**Command Verbs and Level Descriptors**

The aim of this document is to give a definition of the command verbs used in our qualification guides at levels 4 and above for the benefit of both Centres and their learners.

Some of the command verbs are used at all levels of our qualifications, however as the qualification levels increase the command verbs require a more detailed and in–depth response. This document shows examples of the level of detail required

We hope that you find this a useful guide and reference tool.

**Explanation of level descriptors and command verbs**

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| **LEVEL** | **Knowledge descriptor (the learner…)** | **Skills descriptor (the learner can…..)** |
| **4** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | Has practical, theoretical or technical knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to address problems that are well defined but complex and non-routine.  Can analyse, interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas.  Is aware of the nature of approximate scope of the area of study or work.  Has an informed awareness of different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or work.  Develop a rigorous approach to the acquisition of a broad knowledge base; employ a range of specialised skills; evaluate information, using it to plan and develop investigative strategies and to determine solutions to a variety of unpredictable problems; and operate in a range of varied and specific contexts, taking responsibility for the nature and quality of outputs. |  | | Identify, adapt and use appropriate cognitive and practical skills to inform actions and address problems that are complex and non-routine while normally fairly well-defined.  Review the effectiveness and appropriateness of methods, actions and results.  Has a broad understanding of the knowledge base and its terminology or discourse. Appreciates that areas of this knowledge base are open to ongoing debate and reformulation.  Identifies a well-defined focus for enquiry, plans and undertakes investigative strategies using a limited and defined range of methods, collects data from a variety of sources, and communicates results effectively in an appropriate format.  Is aware of own capabilities in key areas and engages in development activity through guided self-direction.  Uses interpersonal and communication skills to clarify tasks and identify and rectify issues in a range of contexts. |
| **5** | Has practical, theoretical or technological knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to find ways forward in broadly defined, complex contexts.  Can analyse, interpret and evaluate relevant information, concepts and ideas.  Is aware of the nature and scope of the area of study or work.  Understands different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the reasoning behind them.  Generate ideas through the analysis of concepts at an abstract level with a command of specialised skills and the formulation of responses to well-defined and abstract problems; analyse and evaluate information; exercise significant judgement across a broad range of functions; and accept responsibility for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes. | Determine, adapt and use appropriate methods, cognitive and practical skills to address broadly defined, complex problems.  Use relevant research or development to inform actions.  Evaluate actions, methods and results.  Has detailed knowledge of well-established theories and concepts. Demonstrates an awareness of different ideas, contexts and frameworks and recognises those areas where the knowledge base is most/least secure.  Undertakes research to provide new information and/or explores new or existing data to identify patterns and relationships. Uses appropriate theoretical models to judge the significance of the data collected, recognising the limitations of the enquiry.  Analyses a range of information, comparing alternative methods and techniques. Selects appropriate techniques/criteria for evaluation and discriminates between the relative relevance and significance of data/evidence collected. |
| **6** | Has advanced practical, conceptual or technological knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to create ways forward in contexts where there are many interacting factors.  Understands different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the theories that underpin them.  Can critically analyse, interpret and evaluate complex information, concepts and ideas.  Critically review, consolidate and extend a systematic and coherent body of knowledge, utilising specialised skills across an area of study; critically evaluate concepts and evidence from a range of sources; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills and exercise significant judgement in a range of situations; and accept accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes. | Determine, refine, adapt and use appropriate methods and advanced cognitive and practical skills to address problems that have limited definition and involve many interacting factors.  Use and, where appropriate, design relevant research and development to inform actions.  Evaluate actions, methods and results and their implications.  Has a systematic understanding of the knowledge base and its interrelationship with other fields of study. Demonstrates current understanding of some specialist areas in depth.  Demonstrates confidence and flexibility in identifying and defining complex problems. Identifies, selects and uses investigative strategies and techniques to undertake a critical analysis, evaluating the outcomes.  Analyses new, novel and/or abstract data using an appropriate range of established subject-specific techniques. Judges the reliability, validity and significance of evidence to support conclusions and/or recommendations. Suggests reasons for contradictory data/results. |

