

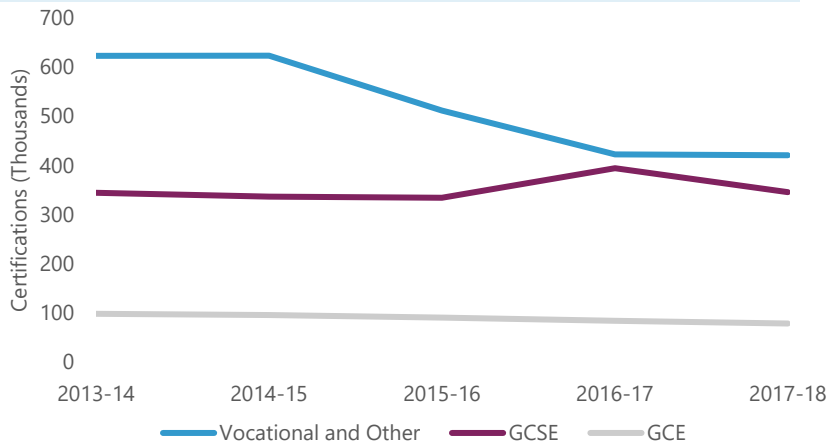
Annual qualifications market report: academic year 2017 to 2018 in Wales



07 February 2019

Highlights

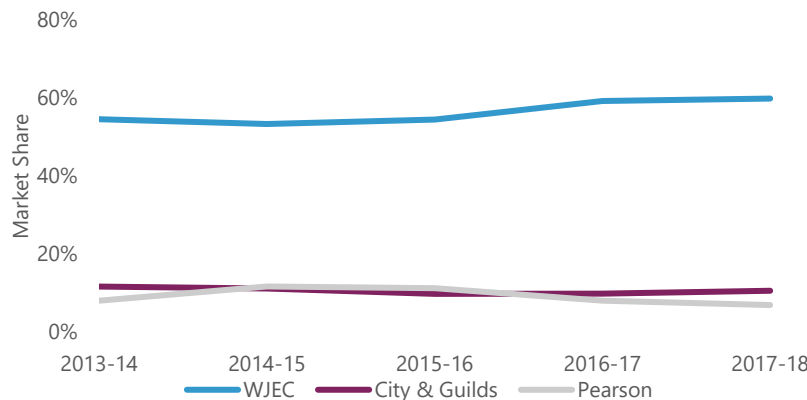
Figure 1: Time series of certificates by type



Source: (VQ) Ofqual data collection, (GQ) Entries, Late Entries and Awards data collection (pre-2017 Ofqual, 2017 onwards QW)

Total certifications decreased 56,120 (6.2%) to 844,690. The awarding body with the largest market share was WJEC with 59.8% market share, up from 59.3% last year.

Figure 2: Market share of top 3 awarding bodies



Source: (VQ) Ofqual data collection, (GQ) Entries, Late Entries and Awards data collection (pre-2017 Ofqual, 2017 onwards QW)

About this release

This statistical release provides information on qualifications available for award in Wales over the academic year 2017-18 and the number of certificates awarded by recognised awarding bodies. Statistics are reported on an academic year basis. General qualification data is collected on an academic year basis. Vocational qualification data is collected on a calendar year basis but is approximated to an academic year basis by using data for October to September for an academic year.

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INTRODUCTION

Qualifications Wales regulates qualifications, other than degrees, in Wales. Under the Qualifications Wales Act 2015¹, 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.

This report presents data on the number and types of qualifications available for award in Wales over the academic year 2017-18 by recognised awarding bodies (bodies recognised by us to develop, deliver and award qualifications). For the purpose of this report the 2017-18 academic year is considered the start of September 2017 to the end of August 2018. General qualification data is collected on an academic year basis. Vocational qualification data is collected on a calendar year basis but is approximated to an academic year basis (data for October to September inclusive is interpreted here as the academic year September to August). It provides an overview of the qualifications market and offers a single reference point about participants in the market.

Data presented in this release covers the number of awarding bodies, regulated qualifications and certificates awarded for all types of qualifications. The market share of certificates is further presented for GCSE, AS level and A level qualifications by awarding body. The market share of certificates for vocational and other qualifications is presented by sector subject area, awarding body and qualification level.

This report is produced annually and is based primarily on information that we hold or collect from awarding bodies and the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).

Note that where this report refers to 'vocational and other' qualifications, this means all qualifications other than GCSE, AS and A level.

