

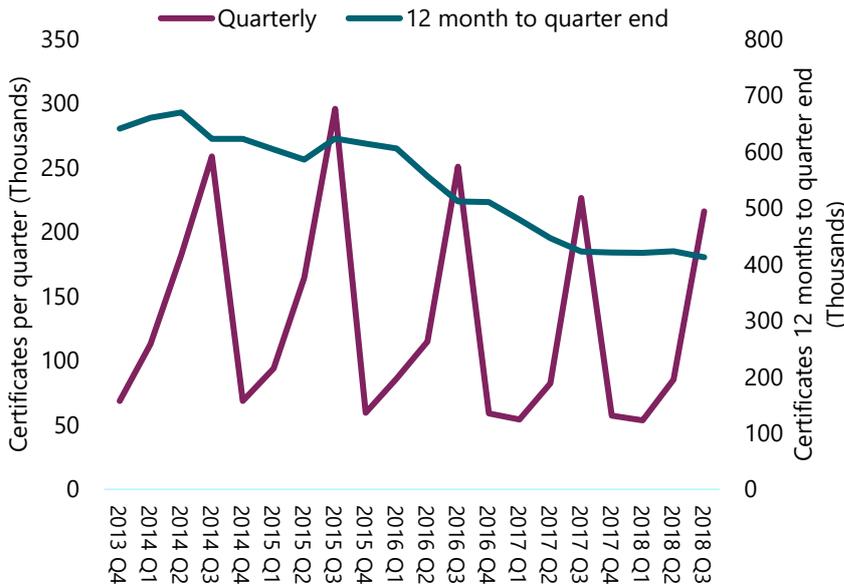


# Vocational and Other Qualifications Quarterly: Quarter 3 (July – September 2018) for Wales

## Highlights

Corrected 21 February 2019

**Figure 1: Total Certifications**



Source: Ofqual VQ data collection from awarding bodies



**216,130** certificates were awarded between July and September of 2018. This is a **4.6%** decrease compared to the same quarter in 2017, when there were **226,540** certifications.

Between October 2017 and September 2018 there were **412,480** certifications, a decrease of **2.3%** compared to **422,315** between October 2016 and September 2017.



## 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 July – September 2018 (quarter 3).

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# INTRODUCTION

Qualifications Wales regulates qualifications, other than degrees, 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 the fourth quarter (October-December) of 2017, Ofqual<sup>1</sup> collected and published data for Wales. We have tried as far as possible to keep these statistics consistent with earlier Ofqual statistics.

In this release, we present data collected by Ofqual on the range of vocational and other qualifications and certificates issued during quarter 3 of 2018 (2018 Q3). The figures represent the number of certificates, rounded to the nearest 5 to protect confidentiality, that were awarded by awarding bodies between 1 July and 30 September 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.

We are developing our own data collection and how we produce and report these statistics. 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 currently maintain a complete 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 in this release for qualifications

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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 22 Aug 2018].

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

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 at the top of on the next page 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 the 12 months to the end of 2018 Q3 are shaded blue in the table.

<b>Qualification type</b>	<b>Current levels</b>
Basic Skills	Entry Level, Levels 1 and 2
CVET <sup>4</sup>	Levels 1 to 6
End-Point Assessment	Levels 2 to 7
English for speakers of other languages	Entry Level, Levels 1, 2 and 3
Entry level	Entry Level
Essential Skills Wales	Entry Level, Levels 1 to 3
Free-standing mathematics qualification	Levels 1,2,3
Functional skills	Entry level, Levels 1 and 2

<b>Qualification type</b>	<b>Current levels</b>
Higher Level	Levels 4 to 8
IVET <sup>3</sup>	Entry Level, Levels 1 to 5
Key skills	Levels 1 to 4
NVQ	Levels 1 to 5
'Other general' qualification	Levels 1, 1/2, 2 and 3
Occupational qualification	Levels 1 to 4
QCF <sup>5</sup>	Entry Level, Levels 1 to 8
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://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/cqfw-brochure.pdf>).

<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://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/cqfw-brochure.pdf>).

<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 2016, new qualifications were no longer classified as QCF.

