

CRAFT CERTIFICATION SCHEME

REFERENCE GUIDE



Level 1

The Assessment

The Level 1 test requires the candidate to take down and rebuild 2.5m² of dry stone wall in a 7.5 hour time period. The test represents the first job many wallers are asked to do - repairing a gap in a field wall.

At this level the DSWA Assessor is looking to see that the candidate has an understanding of the core principles of dry stone walling these being :

- Stones walled length into the wall
- Wall stones pinned and hearting/fill used in the middle of the wall
- Wall built with batter
- Throughs placed appropriately
- Toppings placed solidly
- Majority of joints crossed

What does a pass at Level 1 look like?

Build strength is the focus of this test and therefore the 'look' of the wall comes secondary. Some gappiness on the perpendicular joints is acceptable and providing the stones are walled length in, some straight joints are allowable.

Occasional dips and bulges are acceptable in the line and batter so long as they are not major .

The top line of the wall can deviate slightly.

What does a fail look like

A fail at this level would require the candidate to have built several bad errors into the wall. Several traced courses, numerous straight joints or not using proper hearting/fill may result in a fail.

Prerequisites

None

Suggested Guided Learning Hours

Four-days guided learning
hours

OR

117 hours private learning
hours

Level 2

The Assessment

The Level 2 test requires candidates to take down and rebuild 2.5m² of dry stone wall, including a wall end, in a 7.5 hour time period.

At this level the DSWA Assessor is looking to see that the candidate has a good walling ability as well as being able to build a solid wall end. The Assessor is looking to see:

- Stones are walled length into the wall
- Wall stones are pinned up level and the middle filled well with bigger hearting/fill being used at the bottom of the wall and smaller hearting/fill at the top
- Wall end tied well back into the wall
- Wall end not out of plumb
- Very few straight joints in the entire wall
- Throughs placed appropriately
- Toppings placed solidly
- Foundation built very solidly and packed well

What does a pass at Level 2 look like?

Build strength and aesthetic are equally important at this level. The added emphasis on 'face' quality indicates that the candidate has a good understanding of stone selection – some effort has been made to fit shapes together and stone is nicely graded from the thickest-broadest stones at the bottom to the thinner towards the top. The Assessor is not looking for 'tight' walling and some gappiness is acceptable – more so on irregular stone types.

Minor dips and bulges are acceptable in the line and batter

The top line of the wall can deviate slightly.

What does a fail look like

A fail at this level would require the candidate to have built one bad error or several moderate errors into the wall. For example the wall end not being tied into the wall or being out of plumb.

Prerequisites

None

Suggested Guided Learning Hours

137 hours private learning
hours

Level 3

The Assessment

The Level 3 test requires candidates to take down and rebuild 4.5m² of retaining wall in a 7.5 hour time period.

This assessment is designed to test the candidates understanding of retaining walls and their ability to work at a commercial rate.

At this level the Assessor is looking to see that the candidate demonstrates:

- The front and back of the wall are walled properly and evenly
- Wall stones are pinned correctly
- Internal joints follow one another
- Each void in the middle is filled with the largest stone available
- The wall is built with batter and only slight deviations are acceptable
- Throughs placed appropriately (ideally two courses)
- Toppings placed solidly and fit together tightly
- Stones fit together tightly on the face and shapes follow one another well

What does a pass at Level 3 look like?

Assessors are looking for a high level of finish. Stones fit together tightly on the bed, courses run level and the perpendicular joints fit together well.

Internal strength is hugely important in a retaining wall so particular importance is placed on the correct use of hearting/fill, always using the biggest piece of fill available and sitting it well. Walling that is very tight internally as well as tight on the face will be awarded the highest marks.

At this level, only a couple of straight joints are acceptable in total. Minor dips and bulges are acceptable in the line and batter. The top line of the wall can deviate slightly.

What does a fail look like

A fail would be for work that doesn't consistently display a good, high quality finish nor sound quality. This could include poor preparation of the bank, poor packing and noticeable unevenness to batter.

Prerequisites

Must have completed
Level 3 Part A (Features)

Suggested Guided Learning Hours

189 hours private learning
hours

Level 4

The Assessment

The Level 4 test requires candidates to take down and rebuild 5m² of dry stone wall including a selected feature in a 7.5 hour time period.

The test represents the highest standard of walling and therefore the margin for error is very low.

At this level the candidate should be confident that they can produce the amount of work and as a rule of thumb should be comfortable in producing 4m² of field wall on any work day. At this level the Assessor is looking for the following:

- Stones graded evenly from bottom to top
- All stones fit together tightly
- Maximum bed contact
- No trace walling (every single stone at least 1/3 into the wall)
- Wall filled completely all the way up using biggest hearting/fill possible
- Batter close to perfect
- All stones pinned up level
- Foundations interlocking
- Walling stones interlocking/tailbinding where possible
- Wall prepared for throughs so they sit well
- No zip joints

What does a pass at Level 4 look like?

The Assessors are looking for a near faultless wall at this level inside and out. Candidates should be aware that even a nice looking wall can lose points if it is not constructed well internally.

A high scoring pass will show great use of stone; shapes fit excellently together and courses work out in a planned way.

Prerequisites

Must have completed
Level 4 Part A (Features)

Suggested Guided Learning Hours

6 years professional walling
experience

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