

CRAFT CERTIFICATION SCHEME



The requirements and fees set out in this publication
are applicable from January 2024
Lantra Awards Accredited Qualifications

Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain

Lantra Awards Accredited Craft Certification Scheme

Introduction

The Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain (DSWA), in partnership with the Awarding Body, Lantra Awards, offers a series of progressive practical tests, which ultimately leads to the DSWA Master Craftsman certificate in dry stone walling. The scheme is designed to ensure that dry stone wallers and dykers achieve the highest standards of craftsmanship.

Tests are available for the Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 certificates and DSWA Master Craftsman level. Certificates at Levels 1, 2 and 3 are recognised and approved by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual). The Master Craftsman Certificate is the DSWA's highest qualification.

Who can be Tested?

Tests are available to all individuals, whether or not members of the DSWA. We recommend that candidates new to dry stone walling, or with limited experience, commence with the Level 1 test. Those working in the craft or with more experience may start at Level 2.

Where to get Help and Guidance

Dates for training courses held at the National Training Site in Cumbria are published at www.dswa.org.uk. Locally based basic training and practice events can also be found under the Branch section of the DSWA website. The Association can advise on test dates taking place at other locations throughout the country. Less experienced candidates can contact training@dswa.org.uk for further advice.

How to Apply

Application forms can be completed online at www.dswa.org.uk, from the Craft Certification section under the Training heading. Applications should be submitted with the relevant fee **at least four weeks prior to the test date**. Payment can be made on-line via the DSWA website, using either PayPal or credit/debit cards.

How Tests are Arranged and Conducted

Tests will take place on pre-arranged test days. You should contact the DSWA office to discuss options for tests in remote areas. Additional costs will apply.

Tests cannot take place until the Application Form and fees have been received by the DSWA.

At all levels, the work must be the unaided work of the candidate. Candidates should not take a test on a section of wall on which they have previously practised. It is recommended lots be drawn for test sections and Assessors will ensure critical stones, such as those for cheekends, are randomised where a site has obviously been used for practices or previous tests. The use of sawn or machined stone is not permitted in any DSWA test. The occasional sawn face is permissible as long as an attempt has been made to dress the stone to reveal a more natural looking face. It is worth remembering that any visible sawn faces will be looked upon as an indication of inferior work and will be penalised by the Assessors, certainly at higher levels or certification.

Over use of tools is discouraged and the use of angle grinders and/or stone saws is not permitted on any work being assessed under the DSWA Craft Certification Scheme.

Candidates should ensure their attire and conduct throughout the test are in the best interests of their own safety and the safety of others on the site. Protective footwear (to safety standard ISO EN 20345) **must** be worn throughout the test.

To pass the test, a candidate must meet two conditions:

- 1. Section Minimums: Achieve at least the minimum mark in each section (default is half marks if not stated).**
- 2. Overall Minimum: Achieve the overall minimum total mark for the test.**

Failing any section results in overall failure, even if the total marks exceed the minimum required.

ALL timed tests are 7.5 hours in length.

Where a candidate fails to achieve the marks required to pass a test, Assessors must clearly indicate areas of weakness to the candidate.

DSWA/Lantra Awards will appoint Assessors for all relevant tests and may send representatives, without notice, to observe tests taking place.

Assessors should not assess their own trainees or employees.

Appeals

Appeals must be made in writing within ten working days of the test. The Appeals Procedure is available at www.dswa.org.uk

Working Wallers & Dykers

The list of contractors, available on the DSWA website, www.dswa.org.uk, indicates the level of certification held by those paying the current professional subscription to the Dry Stone Walling Association.

Overseas Candidates

Separate arrangements can be made for candidates wishing to take the DSWA certificates overseas (any level) for which a registration-only fee is required with the application form. For the DSWA Overseas assessment process please contact training@dswa.org.uk.

Under the General Data Protection Regulations, the Dry Stone Walling Association maintains a computerised record of all certificates issued, which is used to provide information about the skills level and qualifications of an individual, if required.

If a certificate is lost or damaged, replacements can be obtained from DSWA, at a cost of £30 per certificate.

What the Assessors Look For

Please refer to the Craft Certification—Guidance booklet

General Approach and Safety at all Levels: Methodical approach to work. Aptitude for and attitude to the job in hand particularly in regard to safe handling of heavy stones and instruction to others giving assistance if required. Consistent display of skill. Safe use of hammer. Keeping working area clear of obstacles. Leaving any surplus stone in tidy heaps. PPE safety boots (to safety standard ISO EN 20345) and safety spectacles are compulsory especially on stone which splinters. Awareness of any health and safety issues and due regard to others on site or nearby. Due regard given to preservation of wildlife and habitat within, on and beside the wall.

