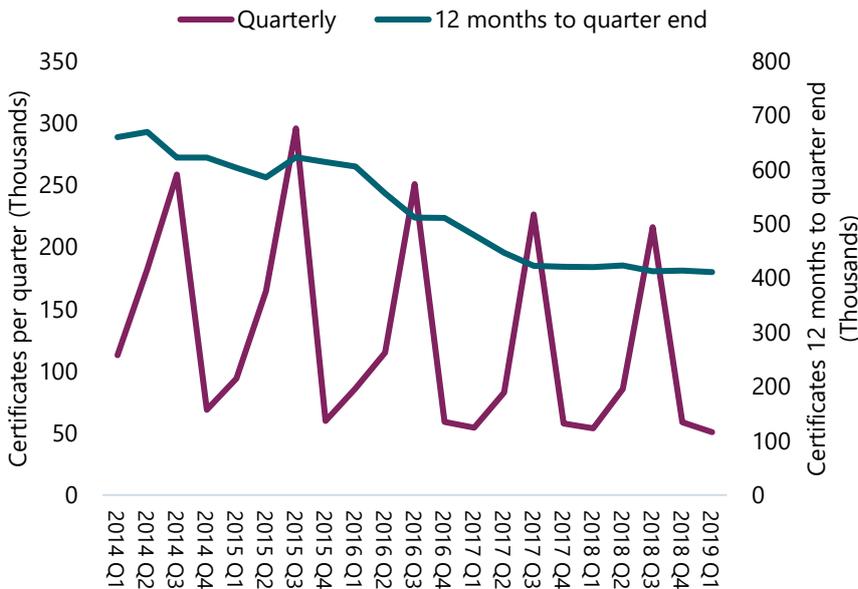


Vocational and Other Qualifications Quarterly: Quarter 1 (January – March 2019) for Wales

Highlights

6 June 2019

Figure 1: Total Certifications



Source: Qualifications Wales VQ data collection from awarding bodies



50,760 certificates were awarded between January and March of 2019. This is a **5.6%** decrease compared to the same quarter in 2018, when there were **53,765** certifications.

Between April 2018 and March 2019 there were **411,285** certifications, a decrease of **2.2%** compared to **420,575** between April 2017 and March 2018.



About this release

This statistical release presents information for Wales collected by Qualifications Wales from awarding bodies. It contains data on the range and number of vocational and other qualification certificates issued during January – March 2019 (quarter 1). Wales data prior to quarter 1 2019 was collected by Ofqual.

Contents

- Introduction..... [2](#)
- Statistics..... [6](#)
- Glossary of terms [13](#)
- Background
- Notes.....[16](#)

Statistician: Jonathan Davey 01633 373 261 statistics@qualificationswales.org
Media enquiries: Alan Morris 01633 373 216 comms@qualificationswales.org



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.

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 reported data collected from awarding bodies by Ofqual on our behalf. As of quarter 1 2019 (2019 Q1), we are both collecting and reporting data for qualifications that we regulate. Before the fourth quarter (October-December) of 2017, Ofqual² collected and published data for Wales. We have tried as far as possible to keep these statistics consistent with these earlier statistics; changes have only been made where it was clear that doing so would result in the reporting of more accurate certification data.

In this release, we present data on the range of vocational and other qualifications and certificates issued during quarter 1 of 2019. The figures represent the number of certificates, rounded to the nearest 5, that were awarded by awarding bodies between 1 January and 31 March 2019. 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 Qualifications in Wales (QiW) database³ or on our internal list of other regulated qualifications.

We have developed our own method for producing and reporting these statistics. This is because:

- Our regulatory approach differs from Ofqual: Ofqual ask awarding bodies to opt in qualifications for regulation, whereas we require awarding bodies to opt out qualifications that they do not wish to be regulated. The historical data reported in this release may include

¹ http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015/5/pdfs/anaw_20150005_en.pdf

² 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 19 Feb 2019].

³ QiW is a register of regulated qualifications that are eligible for public funding in Wales.

certifications for qualifications that we did 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 Wales-only qualifications unaccounted for in historical data because they have not been eligible for public funding (i.e. listed on QiW).

