

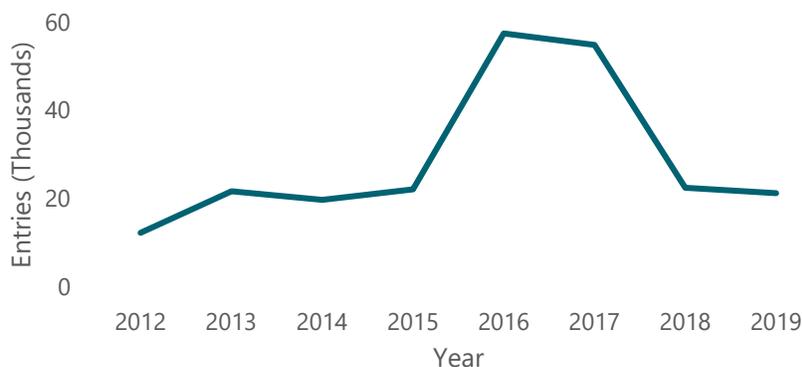
Provisional November GCSE and Level 1/Level 2 Certificates Entries for Wales 2019



05 December 2019

Highlights

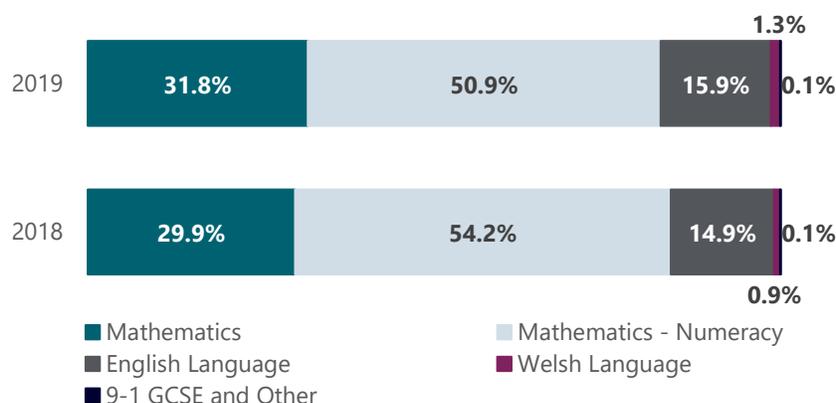
Figure 1: November 2019 entries



Source: Awarding bodies – Entries by Year Group data collection, 2017 to 2019 Qualifications Wales; pre-2017 Ofqual

There were 21,260 entries in November 2019, down 1,195 (5.3%) from November 2018.

Figure 2: November entries by subject



Source: Awarding bodies – Entries by Year Group data collection

Mathematics – Numeracy remains the largest November entry subject (50.9%), down from 54.2% in 2018.

About this release

This statistical release provides information on the number of entries for GCSEs and Level 1/Level 2 Certificates submitted to awarding bodies ahead of the November 2019 series. GCSE entries this November series were for: Mathematics, Mathematics – Numeracy, English Language and Welsh Language.

This release is based on data collected from awarding bodies, accurate to the 23 October 2019.

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INTRODUCTION

Qualifications Wales regulates qualifications, other than degrees, in Wales. Under the Qualifications Wales Act 2015¹, our principal aims are to ensure that qualifications, and the Welsh qualification system, are effective for meeting the reasonable needs of learners in Wales and to promote public confidence in qualifications and in the Welsh qualification system.

From the academic year 2017/18, we have collected and reported on data for Wales for general qualifications. Before the 2017/18 academic year, Ofqual² collected and published data for Wales. Comparisons made in this release are based on data collected and published by us (November 2017 and November 2018) and Ofqual (November 2016 and earlier).