Note: Unsafe practices displayed in a test situation, especially with regard to others on the site, will result in failure of a test and, if necessary the Assessor will halt the test.

Level 1 Certificate (and all subsequent levels)

- **Stripping Out:** Cope stones laid in line approximately 2 metres from wall. Cover stones and throughbands laid next to them. Building stones and packing placed both sides of wall. Foundation stones laid on top of building stones. Clear space, free of stones both sides of the wall.

- **Preparing and Laying Foundations:** Foundation dug out and levelled. Foundation stones reaching as far into centre of wall as possible. Extra-large stones should be in the foundations. Foundation well-packed with hearting stones.
- **Building and Packing:** Stones laid tight together with good contact between stones. Stones laid “end in” and “end out”. No running joints further than two rows of stones. Coursing of stones if applicable and a definite line for throughbands, appropriate to wall height (usually mid-height but note regional variations). Good use of hearting, thoroughly packed in, and not thrown in. Tight wall with no loose stone. A definite line at coverband or cope height. The bigger the stones, the further down the wall they should be placed.
- **Placing of Throughbands:** Laid at approximately one metre intervals. Check they are lying solidly on the wall. Should protrude 50-80mm on either side of wall (but note regional variations).
- **Straightness of Line & Batter:** Wall should come in evenly. Absence of bulges or hollows in the wall. Correct use of frame or pins to set batter. Correct use of lines: taut, level, correct width. Covers run evenly.
- **Copestones and Finish:** Stones should sit solid on their own base rather than propped up on pinnings. Vertical, tight together, well keyed to give a level finish (some regions have copestones on the slant, other regions have variations which should be observed, eg turf underneath copes). Minimum pinning, which should be neat and blend into wall.

Additional for Level 2 Certificate

- **Cheekend/Wall head:** Stones well tied-back into wall. Good selection of corner stones, well tied back into body of the wall. No running joints in face or where tied into the wall. A good solid end cope stone. Work from cheekend back into the wall.

Additional for Level 3 Certificate

Guidance sheets for Level 3 features, including calculation of slope can be found on the DSWA website, www.dswa.org.uk.

- **Curve:** Wall with definite curve (refer to guidance sheets). Smooth curve with even batter inside and outside. Building stones should be tight. Copestones must fit tightly.

- **Lunky or Waterpen:** At least 500mm x 500mm. Corners tied well back into wall. Selection of suitable stones. Covers (lintel) long enough to extend well into the wall either side.
- **High Wall:** Base width in proportion to height. Correct number of throughstone courses for height. Multiple rows of throughs to be staggered. Even batter throughout. Safe working practices, particularly when lifting copes.
- **Sloping Ground:** A slope of approximately 20 degrees for the Level 3 certificate and 30 degrees for the Master Craftsman certificate must be used. Foundations should be stepped at appropriate intervals. Copes must be self-supporting. Throughbands should be horizontal and at equidistant height above foundations. Courses should be horizontal. Assessors will check minimum degree of slope.
- **Retaining Wall:** Careful stripping out to avoid earth falls. Width of base and batter appropriate to height and material being retained. Building stones laid lengthways into wall. Careful packing back to earth face. Throughbands as long as possible and cut back into earth bank. Use of additional rows of throughbands related to height. Retaining bank must be a minimum of 1.2m in height, measured from the base of foundations; the wall should be retaining to the base of copes.

Master Craftsman

Guidance notes for Masters Features, including calculation of slope can be found on the DSWA website, www.dswa.org.uk

- **Steps:** Selection of stone for at least four steps. Minimum number of stones per tread. Tread stones well secured side and rear. Minimum tread 300mm. Equal rise on all steps. Maximum rise 225mm.
- **Stiles:** Minimum of 3 steps in a **step-stile**. Vertical between steps not more than 250mm. Steps should protrude 250-300mm on either side of wall. Even spacing of steps as they ascend. Tread of step sufficient size for a large boot. Steps positioned to prevent foot/leg going down between steps. Large copestones. **Squeeze-stile:** room for one boot but insufficient room for sheep to pass through. Sound cheekends.
- **Arches:** Must include walling above the arch in addition to copestones. **Keystone arch:** Construction and setting up of former. Selection, dressing and fitting of key stones. Tightness and packing. **Corbelled arch:** Matching stones tied well into wall. Top stone large and well tied in. Tightness and packing.

