



Qualifications Wales Data Project GQ Templates Consultation

Preamble

Since late 2016, we have been considering how best to collect data and publish statistics on regulated qualifications offered in Wales. We have spoken to awarding bodies, other regulators and representative bodies about the possible approaches we could take and the systems and processes we may need to put in place.

We have developed draft templates and a proposed schedule for collecting data on **general qualifications** (GQs) taken by learners in Wales. This consultation seeks your views on the feasibility of our proposed templates and collection schedule for awarding bodies.

We are considering our proposals for the collection of data on vocational qualifications (VQs) separately and they are not part of this consultation. Ofqual will continue to collect and make available data on VQs in Wales for the time being. We will engage with awarding bodies as we consider appropriate in due course, as we develop our proposals further.

Approach

We have two principal aims:

- 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 the Welsh qualification system

To achieve these aims, we must be able to collect, analyse and publish data about qualifications taken in Wales. Timely and reliable data will support effective and targeted regulation and better quality research. It will give a clear and accurate picture of how the Welsh qualifications system is operating and the extent to which it is meeting the needs of learners and other qualification users. Better information will also allow awarding bodies to tailor their provision to the Welsh market. We want to establish an effective and efficient mechanism to collect data from awarding bodies.

Awarding bodies have raised concerns about the burden that data collections can impose and have asked that we are proportionate in our requirements. We have taken these concerns on board in our proposals.

This consultation is intended to get feedback on our proposals and to check they are appropriate, especially in relation to the collection of aggregated or disaggregated data. For

the purpose of this consultation, by 'disaggregated data' we mean data collected at a candidate level (which may include more than one record per candidate), whereas by 'aggregate data' we mean data collected at a higher level than candidate records, for example, counts of candidates at a qualification or unit level.

Options

There is no option of continuing to rely indefinitely on Ofqual to collect data on our behalf. Therefore, there are three possible options:

- a) **We mirror the templates used by Ofqual and proceed to collect a mix of disaggregated candidate level data and aggregated data.** This would mean that awarding bodies would have only one set of collection instructions to follow. However, it would also mean that we had not taken account of the feedback from awarding bodies. It would also be an approach that would not reflect the differences in the GQ market in England and Wales.
- b) **We develop our own approach and regularly collect aggregated data using our own templates.** This would mean that awarding bodies need only provide regular data in aggregated form. It also removes the need for alignment in the data collection approach in England and in Wales.
- c) **We develop our own approach and collect disaggregated data for every element** i.e. collecting all information at a candidate level (where this is applicable to the topic). This would mean that awarding bodies would provide most, if not all, information held in their systems. It would require a costly IT solution and may be considered disproportionate to our requirements.

It is our preference to proceed with option b for our regular collections from awarding bodies.

As a regulator, we require a standard set of data to conduct our regulatory activity. As a research body asking complex questions, we will sometimes seek greater detail. In either case the process of acquiring data needs to be as efficient as possible. Where we require greater detail, including candidate-level data, we will request this on a case-by-case basis. We understand from our engagement with awarding bodies that this approach will be more efficient and more manageable than routinely collecting and storing large amounts of candidate-level data.

We are therefore consulting on our proposal to use the templates provided to deliver this option.

Our proposals for data collection under option b are as follows:

Types of data submission by awarding bodies

- We will require regular submissions of aggregated data from awarding bodies.
- When necessary for research or regulatory purposes, we will require submission of detailed data on a case-by-case basis from awarding bodies. This data may be requested at a candidate level.

- Detailed data to answer research questions may either need to be requested in line with scheduled research activity, or as and when research questions arise. This type of collection will not be made on a standard template, and will come in the form of a tailored requirement. (As much advance notice as possible of the requirement will be provided. Currently there is no pre-determined schedule).
- For our regular collections, we will require that awarding bodies provide us with data for learners entered by centres located in Wales (primarily centre identifiers starting with a '68').

Collection Schedule

We propose to begin collecting GQ data from the 2017/18 academic year, starting in October 2017 with entries into the November 2017 series. In the meantime, Ofqual will continue collecting learner data for the 2016/17 academic year on our behalf.

The key below in Table 1 explains the codes being used for the collection schedules in Table 2 and 3. In the schedules the name of the collection will be followed by the series that it refers to (NOV/JAN/MAR/JUN/ALL), whether the collection is preliminary (P) or final (F), and, if there are multiple templates for the collection, how many templates there are (e.g. X2 is two templates, X4 is 4 templates). Tables 1, 2 and 3 are also published in Excel format alongside this consultation document, along with the proposed templates.

