



Vocational and Other Qualifications Quarterly: Quarter 4 (October – December) 2020 for Wales

25 February 2021

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 October to December 2020 (quarter 4). Wales data prior to quarter 1 2019 was collected by Ofqual.

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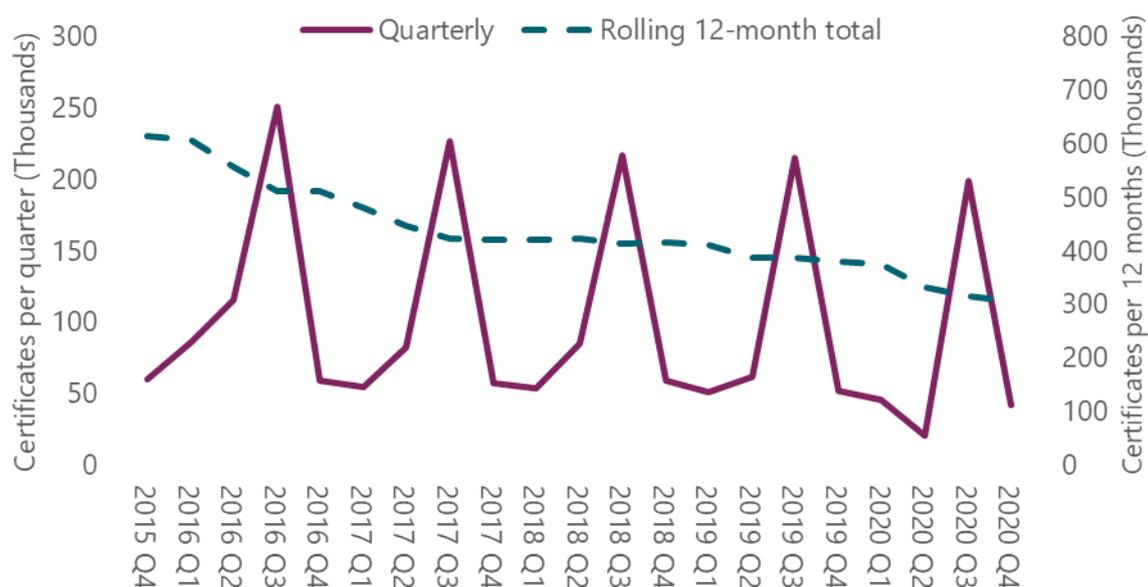
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Highlights

Figure 1: Total Certifications



Source: Qualifications Wales VQ data collection from awarding bodies



41,275 certificates were awarded between October and December of 2020. This is a **19.4%** decrease compared to the same quarter in 2019, when there were **51,765** certifications.

Between January 2020 and December 2020 there were **306,020** certifications, a decrease of **19.3%** compared to **379,030** between January 2019 and December 2019.



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Introduction

Qualifications Wales regulates qualifications, other than degrees, in Wales. Under the [Qualifications Wales Act 2015](#), our principal aims are to ensure that qualifications, and the Welsh qualifications system, are effective for meeting the reasonable needs of learners in Wales and to promote public confidence in qualifications and in the Welsh qualifications system.

In this release, we present data on the range of vocational and other qualifications and certificates issued during the fourth quarter of 2020. The figures represent the number of certificates, rounded to the nearest 5, that were awarded by awarding bodies between 1 October and 31 December 2020. 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 in this release is for vocational and other qualifications listed on the [Qualifications in Wales \(QiW\) database](#)¹ or on our internal list of other regulated qualifications. This data does not include GCSEs, AS level, A level, Advanced Extension Awards, Principal Learning and Project qualifications.

This release presents data by quarter, using the quarters of the calendar year. Q1 represents 1 January to 31 March; Q2 represents 1 April to 30 June; Q3 represents 1 July to 30 September; and Q4 represents 1 October to 31 December.

From 2017 Q4, we have reported on certificates issued for vocational and other qualifications for Wales, which was initially collected from awarding bodies by Ofqual on our behalf. As of 2019 Q1, Qualifications Wales both collects and publishes official statistics for qualifications that we regulate. Data for Wales prior to 2017 Q4 was collected and published by [Ofqual](#). We have tried as far as possible to keep these statistics consistent with those earlier statistics; changes have only been made where it was clear that doing so would result in the reporting of more accurate certification data, or where they were necessary due to differences in our regulatory approach. More detail is included in the [Methodology](#) section of the background notes.

¹ QiW is a register of regulated qualifications in Wales.