- **Pillars:** Use of profile. Checking for vertical. Dressing of stones. Absence of holes. Very tight packing.
 - **Square/Right-angled Corner:** Long stones tied across each other alternatively both on inside and outside of corner. Correct inner and outer batter. Good solid corner cope.
 - **Round End:** Good batter. Correct alignment and uniformity of curve.
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Schedules for Assessment

All work must be the unaided work of the candidate.

A square metre, as used in the following schedules, is calculated by the length times the height of the wall, measured on one side of a double-skinned wall.

All horizontal measurements will be made at half the height of the wall. All vertical measurements will be from the base of the foundations or scarcement to the top of the copes.

Candidates should be familiar with the setting up and use of walling poles/rods/frames, strings, etc and make use of them during tests.

Walls and features will be marked from both sides.

Assessors may increase the time allowed by a period of 30 minutes to make allowance for extenuating circumstances.

Lunch breaks will be 30 minutes for all timed tests.

Level I Certificate Test Criteria

- Each candidate to strip down and rebuild a straight-forward free-standing section of wall totalling 2.5 square metres and not less than one metre in height below the copes.
- The test should be completed within a single, 7.5 hour period and not spread over multiple days.
- Lunch/refreshment breaks are in addition to the building time.
- The standard required places emphasis on sound and solid construction rather than on finished quality. Note should be taken of the high marks allocated to preparing and laying foundations.

	Marks available
Stripping out	10
Preparing and laying foundations	24
Building and packing (first lift to throughbands)	20
Placing of throughbands	6
Building and packing (second lift)	20
Copestones and finish	15
General approach and safety	5
TOTAL MARKS POSSIBLE	100
MINIMUM TOTAL MARKS REQUIRED TO PASS	50

Level 2 Certificate Test Criteria

- Each candidate to strip down and rebuild a section of wall totalling 2.5 square metres and not less than one metre in height below the copes.
- The wall must incorporate a vertical cheekend.
- The test should be completed within a single, 7.5 hour period and not spread over multiple days.
- Lunch/refreshment breaks are in addition to the building time.
- The basic principles of construction set out at the start of the booklet are to be followed.
- Note should be taken of the high marks required for the straightness of line and batter and the construction of the cheekend.
- **In addition**, particular emphasis will be placed on a more professional finish.

	Marks available
Stripping out	5
Preparing and laying foundations	10
Building and packing (first lift)	12
Placing of throughbands	10
Building and packing (second lift)	12
Line and straightness	12
Batter or camber	12
Copstones and finish	10
Cheekend	26
General approach and safety	6
TOTAL MARKS POSSIBLE	115
MINIMUM TOTAL MARKS REQUIRED TO PASS	69

Level 3 Certificate Test Criteria

This certificate is in two parts, A (Features) and B (Timed - Retaining Wall) which must be applied and paid for separately.

- Candidates must hold the Level 2 Certificate, before applying for the Level 3 Certificate.
- **Part A must be marked and passed before applying for Part B.**
- Candidates should, however, view the certificate as a whole, and **include practice for the timed section**, whilst working on their features, as well as managing their expectations of what is actually required.
- The features can be part of normal day to day work. However, anyone wishing to build features remote from a test site should contact the Craft Skills Group for advice first, craftskills@dswa.org.uk
- If a candidate fails Part A, they must reapply for this section, submitting the relevant fee each time, before moving on to Part B.

Part A content

- Build 5 square metres of curved wall. Advice on the curve is available on the website, www.dswa.org.uk.

then build one of the following features:

- Five square metres of wall incorporating a lunky or waterpen (at least 500mm x 500mm)

or

- Five square metres of wall at least 1.8m high

or

- Five square metres of wall on ground with a slope of 20 degrees or more.

	Marks available	Minimum pass mark
Construction of curved wall	25	17
Construction of special feature: high wall or lunky/waterpen or sloping ground	25	17
TOTAL MARKS POSSIBLE	50	
MINIMUM TOTAL MARKS REQUIRED TO PASS PART A	34	

Only when Part A is successfully completed can the candidate apply for Part B, which is expected to be taken within twelve months, under normal circumstances.

