

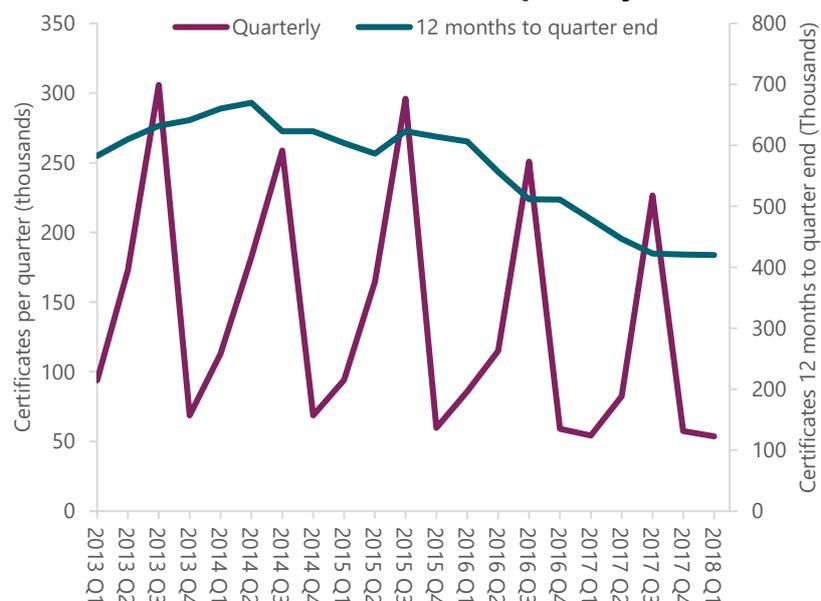
# Vocational and Other Qualifications Quarterly: Quarter 1 (January – March 2018) for Wales

Highlights, Quarter 1 2018

14th June 2018

## Total Certifications

Chart 1: Total certifications in the past 5 years



Source: Ofqual VQ data collection from awarding bodies



**53,670** certificates were awarded between January and March of 2018. This is a **1.2** per cent decrease compared to the same quarter in 2017, when there were **54,310** certifications.

Between April 2017 and March 2018 there were **420,075** certifications, a decrease of **12.3** per cent compared to **479,120** between April 2016 and March 2017.



These decreases are mainly caused by changes to the qualifications that can count towards the Welsh Baccalaureate.

## About this release

This statistical release presents information for Wales collected by Ofqual from awarding bodies. It contains data on the range and number of vocational and other qualification certificates issued during January – March 2018. These statistics are being developed over time, so we have categorised them as experimental statistics. They are being published in line with our current voluntary compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics (see [introduction](#)).

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# INTRODUCTION

Qualifications Wales is the regulator of qualifications, other than degrees, and the qualification system in Wales. Under the Qualifications Wales Act 2015, our principal aims are to ensure that qualifications, and the Welsh qualification system, are effective for meeting the reasonable needs of learners in Wales and to promote public confidence in qualifications and in the Welsh qualification system.

From the fourth quarter (October-December) of 2017, we have reported on certificates issued for vocational and other qualifications for Wales. This data does not include GCSEs, AS level, A level, Advanced Extension Awards, Principal Learning and Project qualifications. Initially we are using data collected from awarding bodies by Ofqual, but we are working towards collecting our own data on the qualifications that we regulate. Before this quarter, Ofqual<sup>1</sup> collected and published data for Wales. We have tried as far as possible to keep these statistics consistent with historical Ofqual statistics.

In this release, we present data collected by Ofqual on the range of vocational and other qualifications and certificates issued during quarter 1 of 2018 (2018 Q1). The figures represent the number of certificates, rounded to the nearest 5, that were awarded by awarding bodies between 1 January and 31 March 2018. These statistics do not represent individual learners, as a learner could have achieved multiple certificates in any time period presented in this release.

The data collected is for vocational and other qualifications listed on the Ofqual register and/or the Qualifications in Wales (QiW) database<sup>2</sup>. In some cases, the same qualifications are listed on both the Ofqual register and QiW.

## **Voluntary Compliance and Experimental Statistics Status**

- We have been designated as an Official Statistics producer in The Official Statistics (Wales) Order 2017.
- We will be considering introducing official statistics series for certifications occurring in the 2018/19 academic year.
- In the meantime, we are voluntarily complying with the Code of Practice for Statistics. This means we are following the following principles of the Code, as outlined in our statement of voluntary compliance published alongside this release.

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<sup>1</sup> Ofqual (2017) *Changes to the publication of geographical breakdowns of data*. [Online]. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/changes-to-the-publication-of-geographical-breakdowns-of-data> [Accessed 27 Feb 2018].

<sup>2</sup> QiW is a register of regulated qualifications that are eligible for public funding in Wales.