- 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.

Each qualification is ascribed a level. Levels are described in the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales⁴. 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 2019 Q1 are shaded blue in the table.

⁴ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-02/level-descriptors.pdf>

Qualification type	Current levels
Basic Skills	Entry Level, Levels 1 and 2
CVET ⁶	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

Qualification type	Current levels
Higher Level	Levels 4 to 8
IVET ⁵	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 ⁷	Entry Level, Levels 1 to 8
Vocationally related qualification	Entry Level, Levels 1 to 8
Welsh Baccalaureate ⁸	Levels 1, 1/2, 2 and 3

⁵ 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>).

⁶ 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>).

⁷ 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.

⁸ 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'⁹, 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 policy¹⁰ 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 count¹¹.

⁹ 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 19 Feb 2019].

¹⁰ 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 19 Feb 2019].

¹¹ 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 19 Feb 2019].

STATISTICS

TOTAL CERTIFICATES AND HISTORICAL TRENDS

Table 1: Number of certificates awarded by quarter and by previous 12 months to quarter end

Time period	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
		Jan to Mar	Apr to Jun	Jul to Sep	Oct to Dec
Quarterly	2014	112,965	182,365	258,795	68,670
	2015	94,070	164,620	295,930	59,650
	2016	86,085	115,010	251,035	59,055
	2017	54,425	82,710	226,505	57,595
	2018	53,765	85,415	216,310	58,795
	2019	50,760	N/A	N/A	N/A
12 months to quarter end	2014	660,415	669,840	622,750	622,795
	2015	603,900	586,150	623,285	614,265
	2016	606,285	556,675	511,780	511,190
	2017	479,525	447,225	422,695	421,235
	2018	420,575	423,285	413,090	414,290
	2019	411,285	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: Qualifications Wales VQ data collection from awarding bodies

Quarterly Comparison

50,760 certificates were awarded in 2019 Q1, a decrease of 5.6% on the same quarter of 2018. Quarter 1 has seen the fewest certificates awarded in each of the last two calendar years.

Annual Comparison

There were 411,285 certifications in the latest 12 months (2018 Q2 – 2019 Q1), which is a decrease of 2.2% compared to the previous 12 months (2017 Q2 – 2018 Q1).

CERTIFICATES BY SECTOR SUBJECT AREA (SSA)

Table 2: Number of certificates awarded by sector subject area

Sector Subject Area	Quarterly Comparison		Annual Comparison	
	2018 Q1	2019 Q1	Apr 2017 to Mar 2018	Apr 2018 to Mar 2019
01 Health, Public Services and Care	15,845	13,495	71,325	68,955
02 Science and Mathematics	60	40	13,145	6,215
03 Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	1,270	1,180	7,120	6,860
04 Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	3,120	3,105	23,210	21,455
05 Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	2,560	3,500	18,830	19,605
06 Information and Communication Technology	570	525	9,200	7,645
07 Retail and Commercial Enterprise	5,490	5,025	27,805	27,500
08 Leisure, Travel and Tourism	2,565	2,945	15,985	16,530
09 Arts, Media and Publishing	3,380	3,130	29,580	28,365
10 History, Philosophy and Theology	*	*	230	135
11 Social Sciences	*	*	130	390
12 Languages, Literature and Culture	1,210	675	13,575	10,210
13 Education and Training	895	850	3,825	4,505
14 Preparation for Life and Work	13,430	12,580	162,570	169,610
15 Business, Administration and Law	3,370	3,705	24,045	23,305
Total	53,765	50,760	420,575	411,285

Source: Qualifications Wales VQ data collection from awarding bodies

The predominant subject sectors in this quarter were 'Health, Public Services and Care' (13,495 certifications, 26.6% of total) and 'Preparation for Life and Work' (12,580 certifications, 24.8% of total). Together these two sectors account for over half of all certificates issued in 2019 Q1 with no other sector accounting for more than 10.0%.