In this release, we present data on the number of entries for GCSEs and Level 1/Level 2 certificates in Wales for the November 2019 exam series. The figures represent the number of entries, rounded to the nearest 5, submitted by awarding bodies by the 25 October 2019, reflecting the position at 23 October. The figures for entries can change daily up to the day of the exams. The entry figures can contain more than one entry for individual learners across subjects.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

There are a number of factors that can influence why November entries for year groups might change over time, for example changes to:

- Population size;
- entry behaviour e.g. when learners are entered for their GCSEs;
- the number of GCSEs being taken on average;
- the types of qualifications being taken in post-16;
- school performance measures.

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

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/changes-to-the-publication-of-geographical-breakdowns-of-data>

The latest available official statistics on the Wales population by age are the population projections published by the Welsh Government³. These show a 1.9% and 0.7% increase in the population of 15- and 16-year-olds respectively in 2019 compared to 2018. In contrast, the potential population of year 12 and above learners has reduced with 3.8% less 17-year-olds and 2.1% less 18-year-olds.

Table 1: Population Changes

Year	15-year olds	16-year olds	17-year olds	18-year olds
2019	33,476	33,002	32,939	34,685
2018	32,843	32,781	34,248	35,447
Change (2019 - 2018)	633	221	-1,309	-762
Percentage change ((2019 - 2018) / 2018)	1.9%	0.7%	-3.8%	-2.1%

Source: Welsh Government

As this release is based on counts of entries at qualification level it is not possible for us to quantify the impact of such factors.

Qualification reforms

Following a Welsh Government review⁴ of qualifications for 14-19-year-olds in 2012, a new set of reformed qualifications have been introduced in Wales. Information about these changes, and a list of subjects affected can be found on our website⁵.

A limited number of subjects are available in the November series compared to the summer series. In November 2019, reformed GCSEs in Mathematics, Mathematics – Numeracy, English Language and Welsh Language are taken by learners in Wales. A small number of other qualifications are also being awarded, including resits for the new England 9-1 GCSEs in Mathematics and English Language.

When we use “reformed GCSEs” we are referring to GCSEs reformed to meet approval criteria specified in Wales.

Performance measures

Welsh Government made an announcement⁶ on 16 October 2017 regarding new rules linked to GCSE entry. The Education Secretary announced that, from summer 2019, only

³ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Projections/National/2016-based/populationprojections-by-year-age>

⁴ https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-02/review-of-qualifications-for-14-to-19-year-olds-in-wales-final-report-and-recommendations_0.pdf

⁵ <https://qualificationswales.org/english/qualifications/gcses-and-a-levels/gq-reform/what-subjects-are-available/>

⁶ <https://gov.wales/changes-early-entry-exams-announced-kirsty-williams>

a learner's first entry to a GCSE examination will count towards school performance measures. Previously the best grade achieved counted. The announcement means that first grades achieved by learners in year 10 or below will be counted towards performance measures.

Recent changes to performance measures may still be impacting on the number of entries for GCSEs November 2019. From 2017, a maximum of two non-GCSE qualifications counted towards all threshold-based measures published by the Welsh Government. Additionally, GCSE English Literature and GCSE Welsh Literature qualifications counted towards the literacy elements of the level 2 inclusive or the capped 9 points score.

There have been other changes made to the calculation of the capped 9 performance measure in 2019. The number of reserved slots for literacy, numeracy and science GCSEs has been reduced from five to three and there will therefore be six unreserved slots for other qualifications that are eligible for public funding in Wales. In the literacy slot, the 'best of the first' grades achieved in the English Language, English Literature, Welsh Language or Welsh Literature GCSE will count. In the numeracy slot, the 'best of the first' grades achieved in the Mathematics or Mathematics-Numeracy GCSE will count.