COVID-19

On 18 March 2020, the Minister for Education Kirsty Williams [announced that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all schools in Wales would be closed by 20 March 2020](#). On 23 March 2020, [First Minister Mark Drakeford announced further restrictions to slow the spread of coronavirus in Wales](#). These initial measures were eased prior to the start of quarter 3, but a number of restrictions remained in place during some or all of the quarter. Further lockdowns were introduced to control the spread of the pandemic including a short “firebreak” lockdown in October and a full lockdown in December. As a result of these restrictions, many colleges, assessment centres and training providers were unable to operate for several months. This will likely have an impact on the number of certificates that were awarded for vocational and other qualifications in quarters 3 and 4 of 2020.

Due to the closure of schools and colleges, many of the qualifications were assessed and awarded in a way that was different to the usual process. For some qualifications, this meant that overall results were notably different to result in previous years. The figures in this release represent the number of certificates awarded and do not include learners who do not pass the qualification. In some cases, changes in totals for individual qualifications may be due to changes in the pass rate, rather than changes in entry.

Statistics

Total certificates and historical trends

Table 1: Number of certificates awarded by quarter and by year

Time period	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
		Jan to Mar	Apr to Jun	Jul to Sep	Oct to Dec
Quarterly	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	50,550	61,610	215,110	51,765
	2020	45,300	20,120	198,870	41,725
Rolling 12-month total	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	411,075	387,265	386,065	379,030
	2020	373,780	332,295	316,055	306,020

Source: Qualifications Wales VQ data collection from awarding bodies

Quarterly Comparison

41,725 certificates were awarded between October and December of 2020. This is a 19.4% decrease compared to the same quarter in 2019, when there were 51,765 certifications. This decrease is likely to be an impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Details of other external factors which have likely contributed to the overall downward trend seen over the last five years can be found in the [background notes](#) of this release.

Annual Comparison

Between January 2020 and December 2020 there were 306,020 certifications, a decrease of 19.3% compared to 379,030 between January 2019 and December 2019.

Certificates by sector subject area (SSA)

Table 2: Number of certificates awarded by sector subject area

Sector Subject Area	Quarterly Comparison		Annual Comparison	
	2019 Q4	2020 Q4	Jan 2019 to Dec 2019	Jan 2020 to Dec 2020
01 Health, Public Services and Care	13,335	7,705	60,425	38,715
02 Science and Mathematics	70	80	5,510	7,840
03 Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	835	525	3,955	3,600
04 Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	3,440	2,430	20,010	12,790
05 Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	4,505	3,695	22,525	15,395
06 Information and Communication Technology	505	575	5,940	5,545
07 Retail and Commercial Enterprise	5,220	4,585	26,855	16,115
08 Leisure, Travel and Tourism	2,200	1,285	15,305	9,535
09 Arts, Media and Publishing	4,630	2,835	26,095	12,235
10 History, Philosophy and Theology	0	0	70	260
11 Social Sciences	0	0	1,005	1,275
12 Languages, Literature and Culture	590	190	5,725	2,420
13 Education and Training	875	700	3,955	3,060
14 Preparation for Life and Work	12,375	13,845	159,125	156,195
15 Business, Administration and Law	3,190	3,280	22,525	21,040
Total	51,765	41,725	379,030	306,020

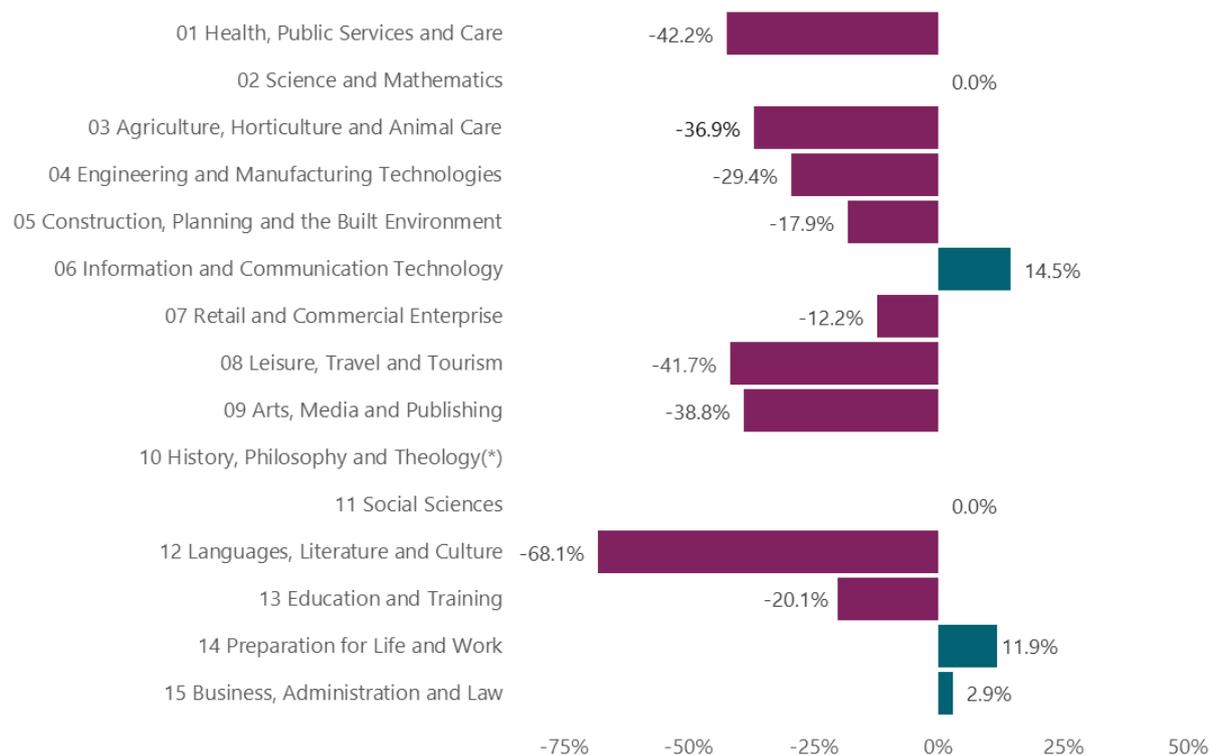
Source: Qualifications Wales VQ data collection from awarding bodies