<sup>6</sup> The type 'Welsh Baccalaureate' includes both the Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate (at all levels) and the Welsh Baccalaureate 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 the 'Review of Qualifications for 14 to 19-year-olds in Wales'<sup>7</sup>, which was commissioned by the Welsh Government in 2011, the 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. 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. However, 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 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 further 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 count<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Welsh Government (2014) *Review of Qualifications 14-19* [online]. Available from: <https://beta.gov.wales/review-qualifications-14-19-year-olds-final-report-and-recommendations> [Accessed 22 Aug 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> [Accessed 22 Aug 2018].

<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/> [Accessed 22 Aug 2018].

# STATISTICS

## TOTAL CERTIFICATES AND HISTORICAL TRENDS

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

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Year	Jan to Mar	Apr to Jun	Jul to Sep	Oct to Dec
2013	93,840	172,940	305,805	68,625
2014	112,970	182,355	258,805	68,670
2015	94,055	164,575	295,855	59,645
2016	85,980	114,915	250,880	59,020
2017	54,310	82,445	226,540	57,420
2018	53,670	85,260	<b>216,130</b>	N/A
<hr/>				
2013	582,675	609,830	631,980	641,205
2014	660,340	669,755	622,755	622,800
2015	603,885	586,110	623,160	614,140
2016	606,065	556,400	511,420	510,795
2017	479,120	446,650	422,315	420,715
2018	420,075	422,890	<b>412,480</b>	N/A

*Source: Ofqual VQ data collection from awarding bodies*

### Quarterly Comparison

216,130 certificates were awarded in 2018 Q3, a decrease of 4.6% on the same quarter of 2017. This decrease is mostly related to falls in the number of level 1 (down 3,690) and level 2 (down 7,820) certifications, although these decreases are partially offset by an increase in level 3 certificates (up 2,750).

### Annual Comparison

There were 412,480 certifications in the latest 12 months (2017 Q4 – 2018 Q3), which is a decrease of 2.3% compared to the previous 12 months (2016 Q4 – 2017 Q3). As with the quarterly comparison, the overall decrease was driven by fewer level 1 (down 5,875) and level 2 (down 25,895) certifications, which was offset against a large increase in level 3 (up 22,500) certifications. This increase in level 3 qualifications is likely related to Welsh Government shifting their policy focus towards higher level qualifications.

## CERTIFICATES BY SECTOR SUBJECT AREA (SSA)

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

Sector Subject Area	Quarterly Comparison		Annual Comparison	
	2017 Q3	2018 Q3	Oct 2016 to Sep 2017	Oct 2017 to Sep 2018
01 Health, Public Services and Care	23,050	21,435	70,570	73,145
02 Science and Mathematics	10,605	5,175	13,285	6,180
03 Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	2,820	2,785	8,100	6,850
04 Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	11,000	9,375	25,005	21,940
05 Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	8,085	7,870	18,970	17,280
06 Information and Communication Technology	6,540	4,605	9,225	7,180
07 Retail and Commercial Enterprise	8,840	10,050	28,970	28,610
08 Leisure, Travel and Tourism	7,765	6,340	16,085	15,725
09 Arts, Media and Publishing	13,340	12,955	30,105	28,385
10 History, Philosophy and Theology	225	130	260	135
11 Social Sciences	130	385	130	390
12 Languages, Literature and Culture	5,650	6,240	13,450	10,630
13 Education and Training	1,245	1,595	3,455	4,245
14 Preparation for Life and Work	114,700	115,805	161,855	168,550
15 Business, Administration and Law	12,540	11,370	22,845	23,230
<b>Total</b>	<b>226,540</b>	<b>216,130</b>	<b>422,315</b>	<b>412,480</b>

*Source: Ofqual VQ data collection from awarding bodies*

The predominant subject sector in this quarter was 'Preparation for Life and Work' with 115,805 certifications or 53.6% of total certificates issued in 2018 Q3. No other SSA makes up more than 10% of the certificates awarded in quarter 3, with 'Health, Public Services and Care' the second largest sector (21,435 certifications, 9.9% of total).

The 'Preparation for Life and Work' sector also had the largest number of certifications in 2017 Q4 – 2018 Q3 (168,550 or 40.9% of the total). This sector saw a 4.1% increase in the number of certifications awarded compared to 2016 Q4 – 2017 Q3 (161,840). The 'Health, Public Services and Care' was the second largest with 73,145 certifications (17.7% of the total), an increase of 3.7% compared to 2016 Q4 – 2017 Q3. However, this sector saw a 7.0% quarterly decrease compared to 2017 Q3.