The 'Preparation for Life and Work' sector had the largest number of certifications in 2018 Q2 – 2019 Q1 (169,610 or 41.2% of the total). This sector saw a 4.3% increase in the number of certifications awarded compared to 2017 Q2 – 2018 Q1 (162,570). The 'Health, Public Services and Care' sector was the second largest with 68,955 certifications (16.8% of the total), although it decreased by 3.3% compared to 2017 Q2 – 2018 Q1.

Figure 2: Percentage change in certifications awarded by sector subject area, 2019 Q1 compared to 2018 Q1

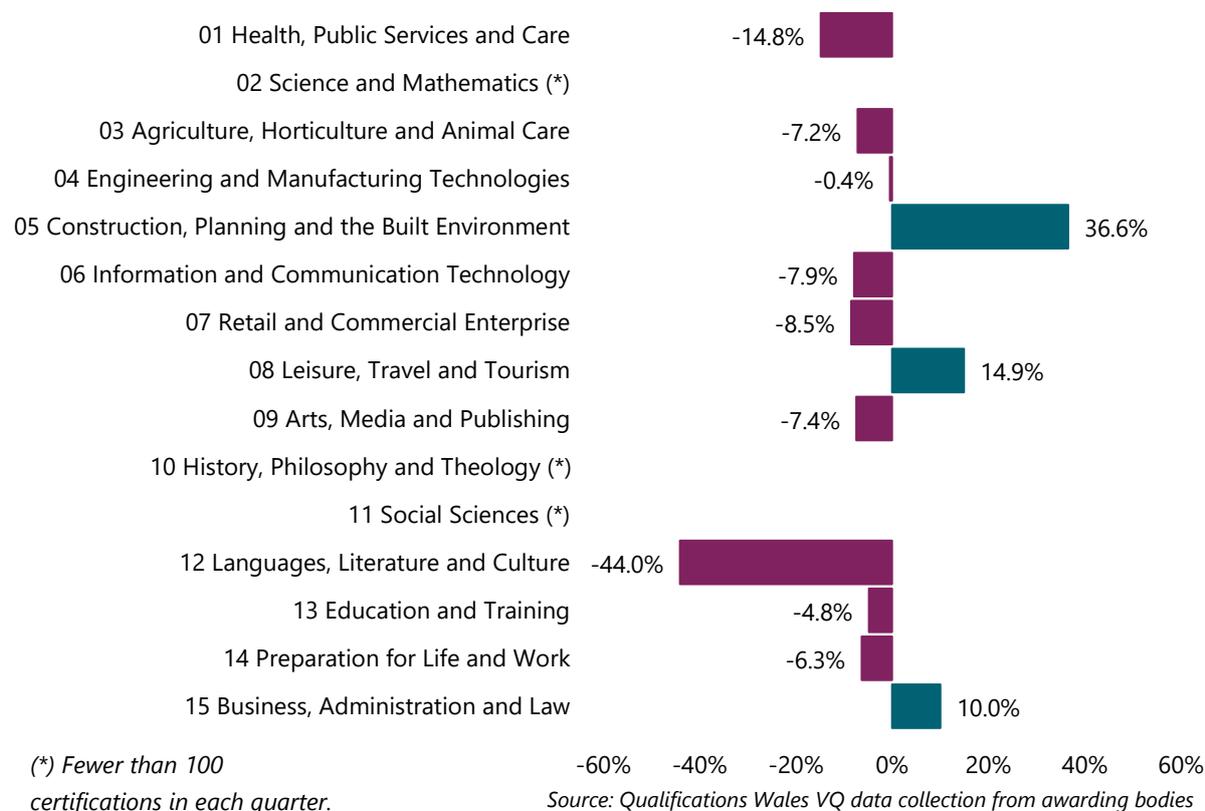


Figure 2 shows that 'Construction' had the largest proportional increase (36.6%) in certificates awarded in 2019 Q1 this year compared to 2018 Q1. The only other two sector subject areas to see an increase were 'Leisure, Travel and Tourism' (up 14.9%) and 'Business Administration and Law' (up 10.0%).

