



Revisions and Corrections Policy for Statistical Releases

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Version Control

This Revisions and Corrections Policy for Statistical Releases was published in December 2019.

Feedback on this policy is welcomed at any time. Please send any comments to policy@qualificationswales.org

General principles of the Revisions and Corrections Policy for Statistical Outputs

This document describes how Qualifications Wales (“we”) will publish statistical outputs relating to data that we collect on regulated qualifications. We collect data from recognised awarding bodies both for monitoring and compliance purposes and for thematic and sector reviews, as outlined in our document ‘Policy Statement on Reviews of Qualifications and of the Qualifications System’ and as specified in our [Standard Conditions of Recognition](#). In November 2017 we were named as producers of official statistics¹. This requires us to comply with the relevant legislation^{2,3} and regulation⁴ for official statistics.

We support the qualifications system through delivery of a range of statistical outputs and services. We do this by:

- Building and maintaining confidence in our statistical staff and processes that produce statistics and data. We achieve this by:
 - Building capacity, capability and engagement;
 - Producing statistics that are trusted and thus authoritative.
- Ensuring that our statistics fit their intended uses, are based on appropriate data and methods, and are not materially misleading. We achieve this by:
 - Producing statistics that are relevant to the range of uses to which they are put;
 - Making available analysis that is timely and based on robust methodology;
 - Striking the right balance between users’ diverse and sometimes competing needs;
 - Anticipating and responding to changes in users’ needs.
- Ensuring that our statistics and data are useful, easy to access, remain relevant, and support understanding of important issues. We achieve this by:
 - Publishing data which are accessible, consistent and fully documented;
 - Producing statistics that are presented and disseminated in ways that suit the wider community.

¹National Assembly for Wales, (November 2017) *The Official Statistics (Wales) Order 2017* [Online]. Available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2017/1142/introduction/made> (Accessed 11 June 019).

²National Assembly for Wales, (October 2009) *The Pre-release Access to Official Statistics (Wales) Order 2009* [Online]. Available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2009/2818/introduction/made> (Accessed 11 June 019).

³Parliament, (July 2007) *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007* [Online]. Available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/18/introduction> (Accessed 11 June 019).

⁴UK Statistics Authority, (February 2008) *Code of Practice for Statistics* [Online]. Available at <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/> (Accessed 11 June 019).

“Statistical Outputs” refers to all forms of publications which contain data that we collect in relation to qualifications and the qualifications system in Wales. These outputs may also contain some data that we do not collect but that is collected by other bodies. Our outputs take several different forms, including:

- Regular statistical releases containing routinely collected data;
- Experimental or ad hoc statistical releases and responses to Freedom of Information requests;
- Thematic reports;
- Briefings, bulletins;
- Infographics and visualisations.

Our approach to producing Statistical Outputs is set out in our Statistical Outputs Policy.

We aim to minimise revisions to our statistical outputs but sometimes changes are unavoidable. These changes come in two forms:

- **Revisions** – these are generally, but not always, planned, and are the result either of improvements in methods or of additional data after the date of publication.
- **Corrections** – these are unplanned and occur when errors in either the data or the methodology are found after release of the publication.

We comply with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Statistics. This policy follows the best practice set out in line with the ‘Trustworthiness’ and ‘Quality’ pillars of the Code of Practice for Statistics.

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Revisions

Planned Revisions (due to methodological changes, re-basing or the availability of 'final' data)

1. When considering planned revisions, the timeliness gained from issuing provisional data will always be balanced with the potential confusion and damage to users' confidence that such revisions may cause.
2. All outputs that include statistics subject to planned revisions will state whether the statistics are provisional or final and highlight any revisions. If there are any revisions, it will state:
 - what they are;
 - why they have been made (a general statement rather than a description of each individual change); and
 - how they affect any previously published commentary or interpretation.
3. As far as possible the revised statistics will be released to the same audiences and via the same media as the original release. The same supporting information will be provided.
4. Non-trivial methodological changes, and their likely effect, will be announced before publication of any resulting revisions, to give users time to absorb the methodological issues first.

