



City & Guilds Level 2 Certificate of Competence in Branch Removal and Crown Breakdown (0039-25)

Version 1.6 (December 2025)

Qualification Handbook

Qualification at a glance

Subject area	Chainsaw and Related Operations
City & Guilds number	0039-25
Age group	16+
Entry requirements	Candidates must have achieved 0039-20 Level 2 Certificate of Competence in Chainsaw Maintenance and Cross-Cutting (or equivalent versions). Centres must ensure that any pre-requisites stated are met.
Assessment	To gain this qualification, candidates must successfully achieve the following assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> one to one practical assessment with oral questioning by an NPTC City & Guilds approved assessor.
Grading	Met/not met
Approvals	Full centre approval Qualification approval
Support materials	Qualification Handbook (candidates). Assessment materials (approved assessment centres only).
Registration and certification	Consult the Walled Garden/Online Catalogue for last registration and certification dates.

Title and level	City & Guilds qualification number	Regulatory reference number	GLH	TQT
City & Guilds Level 2 Certificate of Competence in Branch Removal and Crown Breakdown	0039-25	603/7644/2	16	19

Version and date	Change detail	Section
1.0	First version	
1.1 August 2022	Formatting changes Updated logo Updated 'Sources of general information'	Throughout Front cover Appendix 1
1.2 August 2024	Update of Quality Assurance Statement Formatting changes	Centre Requirements
1.3 October 2024	Formatting changes	Throughout
1.4 March 2025	Updated Quality Assurance Updated Inclusion and Diversity Updated Sustainability	Throughout
1.5 May 2025	Updated qualification title Updated information in introduction table	Throughout Introduction
1.6 December 2025	Updated assessment timing	Assessment

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1 Introduction

This document tells you what you need to do to deliver the **City & Guilds Level 2 Certificate of Competence in Branch Removal and Crown Breakdown (0039-25)**

Area	Description
Who is the qualification for?	Individuals who carry out branch removal and crown breakdown tasks as part of their work in arboriculture, forestry, or other industries. It will provide the individual with the knowledge, understanding and skills required to carry out branch removal and crown breakdown.
What does the qualification cover?	It covers hazards, risks, controls, emergency procedures, legislation, industry good practice, roles and responsibilities and other branch removal and crown breakdown tasks..
What opportunities for progression are there?	This qualification will support progression into employment where branch removal and crown breakdown tasks are part of the role. Individuals who successfully complete this qualification could go on to increase their level of proficiency through consolidation practice within a working environment, or develop other skills in safely operating chainsaws.
Who did we develop the qualification with?	Developed with City & Guilds NPTC Stakeholders, associates and industry representatives.
Is it part of an apprenticeship framework or initiative?	No

2 Qualification structure

To achieve the **City & Guilds Level 2 Certificate of Competence in Branch Removal and Crown Breakdown (0039-25)** learners must achieve:

City & Guilds unit number	Unit title	GLH
Mandatory units:		
Learners must achieve or must have achieved this mandatory unit.		
206	Branch removal and crown breakdown	16

Total Qualification Time

Total Qualification Time (TQT) is the number of notional hours which represents an estimate of the total amount of time that could reasonably be expected for a learner to achieve and demonstrate the achievement of the level of attainment necessary for the award of a qualification.

TQT consists of the following two elements:

- the number of hours which an awarding organisation has assigned to a qualification for Guided Learning, and
- an estimate of the number of hours a Learner will reasonably be likely to spend in preparation, study or any other form of participation in education or training, including assessment, which takes place as directed by - but, unlike Guided Learning, not under the Immediate Guidance or Supervision of - a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other, appropriate provider of education or training.

Title and level	GLH	TQT
City & Guilds Level 2 Certificate of Competence in Branch Removal and Crown Breakdown	16	19

3 Centre requirements

Approval

Full approval

To offer this qualification, new centres will need to gain both centre and qualification approval. Please refer to the document **Centre Approval process: Quality Standards** for further information. Please email qasupport@cityandguilds.com for further information on the approval process.