Part B content

- The candidate is required to strip down and rebuild at least 4.5 square metres of wall in total, including foundations and copes.
- The actual retaining part of the wall must be a minimum of 1.2m in height, measured from base of foundations.
- The wall should be retaining to the base of the copes.
- The work must be completed within a single, 7.5 hour period and not spread over multiple days.
- Lunch/refreshment breaks are in addition to the building time.

Particular emphasis will be placed on:

- Solid secure foundations and preparation of earth bank
- Adequacy of packing
- Selection and placement of building stones
- Sufficient throughbands relative to the height of the wall
- Straightness of line and batter.

	Marks available
Stripping out	5
Preparing earth bank and laying foundations	15
Building and packing (first lift)	10
Placing of throughbands	10
Building and packing (second lift)	10
Line and straightness	12
Batter or camber	12
Copestones and finish	10
General approach and safety	6
TOTAL MARKS POSSIBLE	90
MINIMUM TOTAL MARKS REQUIRED TO PASS PART B	60

If a candidate fails Part B, there is no restriction on the number of times they could reapply for Part B within the year since passing Part A, providing the relevant fee is submitted with each application.

DSWA Master Craftsman Certificate

This certificate is in two parts, **A (Features)** and **B (Timed Piece)** which must be applied and paid for separately.

- Candidates must hold the Level 3 certificate before applying for the Master Craftsman Certificate Part A.
- **Part A must be marked and passed before applying for Part B.**
- The features can be part of normal day to day work. However, anyone wishing to build features remote from a test site should contact the Craft Skills Group for advice first, craftskills@dswa.org.uk
- Each feature is to be built within at least 5 square metres of wall, excluding the pillar, which must have a total face area of at least 3.6 square metres.
- The work, including one of the features, must demonstrate different building styles, ie coursed and random walling.
- The work must use at least two different geological stone types.
- The Master Craftsman qualification is not just about the quality of walling, it is also about organisation and timing.
- If a candidate fails Part A they must reapply for this section, submitting the relevant fee each time, before moving on to Part B.

Part A content

- Candidates must build the compulsory element of 5 square metres of wall on sloping ground of at least 30 degrees.
- Candidates must then build **three features**, one from each of the groupings below.
- **At the outset, one** of the features should be chosen and set aside as the Part B Timed test.

Group 1

- A set of at least 4 steps within a minimum width of 0.6m
- or
- A step-stile
- or
- A squeeze stile.

Group 2

- An arch at least 0.6 m high, measured from ground level to base of keystone, with walling above the arch

or

- A square pillar

or

- A round pillar

Note: (pillars at least 1.3 m high and with a total face area of at least 3.6 sq. m)

Group 3

- A square/right-angled corner

or

- A round end

or

- A round corner

	Marks available	Minimum pass mark
Work on sloping ground 30 degrees or above	24	18
Group 1	24	18
Group 2	24	18
Group 3	24	18
TOTAL MARKS POSSIBLE (for 3 features)	72	
MINIMUM TOTAL MARKS REQUIRED TO PASS PART A (3 features)	54	

When Part A is successfully completed the candidate can then apply for Part B, which would be built on a test site as part of a pre-arranged test day. Part B is expected to be taken within one year under normal circumstances.

Part B content

- The candidate is required to build their chosen feature on site using appropriate stone that can have been selected beforehand but should not be overly dressed or pre-worked.
- The stone should be stripped out in a pile before the test begins but not laid out in a “ready to build” order.
- There are no marks for stripping out in the Master test.
- The work should incorporate at least 5 square metres of wall.
- The work must be completed within a single, 7.5 hour period and not spread over multiple days.
- Lunch/refreshment breaks are in addition to the building time.

Assessors will ask random questions regarding features they have not seen being built in order to assess if correct building procedures have been used.

	Marks available
Preparing and laying foundations	10
Placing of throughbands	10
Building and packing (for 1st and 2nd lift)	20
Line and straightness	10
Batter or camber	10
Copestones and finish	10
General approach and safety	6
Chosen Feature:	24
TOTAL MARKS POSSIBLE	100
MINIMUM TOTAL MARKS REQUIRED TO PASS PART B	75

If a candidate fails Part B, there is no restriction on the number of times they can reapply for this section, within the year since passing Part A, providing the relevant fee is submitted with each application.

Candidates must prove their ability to

- produce quality work at the prescribed work-rate;
- build to a high standard of craftsmanship for all the features required in the test schedule;
- produce quality work in a commercial working situation.

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Information about Lantra Awards (a subsidiary of Lantra)
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