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| **Command verb** | **Meaning** | **Examples** |
| **Analyse** | Examine in detail to discover the meaning or essential features of a theme, topic or situation. Break something down into its components, examine factors methodically and in detail to recognise patterns by applying concepts and making connections to predict consequences.  Separate information into components and identify their characteristics. Discuss the pros and cons of a topic or argument and make reasoned comment.  Break the subject or complex situation(s) into separate parts and examine each part in detail. Identify the main issues and show how the main ideas are related to practice and why they are important. Reference to current research or theory should support the analysis.  Break the information into constituent parts; examine the relationship between the parts; question the information. | **Analyse** the structure and explain the position of the liver, gall bladder and the pancreas. **T/506/1557**  **Analyse** five ways in which the impact of tree work on potential energy (Non-structural carbohydrates) can be reduced. **D/503/3316**  **Analyse** the similarities and differences between their chosen ethical framework and the requirements of at least one other professional body or employing organisation. **K/617/7588**  **Analyse** living tree wood degradation by fungi and how it is influenced by the characteristics of the wood substrate and other factors. **J/503/4170**  **Analyse** evidence of learner achievement. **F/601/5319**  **Analyse** personal qualities and skills required for the delivery of employability skills. **M/505/1089**  **Analyse** ways to involve learners in the management of their own learning and development in groups. **A/502/9550**  **Analyse** the history and heritage of bespoke garment production in the United Kingdom. **T/5079735** |
| **Assess** | Provide sufficient detail and/or understanding in responses. Learners will break something down into its components, examine factors methodically and in detail to present logical and coherent reasoning.  Offer a reasoned judgement of the standard/quality of situation/ skills informed by relevant facts/rationale.  Provide a reasoned judgement or rationale of the standard, quality, value or importance of something, informed by relevant facts/rationale. Comment Identify and write about the main issues, express an opinion, giving reaction to what has been read/observed. | **Assess** the compatibility of objectives that reflect the following two aspects, identifying any conflicts:   * Conservation of wildlife * Recreation     **Y/503/4173**  **Assess** future trends in the technical textile industry. **T/505/6892**  **Assess** the extent to which the statutory and legal frameworks for protecting young people are being effectively applied. **T/502/5366** |
| **Conduct** | Organise and perform a particular activity. | **Conduct** a preliminary site survey and undertake a basic soil analysis drawing conclusion regarding suitableness and if improvements are required. **L/503/3330**  **Conduct** assessments in line with internal and external requirements. **F/505/0125**  **Conduct** negotiations in relation to costs. **D/504/2677**  **Conduct** a project meeting with client and team members. **R/501/8392** |
| **Compare** | Examine the subjects in detail, identify similarities and differences, and consider these from different perspectives.  Look for similarities and differences between; perhaps conclude which is preferable; implies evaluation. | **Compare** the benefits and limitations of ring porous, diffuse porous xylem anatomy in tree. **D/503/3316**  **Compare** methods used to assess individual learning needs. **K/502/9544** |
| **Critically Evaluate** | Consider the strengths and weaknesses, arguments for and against and/or similarities and differences. The writer should then judge the evidence from the different perspectives and make a valid conclusion or reasoned judgement. Apply current research or theories to support the evaluation when applicable.  Critical evaluation not only considers the evidence above but also the strength of the evidence based on the validity of the method of evidence compilation. | **Critically** evaluate a given tree risk management strategy, refining the content as applicable and specify any additions that are required to ensure the strategy is fit for purpose. **L/503/4168**  **Critically** evaluate the role of street trees today where society demands value for money. **R/503/4169**  **Critically** evaluate a current tree strategy indicating its strengths and weaknesses, refine the content as applicable and specify what information is required to address any weaknesses found in the strategy. **R/503/4169** |
| **Describe** | Giving an account of something including a series of features/points/trends/factors.  Express, fully and clearly, the details/facts of.  (e.g. “Describe the risks arising” under a specific given scenario.)  Provide an extended range of detailed factual information about the topic or item in a logical way.  Provide an extended range of detailed factual information about the topic or item in a logical way.  Identify distinctive features and give descriptive, factual detail.  State the points of a topic / give characteristics and main features. | **Describe** the swing and stance phases of different gait patterns. **A/617/7756**  **Describe** the use of static and dynamic treatment techniques as part of a treatment in a hydrotherapy pool. **F/617/7757**  **Describe** how the principal requirements of an urban tree can be provided for in practice to achieve a healthy full-term life. **D/503/3316**  **Describe** and justify the use of three practices that can be adopted at the time of carrying out tree surgery operations that may assist a tree to form barriers as represented in the CODIT model. **D/503/3316**  **Describe** behaviours that can occur in a learning environment. **Y/505/1099** |