We have categorised these statistics as experimental for the following reasons:

- Firstly, there are some differences in the data included in this publication compared to what has previously been published by Ofqual for Wales.
  - For this quarter we have not reported on certifications for any qualifications offered by awarding bodies that were not recognised in Wales. Additionally, where we make comparisons to previous quarters we have excluded qualifications from awarding bodies that we did not recognise at the time of collection. This means that totals for historical quarters and years for Wales will not match those published by Ofqual. This should be considered when making any comparisons to what Ofqual has historically published.
  - We have not included certifications broken down by qualification type. This is primarily because of inconsistency in the classification of qualifications by type on Ofqual's register and QiW.
- We are developing our own data collection and how we produce and report these statistics, taking into account our regulatory scope. This is because:
  - Our regulatory approach differs from Ofqual: Ofqual holds a register of all qualifications that they regulate; they ask awarding bodies to opt in qualifications for regulation. We do not maintain a register of all qualifications that we regulate; we require awarding bodies to opt out qualifications that they do not wish to be regulated. There may be certifications reported on in this release for qualifications that we do not regulate, since some of the qualifications listed on the Ofqual register are likely to have been surrendered for regulation in Wales by recognised awarding bodies. Additionally, there may be a small number of qualifications not eligible for public funding and awarded only in Wales that are currently unaccounted for.
  - We will be working towards consistent classification of qualifications by type to enable future publication of this breakdown.

### **Qualification breakdowns**

This publication includes breakdowns of qualification certifications by Sector Subject Area (SSA) and level. In producing these breakdowns, we have continued to use Ofqual's methodology. More detail is included in the 'Methodology' section of the background notes.

The 'level' of a qualification is indicative of the level of demand for learners. The table below shows how levels relate to the types of vocational and other qualifications on

the Ofqual register and QiW. Qualification types that were not awarded in Wales in 2018 are shaded blue in the table.

Qualification type	Current levels	Qualification type	Current levels
Basic Skills	Entry Level, Levels 1 and 2	Higher Level	Levels 4 to 8
CVET <sup>4</sup>	Levels 1 to 6	IVET <sup>3</sup>	Entry Level, Levels 1 to 5
End-Point Assessment	Levels 2 to 7	Key skills	Levels 1 to 4
English for speakers of other languages	Entry Level, Levels 1, 2 and 3	NVQ	Levels 1 to 5
Entry level	Entry Level	'Other general' qualification	Levels 1, 1/2, 2 and 3
Essential Skills Wales	Entry Level, Levels 1 to 3	Occupational qualification	Levels 1 to 4
Free-standing mathematics qualification	Levels 1,2,3	QCF <sup>5</sup>	Entry Level, Levels 1 to 8
Functional skills	Entry level, Levels 1 and 2	Vocationally related qualification	Entry Level, Levels 1 to 8
		Welsh BaccaLaureate <sup>6</sup>	Levels 1, 1/2, 2 and 3

<sup>3</sup> IVET stands for 'Initial vocational education and training' and is a classification for introductory vocational qualifications that are suitable for all ages and abilities (see <https://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/qualificationsinwales/creditqualificationsframework/?lang=en>)

<sup>4</sup> CVET stands for 'Continuing vocational education and training' and is a classification for occupational competence vocational qualifications for those over the age of 16 (see <https://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/qualificationsinwales/creditqualificationsframework/?lang=en>)

<sup>5</sup> On 1 October 2015, Ofqual withdrew the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) requirements. However, for administrative reasons, until summer 2016, awarding organisations could still use the QCF type on Ofqual's system for new qualifications when no other type was appropriate. Following Ofqual's decision, we also withdrew the QCF requirements from 1 December 2015. When QiW was introduced on the 1 April, new qualifications were no longer able to be classified as QCF.

<sup>6</sup> The type 'Welsh BaccaLaureate' includes both the Welsh BaccaLaureate Skills Challenge Certificate (at all levels) and the certification of the Welsh Bacc at all levels (the latter requires learners to achieve other qualifications at specified levels in addition to the relevant Skills Challenge Certificate).

## EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

### Welsh Baccalaureate (Welsh Bacc)

Following a 'Review of Qualifications for 14 to 19-year-olds in Wales'<sup>7</sup>, which was commissioned by the Welsh Government in 2011, a new Welsh Bacc was introduced for first teaching from September 2015. When the Welsh Government introduced the Welsh Bacc, it announced a policy of universal adoption. This means that the Welsh Bacc is available to all schools and FE Colleges to offer, as opposed to only those approved to offer it, which was the case with the legacy Welsh Bacc. The policy<sup>8</sup> also set targets for schools and FE Colleges to gradually increase the proportion of students taking the Welsh Bacc, with the aim that by 2019/20 the vast majority of learners in Wales will be taking it as part of their programme of study. The reformed Welsh Bacc includes the Skills Challenge Certificate. Certifications for the Skills Challenge Certificate and the Welsh Bacc are included in the statistics in this publication.

For the legacy Welsh Bacc, Key Skills and Essential Skills qualifications could (alongside other qualifications) count towards the award. A learner could have certificated multiple Key Skills and Essential Skills qualifications to count towards the award. However, current Key Skills and Essentials Skills qualifications do not count towards the award of the new Welsh Bacc at key stage 4 or for the Advanced Welsh Bacc, the new Essential Skills Wales qualifications can count towards the Post-16 Foundation and National Welsh Bacc. These changes impact on comparisons over time in this publication.

### Performance Measures

Changes to performance measures may also be impacting on the number of certifications in vocational and other qualifications over time, particularly at levels 1 to 3. For example, from 2017, vocational qualifications were capped to provide a maximum of 40 per cent of the points for Welsh Government school (key stage 4) threshold measures. In 2018, Welsh Government will introduce a further change to Key Stage 4 performance measures with only GCSE Science qualifications counting. Previously vocational science qualifications have been allowed to count<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Welsh Government (2014) *Review of Qualifications 14-19* [online]. Available from: <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/qualificationsinwales/revofqualen/?lang=en> [Accessed 27 Feb 2018].