Centre staffing

Staff delivering these qualifications must be able to demonstrate that they meet the following requirements:

- be technically competent in the areas in which they are delivering
- be able to deliver across the breadth and depth of the content of the qualification being taught
- have recent relevant teaching and assessment experience in the specific area they will be teaching, or be working towards this
- demonstrate continuing CPD.

Centre staff should familiarise themselves with the structure, content and assessment requirements of the qualification before delivering a course programme.

Physical resources

Centres must be able to demonstrate that they have access to the equipment and technical resources required to deliver this qualification and its assessments.

Assessment Guidance for the Assessor

Staff assessing these qualifications must be approved Certificate of Competence City & Guilds NPTC Assessors and must be independent and cannot have been involved with the training of the Candidate. This qualification can only be assessed by an Assessor who is suitably qualified and meets the requirements of the awarding body.

Certificate of Competence City & Guilds NPTC Assessors must meet the following requirements:

- show competence and provide evidence of industry expertise in the qualification/s they wish to assess
- hold the qualification as a candidate and have been technically evaluated as an Assessor
- be up to date with their verification and relevant first aid
- demonstrate continuing technically relevant CPD Compliance with these requirements is a pre-requisite for Assessors remaining on the list of approved Assessors.

Verification is a process of monitoring assessment; it is an essential check to confirm that the assessment procedures are being carried out in the way City & Guilds has laid down. The overall aim of verification is to establish a system of quality assurance that is acceptable in terms of both credibility and cost effectiveness and approved Assessors will be subject to a regular visit by the Verifier at a time when assessments are being undertaken.

A selection of assessment reports completed by the Assessor will be evaluated by a City & Guilds approved Quality Consultant.

Safe Practice

Appropriate PPE must be worn at all times All equipment must be operated in such a way that the Candidate, Assessor, other persons, animals or other equipment are not endangered.

If these conditions are not observed this will result in the Candidate not meeting the required standard.

Validation of Equipment

Any item(s) equipment used for the assessment must comply with current legal requirements.

Additional information may be sought from the relevant manufacturer's instruction book, operators' manual, product label/database or any other Government/Government Agency publication.

Appeals and Equal opportunities

Centres must have their own auditable, appeals procedures. If a Candidate is not satisfied with the examination conditions or a Candidate feels the opportunity for examination is being denied, the Centre Manager should, in the first instance, address the problem. If, however the problem cannot be resolved, City & Guilds will arbitrate and a Principal Verifier may be approached to offer independent advice.

All appeals must be clearly documented by the Centre Manager and made available to the Principal Verifier or City & Guilds if advice is required.

Should occasions arise when Centres are not satisfied with any aspect of the verification process, they should contact the Quality Assurance Manager at City & Guilds NPTC, 5-6 Giltspur Street, London, EC1A 9DE, UK Access to the qualification is open to all, irrespective of gender, race, creed or special needs. Subject to Health and Safety restrictions the Centre Manager should ensure that no learner is subjected to unfair discrimination on any grounds in relation to access to assessment and to the fairness of the assessment. QCA requires City & Guilds to monitor centres to check whether equal opportunities policies are being adhered to.

Quality assurance

Approved centres must have effective quality assurance systems to ensure optimum delivery and assessment of qualifications. Quality assurance includes initial centre approval, qualification approval and the centre's own internal procedures for monitoring quality. Centres are responsible for internal quality assurance and City & Guilds is responsible for external quality assurance. All external quality assurance processes reflect the minimum requirements

for verified and moderated assessments, as detailed in the Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS), section H2 of Ofqual's General Conditions. For more information on both CASS and City & Guilds Quality Assurance processes visit: the **What is CASS?** and **Quality Assurance Standards** documents on the City & Guilds website.

Standards and rigorous quality assurance are maintained by the use of:

- Internal quality assurance
- City & Guilds external quality assurance.

In order to carry out the quality assurance role, Internal Quality Assurers must

- have appropriate teaching and vocational knowledge and expertise
- have experience in quality management/internal quality assurance
- hold or be working towards an appropriate teaching/training/assessing qualification
- be familiar with the occupation and technical content covered within the qualification.