**Figure 2: Percentage change in certifications by Sector Subject Area (SSA), 2018 Q3 compared to 2017 Q3**

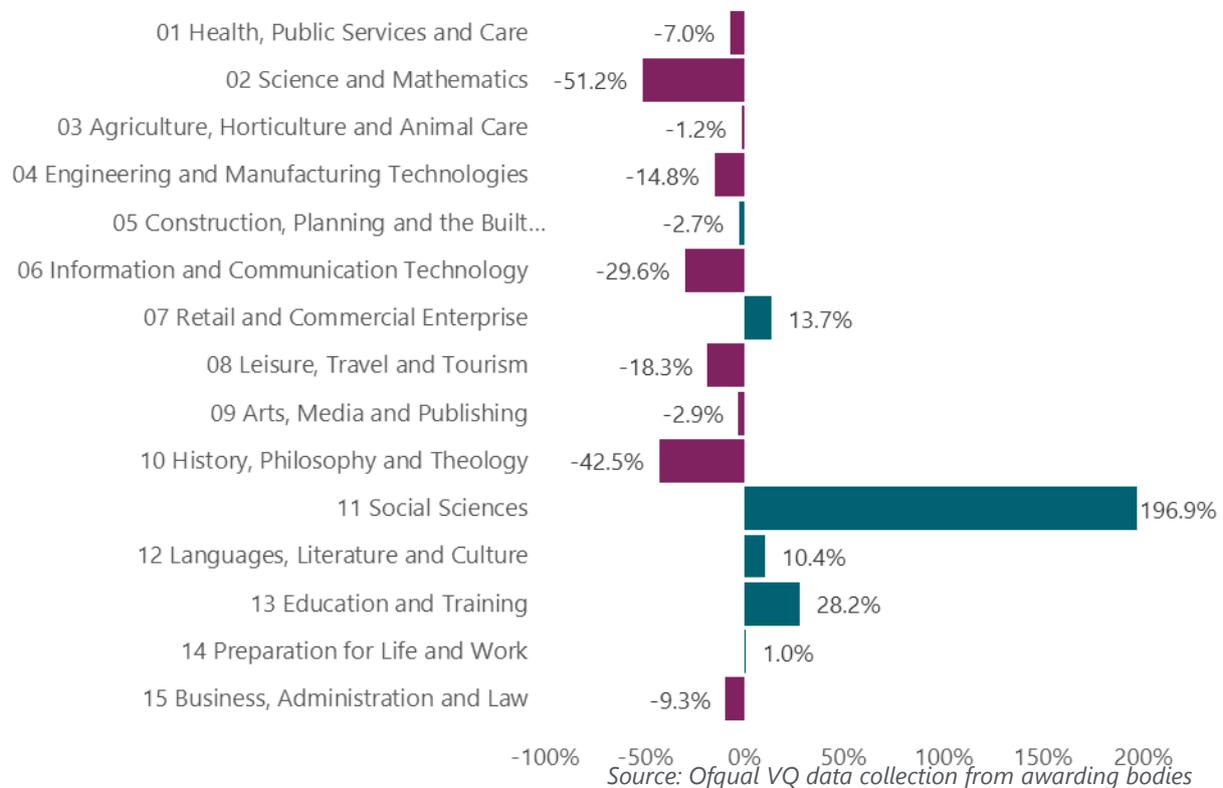


Figure 2 shows that 'Social Sciences' (196.9%) had the largest proportional increase in certificates awarded in 2018 Q3 this year compared to 2017 Q3, although Table 2 shows that this is the SSA with a low volume of certifications and is therefore more likely to see volatile year-to-year changes. The 'Education and Training' (28.2%) and 'Retail and Commercial Enterprise' (13.7%) sectors also saw large proportional increases in certificates awarded in 2018 Q3 this year compared to 2017 Q3.

'Science and Mathematics' and 'History, Philosophy and Theology' SSAs had the largest proportional decreases of certificates awarded of 51.2% and 42.5% respectively.