<sup>8</sup> Welsh Government (2017) *The post-16 Welsh Baccalaureate: recording and measuring outcomes* [online]. Available from: <https://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/160524-welsh-bac-en-v3.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Further information on changes to performance measures in Wales can be found at: <https://digitalanddata.blog.gov.wales/2017/12/06/chief-statisticians-update-understanding-changes-to-education-data/>

# STATISTICS

## TOTAL CERTIFICATES AND HISTORICAL TRENDS

**Table 1: Comparison with the same quarter in previous years and previous 12 months**

<b>Period</b>	<b>Quarterly</b>	<b>12 months to quarter end</b>
Jan to Mar 2013	93,840	582,675
Apr to Jun 2013	172,940	609,830
Jul to Sep 2013	305,805	631,980
Oct to Dec 2013	68,625	641,205
Jan to Mar 2014	112,970	660,340
Apr to Jun 2014	182,355	669,755
Jul to Sep 2014	258,805	622,755
Oct to Dec 2014	68,670	622,800
Jan to Mar 2015	94,055	603,885
Apr to Jun 2015	164,575	586,110
Jul to Sep 2015	295,855	623,160
Oct to Dec 2015	59,645	614,140
Jan to Mar 2016	85,980	606,065
Apr to Jun 2016	114,915	556,400
Jul to Sep 2016	250,880	511,420
Oct to Dec 2016	59,020	510,795
Jan to Mar 2017	54,310	479,120
Apr to Jun 2017	82,445	446,650
Jul to Sep 2017	226,540	422,315
Oct to Dec 2017	57,420	420,715
Jan to Mar 2018	53,670	420,075

*Source: Ofqual VQ data collection from awarding bodies*

### Quarterly Comparison

53,670 certificates were awarded in 2018 Q1, a decrease of 1.2 per cent on the same quarter of 2017. This small decrease is in line with decreases in certificates issued in quarter 1 over the last 4 years and is largely driven by fewer certificates for level 2 qualifications which includes Essential Skills qualifications.

## Annual Comparison

There were 420,075 certifications in the latest 12 months, (2017 Q2 – 2018 Q1), which is a decrease of 12.3 per cent compared to the previous 12 months (2016 Q2 – 2017 Q1).

Both of these changes can mainly be attributed to a fall in certifications for Key Skills and legacy Essential Skills Wales qualifications. The number of certifications for these qualifications has decreased by 92,920 in 2017 Q2 – 2018 Q1 when compared to 2016 Q2 - 2017 Q1. These legacy qualifications have been replaced by similar new qualifications which have only partially offset this fall in certifications.

The 3 legacy Essential Skills and Key Skills qualifications that contributed most to the overall decrease in certifications between 2016 Q2 - 2017 Q1 and 2017 Q2 - 2018 Q1 were:

- WJEC Level 2 Essential Skills Wales in Communication (a decrease of 7,960 certifications)
- WJEC Level 2 Essential Skills Wales in Information and Communication Technology (a decrease of 6,705 certifications)
- WJEC Level 2 Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number (a decrease of 6,305 certifications)

Quarter 3 has consistently been the largest quarter for certifications over the last five years. This is likely to be because many qualifications are awarded after the end of the academic year, which falls during quarter 3. In 2017 there were 761 qualifications that were only certificated in quarter 3, including both the legacy and reformed Welsh Bacc and corresponding Skills Challenge Certificate. Both the legacy and new Welsh Bacc and Skills Challenge Certificate featured in the top 10 qualification certifications for 2017 Q3 and made up 30.3 per cent of total certificates issued in 2017 Q3.

2018 Q1 had the lowest number of certifications of any quarter over the last 5 years.

## CERTIFICATES BY SECTOR SUBJECT AREA (SSA)

**Table 2: Number of certificates awarded by sector subject area**

Sector Subject Area	Quarterly Comparison		Annual Comparison	
	2017 Q1	2018 Q1	Apr 2016 to Mar 2017	Apr 2017 to Mar 2018
01 Health, Public Services and Care	16,230	15,965	71,800	71,865
02 Science and Mathematics	155	60	17,920	13,145
03 Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	1,610	1,275	8,320	7,200
04 Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	4,165	3,225	25,660	23,855
05 Construction, Planning and the Built	2,910	2,530	18,655	18,450
06 Information and Communication Technology	615	445	11,865	8,865
07 Retail and Commercial Enterprise	6,270	5,480	30,620	27,730
08 Leisure, Travel and Tourism	2,635	2,565	17,090	15,955
09 Arts, Media and Publishing	3,380	3,380	29,440	29,560
10 History, Philosophy and Theology	35	0	260	230
11 Social Sciences	0	0	120	130
12 Languages, Literature and Culture	1,115	1,210	12,255	13,565
13 Education and Training	720	845	3,660	3,760
14 Preparation for Life and Work	11,375	13,330	210,495	161,735
15 Business, Administration and Law	3,105	3,360	20,960	24,030
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,310</b>	<b>53,670</b>	<b>479,120</b>	<b>420,075</b>

*Source: Ofqual VQ data collection from awarding bodies*

The largest subject sector in this quarter was 'Health, Public Services and Care' with 15,965 certifications or 29.7 per cent of total certificates issued in 2018 Q1, followed by 'Preparation for Life and Work' with 13,330 certifications, making up 24.8 per cent of total certificates in 2018 Q1.