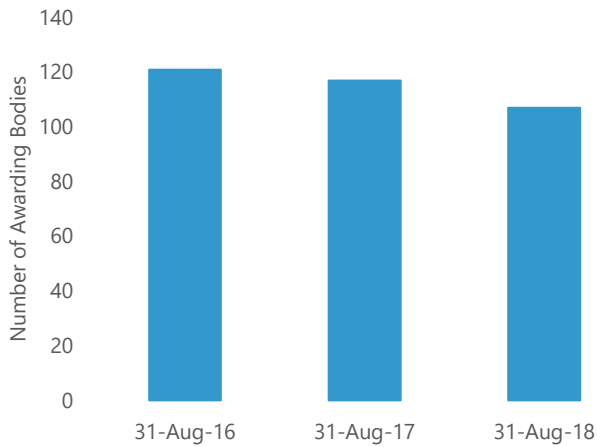
Following a transition arrangement with Ofqual (the regulator in England), we now publish official statistics relating to qualifications for Wales where previously this was published by Ofqual. Statistics in this release may not match statistics previously published by Ofqual due to corrections to the data. Where figures are publicly available, they are presented to full accuracy. Figures for number of certificates are rounded to the nearest 5, with values 1 to 4 denoted "*". Figures for the number of qualifications are not rounded. Further information on this release is available in the background information as well as data tables accompanying this report.

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015/5/contents/enacted>

STATISTICS

How many awarding bodies are there in Wales?

Figure 3: Awarding bodies over time

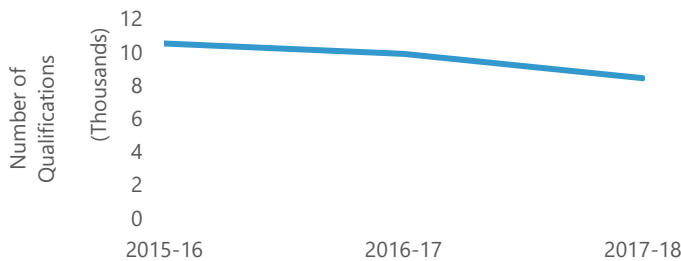


Source: Qualifications Wales

A count of the number of recognised awarding bodies on the 31st August 2018 showed a decrease of 10 (8.5%) to 107. Since Qualifications Wales was established (21 September 2015) there are 26 (19.5%) fewer recognised awarding bodies. Some of this reduction is due to awarding bodies being inactive due to having no learners in Wales.

How many approved or designated qualifications are there in Wales?

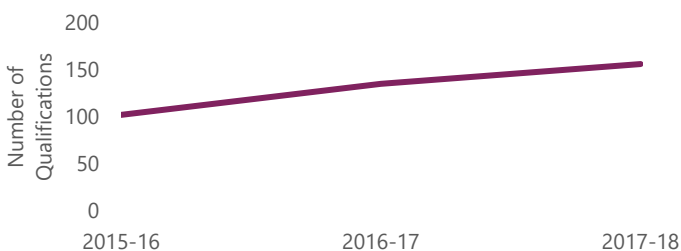
Figure 4: Number of designated qualifications



Source: Qualifications in Wales (extracted 13 Dec 2018)

Approved qualifications have met criteria designed specifically for Wales. Designated qualifications are eligible for use on publicly funded programmes of learning. The number of available designated or approved qualifications in 2017-18 was 8,593, a decrease of 1,440 (14.4%). Since 2015-16 the number of designated qualifications has decreased 2,089 (19.8%) to 8,437, and the number of approved qualifications has increased 54 (52.9%) to 156.

Figure 5: Number of approved qualifications



Source: Qualifications in Wales (extracted 13 Dec 2018)

How many qualifications are there of each type in Wales?

Table 1: Qualifications by type

Qualification Type	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Vocational and Other ⁽¹⁾	9,699	9,114	7,877
GCSE	411	381	280
GCE A level	246	258	209
GCE AS level	243	256	207
Project	13	13	11
Welsh Baccalaureate	8	8	8
Advanced extension award	1	1	1
Principal learning	7	2	0
Total	10,628	10,033	8,593

Data from the Qualifications in Wales² database show that the number of qualifications in Wales decreased 1,440 (14.4%) to 8,593. This was driven by decreases in 'Vocational and Other' which decreased 1,237 (13.6%), GCSE which decreased 101 (26.5%), A

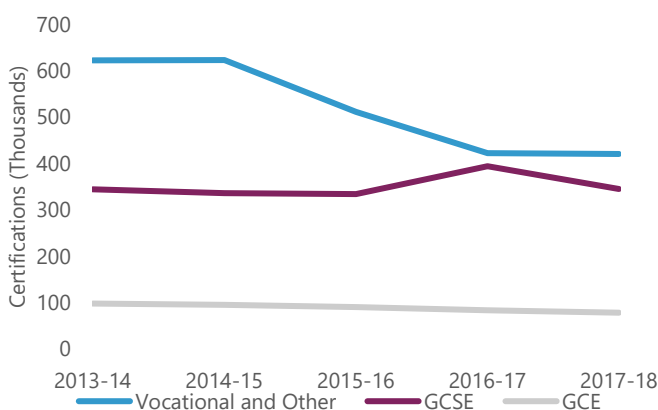
Source: Qualifications in Wales, extracted 13 Dec 2018.