The 'Languages, Literature and Culture' sector had a large proportional decrease with the number of certificates falling by 44.0% in 2019 Q1 compared to 2018 Q1. This was primarily due to the discontinuation of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Skills for Life qualifications. Of sector subject areas with at least 100 certificates in each quarter, 'Health, Public Services and Care' saw the next biggest proportional decrease (down 14.8%).

CERTIFICATES BY LEVEL

Table 3: Number of certificates awarded by level

Level	Quarterly Comparison		Annual Comparison	
	2018 Q1	2019 Q1	Apr 2017 to Mar 2018	Apr 2018 to Mar 2019
Entry Level	3,495	4,810	33,535	33,750
Level 1	8,610	8,210	62,585	57,465
Level 1/2	25	25	64,380	63,830
Level 2	23,970	21,685	154,050	137,995
Level 3	15,360	14,250	95,680	108,330
Level 4	990	865	4,345	4,685
Level 5	975	720	4,865	4,070
Level 6	130	90	770	860
Level 7	210	105	360	300
Level 8	0	0	*	*
Total	53,765	50,760	420,575	411,285

Source: Qualifications Wales VQ data collection from awarding bodies

Table 3 shows the number of certifications during quarter 1, compared to the same quarter in 2018, and during the last 12 months, compared to the previous 12 months. The three levels with the largest number of certifications in 2019 Q1 (level 1, level 2 and level 3) accounted for 87.0% of the total number of certificates for the quarter. The same levels accounted for 73.9% of the annual total.

Most levels saw a decrease in the number of certifications awarded in 2019 Q1 compared to 2018 Q1 with the largest proportional decrease occurring at level 7 (down 50.5%). Excluding levels with less than 100 certifications, the only level to see a quarterly increase was entry level (up 37.7%).

The decrease over the last 12 months is driven by less level 1 (down 5,120) and level 2 (down 16,055) certificates being awarded, although this is partially being offset by a large increase in level 3 (up 12,650) certificates. The increase in level 3 qualifications is likely related to Welsh Government shifting their policy focus towards higher 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

AwardingBody	Apr 2017 to Mar 2018	Apr 2018 to Mar 2019	Rank Apr 2017 to Mar 2018	Rank Apr 2018 to Mar 2019	Rank Change
WJEC-CBAC	85,960	91,620	2	1	↑ +1
City and Guilds of London Institute	89,490	86,525	1	2	↓ -1
Pearson Education Ltd	62,570	53,270	3	3	→ +0
Highfield Qualifications	29,685	32,655	4	4	→ +0
Agored Cymru	12,245	17,675	7	5	↑ +2
Qualsafe Awards	11,130	13,085	9	6	↑ +3
OCR	14,455	10,640	5	7	↓ -2
Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music	11,320	10,145	8	8	→ +0
Trinity College London	7,080	9,320	11	9	↑ +2
Excellence, Achievement & Learning Limited	8,575	8,475	10	10	→ +0

Source: Qualifications Wales VQ data collection from awarding bodies

Table 4 shows the top ten certifying 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 increase for WJEC-CBAC is primarily explained by more Welsh Baccalaureate certifications being awarded in the most recent 12 months (see Table 6). City and Guilds of London Institute drop to second place having issued 2,960 less certifications in the last 12 months compared to the previous 12 months (down 3.3%).

Agored Cymru saw an increase of 5,435 certificates (up 44.4%) issued over the last 12 months, moving up two 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 entry level, level 1 and level 2 qualifications. Qualsafe Awards were also notable risers, moving up three ranks to sixth having awarded 1,960 (up 17.6%) additional certificates over the last 12 months.

Pearson Education Ltd remains at third place but has seen a fall of 9,300 certificates issued in the last 12 months (down 14.9%). This change is largely driven by decreases in certificates issued for level 1/2 and level 2 qualifications.

Cambridge Assessment English dropped out of the top 10 having awarded 10,030 fewer certifications over the last 12 months to the end of this quarter, compared to the previous 12 months (down 76.9%). Most of this decrease is due to the discontinuation of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Skills for Life qualifications.