The 'Preparation for Life and Work' sector had the largest number of certifications in 2017 Q2 – 2018 Q1 (161,735). However, there was a 23.2 per cent reduction in certifications in this sector compared to 2016 Q2 – 2017 Q1 (210,495). Key Skills and Essential Skills Wales qualifications are classified within this sector, which is likely to explain the decrease over the last year ([see Welsh Bacc](#)).

**Chart 2: Percentage change in certifications by Sector Subject Area (SSA), 2018 Q1 compared to 2017 Q1**

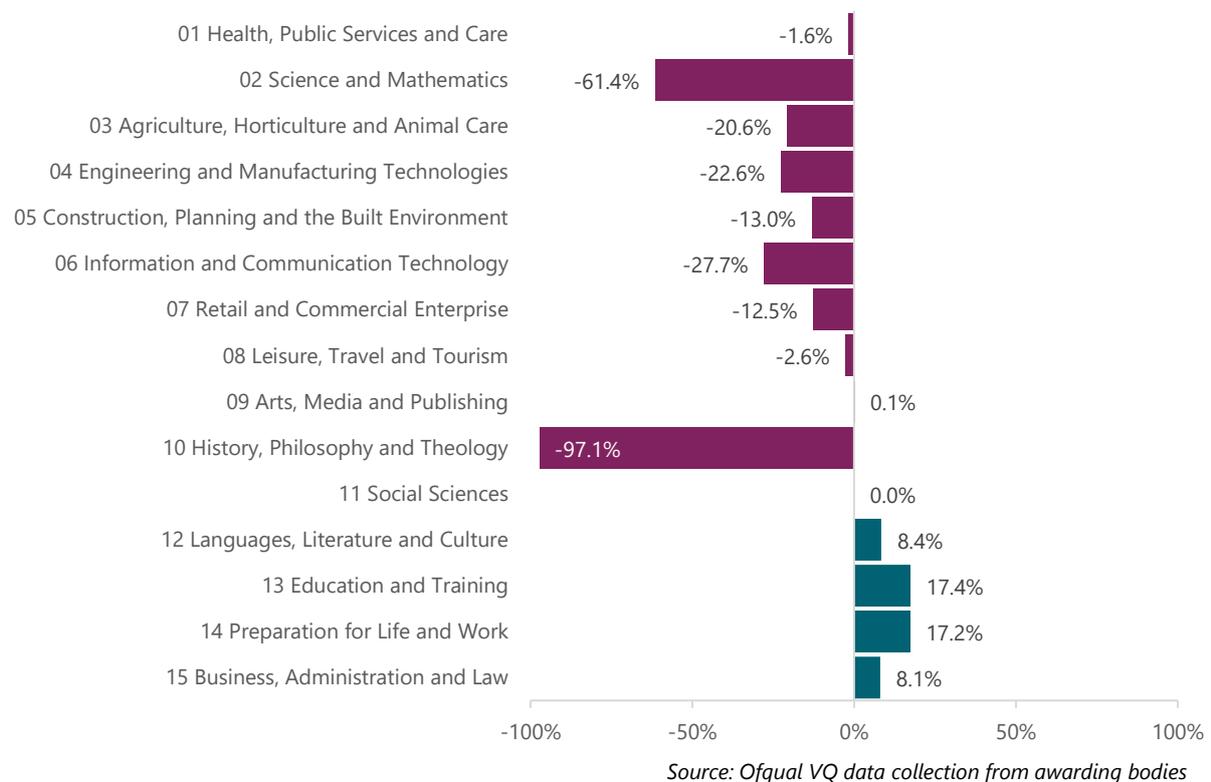


Chart 2 shows that 'Education and Training' and 'Preparation for Life and Work' SSAs saw the largest proportional increase in certificates awarded in 2018 Q1 this year compared to 2017 Q1, of 17.4 per cent and 17.2 per cent respectively.

'History, Philosophy and Theology' and 'Science and Mathematics' SSAs had the largest proportional decreases of certificates awarded of 97.1 per cent, and 61.4 per cent respectively. These sectors are relatively small in terms of total certifications.

## CERTIFICATES BY LEVEL

**Table 3: Number of certificates awarded by level**

Level	Quarterly Comparison		Annual Comparison	
	2017 Q1	2018 Q1	Apr 2016 to Mar 2017	Apr 2017 to Mar 2018
Entry Level	4,270	3,475	32,855	33,390
Level 1	8,185	8,565	80,265	62,550
Level 1/2	185	25	16,295	64,380
Level 2	30,240	23,940	231,320	153,750
Level 3	9,665	15,370	111,015	95,595
Level 4	785	980	2,865	4,315
Level 5	830	975	3,730	4,960
Level 6	90	130	560	770
Level 7	55	210	200	360
Level 8	*	0	5	*
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,310</b>	<b>53,670</b>	<b>479,120</b>	<b>420,075</b>

*Source: Ofqual VQ data collection from awarding bodies*

Table 3 shows the number of certifications during quarter 1, compared to the same quarter in 2017, and during the last 12 months, compared to the previous 12 months.