| **Determine** | Find out, decide, e.g. what is relevant. To find a solution by following a set of procedures or to obtain a numerical value by carrying out a series of calculations.  Settle/conclude an argument/question as a result of investigation or by referring to an authority.  Find out something; calculate. | **Determine** whether assessment methods are safe, fair, valid and reliable. **A/601/5321**  **Determine** the strengths and weaknesses of the business relevant to its target market. **J/501/8387**  **Determine** where to go for information about protecting intellectual property rights in specific jurisdictions inside and outside the UK. **L/501/8391** |
| **Develop** | Progress/expand/initialise from a starting point.  Take forward or build upon given information.  Elaborate, expand or progress an idea from a starting point building upon given information. | **Develop** a written tree risk management strategy for either a public or private owner of a large number of trees. **L/503/4168** |
| **Define** | State or describe the nature, scope or meaning.  Show or state clearly and accurately.  Give the precise meaning of a term. Examine the different possible or often used definitions. | **Define** palatability and analyse the factors that affect it. **T/506/1557**  **Define** and evaluate the tools needed to create a brand. **R/501/8389** |
| **Evaluate** | Examine in detail the meaning or essential features of a theme, topic or situation; break something down into its components; examine factors methodically and in detail, identify separate factors, say how they are related and how each one contributes to the topic to make reasoned judgements and conclusions.  Make a qualitative judgement taking into account different factors and using available knowledge/experience/evidence.  Consider the strengths and weaknesses, arguments for and against and/or similarities and differences and then judge the evidence from different perspectives/points of view and make a valid conclusion or reasoned judgement. Apply current research or theories to support the evaluation. | **Evaluate** the functions of each organ within the digestive tract. **T/506/1557**  **Evaluate** why understanding advanced aquatic treadmill techniques is important when working as a hydrotherapist. **A/617/7756**  **Evaluate** methods of collecting qualitative and quantitative data. **T/503/5380**  **Evaluate** the importance of suicide risk assessment. **K/617/7588**  **Evaluate** own work in carrying out assessments of occupational competence. **H/601/5314** |
| **Explain** | Provide sufficient detail and/or understanding in responses. Learners use linkage words such as ‘therefore’, ‘so that’ and ‘because’ to expand on the initial point made.  To give account of the purposes or reasons.  Make clear the meaning or purpose or details of, or the justification for.  Make it clear to somebody by describing or revealing relevant information in more detail. Give an account of purpose or reasons.  An explanation requires a justification/exemplification of a point. The answer must contain some element of reasoning/justification, this can include mathematical/logical explanations.  Provide an understanding; make an idea or relationship clear. This command word tests your understanding of why or how something happens. | **Explain** what is meant by cultural divisions and heritage. **D/601/7630**  **Explain** the purpose and importance of a working agreement for a series of sessions. **D/601/7633**  **Explain**, using a range of examples, the importance of recognising the different abilities of fungi invasiveness and their relationship with various hosts in connection to the management of risk posed by trees. **J/503/4170**  **Explain** the concept of decay and disease in relation to longevity of an Ancient or Ancient Veteran tree. **H/503/4175**  **Explain** the revenue opportunities and risks associated with Intellectual Property Rights. **L/501/8391**  **Explain** how to give support in a way that balances the interests of the young person, inherent risks and legal duties of care. **A/502/5224** |
| **Explore** | To find out about.  Investigate without preconceptions about the outcome.  To investigate, examine and look into with an open mind about what might be found or developed. | **Explore** the concept of tree health care in relation to the development of new pesticides, biological control and treatments and form a conclusion related to future resilience of urban tree cover. **J/503/4170**  **Explore** the concept of ‘continuous cover urban forestry’. **R/503/4169** |