(1) Vocational and Other includes: QCF; Other general; Vocationally related; IVET; CVET; Entry level; English for speakers of other languages; Essential Skills Wales; Higher level; Occupational qualification; National Vocational Qualification; Key Skills.

levels which decreased 49 (19.0%) and AS levels which decreased 49 (19.1%). The decrease in GCSE, AS and A level is due to reforms to general qualifications and the move to a sole provider in Wales.

How many certificates were awarded in Wales?

Figure 6: Certifications by qualification type



The total number of certificates awarded decreased 56,120 (6.2%) to 844,690. This was driven by a decrease of 48,955 (12.4%) for GCSE and a decrease of 5,510 (6.6%) for GCE qualifications.

Source: (VQ) Ofqual data collection, (GQ) Entries, Late Entries and Awards data collection (pre-2017 Ofqual, 2017 onwards QW)

² <https://www.qiw.wales/>

Which are the largest awarding bodies in Wales?

Table 2: Number of certificates issued highlighting top five awarding bodies

Awarding Body	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
WJEC	583,525	562,855	510,225	533,785	505,475
City & Guilds	124,840	118,025	91,805	88,630	89,640
Pearson	86,400	123,405	105,750	72,785	58,595
Highfield Qualifications	19,225	19,210	20,275	24,975	32,490
Agored Cymru	7,110	6,945	8,550	10,045	17,950
Other ABs	248,445	225,035	200,235	170,585	140,535
Total	1,069,545	1,055,475	936,845	900,810	844,690

Source: (VQ) Ofqual data collection from awarding bodies and (GQ) Entries, Late Entries and Awards data collection (pre-2017 Ofqual, 2017 onwards QW)

WJEC saw a decrease of 28,310 (5.3%) but remains the awarding body with the largest number of certificates 505,475 accounting for 59.8% of all certificates (up from 59.3% last year). The five largest awarding bodies accounted for 83.4% of all certificates issued.

What is the GCSE market share of awarding bodies in Wales?

Table 3: GCSE market

Academic Year	AQA	CCEA	Pearson	OCR	WJEC	Total
2013-14	25,980	50	21,535	7,910	288,865	344,340
2014-15	19,895	45	14,920	7,125	294,330	336,315
2015-16	18,425	30	10,230	6,305	299,215	334,200
2016-17	13,565	20	5,545	4,355	370,805	394,285
2017-18	3,460	5	1,735	575	339,550	345,330

Source: Entries, Late Entries and Awards data collection (pre-2017 Ofqual, 2017 onwards QW)

The GCSE market in Wales saw 344,340 certificates issued, a decrease of 48,955 (12.4%) certificates compared to last year. The awarding body with the largest number of certificates issues was WJEC. WJEC saw a decrease of 31,255 (8.4%) to 339,550. WJEC accounts for 98.3% of the GCSE market in Wales, up from 94.0% last year.

What is the AS and A level market share of awarding bodies in Wales?

Table 4: GCE market

Academic Year	AQA	CCEA	Pearson	OCR	WJEC	Total
2013-14	11,395	5	4,795	8,465	73,525	98,185
2014-15	10,775	5	4,480	7,435	72,685	95,375
2015-16	6,165	0	3,400	4,730	76,505	90,805
2016-17	2,415	0	2,285	2,160	77,115	83,975
2017-18	1,595	0	1,365	1,330	74,175	78,470

Source: Entries, Late Entries and Awards data collection (pre-2017 Ofqual, 2017 onwards QW)

The number of GCE certificates issued continues the declining trend from 2013-14. From 2013-14 the number of GCE certificates issued has declined 19,720 (20.1%). In 2017-18 the number of GCE certificates issued declined by 5,510 (6.6%) to 78,470. Of these 74,175 were issued by WJEC which accounted for 94.5 % of all certificates issued (up from 91.8%).

What is the vocational and other qualifications market share of awarding bodies in Wales?