External quality assurance for the qualification will be provided by City & Guilds EQA process. EQAs are appointed by City & Guilds to approve centres, and to monitor the assessment and internal quality assurance carried out by centres. External quality assurance is carried out to ensure that assessment is valid and reliable, and that there is good assessment practice in centres.

The role of the EQA is to:

- provide advice and support to centre staff
- ensure the quality and consistency of assessments and marking/grading within and between centres by the use of systematic sampling
- provide feedback to centres and to City & Guilds.

Learner entry requirements

Candidates must have achieved 0039-20 Level 2 Certificate of Competence in Chainsaw Maintenance and Cross-Cutting (or equivalent versions).

Age restrictions

This qualification is approved for learners aged 16 or above.

Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

Access arrangements are adjustments that allow candidates with disabilities, special educational needs, and temporary injuries to access the assessment and demonstrate their skills and knowledge without changing the demands of the assessment. These arrangements must be made before assessment takes place.

The Equality Act 2010 requires City & Guilds to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment.

It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure at the start of a programme of learning that candidates will be able to access the requirements of the qualification.

Please refer to the JQC access arrangements and reasonable adjustments and Access arrangements - when and how applications need to be made to City & Guilds for more information. Both are available on the City & Guilds website: **Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments**.

4 Delivering the qualification

Initial assessment and induction

An initial assessment of each learner should be made before the start of their programme to identify:

- if the learner has any specific training needs
- support and guidance they may need when working towards their qualification.
- any units they have already completed or credit they have accumulated which is relevant to the qualification
- the appropriate type and level of qualification.

We recommend that centres provide an induction programme so the learner fully understands the requirements of the qualification, their responsibilities as a learner and the responsibilities of the centre. This information can be recorded on a learning contract.

Inclusion and diversity

City & Guilds is committed to improving inclusion and diversity within the way we work and how we deliver our purpose which is to help people and organisations develop the skills they need for growth.

More information and guidance to support centres in supporting inclusion and diversity through the delivery of City & Guilds qualifications can be found here:

Inclusion and diversity | City & Guilds ([cityandguilds.com](https://www.cityandguilds.com))

Sustainability

City & Guilds are committed to net zero. Our ambition is to reduce our carbon emissions by at least 50% before 2030 and develop environmentally responsible operations to achieve net zero by 2040 or sooner if we can. City & Guilds is committed to supporting qualifications that support our customers to consider sustainability and their environmental footprint.

More information and guidance to support centres in developing sustainable practices through the delivery of City & Guilds qualifications can be found here:

Our Pathway to Net Zero | City & Guilds ([cityandguilds.com](https://www.cityandguilds.com))

Centres should consider their own carbon footprint when delivering this qualification and consider reasonable and practical ways of delivering this qualification with sustainability in mind. This could include:

- reviewing purchasing and procurement processes (such as buying in bulk to reduce the amount of travel time and energy, considering and investing in the use of components that can be reused, instead of the use of disposable or single use consumables)
- reusing components wherever possible
- waste procedures (ensuring that waste is minimised, recycling of components is in place wherever possible)
- minimising water use and considering options for reuse/salvage as part of plumbing activities wherever possible.

Support materials

The following resources are available for this qualification:

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Description	How to access
Candidate Handbook	www.nptc.org.uk
Assessment Pack (available only to assessors)	www.nptc.org.uk

5 Assessment

Assessment of the qualification

Assessment types			
Unit	Title	Assessment method	Where to obtain assessment materials
206	Branch removal and crown breakdown	Oral Examination and Practical observation Centres may use the materials provided by City & Guilds.	www.nptc.org.uk

Assessment strategy

City & Guilds has written the practical observations with oral questioning to use with this qualification, live assessment materials can be downloaded by the assessor via the Assessment Pack from the NPTC website.

Time constraints

The following must be applied to the assessment of this qualification:

- Candidates must finish their assessment within 24 months of date of initial registration
- The practical observation and oral questioning should take between **1 – 2 hours**.
- Qualification registration is valid for two years.