Table 1: Key for interpreting collection schedules

Entries & Awards	Entries and Awards
EntriesYG	Entries by Year Group
RoM	Review of Marking
RoM >1GC	Review of Marking - grade changes of 2 or more
Malpractice	Malpractice
Appeals	Appeals
AccArr	Access Arrangements
ModPap	Modified Papers
SpecCon	Special Consideration
ExtRev	Extended Reviews
O&Tmark	Online & Traditional Marking
E-Assess	E-Assessment

The schedule of data collections that we propose to undertake during the 2017/18 academic year is provided in Table 2 below. This schedule does not include collections that Ofqual will undertake on our behalf in that period (all VQ collections, and remaining GQ collections for awards made in the 2016/17 academic year). We will aim to schedule each collection to coincide with Ofqual's data collection for the same topic. We are, however, proposing to collect some of the data relating to the January and March awarding series at the same time as collections on the same topic relating to the June series. Those collections are represented on Table 2, rather than on Table 1, for the awarding series falling in the 2017/18 academic year. After this consultation exercise, we will work with the relevant awarding bodies and Ofqual to agree more precise dates for the collections.

The names of the templates in the collection schedule in Tables 2 and 3 refer to the proposed templates that we are consulting on. The templates and the fields included within them can be found on the consultation website in Excel format. The collection schedules in Tables 2 and 3 are arranged with three rows per month. The first row contains collections due in the first third of the month (i.e. 1st-10th), the second row has collections due in the middle third of the month (i.e. 11th-20th) and the third row has collections due in the final third of the month (i.e. 21st-31st). There are multiple columns per month to account for months where more than one collection is scheduled.

Table 2: Our proposed GQ data collection schedule during the 2017/18 academic year (September 2017 to August 2018)

Qualifications Wales GQ Collection Schedule 2017/18 (26 collections)											
September			October			November					
			EntriesYG NOV (P)								
			Entries NOV (P)	EntriesYG NOV (F)							
December			January			February					
			Entries & Awards NOV			ROM X4 Nov (P)					
Entries JAN (P)											
March			April			May					
Entries (F) & Awards JAN			Entries MAR/JUN (P)								
			EntriesYG JUN (F)								
ROM X4 Nov (F)			Appeals NOV (P)								
June			July			August					
RoM x4 JAN (F)			ExtRev NOV			Entries (F) & Awards MAR/JUN					
						ModPap ALL					
			Appeals NOV (F)			AccArr ALL					

Table 3 shows the schedule of GQ collections that we propose to undertake during the 2018/19 academic year. It contains collections relating to both the 2017/18 and 2018/19 academic years. The collections relating to the 2017/18 academic year include some collections relating to the November 2017, January 2018 and March 2018 series taking place from September 2018 onwards, after the publication of the June 2018 series results. We intend to run the collection schedule shown in Table 3 in future academic years.

Table 3: Our proposed GQ data collection schedule during the 2018/19 academic year (September 2018 to August 2019)

Qualifications Wales GQ Collection Schedule 2018/19 (47 collections)						
September		October			November	
ExtRev JAN		E-Assess ALL	O&TMark ALL	EntriesYG NOV (P)		
RoM x4 JUN (P)		SpecCon x2 ALL			Appeals JUN (P)	Malpractice x2 ALL
Appeals JAN (F)		Entries NOV (P)	EntriesYG NOV (F)		RoM x4 MAR/JUN (F)	RoM >1GC ALL ROM Grade challenged ALL
December		January			February	
		Entries & Awards (F) NOV			ExtRev MAR/JUN	RoM x4 NOV (P)
Entries JAN (P)					Appeals MAR/JUN (F)	
March		April			May	
Entries (F) & Awards JAN		Entries MAR/JUN (P)				
		EntriesYG JUN (F)				
RoM x4 NOV (F)		Appeals NOV (P)				
June		July			August	
RoM x4 JAN (F)		ExtRev NOV			Entries (F) & Awards MAR/JUN	
					ModPap ALL	
		Appeals NOV (F)			AccArr ALL	

Transition

We anticipate that the types of general qualifications included within our regular submission templates will be the same as those qualifications specified in Ofqual's current collection guidance. In summary, we will collect data for learners entered by centres in Wales for:

- GCSEs
- GCEs
- The Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate
- Level 1/2/3 certificates in general qualifications, (alternatives or complements to GCSEs and GCEs for example level 1/2 certificates, Extended Project qualifications)

We will only collect data on qualifications that we regulate. This includes '[approved](#)', '[designated](#)' and 'other regulated' qualifications. In other words, all qualifications matching the descriptions above that an awarding body recognised by us offers in Wales and for which the awarding body has not specifically surrendered from the scope of recognition.

Data relating to certifications on the reformed Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate (SCC) are currently being returned to Ofqual as part of the quarterly vocational qualifications template. From the point at which we start collecting GQ data, we will collect data on Welsh Baccalaureate SCC using our GQ templates.