Table 5: Number of certificates issued highlighting the top ten awarding bodies

Awarding Body	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
WJEC-CBAC	216,935	195,360	134,175	85,755	91,605
City and Guilds of London Institute	124,840	118,025	91,805	88,630	89,640
Pearson Education Ltd	60,045	103,895	92,080	64,920	55,480
Highfield Qualifications	19,225	19,210	20,275	24,975	32,490
Agored Cymru	7,110	6,945	8,550	10,045	17,950
Qualsafe Awards	5,475	7,000	9,045	9,505	12,055
OCR	46,185	37,900	27,405	14,560	10,800
Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music	13,200	12,480	10,795	11,310	10,480
NOCN	3,720	1,885	2,050	1,370	10,195
Trinity College London	2,985	4,875	6,680	6,780	8,830
Other ABs	126,020	120,460	115,235	111,245	89,975
Total	622,755	623,160	511,420	422,315	420,665

Source: Ofqual data collection from awarding bodies

The number of vocational qualification certificates issued continues the declining trend from 2014-15. Changes to performance measures may be affecting 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% of the points for Welsh Government school (Key Stage 4) threshold measures. In 2018, Welsh Government introduced a change to Key Stage 4 performance measures in relation to science with only GCSE Science qualifications counting. Previously vocational science qualifications have been allowed to count³. From 2014-15 the number of vocational qualification certificates issued has declined 202,495 (32.5%). In 2017-18 the number of vocational qualification certificates issued decreased 1,645 (0.4%) to 420,665. The ten awarding bodies with the largest number of certificates accounted for 339,795 certificates issued (80.7% of total). WJEC issued 91,605 certificates, an increase of 5,580 (6.8%), accounting for 21.8% (up from 20.3%) of all certificates issued last year.

³ Further information on changes to performance measures in Wales can be found at: <https://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2016/160721-chief-statisticians-update-issue-9-en.pdf> [Accessed 24 Jan 2019].

How many vocational qualification certificates were issued in each subject area?

Table 6: Number of VQ and Other certificates issued by sector subject area

Sector subject area	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
01 Health, Public Services and Care	60,300	68,320	71,855	70,570	73,205
02 Science and Mathematics	12,000	19,650	18,005	13,285	6,180
03 Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	7,450	8,425	6,535	8,100	6,850
04 Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	28,615	26,725	25,770	24,865	21,960
05 Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	14,645	17,025	18,090	19,115	22,425
06 Information and Communication Technology	18,430	13,955	12,070	9,225	7,180
07 Retail and Commercial Enterprise	41,910	38,635	29,485	28,970	28,690
08 Leisure, Travel and Tourism	15,570	19,620	16,925	16,085	15,725
09 Arts, Media and Publishing	29,565	31,325	29,030	30,105	28,395
10 History, Philosophy and Theology	240	300	255	260	135
11 Social Sciences	30	115	120	130	390
12 Languages, Literature and Culture	10,270	12,575	12,540	13,450	10,630
13 Education and Training	5,405	4,690	3,790	3,455	4,245
14 Preparation for Life and Work	350,335	337,295	245,695	161,840	170,970
15 Business, Administration and Law	27,990	24,495	21,260	22,855	23,680
Total	622,755	623,160	511,420	422,315	420,665

Source: Ofqual data collection from awarding bodies

In 2017-18 the sector subject area (SSA) with the largest number of certificates was 'Preparation for Life and Work' which accounted for 170,970 certifications (up 9,130 (5.6%)), 40.6% of the total.

How many vocational qualification certificates were issued at each level?

Table 7: Number of VQ and Other certificates issued by level

Qualification Level	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Entry Level	31,510	33,540	33,835	33,235	33,545
Level 1	125,885	108,095	85,995	63,660	58,330
Level 1/2	1,695	9,360	16,140	64,565	63,865
Level 2	338,315	318,630	246,040	166,445	144,215
Level 3	121,095	147,490	122,540	85,705	109,610
Level 4	1,805	2,320	2,560	3,535	4,845
Level 5	2,035	3,340	3,620	4,200	5,010
Level 6	245	220	550	745	870
Level 7	175	155	145	220	375
Level 8	*	0	5	*	*
Total	622,755	623,160	511,420	422,315	420,665

Source: Ofqual data collection from awarding bodies

The qualification level with the largest number of certificates in 2017-18 was level 2 which had 144,215 certificates, a decrease of 22,230 (13.4%) compared to last year. Despite this reduction, level 2 qualifications account for 34.3% of all vocational qualification certificates. Changes to performance measures mentioned above may be affecting the decrease in certifications.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

A level

General Certificate of Education Advanced Level, also known as a GCE A level. Qualifications taken, after GCSEs, in a range of subjects, usually taken at age 16-18 and typically a two-year course of study. They are used as a basis for admissions to higher education, further training or entry into employment.