TOP CERTIFICATING QUALIFICATIONS

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

Qualification	2018 Q1	2019 Q1
Highfield Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering (RQF)	2,130	2,100
Highfield Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work (RQF)	1,885	1,955
QA Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work (RQF)	1,330	1,290
Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International Speaking and Listening (Entry 3) (GESE Grade 5) (B1.1)	0	965
City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Digital Literacy Skills	1,270	920
City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Application of Number Skills	985	750
City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Communication Skills	695	740
BSC Level 1 Award in Health and Safety in a Construction Environment	635	685
Highfield Level 3 Award in First Aid at Work (RQF)	565	605
Highfield Level 3 Award in Paediatric First Aid (RQF)	425	525

Source: Qualifications Wales 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 qualification with the highest number of certificates was Highfield Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering which saw 2,100 certifications in 2019 Q1, a decrease of 1.5% on the same quarter in 2018. Highfield Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid Work (RQF) and QA Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work (QCF) retained their place as the second and third most awarded qualifications respectively in quarter 1. Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International Speaking and Listening (Entry 3) (GESE Grade 5) (B1.1), a Trinity College London qualification, was a new entrant as the fourth most awarded qualification in 2019 Q1.

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

Qualification Title	Apr 2017 to Mar 2018	Apr 2018 to Mar 2019
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
Highfield Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering (RQF)	3,810	8,395
Highfield Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work (RQF)	3,200	6,685
City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Digital Literacy Skills	5,470	5,865
QA Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work (RQF)	3,025	5,225
City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Application of Number Skills	5,095	4,235
City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Communication Skills	3,845	4,145

Source: Qualifications Wales VQ data collection from awarding bodies

Table 6 shows the top ten qualifications with the highest number of certifications in 2018 Q2 – 2019 Q1 compared to 2017 Q2 – 2018 Q1.

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 Baccaulaureate) at the top with 26,960 certificates. 2017 was the first year in which this qualification, along with the WJEC National/Foundation Welsh Baccaulaureate, 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 4,585 (up 120.3%) and 3,485 (up 109.0%) 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 Qualifications¹² 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 Wales¹³.

¹² <https://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>.

¹³ <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 2017¹⁴ which named Qualifications Wales as one of the bodies that are in scope of the Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007¹⁵. 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 1 2019 (January – March 2019) have been submitted to Qualifications Wales by awarding bodies. The certifications are only for learners who were wholly or mainly assessed at 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 Qualifications¹⁶.

Prior to quarter 4 2017, Wales data for vocational and other qualifications was collected and reported by Ofqual. Between quarter 4 2017 and quarter 4 2018 (inclusive), Ofqual collected Wales data for vocational and other qualifications and provided it to Qualifications Wales to allow production of this quarterly report. As of quarter 1 2019, this data is being collected and reported by Qualifications Wales. In April 2019, Ofqual informed awarding bodies of their intention to collect vocational quarterly certificates data for all UK regions, and so will continue to collect Wales vocational qualification data for their own internal purposes¹⁷.

Qualifications Wales and Ofqual conducted parallel vocational data collections for quarter 4 2018 and quarter 1 2019. The purpose of this was to provide a transition period during which we could test our data collection systems and quality assure the data we collected by comparing it with the data collected by Ofqual. Analysis of any differences between the two collections was used to inform engagement with awarding bodies to assure and improve the quality of the data published in this

¹⁴ http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2017/1142/pdfs/wsi_20171142_mi.pdf

¹⁵ https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/18/pdfs/ukpga_20070018_en.pdf

¹⁶ <https://www.jcq.org.uk/>

¹⁷ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/797024/RO65.2019_international_certificates_and_qualifications.pdf

report. Some awarding bodies have made changes to the vocational data they submit as a result of this work. It is uncertain whether awarding bodies will replicate these changes in their data submission to Ofqual; therefore, we are not in a position to determine the extent to which collecting the data ourselves has impacted upon reported certification volumes. Due to methodological issues with the Wales certification data submitted by City & Guilds, we have used the data that City & Guilds reported to Ofqual in the production of this release.