Welsh-medium Assessment

Through our data collections, we want to find out more about the demand for, and provision of, Welsh-medium assessment. This data has not been collected previously. Therefore, we propose adding new fields to the 'entries' data collection to capture cash-in entry codes and unit entry codes. This should tell us more about how many candidates are entered for Welsh-medium assessment.

In future, we may wish to collect data on the language in which candidates respond to questions. We know from speaking to awarding bodies that this is not something on which reliable data is currently available. In the consultation, we ask whether and when it would be possible for this type of data to be collected and what challenges this might present.

Other information on our proposals

Awarding bodies have asked for regulators as far as possible to align their approaches. With this in mind, we have tried to make our templates as similar as possible to those used by Ofqual. Our intention is that awarding bodies will only need to make minor modifications to their existing business processes to be able to provide us, rather than Ofqual, with data relating to qualifications offered in Wales.

- We currently assume that we will collect data on access arrangements in the same way as Ofqual does, with some of the data provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). This will need to be agreed with JCQ, and that process is outside of the scope of this consultation.
- We do not intend to replicate and maintain the 'errata', 'examiner/ moderator posts' and 'missing scripts' collection templates currently used by Ofqual.
- At this time, we do not intend to regularly collect a version of Ofqual's summer awarding templates for GCE and GCSE. If we do require such data from an awarding body for research purposes, we will manage that on a case-by-case basis.
- We do not propose to collect data on candidates entered by centres outside of Wales in any of our GQ collection templates.

Table 4 summarises the differences between the new templates proposed by Qualifications Wales and Ofqual's current templates (as of the June 2017 series). Some are the same as, or similar to, Ofqual's templates, others are more substantially different.

'Similar' templates: These are indicated by an 'N' in the second column of Table 4. They are very similar or identical to the templates that Ofqual are currently using (as of the summer 2017 series). The main differences, in addition to the codes added to the entries, late entries and award template, are the removal of the 'country' field (not required as all data returned to Qualifications Wales should be for learners in Wales) and the addition of the QW approval/designation number from QiW.

'Substantially different' templates: These are indicated by a 'Y' in the second column of Table 4. These templates include substantial differences to Ofqual's summer 2017 templates. The main difference across all these templates is the level of data aggregation required. We are particularly interested in feedback on these templates.

Information on the current Ofqual templates is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/submitting-data-to-ofqual>

Table 4 Relationship between our proposed GQ templates and current Ofqual templates

Template(s)	Substantial difference from Ofqual?	Difference(s)	Rationale
Entries (Entries, Late Entries and Awards) (Ofqual template reference: T1)	N	Still aggregate level counts, but with the inclusion of qualification, specification and entry codes; data to be reported at the lowest applicable levels for entry in a qualification i.e. entries reported down to component and sub-unit level even when a candidate is not certificating.	An enhancement to allow a more comprehensive understanding of entries. This avoids the need to ask for entry data in other templates and allows data collected for other themes, such as reviews of marking and malpractice, to be put into the context of entries.
Entries by year group	N	Same as Ofqual template	
Referrals	N	Same as Ofqual template	
Modified Papers (T15)	N	Same as Ofqual template	
Extended Reviews (T8a)	N	Same as Ofqual template	
E-Assessment	N	Same as Ofqual template	
Online Vs Traditional Marking (T5)	N	Same as Ofqual template	
Review of Marking (EaRs)	Y	Ofqual use one candidate level collection template. We propose a total of six aggregated templates: Four aggregated unit/sub-component level templates for each service type. Plus two templates to collect grade changes of two grades or more and total qualification grades challenged.	The proposed templates are sufficient to meet regular statistical analysis and publication needs, including the replication of Ofqual's Official Statistics publications to date, whilst also maintaining consistency across collections at an aggregate level.

Template(s)	Substantial difference from Ofqual?	Difference(s)	Rationale
Appeals	Y	<p>Ofqual are using one new (from June 2017) candidate level template.</p> <p>Our proposal is for one aggregate unit/sub-unit level template.</p>	<p>The proposed templates are sufficient to meet regular statistical analysis and publication needs, including the replication of Ofqual's Official Statistics publications to date, whilst also maintaining consistency across collections at an aggregate level.</p>
Malpractice	Y	<p>Ofqual are using one new (from June 2017) candidate level template.</p> <p>Our proposal is for two aggregated templates collecting centre and candidate level malpractice with entry and unit/sub-unit code fields.</p>	<p>The proposed templates are sufficient to meet regular statistical analysis and publication needs, including the replication of Ofqual's Official Statistics publications to date, whilst also maintaining consistency across collections at an aggregate level.</p>
Special Consideration	Y	<p>Ofqual are using one from (June 2017) candidate level template.</p> <p>Our proposal is for two aggregated templates collecting totals and tariffs, at a unit/sub-unit level. Data in the totals template will be requested by disadvantage category.</p>	<p>The proposed templates are sufficient to meet regular statistical analysis and publication needs, including the replication of Ofqual's Official Statistics publications to date, whilst also maintaining consistency across collections at an aggregate level.</p>

Data submission process and guidance

We will produce guidance for awarding bodies on how to complete each collection template. We will ask awarding bodies for feedback on our guidance before we require them to start using a template.