Approved

Qualifications reviewed to ensure they meet approval criteria. Regulated under Standard Conditions of Recognition and any conditions of approval that apply.

Advanced Subsidiary (AS)

A qualification that forms the first part of an A level qualification. It may be taken as a free-standing qualification. In Wales and Northern Ireland, it contributes to the A level result. In England, AS qualifications cannot contribute to A levels.

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.

Designated

Designated as eligible for use on publicly funded programmes of learning, for learners under the age of 19. Must meet designation matters. Regulated under Standard Conditions of Recognition.

GCE

A group of qualifications including A level and Advanced Subsidiary (AS).

GCSEs

General Certificates of Secondary Education are available in a wide range of subjects. GCSEs are the main Level 1 and Level 2 general qualifications at age 14-16 in Wales. They can be used as a basis for higher level study or training, or direct entry into employment.

Sector Subject Area

A classification system for the subject of study in a qualification.

BACKGROUND NOTES

On 21 November 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. Qualifications Wales operates in compliance with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Official Statistics⁴ and has published this statistical release as Official Statistics.

Data Source

The awarding bodies that provide qualifications have submitted information to Qualifications Wales about the number of certificates issued for each vocational qualification and the number of certificates for each type of general qualification available in the academic year 2017-18. The entries are only for centres located in Wales, regardless of the type of centre.

Limitations of data

There is potential error in the information provided by awarding bodies. Therefore, Qualifications Wales cannot guarantee that the information received is correct. Qualifications Wales compares the data over time and checks for systematic issues. Quality assurance procedures are carried out to ensure the accuracy of the data and challenge or question it, where necessary. Qualifications Wales continuously manages this process by:

- Ensuring that data providers are clear about what is required of them and are fully consulted during the initial design and any subsequent change phases;
- Reminding all providers (if appropriate) that, as a condition of them being regulated, all data must be completely accurate;
- Being alert to unexpected changes in the data submitted by comparing individual returns over time from the same provider;
- Actively challenging any unexpected results with the data providers.

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

⁴ <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/>

Comparisons

From 2017-18 awarding bodies submitted data to Qualifications Wales rather than Ofqual. Comparisons to historical Ofqual data should be interpreted with caution.

Geographical Coverage

This release presents data on the number of certificates for the 2017-18 academic year for centres located in Wales.

Revisions

Once published, data on the number of recognised awarding bodies, qualifications and certificates is not usually subject to revision, although subsequent releases may be revised to correct an error.

Completeness of the data

Awarding bodies send Qualifications Wales entry data for all regulated qualifications. Qualifications Wales contacts any awarding body that does not return a complete set of data within the collection period, to make sure the data is as complete as possible.

Rounding and Confidentiality

To protect confidentiality, and in accordance with Qualifications Wales's interim statistical outputs policy, all figures for the number of certificates issued are rounded. In the commentary and tables, they are rounded to the nearest 5. 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 percentages within the commentary are based on actual figures. Figures have been rounded independently and therefore may not sum to the total.

Users of these statistics

These statistics are likely to be of interest to Qualifications Wales, awarding bodies, and the Welsh Government. We welcome feedback from users, to gain a better understanding of who our users are over time. Qualifications Wales uses these statistics to monitor the qualification market in Wales.

Related statistics and publications

A number of statistical releases relate to this one, including:

- Vocational and Other Qualifications Quarterly: Quarter 3 (July – September 2018) for Wales⁵.
- Entries and late entries for GCSE and A level in Wales: 2017-18 academic year⁶.
- The annual 'Schools' census results' release, published by Welsh Government⁷.

Useful information

A glossary of terms is available on page 10 to help you interpret this release. You can find information about future publications on the Welsh Government website⁸.

The QiW register⁹ gives information on approved and designated qualifications which are eligible for public funding in Wales.

Statistics on the qualifications market in England are published by Ofqual¹⁰.

Next update

February 2020 (provisional).

User feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to statistics@qualificationswales.org.

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⁵ <https://qualificationswales.org/english/publications/vq-qrt-3-dec-2018/>

⁶ <https://qualificationswales.org/english/publications/2-entries-and-late-entries-for-gcse-and-a-level-in-wales-2017-18-academic-year/>

⁷ <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/schools-census/?lang=en>

⁸ <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/?upcoming=true&lang=en>

⁹ <https://www.qiw.wales/>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual/about/statistics>