## CERTIFICATES BY LEVEL

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

Level	Quarterly Comparison		Annual Comparison	
	2017 Q3	2018 Q3	Oct 2016 to Sep 2017	Oct 2017 to Sep 2018
Entry Level	16,245	14,720	33,235	31,255
Level 1	28,385	24,695	63,660	57,785
Level 1/2	61,070	61,050	64,565	63,865
Level 2	64,850	57,030	166,445	140,550
Level 3	52,350	55,100	85,705	108,205
Level 4	1,515	1,595	3,535	4,705
Level 5	1,565	1,350	4,200	4,870
Level 6	500	530	745	870
Level 7	55	55	220	375
Level 8	0	*	*	*
<b>Total</b>	<b>226,540</b>	<b>216,130</b>	<b>422,315</b>	<b>412,480</b>

*Source: Ofqual VQ data collection from awarding bodies*

Table 3 shows the number of certifications during quarter 3, compared to the same quarter in 2017, and during the last 12 months, compared to the previous 12 months. The three levels with the largest number of certifications in 2018 Q3 (level 1/2, level 2 and level 3) accounted for 80.1% of the total number of certificates for the quarter. The same levels accounted for 75.8% of the annual total. Changes between 2017 Q3 and 2018 Q3 ranged from a decrease of 13.7% for level 5 to an increase of 5.8% for level 6. There were annual increases for level 3 and above, except for level 8, and annual decreases for level 2 and below, except for entry level.

## 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	Oct 2016 to Sep 2017	Oct 2017 to Sep 2018	Rank Oct 2016 to Sep 2017	Rank Oct 2017 to Sep 2018	Rank Change
WJEC-CBAC	85,755	91,605	2	1	↑ +1
City and Guilds of London Institute	88,630	89,640	1	2	↓ -1
Pearson Education Ltd	64,920	55,480	3	3	→ +0
Highfield Qualifications	24,975	32,490	4	4	→ +0
Agored Cymru	10,045	17,950	9	5	↑ +4
Qualsafe Awards	9,505	12,055	10	6	↑ +4
OCR	14,560	10,800	5	7	↓ -2
Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music	11,310	10,480	7	8	↓ -1
Trinity College London	6,780	8,830	12	9	↑ +3
Excellence, Achievement & Learning Limited	7,205	8,205	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. WJEC-CBAC have risen one place to become the awarding body with the highest number of certifications in the last 12 months. This is primarily explained by an increase in the number of Welsh Bacc certifications awarded in 2018 Q3 relative to 2017 Q3. City and Guilds of London Institute drop to second place despite having issued 1,010 additional certifications in the last 12 months (1.1% increase).

Agored Cymru saw an increase of 7,905 certificates (78.7% increase) issued over the last 12 months, moving up four places to be the awarding body with the fifth highest number of certifications awarded over that period. This has been largely driven by increases in certificates issued for qualifications allocated to the 'Preparation for Life and Work' SSA, particularly reformed Essential Skills Wales qualifications.

Pearson Education Ltd remains at 3<sup>rd</sup> place but has seen a fall of 9,440 certificates issued in the last 12 months (14.5% decrease). This change is largely driven by decreases in certificates issued for qualifications allocated to 'Science and Mathematics', 'Preparation for Life and Work' and 'Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies' sectors.

## TOP CERTIFICATING QUALIFICATIONS

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>2017 Q3</b>	<b>2018 Q3</b>
WJEC Foundation/National Skills Challenge Certificate (Welsh Baccaulaureate)	23,805	26,960
WJEC National/Foundation Welsh Baccaulaureate	21,825	25,950
WJEC Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate (Welsh Baccaulaureate)	11,330	12,045
WJEC Advanced Welsh Baccaulaureate	9,195	10,185
LIBF Level 2 Certificate In Financial Capability and Careers Development	4,205	4,020
WJEC Level 2 Certificate in Additional Mathematics	2,455	3,130
City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Digital Literacy Skills	2,140	2,340
Highfield Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering (RQF)	165	1,945
Pearson Edexcel Level 2 Certificate in Personal and Social Development	1,270	1,615
City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Communication Skills	1,855	1,595

*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.

The top four qualifications in 2018 Q3 were all part of the Welsh Bacc framework, with WJEC Foundation/National Skills Challenge (Welsh Baccaulaureate) the qualification with the highest number of certifications (26,960), closely followed by WJEC National/Foundation Welsh Baccaulaureate (25,950). Taken together, the top four Welsh Bacc qualifications represent 34.8% of all certifications issued during 2018 Q3.