There were low numbers of certifications for level 1/2 qualifications in 2017 Q1 which further reduced in 2018 Q1. However, these qualifications had the largest proportional increase in certifications for 2017 Q2 – 2018 Q1 compared to the same period in the previous year, almost quadrupling (see table 1 in corresponding excel tables for qualification level proportional changes). This is likely to be because the new National/Foundation Welsh Bacc is classified as a level 1/2 and is only awarded in quarter 3. The legacy Welsh Bacc was not awarded at this level.

Level 2 qualifications had the largest number of certifications in 2018 Q1, making up 44.6 per cent of total certifications this quarter. However, the number of certificates reduced by 20.8 per cent compared to 2017 Q1. On the annual comparison, Level 2 qualifications also had the highest number of certifications in the latest 12 months, making up 36.6 per cent of certifications. However, they also saw a decrease of 33.5 per cent compared to the previous year. Although level 3 certifications increased on a quarterly comparison, for the period 2017 Q2 – 2018 Q1 they dropped by 13.9 per cent compared to 2016 Q2 – 2017 Q1. A decrease in Essential Skills and Key Skills qualification certifications is likely to have had an impact on level 2 and 3 certifications over this period ([see Welsh Bacc](#)).

Level 7 certifications almost quadrupled and had the largest proportional increase in 2018 Q1 when compared to 2017 Q1. It also had the second largest proportional year-on-year increase of 80.9 per cent. CMI Level 7 Certificate in Strategic Management and Leadership was the level 7 qualification with the largest increase in certifications (increase of 155 certifications) when comparing the latest 12 months certifications to the previous 12 months.

Level 6, level 7 and level 8 continue to certificate smaller numbers compared to lower level qualifications.

## TOP CERTIFICATING AWARDING BODIES

**Table 4: Top 10 awarding bodies with the highest number of certificates issued in the 12 months to this quarter end**

Awarding Body	Apr 2016 to Mar 2017	Apr 2017 to Mar 2018	Rank Apr 2016 to Mar 2017	Rank Apr 2017 to Mar 2018	Rank Change
City and Guilds of London Institute	94,980	89,495	2	1	↑ +1
WJEC-CBAC	106,745	85,960	1	2	↓ -1
Pearson Education Ltd	87,425	62,570	3	3	→ +0
Highfield Qualifications	21,805	29,685	5	4	↑ +1
OCR	22,660	14,455	4	5	↓ -1
Cambridge Assessment English	15,175	13,100	7	6	↑ +1
Agored Cymru	8,855	12,085	10	7	↑ +3
Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music	10,395	11,320	8	8	→ +0
Qualsafe Awards	9,345	11,130	9	9	→ +0
Excellence, Achievement & Learning Limited	6,755	8,575	11	10	↑ +1

*Source: Ofqual VQ data collection from awarding bodies*

Table 4 shows the top ten certificating awarding bodies over the last 12 months to the end of this quarter, compared to the previous 12 months. City and Guilds of London Institute has overtaken WJEC-CBAC as the awarding body with the highest number of certifications in the last 12 months. WJEC-CBAC has fallen to 2<sup>nd</sup> place, largely driven by a decrease in certifications for Key Skills and legacy Essential Skills qualifications. OCR has fallen to 5<sup>th</sup> place from 4<sup>th</sup> in 2016 Q2 – 2017 Q1 for the same reason.

Agored Cymru has moved up 3 places to 7<sup>th</sup> place from 10<sup>th</sup> in 2016 Q2 – 2017 Q1, largely driven by increases in certificates issued for qualifications allocated to the Preparation for Life and Work SSA, including some reformed Essential Skills qualifications.

Pearson Education Ltd remains at 3<sup>rd</sup> place but has seen a fall of 24,855 certificates issued in the last 12 months (28.4 per cent decrease). There were decreases across a

variety of qualifications offered by Pearson Education Ltd but the most notable decreases were for the level 2 BTEC certificates in applied science and legacy level 2 Essential Skills Wales qualifications. This reduction in BTEC level 2 in applied science qualifications may be due to changes in performance measures (see [external influences](#) for more information).

## TOP CERTIFICATING QUALIFICATIONS

**Table 5: Top 10 qualifications with the highest number of certificates issued in this quarter**

Qualification	2017 Q1	2018 Q1
Highfield Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering (RQF)	0	2,130
Highfield Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work (RQF)	0	1,885
QA Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work (RQF)	0	1,330
City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Digital Literacy Skills	390	1,270
City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Application of Number Skills	440	985
City & Guilds Level 2 Award in Employment Responsibilities and Rights in Health, Social Care or Children and Young People's Settings	690	760
AoFAQ Level 3 Emergency First Aid at Work (RQF)	0	750
TCL Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International - Speaking and Listening (Entry 3)	705	705
City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Communication Skills	195	695
FAA Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work	0	665

*Source: Ofqual VQ data collection from awarding bodies*

Table 5 illustrates the top ten qualifications with the highest number of certifications in the latest quarter compared to the number of certifications for the same qualifications in the same quarter of the previous year.

Highfield Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering (RQF)<sup>10</sup> was the qualification with the highest number of certifications for 2018 Q1, with 2,130 certificates issued. The three highest awarded qualifications are new or updated qualifications with the first certificates awarded during 2017.