We will require awarding bodies to submit data to us using QiW rather than via Ofqual's Portal. We expect to use the same data format as required by Ofqual (.csv format).

Further Information

How to respond	<p>Please respond to this consultation using the online form.</p> <p>This makes it easier for us to collate and analyse the responses we receive.</p> <p>Alternatively, you can email your response to the address below.</p> <p>You can access the online form and PDF version of the consultation on our website at www.qualificationswales.org</p>
Closing date	You must submit your response by 18:00 on Friday 15 September 2017.
Contact details	For further information, email: dataproject@qualificationswales.org

<p>Data protection</p>	<p>Qualifications Wales will analyse and consider all responses received to this consultation. A summary report of the findings will be published on Qualifications Wales' website. Where appropriate, this report will identify trends in responses and relate these to respondent characteristics.</p> <p>We may also publish responses in full, if it is deemed relevant to the consultation. Respondents will be asked for consent for their name or organisation name, and postal town to be published alongside their response. However, this is not obligatory. If you are happy to be identified, please indicate this in your consultation response by selecting the box in question 13.</p> <p>All personal data held by Qualifications Wales will be retained in accordance with UK Data Protection Law. It will only be used for the purpose of this consultation on our proposed GQ data collection templates.</p> <p>As Qualifications Wales is a public body, all the written material we hold, including any correspondence you send to us, may be considered for release following a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The law does allow us to withhold information under some circumstances. If you have not given consent for your name or organisation name and postal town to be published, this will be considered when responding to requests for information. However, there may be rare instances when we must release this information. In these circumstances, we will endeavour to inform you of this decision.</p>
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Consultation Questions

<p>1. Are our proposals for collecting data on general qualifications for learners entered by centres in Wales clear?</p>
<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If No, please explain what further clarification or information you need:</p>
<p>2. Would you prefer that we...</p>
<p>... implement our proposed templates or a version of them amended as a result of this consultation <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Match Ofqual's current templates <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Collect all GQ data at a disaggregated, candidate level <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Please state the reason(s) for your preference</p>
<p>3. Will providing the data in the proposed templates that are similar to those used by Ofqual present your organisation with significant difficulties?</p> <p>The 'similar' templates are indicated with an 'N' in the second column of Table 4.</p>
<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If Yes, please state which template(s) or data fields would present significant difficulty, and why:</p>
<p>4. Will providing the data in the proposed templates that are substantially different to those used by Ofqual present your organisation with significant difficulties?</p> <p>The 'substantially different' templates are indicated with an 'Y' in the second column of Table 4.</p>
<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If Yes, please state which template(s) or data fields might present significant difficulty, and why:</p>
<p>5. Are there any aspects of the proposed collection templates that you feel could be improved?</p>
<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If Yes, please explain what you feel could be improved:</p>

6. Do you consider the proposed collection schedule to be reasonable and achievable?
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If No, please explain why not:
7. Are there any aspects of the proposed collection schedule that you feel could be improved?
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, please state what you feel could be improved:
8. Please provide feedback on the feasibility of collecting data on the language or languages in which candidates respond to assessment tasks at a component level. What changes, if any, would be required in order to achieve this? How long would such changes take?
9. Any other comments
If you have any comments or questions about the approach proposed, or feel that something has not been explained sufficiently well, please use this space to let us know.
Additional Information
10. If you supply contact details, we may contact you for clarification of your answers. Please see our statement on data protection under Further Information.
Name:

Company:

Email Address:

Postal town:

11. Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of your organisation?

Individual

Organisation

12. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please select the type of organisation below.

Awarding body

Centre

Sector body

Other stakeholder

Other (please specify)

13. We may publish responses in full, if it is deemed relevant to the consultation. In these circumstances, we would publish the name and postal town of the respondent. If you are happy for these details to be published alongside your response, please select 'yes' below. If not, please leave this question blank.

Yes

Next Steps

We will consider and analyse the responses to this consultation, and these will inform the final decisions on the templates and collection schedule that we will introduce.

We will provide feedback in the form of a consultation report.

The ongoing summer awarding and our proposal to collect data on entries to the November 2017 exam series in October 2017 have driven the planning of the end date for this consultation of 15 September 2017. We will prioritise making and communicating consultation decisions on the entries templates.