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

Qualification	Oct 2016 to Sep 2017	Oct 2017 to Sep 2018
WJEC Foundation/National Skills Challenge Certificate (Welsh Baccalaureate)	23,805	26,960
WJEC National/Foundation Welsh Baccalaureate	21,825	25,950
WJEC Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate (Welsh Baccalaureate)	11,330	12,045
WJEC Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate	9,195	10,185
Highfield Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering (RQF)	165	7,935
Highfield Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work (RQF)	0	6,455
City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Digital Literacy Skills	3,710	6,385
QA Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work (RQF)	0	5,735
City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Application of Number Skills	3,505	4,705
LIBF Level 2 Certificate In Financial Capability and Careers Development	4,205	4,040

*Source: Ofqual VQ data collection from awarding bodies*

Table 6 shows the top ten qualifications with the highest number of certifications in 2017 Q4 – 2018 Q3 compared to 2016 Q4 – 2017 Q3.

As quarter 3 is the busiest quarter in terms of the awarding of certificates, there is a lot of similarity with the data presented for 2018 Q3 in Table 5. Qualifications that form part of the Welsh Bacc framework make up the top four qualifications awarded over the past 12 months, with WJEC Foundation/National Skills Challenge Certificate (Welsh Baccalaureate) at the top with 26,960 certificates. 2017 was the first year in which this qualification, along with the WJEC National/Foundation Welsh Baccalaureate, were certificated (see [external influences](#) for further information).

Aside from the new Welsh Bacc and Skills Challenge Certificate qualifications, the largest increases in certifications were for the Highfield Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering (RQF) and the Highfield Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work (RQF), which saw increases of 7,765 and 6,455 respectively. Some of the increases may be due to the current qualifications being reformed versions of the previous QCF qualifications.

# 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. We take a number of matters into account when determining whether to designate qualifications.

## **General Qualification**

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<sup>10</sup> 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 (CQFW). The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales 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 (QCF)**

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<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.qiw.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).

### **Sector Subject Area (SSA)**

Sector subject areas are the series of categories based on industry sectors and academic subjects used to classify qualifications.

### **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 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. We have developed our processes to ensure we are fully meeting our obligations as an official statistics producer, allowing this statistical release to be formally published as an official statistic.

## Data Source

The number of certifications awarded for each vocational or other qualification in Quarter 3 2018 (July – September 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<sup>12</sup>.

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 Qualifications Wales for this report for Wales.

Data on approved or designated qualifications offered in Wales is available at Qualifications in Wales (QiW) database<sup>13</sup>.

Data on qualifications regulated by Ofqual is available on the Ofqual register<sup>14</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 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 unique identifier for qualifications in the QiW database), a QAN (a unique identifier for qualifications on Ofqual's register) 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,

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.jcq.org.uk/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.qiw.wales/?lang=en>

<sup>14</sup> <https://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>

and where awarding bodies submit data using a QAN, qualification characteristics will be taken from the Ofqual register.

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 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 3 (July - September 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."

On 04 May 2018 Ofqual withdrew 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 practical to

obtain corrected data from AVA, but the scale of corrections is known to be small. AVA had 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 later. 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:

Quarter	2012.4	2013.1	2013.2	2013.3	2013.4	2014.1	2014.2	2014.3	2014.4	2015.1
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%

Quarter	2015.2	2015.3	2015.4	2016.1	2016.2	2016.3	2016.4	2017.1	2017.2	2017.3
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. Considering 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 behalf of Qualifications Wales. Ofqual's quality assurance procedures are carried out as explained in the Quality Assurance Framework for Statistical Publications<sup>15</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>16</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<sup>17</sup>, 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.

## 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 to gain a better understanding of who our users are over time. Qualifications Wales uses these

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofquals-statistics-policies-and-procedures>

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

<sup>17</sup> <https://qualificationswales.org/english/publications/interim-statistical-outputs-policy/>

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>18</sup>.

Research and Statistics published by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment (CCEA)<sup>19</sup>.

Statistics published by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)<sup>20</sup>.

Statistics published by Eurostat<sup>21</sup>.

### **Useful information**

A glossary of terms is available on page 13 to help you interpret this release. You can find information about future publications on the Welsh Government website<sup>22</sup>.

The QiW database<sup>23</sup> gives information on approved and designated qualifications which are eligible for public funding in Wales.

### **Next update**

February 2019 (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>18</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-vocational-qualifications>.

<sup>19</sup> [http://ccea.org.uk/more/research\\_statistics](http://ccea.org.uk/more/research_statistics).

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/48269.8311.html>.

<sup>21</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/education-and-training/overview>.

<sup>22</sup> <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/?upcoming=true&lang=en>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.qiw.wales/?lang=en>