<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that this qualification is the new version of HABC Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering (QCF), which expired during 2017.

**Table 6: Top 10 qualifications with the highest number of certificates issued in the latest 12 months**

Qualification	Apr 2016 to Mar 2017	Apr 2017 to Mar 2018
WJEC Foundation/National Skills Challenge Certificate (Welsh Baccalaureate)	0	23,805
WJEC National/Foundation Welsh Baccalaureate	0	21,825
WJEC Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate (Welsh Baccalaureate)	0	11,330
WJEC Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate	0	9,195
City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Digital Literacy Skills	805	5,470
City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Application of Number Skills	870	5,095
HABC Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering (QCF)	4,505	4,500
LIBF Level 2 Certificate In Financial Capability and Careers Development	*	4,225
City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Communication Skills	570	3,845
Highfield Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering (RQF)	0	3,810

*Source: Ofqual VQ data collection from awarding bodies*

Table 6 shows the top ten qualifications with the highest number of certifications in 2017 Q2 – 2018 Q1 compared to 2016 Q2 – 2017 Q1.

The highest number of certifications in the latest 12 months were for the new Welsh Bacc and Welsh Bacc Skills Challenge Certificate<sup>11</sup>. 2017 was the first year in which they were certificated (see [external influences](#) for further information).

Aside from the new Welsh Bacc and Skills Challenge Certificate, the largest increases in certifications were for the new City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Digital Literacy Skills and City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Application of Number Skills, which increased by 4,665 and 4,225 certificates respectively.

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<sup>11</sup> The Skills Challenge Certificate is a qualification that counts towards the award of the overall reformed Welsh Bacc.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

## **Approval of qualifications/approval criteria/ approved qualifications**

When a qualification is listed on the Priority Qualification List we publish approval criteria for it. Approval is the process by which we approve such qualifications against the approval criteria. Approved qualifications may not be regulated by other qualifications regulators in Wales and are normally designed to meet the specific needs of learners in Wales.

## **Awarding body**

An organisation that develops qualifications, specifies and monitors assessments and issues awards to learners, formally recognising the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences), following an assessment and validation procedure. In other parts of the UK these are known as Awarding Organisations or Exam Boards.

## **Awarding body recognition**

To offer regulated qualifications in Wales, an awarding body must be recognised by Qualifications Wales. Awarding bodies need to comply with our recognition criteria and apply for recognition.

## **Certificate/Certification**

A formal acknowledgement of a student's achievement. This will be any award that is not graded as U, absent, or X (fail).

## **Certification end date**

A qualification may not be awarded to learners, as an approved or designated qualification, after this date.

## **Designated Qualifications**

Regulated qualifications that are designated by Qualifications Wales as eligible for use on publicly funded programmes of learning for learners under the age of 19, as defined under section 29 of the Qualifications Wales Act 2015. Designated qualifications must meet specific designation criteria.

## **General Qualification (GQ)**

Describes qualifications that are taken typically by learners in school or college as part of their statutory or further education. This includes GCSEs, AS and A levels and the Welsh Baccalaureate and other qualifications that share some of the features common to GCSEs and A levels. WJEC is the main provider of these qualifications in Wales, although some are also offered by other awarding bodies.

## **National Vocational Qualification**

Work-related, competence-based qualifications that cover a broad range of industry sectors and occupations, and are delivered in a workplace setting.

## **Ofqual Register**

The Register of Regulated Qualifications contains details of the qualifications and awarding organisations regulated by Ofqual and CCEA Regulation.

## **Other general**

Qualifications that assess a particular subject area, such as music or art, other than GCSEs, AS and A levels. These qualifications are not directly work-related but may support career development. They are often structured against graded examinations. The category also includes qualifications categorised as level 1/2 certificates.

## **Other regulated qualifications**

Those qualifications awarded in Wales by recognised awarding bodies, which have not been designated or approved by Qualifications Wales, and which awarding bodies have not surrendered or exempted from the scope of their recognition.

## **Qualification Type**

Qualification types refer to groups of qualifications that have been developed to meet common design requirements. The design requirements for some qualification types may no longer be in effect, such as for QCF qualifications (designed to meet the requirements of the Qualifications and Credit Framework).

## **Qualification Level**

The level of attainment that a qualification represents as defined by the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales. The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) has been aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). This means that the level of a qualification gained in Wales can be compared to a level in the EQF. This helps people and organisations to translate achievements between countries and work across the EU.

## **Qualifications and Credit Framework**

A framework, now discontinued, for qualifications containing units and qualifications in three sizes. Awards (1-12 credits), certificate (13-36 credits) and diplomas (37 or more credits).

## **Qualifications in Wales (QiW)**

A publicly available database which provides a source of information on approved and designated qualifications awarded in Wales.

## **Quarter**

Refers to calendar quarters. Quarter 1 (Q1) refers to January – March, quarter 2 (Q2) to April – June, quarter 3 (Q3) to July – September, and quarter 4 (Q4) to October – December.

## **Regulated qualifications**

All non-degree qualifications (whether approved, designated or other regulated) that are offered for award by an awarding body recognised by Qualifications Wales (unless either an awarding body has surrendered its recognition in respect of that qualification, or if an awarding body excluded that qualification from the scope of its recognition by notifying Welsh Government prior to 21 September 2015).