Differences between the certification totals we collect and what Ofqual collect from awarding bodies are to be expected due to slight differences in the coverage of each collection. A small subset of Wales-only other regulated qualifications do not appear on either the Ofqual register or on QiW and would have been missed from Ofqual's historical vocational data collections for Wales. The Wales vocational data that we collect will no longer include qualifications that have been surrendered from the scope of our recognition but are still listed on the Ofqual register. Our qualification templates are produced using QiW and the list of other regulated qualifications and will therefore provide complete coverage of the regulated vocational and other qualifications landscape in Wales.

Information on approved or designated qualifications offered in Wales is available on the Qualifications in Wales (QiW) database¹⁸.

Methodology

Qualification characteristics included in this report, such as subject sector area (SSA) and level, are based on the Ofqual register and QiW database. For quarters up to and including quarter 4 2018, Ofqual's data collection template allowed 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 were taken off QiW database, and where awarding bodies submit data using a QAN, qualification characteristics were taken from the Ofqual register.

The adjusted format of our data collection templates will allow only one data submission per qualification from quarter 1 2019. This will remove the risk of awarding bodies double counting certificates by erroneously submitting the same certification against both the QiW number and QAN. As we are only collecting data for qualifications listed on QiW or our other regulated list, all qualification characteristics from quarter 1 2019 onwards will be taken from our database.

¹⁸ <https://www.qiw.wales/?lang=en>

Characteristics from the Ofqual register will only be used for historical data for qualifications not listed on our database.

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 1 (January – March 2019) 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

While we aim to collect certifications relating to learners who were assessed wholly or mainly at a centre based in Wales, it is possible that non-Welsh learners may be included in the data that some awarding bodies submit. A scenario where this might arise is the awarding of a certification to a distance learner (i.e. there is no centre). We have instructed awarding bodies to use the learner address in the absence of a centre, although this information is not always collected from learners.

Ofqual have collected historical 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 had 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 the same way Ofqual have collected data for previous quarters. Ofqual pre-populate their data collection forms with qualifications from their register and our QiW database; we have followed a similar strategy, populating templates using our QiW database and an other regulated list of qualifications that is kept up-to-date by awarding bodies. For this publication we have removed qualifications by awarding bodies that we do not recognise from historical data. 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. 1st 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 where available, 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
Pearson EDI Certificates	1210	1415	1835	1050	1385	1480	1745	1905	1205	1085
WJEC-EDEXCEL Certificates	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
Pearson EDI Certificates	345	420	205	140	45	30	10	0	0	0
WJEC-EDEXCEL Certificates	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Quality assurance

Now that Qualifications Wales are collecting this data ourselves, we have the responsibility for quality assuring it. Detail around the processes we follow to quality assure this data are covered in our Interim Statement on Statistical Quality and Quality Assurance of Administrative Data Sources¹⁹ document. Historical data has been subject to Ofqual’s quality assurance procedures, which are carried out as explained in the Quality Assurance Framework for Statistical Publications²⁰ 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 release²¹.

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 policy²², 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

¹⁹ <https://www.qualificationswales.org/media/3723/interim-statement-on-statistical-quality-and-quality-assurance-of-administrative-data-sources.pdf>

²⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofquals-statistics-policies-and-procedures>

²¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-vocational-qualifications>

²² <https://www.qualificationswales.org/english/publications/interim-statistical-outputs-policy>

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 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 England²³.

Research and Statistics published by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment (CCEA)²⁴.

Statistics published by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)²⁵.

Statistics published by Eurostat²⁶.

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 website²⁷.

The QiW database²⁸ gives information on approved and designated qualifications which are eligible for public funding in Wales.

Next update

June 2019 (provisional).

User feedback

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

²³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-vocational-qualifications>.

²⁴ http://ccea.org.uk/more/research_statistics.

²⁵ <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/48269.8311.html>.

²⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/education-and-training/overview>.

²⁷ <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/?upcoming=true&lang=en>

²⁸ <https://www.qiw.wales/?lang=en>

© (2019) Permission is granted to reproduce provided reference is made to Qualifications Wales as the original source.