Consistent time series

5. Efforts will be made to provide users with access to the most up-to-date time series. Where appropriate a time series will accompany each Release or Bulletin.
6. When revisions are made, as much consistent back data as practicable will be provided, subject to avoiding any further delay in the release of final statistics.

Corrections

Unplanned revisions (due to errors)

7. When errors occur, we will be open and transparent about the need for any corrections. We will assess the extent to which the error could affect interpretation of the publication and take appropriate actions.
8. As soon as unplanned revisions, small errors or larger errors are identified in relation to an output, users will be notified via the output webpage and social media account and via email to relevant policy contacts.
9. The revised statistics will be released as soon as practicable. In most cases unplanned revisions will be handled by producing a revised release covering the same data and time periods as the original. The revised data for previous time periods will be clearly marked as such.
10. As far as possible the revised statistics will be released to the same audiences and via the same media. The same supporting information will be provided.

Small errors with minimal impact:

11. When small errors occur that we deem to have minimal potential impact, we will correct the corresponding statistical release page (the web page that the publication is found on) and include a statement on the nature of the changes made.
12. If the error is not substantial, for example a typographical error, the document will simply be corrected and re-posted to the Internet.

Larger errors:

13. When we identify larger errors, we will repopulate the web page with the correct figures – where that page has summary information – and place a note on it that explains the error.
14. If the errors are substantial a notification will be issued via our website and social media accounts to alert users while the revised statistics are being prepared.

Symbols to be used

15. In cases where an entire table is provisional or is a revised version of a previously published table, the term “provisional or “revised” will be included in the table title, and no symbols will be used in the body of the table.
16. The following symbols will be used to denote provisional and revised data. No other symbols will be used.
 - “p” for “provisional”; and
 - “r” for “revised” (to apply to all corrections, whether planned or unplanned).
17. Revisions will generally be denoted at a cell level using the symbol “r” in any table containing revisions. In cases where the revision applies to most cells in an entire row or column of data, an alternative approach will be to mark the row or column heading with the symbol “r”, which will be separate from any other footnote applied. The symbol “r” will be removed if the same data are unchanged when published in a subsequent output.
18. Provisional status will generally apply to a subset of data within a table, as given in an entire row or column. The relevant row or column headings will be marked with the symbol “p”, which will be separate from any other footnote applied. The symbol “p” will be removed when data are finalised.
19. Both symbols will be clearly explained, either by means of a footnote to a table making use of them, or in a “notes” section describing all the symbols used in the output.
20. The accepted Welsh translations for these symbols and meanings are as follows:

English	Welsh
provisional (p)	dros dro (p)
revised (r)	diwygiedig (r)
21. The symbols are not translated into (t) or (d) to avoid the need for multiple symbols in bilingual tables.

Communication of revisions

22. The statistical release page for each revised output will have a link to the revisions policy. The webpage will contain:
- a note that identifies any revisions made to that product and the importance of those changes;
 - any indication of the status of the figures – this would indicate whether they are usually subject to revision and in what way.

Pre-release conditions applied to changes

23. In compliance with the relevant legislation and regulation for statistics, some Ministers and officials receive statistical publications before they are published on our website. Where a change is needed it may be subject to the same pre-release conditions as new statistics.
24. We will consult Qualifications Wales Head of Profession for Statistics⁵ before we publish any change that would have a major economic or political impact.

Timeliness of changes

25. Timeliness is a measure of the gap between the date when the data was collected and the date when the final report was published. We try to minimise this gap and publish all outputs at the earliest opportunity. We will balance the need for timeliness against the need to avoid frequent changes.

Keeping a history of changes

26. We keep electronic records of all previous versions of statistics where possible, which are available to users upon request where practicable. To avoid confusion, we only keep the most up-to-date releases on our website.

Analysis of changes

27. We monitor the changes that we make in order to improve our statistical production process and the quality of our statistics, and to identify any systematic bias. If we find any such bias, we will notify our users.

⁵ This is an identifiable member of staff within the Welsh Government.

28. We wish to make our publications widely accessible. Please contact us at statistics@qualificationswales.org if you have any specific accessibility requirements.