| **Identify** | Provide a single word or short response to pick out the key factor(s) or element(s).  Recognise, list, name or otherwise characterise.  Select after consideration of the possible options or alternatives.  Ascertain the origin, nature or definitive characteristics of the subject under study.  Analyse the subject or complex situation(s) into separate parts and examine each part in detail; identify the main issues and show how the main ideas are related to practice and why they are important.  Usually requires some key information to be selected from a given stimulus/resource.  Give a reference to an item, which could be its name or title. Normally a single word or phrase will be sufficient, provided the reference is clear. | **Identify** the tree related components required in a planning application to assist a developer within the planning process. **A/503/3324**  **Identify** the significant information to be collected as part of a site assessment, prior to woodland creation and justify how each item of information contributes to the formation of a plan of operations. **F/503/3325**  **Identify** the contribution that can be provided by other specialists when preparing management plans for either an Ancient Veteran tree or an Ancient Woodland site. **H/503/4175**  **Identify** the key approaches required to address the controversies and problems identified in tree risk assessment and management. **L/503/4168**  **Identify** the aims and objectives of a specific partnership. **Y/503/5310**  **Identify** and minimise hazards and risks in the workplace through safe working practices. **T/507/9735** |
| **Interpret** | Translate information into recognisable form. Convey one’s understanding to others, e.g. in a performance. Explain the meaning of something.  Expound the meaning; make clear and explicit, giving your own judgement. | **Interpret** how each disease can affect the nutritional needs of dogs. **T/506/1557**  **Interpret** relevant court precedents, statute legislation and best practices that are applicable to owners or those responsible for the safety of trees drawing conclusions related to the general requirements of dispensing the duty of care and tree inspection. **L/503/4168**  **Interpret** instructions from colleagues precisely. **T/507/9735** |
| **Justify** | Provide a rationale for actions and or decisions. The rationale should be underpinned by research, academic theory, data analysis or experience.  Give reasons for the validity of a view or idea why some action should be undertaken. This might reasonably involve discussing and discounting alternative views or actions. Each of the views present or options available will have positives and negatives. For the outcome(s) chosen, the positives outweigh the negatives. Students should be able to explain all of this review process. | **Justify** why an understanding of effective management of canine patients with common orthopaedic conditions is important when working as a hydrotherapist. **F/617/7760**  **Justify** own recommendations for action to be taken based on conclusions from action research. **T/503/5380** |
| **Prepare** | Make something or someone ready for use.  To make or develop something ready which will happen in the future. | **Prepare** the content of publicity material to inform the public of the need for a sustainable tree population. **R/503/4169**  **Prepare** a schedule of purchase for tree and shrub stock for a given scenario using the Horticultural Trades Association (HTA) plant specification guidance. **L/503/3330**  **Prepare** information about themselves to suit their progression needs. **T/601/4202** |
| **Reflect** | Look back upon and appraise, relate to, e.g. to stated aims. Give contemplative, balanced consideration to an issue or action.  Consciously contemplate, appraise or give balanced consideration to an action or issue. | **Reflect** on your performance during aquatic treadmill treatments. **A/617/7756**  **Reflect** on the use of an aquatic treadmill as part of your clinical practice. **A/617/7756** |
| **Research** | Investigation into and study of materials and sources to establish facts and reach conclusions.  To find out information about and to study in detail.  Identifying and collecting data or information about a subject and presenting it in a codified or structured form. | **Research** the potential of using aerial imagery and new technology when collecting tree inventory data for a population of trees. **R/503/4169**  **Research** and interpret information regarding progression options. **T/601/4202** |
| **Review** | Study /survey information, methods, outcomes, conclusions, after the event, deciding what was effective or not.  Survey information, methods, outcomes, conclusions, after the event, deciding what was effective or not.  To examine, survey, reconsider a subject, theory or item.  Make a survey, examine or look over something carefully and give a critical account. | **Review** the schools of thought related to measuring tree vitality in urban trees through tree growth, physiological measurements and chlorophyll fluorescence testing. **J/503/4170**  **Review** opportunities and challenges of working within a partnership. **Y/503/5310**  **Review** the effectiveness of a specific partnership’s outputs drawing on valid and reliable data. **Y/503/5310** |
| **Summarise** | To sum up or to put things into your own words or to create a précis of the information discussed.  Write down or verbally explain in brief, the main points or essential features.  Present principal points without detail.  Give a brief account of a topic or idea outlining the main points. | **Summarise** the concept that is the foundation of the principle ‘The Axiom of Uniform Stress’. **M/503/3319**  **Summarise** key aspects of legislation, regulatory requirements and codes of practice relating to own role and responsibilities. **H/505/0053**  **Summarise** methods of presenting partnership outputs to interested parties. **Y/503/5310**  **Summarise** how traditional manufactured cloth processes meet British and European standards. **T/507/9735**  **Summarise** the importance of the high standards of workmanship that are required within bespoke garment production. **T/507/9735** |