6 Units

Structure of the units

These units each have the following:

- City & Guilds reference number
- title
- level
- guided learning hours (GLH)
- unit aim
- assessment type
- learning outcomes, which consist of several assessment criteria

Guidance for delivery of the units

This qualification consists of one **unit**. A unit describes what is expected of a competent person in particular aspects of their job.

Each **unit** is divided into **learning outcomes** which describe in further detail the skills and knowledge that a candidate should possess.

Each **learning outcome** has a set of **assessment criteria** (performance and knowledge and understanding) which specify the desired criteria that must be satisfied before an individual can be said to have performed to the agreed standard.

Level:	2
GLH:	16
Assessment type:	Practical activities with oral assessment.
Aim:	The aim of this unit is to provide the learner with the knowledge, understanding and skills required to carry out branch removal and crown breakdown.

Learning outcome

The learner will be able to:

LO1 Carry out branch removal and crown breakdown. (Criteria 1.1-1.2)

Assessment criteria

AC1.1 Hazards, risks, control and emergency procedures

AC1.2 Branch removal and crown breakdown

Topic 1.1

Hazards, risks and controls relevant to the site task and machine.

Emergency procedures relevant to the work site.

Safe working distances:

- five metres or twice the length of the product.

Topic 1.2

Pre-start checks and setting of the machine:

- chain tension and condition checked for safe and effective use
- safety features checked for condition and function
- external nuts and bolts checked for security
- chainsaw contains sufficient fuel and chain oil for operations.

Chainsaw is checked, started and function tested ready for use in accordance with manufacturer's information.

Risks to consider when removing branches:

- tripping or falling over
- contacting obstructions with chainsaw
- tree rolling onto operator

- spring back from cut branches or saplings when severed
- kick back.

Small diameter timber under severe tension/ compression is dealt with:

- using multiple tension cuts
- using multiple compression cuts.

Removal of branches above shoulder height:

- felling/removal of branch to bring it to a lower working height
- rolling of the stem to allow for a safer working height.

When to use a winch to assist with branch removal may:

- to help restrain the tree
- to roll the tree.

Factors and precautions to consider should:

- capacity of the winch
- communication method between operators
- security of anchor points
- compatibility of components/strength loss of equipment in certain configurations
- serviceability and inspection of all components
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required for winching operations
- competency of operators
- roles and responsibilities understood by all parties
- danger zones including during off-set winching
- safe working distances.

Select and inspect work equipment:

- check for signs of damage or fatigue to equipment
- ensure winch, strops, chokers, winch rope, cable fittings, shackles, other ancillary equipment are compatible
- winch overload prevention device in place
- winch components secure.

Set up of winching system:

- winch and anchor point suitability adequate for weight of tree
- capacity and configuration of equipment compatible with load to be applied
- allowance made for any shock loading that may be applied to the system, especially on slopes
- escape route available for chainsaw and winch operator if applicable.

Pre-tension winching system:

- identify risk zones
- position strops in relation to where cuts are to be made
- pre-tension cable fully prior to cutting.

Branch removal techniques should account for:

- a systematic sequence of cuts and position of the saw to remove branches as appropriate for the branching habit
- correct stance and support of the saw on tree or right leg
- left thumb around the front handle
- neither handle released while the chain is moving

- appropriate use of the chainbrake
- avoid working on lower side of unsecured tree on slopes
- operator's not cutting towards legs or body
- avoiding the use of the tip of guide bar
- avoiding overreaching with chainsaw
- not straddling the stem
- compression and tension forces assessed, and appropriate cuts used
- using an under-sweep technique if applicable
- winch used to restrain timber if it could roll towards the operator
- top cut at an appropriate diameter and removed with a safe method of cutting
- the stem turned using appropriate aid tools/ techniques
- using the stem for protection when removing remaining branches as appropriate
- all branches being removed flush with the stem.

Advantages of a clean stem:

- reducing possible injury to the person moving the timber
- reduce friction/collecting debris when
- pulling timber along the ground
- prevent damage to other trees when extracting timber
- allowing timber to easily enter machines
- easier stacking or loading.

Brush and branches may be dealt with by:

- chipping
- stacking
- windrowing
- baling.

Timber should be left in a safe, stable condition and appropriate position.