## **Sub-Sector Area**

Sector subject areas are the series of categories based on industry sectors and academic subjects used to classify qualifications e.g. a qualification may come into the category Science and Mathematics or Health, Public Services and Care.

## **Sub-Sector Subject Area (previously Sector Subject category)**

Sub sector areas are the second tier of categories based on industry sectors and academic subjects used to classify qualifications.

## **Surrender of Recognition**

Recognition may cease where an awarding body decides to surrender either partial or full recognition. Recognised awarding bodies may surrender *part* of their recognition by informing Qualifications Wales of qualifications, or descriptions of qualifications, that they would like to offer as unregulated qualifications. In such cases, the unregulated qualifications cannot carry the Qualifications Wales logo on certificates issued to learners

## **Vocational Qualification (VQ)**

Qualifications that are awarded and certificated by an awarding body, taken by learners from the age of 14 upwards, and which assess knowledge, understanding and/or skills that relate explicitly to the world of work. These qualifications are a subset of the qualifications included in the statistics in this publication.

## **Vocationally related qualifications**

Work-related, competence-based qualifications designed to provide students with the skills and knowledge needed to do a job. They are related to employment but, unlike NVQs, do not necessarily require experience or assessment in the workplace.

# BACKGROUND NOTES

## Status

On November 21<sup>st</sup> 2017 the National Assembly for Wales approved the Official Statistics (Wales) Order 2017 which named Qualifications Wales as one of the bodies that are in scope of the Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007. Whilst we transition to collect and publish our own data we are voluntarily complying with the Code of Practice. These statistics have 'experimental statistics' status. A statement of voluntary compliance has been published alongside this release.

## Data Source

The number of certifications awarded for each vocational or other qualification in Quarter 1 2018 (January – March 2018) have been submitted to Ofqual by awarding bodies. The certifications are only for centres located in Wales, regardless of the type of centre. It does not include the Advanced Extension Award, GCSEs, AS and A level qualifications, project and principal learning. The number of certifications awarded for these qualifications can be found on the website of the Joint Council for Qualifications.

Data prior to Quarter 4 2017 was collected by and reported by Ofqual. Data from Quarter 4 2017 onwards is collected by Ofqual and provided to us for this report for Wales.

Data on approved or designated qualifications offered in Wales is available at Qualifications in Wales (QiW) database<sup>12</sup>.

Data on qualifications regulated by Ofqual is available on the Ofqual register<sup>13</sup>.

## Methodology

Qualification characteristics, such as subject sector area (SSA) and level, included in this release are based on the Ofqual register and QiW database on 04/05/18 for the analysis included in this report. Ofqual's template allows awarding bodies to submit data for the same qualification against a QiW number, a QAN or a proportion against both for Wales. Where awarding bodies submitted data to Ofqual with a QiW number, the qualification characteristics will be taken off QiW database, and where awarding bodies submit data using a QAN, qualification characteristics will be taken from the Ofqual register.

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<sup>12</sup> See <https://www.qiw.wales/?lang=en>

<sup>13</sup> See <https://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>

In some instances, the characteristics held on the QiW database for a qualification differ from the characteristics held on the Ofqual register for the same qualification. In these cases, if the qualification certifications have been reported against both its QiW and QAN identifier, the same qualification will be reported under two different characteristic categories.

This report includes historical data for the past 5 years. Where qualifications are still live on the registers, the historical data published in this report they will show these characteristics as they are on the day the report (04/05/18) was run for the latest quarter. If the qualification is no longer live, the latest characteristics recorded for that qualification on the registers will be reported. This is in line with Ofqual's methodology.

### **Geographical Coverage**

This release presents data on the number of certifications for vocational and other qualifications for quarter 1 (January-March 2018) for centres located in Wales. This release does **not** include vocational and other qualifications taken outside of Wales, nor certifications for GCSEs, AS level, A level, Advanced Extension Award, Project and Principal learning.

### **Limitations of data**

Ofqual currently collect data for Wales on our behalf. In their background notes they describe the limitations of the data:

"Data are collected at the earliest point available, which is the first day of the next reporting period. This reduces the time between the activity and reporting on the activity.

The main source of potential error is in the information provided by awarding bodies. Ofqual cannot guarantee the number of certificates submitted is correct and there may be systematic bias when the information is sent, although awarding organisations are expected to provide the correct data. Ofqual compares the data over time and checks for systematic issues. Summary data are then sent back to awarding organisations to be checked and confirmed. The figures reported in this release reflect the certificates issued by awarding organisations at the time of data collection."

Ofqual has very recently withdrawn recognition from The Awarding Body for Vocational Achievement (AVA) Ltd (trading as BAA). Please see [this page](#) for more details. As part of the investigation which preceded the decision it was found that AVA has been providing incorrect certification data to Ofqual. It is not going to be

practical to obtain corrected data from AVA but the scale of corrections is known to be small. AVA have very low certificate numbers (about 15 in the past 5 years in the existing data) so these inaccuracies do not significantly affect the overall trends in the data. Therefore, we have reported the existing AVA data as it is in this statistical release.