STATISTICS

GCSE ENTRIES

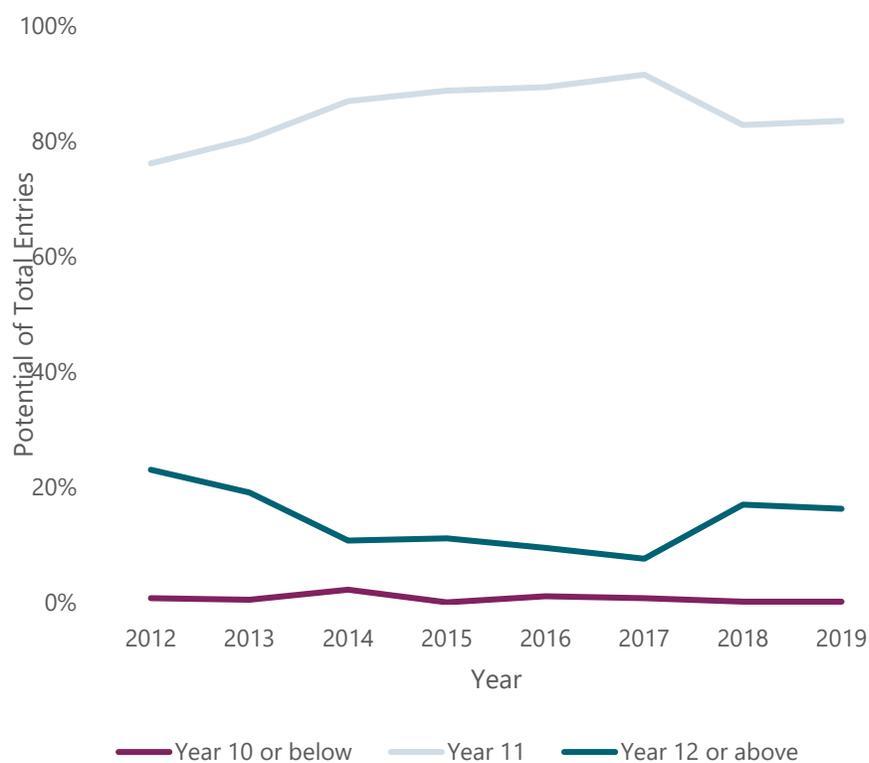
Table 2: GCSE November 2019 entries by year group

GCSE Subject	Year 9 or below	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13 or above	Total
Mathematics	10	15	5,215	1,015	495	6,750
Mathematics - Numeracy	*	10	10,545	200	65	10,825
English Language	0	5	1,725	1,225	425	3,380
Welsh	0	0	260	15	*	280
9-1 GCSE	0	0	0	15	10	25
Total	10	35	17,745	2,470	995	21,255

Source: Awarding bodies - Entries by Year Group collection, as at 23 October 2019, Qualifications Wales

There were 21,255 GCSE entries for the November 2019 series, 21,230 (99.9%) of which were for reformed GCSEs. Qualifications included in the '9-1 GCSE' category include resits of new England 9-1 GCSEs in English Language and Mathematics. These qualifications can be taken in independent schools.

Figure 3: GCSE November entries by year group



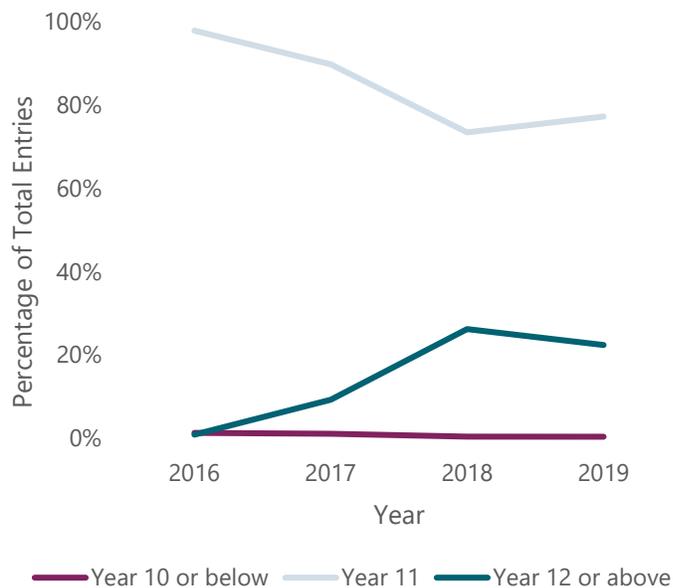
Source: Awarding bodies - Entries by Year Group data collection, 2017 to 2019 Qualifications Wales; pre-2017 Ofqual