All waste produced is disposed of in line with legislation, good practice and site requirements.

All tools, equipment and personal protective equipment is used in line with industry good practice.

It is ensured that any possible environmental damage is always minimised.

All activities must be completed in a way which protects the operator and those around them.

Supporting information

Evidence requirements

One to one practical assessment with oral questioning by an NPTC City & Guilds approved assessor.

Unit guidance

Candidates must successfully achieve all assessment activities in their chosen unit(s).

Safe Practice

Assessors must hold a current 'First Aid at Work' Certificate.

It is strongly recommended that Candidates hold at least a recent, recognised 'Emergency First Aid' Training Certificate.

Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be worn at all times.

A First Aid kit meeting current regulations, of the appropriate size for the number of persons on site, must be available.

The Assessor must ensure a Risk Assessment is carried out, and sufficient control measures implemented.

All equipment being used for this assessment must comply with relevant requirements of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998 and Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998.

Information may be sought from the relevant operator manuals or any other appropriate training or safety publication.

Provision must be made to avoid the risk of environmental pollution and adequate control measures must be implemented (a suitable response kit to be available on the machine).

It is the responsibility of the Assessor and the Candidate to ensure that any additional requirements and provisions are met as relevant to this qualification.

Candidates must comply with current regulations when working at heights regulations 2005 amended

A breach of Health and Safety that puts any person at risk during the assessment process will result in the assessment being terminated and the Candidate not meeting the required standard.

Candidates who undertake this assessment and have met the requirements are reminded of their legal obligation to receive/undertake appropriate additional training in the use of any equipment that differs from that used during the assessment, but which they are nevertheless qualified to use.

Suggested learning resources

Manufacturers' handbooks, manuals.
Safety bulletins.

Appendix 1 Sources of general information

The following documents contain essential information for centres delivering City & Guilds qualifications. They should be referred to in conjunction with this handbook. To download the documents and to find other useful documents, go to the **Centre Document Library** on www.cityandguilds.com or click on the links below:

Quality Assurance Standards: Centre Handbook

This document is for all approved centres and provides guidance to support their delivery of our qualifications. It includes information on

- Centre quality assurance criteria and monitoring activities
- Administration and assessment systems
- Centre-facing support teams at City & Guilds / ILM
- Centre quality assurance roles and responsibilities.

The Centre Handbook should be used to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the Centre Contract.

Quality Assurance Standards: Centre Assessment

This document sets out the minimum common quality assurance requirements for our regulated and non-regulated qualifications that feature centre assessed components. Specific guidance will also be included in relevant qualification handbooks and/or assessment documentation.

It incorporates our expectations for centre internal quality assurance and the external quality assurance methods we use to ensure that assessment standards are met and upheld. It also details the range of sanctions that may be put in place when centres do not comply with our requirements, or actions that will be taken to align centre marking/assessment to required standards. Additionally, it provides detailed guidance on the secure and valid administration of centre-assessments.

Access arrangements - When and how applications need to be made to City & Guilds

provides full details of the arrangements that may be made to facilitate access to assessments and qualifications for candidates who are eligible for adjustments in assessment.

The **Centre Document Library** also contains useful information on such things as:

- Conducting examinations
- Registering learners
- Appeals and malpractice

Useful contacts

Please visit the Contact Us section of the City & Guilds website, **Contact us**.

About City & Guilds

City & Guilds is the global skills partner, empowering people, organisations and economies to develop the skills they need for growth. With almost 150 years of trusted expertise, we support people into work, help them develop on the job and move into the next job.

We work with Governments, employers, training providers, colleges and industry stakeholders to design and deliver high-quality training, qualifications, assessments and credentials that lead to meaningful career progression. We understand the life changing link between skills development, social mobility and success. Our solutions span critical sectors including construction, engineering, transport, energy and electrical, serving over 1 million learners annually.

Through our comprehensive portfolio of brands and trusted global network, we set industry-wide standards for technical, behavioural and commercial skills to improve performance and productivity. We believe you can achieve your potential - and we're here to help make it happen.

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City & Guilds
Giltspur House
5-6 Giltspur Street
London
EC1A 9DE

cityandguilds.com