## Comparisons

This data has been collected in the same way by Ofqual as in previous quarters. Ofqual pre-populate their data collection forms with qualifications from their register and our QiW database. For this publication we have removed qualifications by awarding bodies that we do not recognise. We have done this for the last 5 years included in this publication and corresponding data tables. Where an awarding body has surrendered recognition at the beginning of a quarter (e.g. 1<sup>st</sup> January) data for that awarding body has been removed from that quarter onwards. Where an awarding body has surrendered recognition partway through a quarter, the data for that quarter is included, and the awarding body has been removed from the data from the following quarter onwards. In a small number of cases, an awarding body has surrendered recognition and then been recognised again at a later date. In these cases, data has been excluded only when the awarding body was not recognised for the entire duration of the quarter.

Therefore, historical quarters and years totals may not match what is published by Ofqual. The table below shows the impact this has had on totals for each quarter:

<b>Quarter</b>	<b>2012.4</b>	<b>2013.1</b>	<b>2013.2</b>	<b>2013.3</b>	<b>2013.4</b>	<b>2014.1</b>	<b>2014.2</b>	<b>2014.3</b>	<b>2014.4</b>	<b>2015.1</b>
Number of certificates removed	90	45	110	230	*	55	110	75	105	0
Percentage of total certificates	0.15%	0.05%	0.06%	0.07%	0.00%	0.05%	0.06%	0.03%	0.16%	0.00%

<b>Quarter</b>	<b>2015.2</b>	<b>2015.3</b>	<b>2015.4</b>	<b>2016.1</b>	<b>2016.2</b>	<b>2016.3</b>	<b>2016.4</b>	<b>2017.1</b>	<b>2017.2</b>	<b>2017.3</b>
Number of certificates removed	0	20	280	265	130	215	215	245	225	180
Percentage of total certificates	0.00%	0.01%	0.47%	0.31%	0.11%	0.09%	0.36%	0.45%	0.27%	0.08%

In the case of two partnerships of awarding bodies – WJEC-EDEXCEL and Pearson EDI – we know that their recognition was not transferred over to Qualifications Wales on inception in August 2015. WJEC-EDEXCEL did not award any certificates after 2013 Q3, and Pearson EDI saw a large decrease in certificates from 2015 Q2 onwards. In light of the trends described, data for these partnerships has been included up to and including 2015 Q3 (i.e. until Qualifications Wales was established) and excluded

after this point. The table below shows the data for these awarding bodies – the figures highlighted with shading have been removed from the data for this release:

Quarter	2012.4	2013.1	2013.2	2013.3	2013.4	2014.1	2014.2	2014.3	2014.4	2015.1
<b>Pearson EDI Certificates</b>	1210	1415	1835	1050	1385	1480	1745	1905	1205	1085
<b>WJEC-EDEXCEL Certificates</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Quarter	2015.2	2015.3	2015.4	2016.1	2016.2	2016.3	2016.4	2017.1	2017.2	2017.3
<b>Pearson EDI Certificates</b>	345	420	205	140	45	30	10	0	0	0
<b>WJEC-EDEXCEL Certificates</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

### Quality assurance

Ofqual collect and quality assure this data on our behalf. Ofqual’s quality assurance procedures are carried out as explained in the Quality Assurance Framework for Statistical Publications<sup>14</sup> published by Ofqual to ensure the accuracy of the data and to challenge or question it, where necessary. More information is also included in the background notes of the Ofqual vocational and other qualifications quarterly release<sup>15</sup>.

Publication may be deferred if the statistics are not considered fit for purpose.

### Revisions

Once published, data on the number of vocational qualification certifications is not usually subject to revision, although subsequent releases may be revised to insert late data or correct an error.

### Rounding and Confidentiality

To protect confidentiality, and in accordance with Qualifications Wales’s interim statistical outputs policy, figures fewer than 5 but greater than 0 are replaced with a \*. This is to ensure that data does not reveal an individual candidate. All figures for the number of certificates issued are rounded. In the commentary and tables, they are rounded to the nearest 5. All percentages within the commentary are based on actual figures. Figures have been rounded independently and therefore may not sum to the total.

<sup>14</sup> See [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/562258/Ofqual-2016-10-04-quality-assurance-framework-for-statistical-publications.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/562258/Ofqual-2016-10-04-quality-assurance-framework-for-statistical-publications.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-vocational-qualifications>

## **Users of these statistics**

These statistics are likely to be of interest to Qualifications Wales, Ofqual, awarding bodies, and the Welsh Government. We welcome feedback from users, so expect to gain a better understanding of who our users are over time. Qualifications Wales uses these statistics to inform understanding of certification patterns, and to help aid monitoring of vocational qualifications.

## **Related statistics and publications**

Ofqual publish statistics on vocational qualifications for England<sup>16</sup>.

## **Useful information**

A glossary of terms is available on page 14 to help you interpret this release. You can find information about future publications on the Welsh Government website<sup>17</sup>.

The QiW database<sup>18</sup> gives information on approved and designated qualifications which are eligible for public funding in Wales.

## **Next update**

September 2018 (provisional).

## **User feedback**

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to [statistics@qualificationswales.org](mailto:statistics@qualificationswales.org)

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<sup>16</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-vocational-qualifications>.

<sup>17</sup> See <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/?upcoming=true&lang=en>

<sup>18</sup> See <https://www.qiw.wales/?lang=en>