The majority (17,745, 83.5%) of November 2019 GCSE entry was accounted for by Year 11 learners, up 0.7 percentage points compared to last year. About 1 in 6 November GCSE entries were for learners returning to resit a qualification (Year 12 or above) while GCSE entry for Year 10 or below remained relatively rare (0.2%).

Reformed GCSE subject entries by Year group, November 2019

GCSE Mathematics and GCSE Mathematics – Numeracy

Figure 4: GCSE Mathematics November entries by Year group

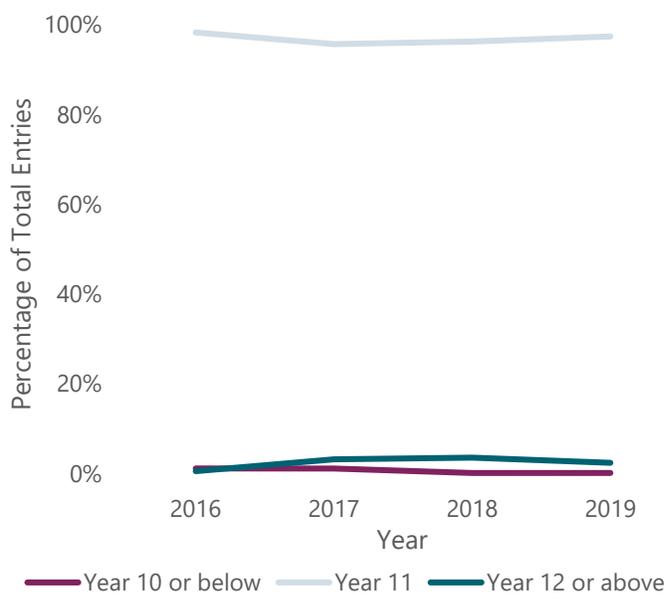


Source: Awarding bodies – Entries by Year Group data collection, 2017 to 2019 Qualifications Wales; pre-2017 Ofqual

There were 6,750 entries for GCSE Mathematics in November 2019, up 30 (0.4%) on the November 2018 exam series.

Year 11 learners accounted for over three quarters (77.3%) of November 2019 entries for GCSE Mathematics. Learners returning to resit the qualification (Year 12 or above) made up the majority of the remaining entries (22.4%) while entry from Year 10 or below continues to be very low (0.4%).

Figure 5: GCSE Mathematics – Numeracy November entries by Year group



Source: Awarding bodies – Entries by Year Group data collection, 2017 to 2019 Qualifications Wales; pre-2017 Ofqual

November 2019 featured 10,825 entries for GCSE Mathematics – Numeracy, down 1,345 (11.0%) compared to the November 2018 exam series.

Most (97.4%) of the November 2019 entries for GCSE Mathematics – Numeracy were for Year 11 learners. The proportion of entries accounted for by Year 12 or above learners returning to resit GCSE Mathematics – Numeracy is notably lower (2.4%) compared to GCSE Mathematics.

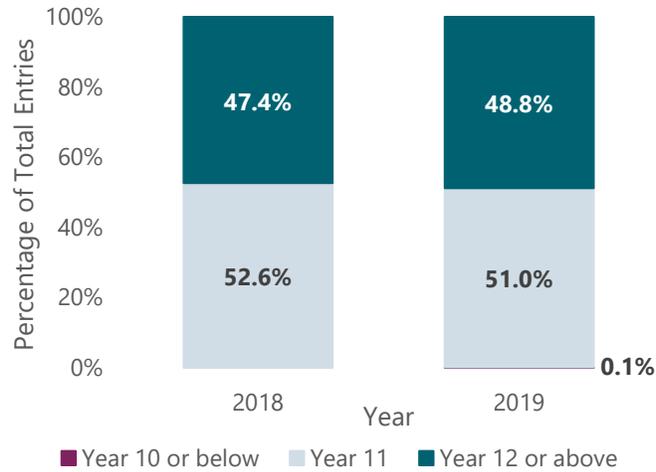
Table 3: GCSE Mathematics and Mathematics – Numeracy November entries by Year group

	Year 9 or below	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13 or above	Total
GCSE Mathematics						
2019	10	15	5,215	1,015	495	6,750
2018	10	15	4,935	1,125	635	6,720
2017	*	230	20,350	1,500	590	22,675
2016	0	295	22,575	175	25	23,070
GCSE Mathematics - Numeracy						
2019	*	10	10,545	200	65	10,825
2018	*	20	11,715	340	95	12,170
2017	*	220	18,880	495	130	19,730
2016	0	335	28,705	145	15	29,205

Source: Awarding bodies – Entries by Year Group data collection, 2017 to 2019 Qualifications Wales; pre-2017 Ofqual

GCSE English Language

Figure 6: GCSE English Language November entries by Year group



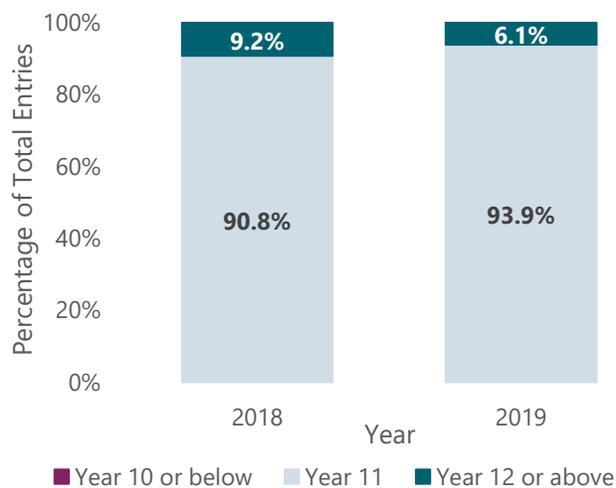
Source: Awarding bodies – Entries by Year Group data collection

There were 3,380 entries in November 2019, an increase of 1.0%. Of these, 1,725 (51.0% of all entries) were from Year 11 learners, down from 1,760 (52.6% of all entries) last November.

1,650 entries (48.8% of all entries) were from Year 12 or above, up from 1,585 (47.4% of all entries) last November. In both years entries for Year 10 or below accounted for 0.1% or less of total entries.

GCSE Welsh Language

Figure 7: GCSE Welsh Language November entries by Year group



Source: Awarding bodies – Entries by Year Group data collection

There were 280 November entries for GCSE Welsh Language in November 2019, an increase of 42.6%. 93.9% of these were from Year 11 learners, an increase compared to 90.8% last November. 15 entries (6.1% of all entries) were from Year 12 or above; proportionally fewer compared with November 2018 (9.2%). In both years entries for Year 10 or below accounted for less than 0.1% of total entries.

LEVEL 1/LEVEL 2 CERTIFICATE ENTRIES

The total number of entries for Level 1/Level 2 certificate entries in November 2019 for Wales are too low to disclose for this release, in line with our interim statistical outputs policy⁷.

⁷ <https://qualificationswales.org/media/2860/171018-interim-statistical-outputs-policy.pdf>

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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.

GCSEs

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

Cash - in

Schools and colleges enter learners who are completing a qualification and want to claim their final grade in that exam session.

Year 10

Learners who are aged 15 by 31 August of the relevant academic year.

Year 11

Learners who are aged 16 by 31 August of the relevant academic year.

Year 12

Learners who are aged 17 by 31 August of the relevant academic year.

Centre

A body undertaking the delivery of an assessment (and potentially other activities) to learners on behalf of an awarding body. Centres are typically educational institutions, training providers, or employers.

Linear

Linear GCSEs are designed so that all assessment-in a subject is completed at the end of the programme of learning. This means that every time a pupil is entered by their school or college to be awarded a grade, they need to sit all assessment components for the qualification (examinations, and for some subjects, other forms of controlled assessment).

Unitised

Unitised qualifications are designed so that assessment units can be taken by learners at different points during the course, with a final grade 'cashed-in' at the end of the programme of learning once a pupil has completed all units. For GCSE, learners must complete a minimum amount of the assessment for a qualification in the series where they are cashing in.

BACKGROUND NOTES

On 21 November 2017 the National Assembly for Wales approved the Official Statistics (Wales) Order 2017⁸ which named Qualifications Wales as one of the bodies that are in scope of the Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007⁹. Qualifications Wales operates in compliance with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Official Statistics¹⁰ and has published this statistical release as Official Statistics.

Data Source

The awarding bodies that provide GCSEs and Level 1/Level 2 certificates have submitted information to Qualifications Wales about the number of entries for each qualification available in November 2019. The entries are only for centres located in Wales, regardless of the type of centre. This release covers the number of entries broken down by subject and age of learners in Wales based on school year groups (Year 11 is the academic year where learners become 16 years old).

Data prior to the November 2017 series was collected by and reported by Ofqual¹¹.

Limitations of data

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

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

⁸ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2017/1142/contents/made>

⁹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/18/contents>

¹⁰ <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/>

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gcse-and-level-1level-2-certificates-entries-in-england-november-2016>

- Actively challenging any unexpected results with the data providers.

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

Data has been collected at an appropriate point when it is reasonably complete. For GCSE and the Level 1/Level 2 certificate this was 25 October 2019. However, schools can continue to make late entries right up to the data of the exam, so the total entry numbers will change to provisional entries. For this reason, the title of this release refers to provisional entries.

Comparisons

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

Geographical Coverage

This release presents data on the number of entries for GCSEs and Level 1/Level 2 certificates for the November 2019 exam series for centres located in Wales. This release does not include GCSEs and Level 1/Level 2 certificates taken outside of Wales.

Revisions

Once published, data on the number of entries is not usually subject to revision, although subsequent releases may be revised to insert late data or correct an error.

Completeness of the data

Awarding bodies send Qualifications Wales entry data for all regulated qualifications classified as GCSEs or Level 1/Level 2 certificates. Qualifications Wales contacts any awarding body that does not return a complete set of data within the collection period, to make sure the data is as complete as possible. A levels and AS levels are not awarded in the November series.

Rounding and Confidentiality

To protect confidentiality, and in accordance with Qualifications Wales's interim statistical outputs policy¹², all figures for the number of certificates issued are rounded. In the commentary and tables, they are rounded to the nearest 5. Figures fewer than 5 but greater than 0 are replaced with a *. This is to ensure that data does not reveal an individual candidate. All percentages within the commentary are based on actual

¹² <https://qualificationswales.org/english/publications/interim-statistical-outputs-policy/>

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, so expect to gain a better understanding of who our users are over time. Qualifications Wales uses these statistics to inform understanding of entry patterns.

Related statistics and publications

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

- November entries, and summer entries statistical release for England¹³ (with corresponding Wales data in excel tables for historical academic years) published by Ofqual.
- The annual 'Schools' census results' release, published by Welsh Government¹⁴.

Useful information

A glossary of terms is available on page 8 to help you interpret this release. You can find information about future publications on the Welsh Government website¹⁵.

The QiW register¹⁶ gives information on approved and designated qualifications which are eligible for public funding in Wales.

Next update

November 2020 (provisional).

User feedback

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

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¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics?departments%5B%5D=ofqual>

¹⁴ <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/schools-census/?lang=en>

¹⁵ <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/?upcoming=true&lang=en>

¹⁶ <https://www.qiw.wales/>