The predominant sectors in 2020 Q4 were 'Preparation for Life and Work' and 'Health, Public Services and Care', respectively making up 33.2% and 18.5% of all certificates. The 'Retail and Commercial enterprise' sector was the third most certificated SSA in 2020 Q4.

'Preparation for Life and Work' was the most certificated SSA between January 2020 and December 2020. Despite an annual decrease in certificates of 1.8%, this sector

made up a higher proportion of total certificates (51.0%) compared with January 2019 to December 2020 (42.0%). The 'Health, Public Services and Care' sector was the second largest over the period January 2020 to December 2020, despite a decrease of 35.9% compared with the previous year.

Figure 2: Percentage change in certifications awarded by sector subject area (SSA), 2020 Q4 compared to 2019 Q4



(*) SSAs with fewer than 100 certifications in either quarter are suppressed.
 Source: Qualifications Wales VQ data collection from awarding bodies

Figure 2 shows that the 'Languages, Literature and Culture' sector saw the largest quarterly decrease in certificates, with a decrease of 68.1% in 2020 Q4 compared with 2019 Q4. The sector with the largest proportional increase was 'Information and Communication Technology' which saw a quarterly increase of 14.5%, or around 75 certificates. The second largest increase of 11.9% was seen in 'Preparation for Life and Work'.

Certificates by level

Table 3: Number of certificates awarded by level

Level	Quarterly Comparison		Annual Comparison	
	2019 Q4	2020 Q4	Jan 2019 to Dec 2019	Jan 2020 to Dec 2020
Entry Level	3,950	3,495	30,665	22,960
Level 1	8,480	6,970	51,935	33,230
Level 1/2	70	135	63,500	71,015
Level 2	21,605	18,025	122,890	92,505
Level 3	15,740	10,830	100,460	78,390
Level 4	920	1,115	4,305	4,000
Level 5	890	900	3,920	3,320
Level 6	60	130	805	365
Level 7	55	125	550	235
Level 8	0	0	0	0
Total	51,765	41,725	379,030	306,020

Source: Qualifications Wales VQ data collection from awarding bodies

Levels 1, 2 and 3 were the most certificated levels in 2020 Q4, accounting for 85.9% of the total number of certificates for the quarter, compared to 88.5% in 2019 Q4. The same levels accounted for 66.7% of the annual total.

Except for Level 1/2, all levels saw an annual decrease in the number of certificates awarded. The increase in certificates for Level 1/2 qualifications is mainly driven by the 'Preparation for Life and Work' sector but increases can be seen in other sectors as well.

Level 6 and Level 7 qualifications saw the largest proportional quarterly increases of 127.6% and 119.6% respectively. These two levels also saw the largest decrease in annual certificates, decreasing by 55.0% and 57.1% respectively. All proportional changes in levels 6 and 7 qualifications represent relatively small numbers of certificates (less than 1% of the total number of certificates). The largest real-terms annual decrease in certificates was at Level 2, which decreased by 30,385 certificates.

Top certificating awarding bodies

Table 4: Top 10 awarding bodies by number of certificates awarded between January 2020 and December 2020

Awarding Body	Jan 2019 to Dec 2019	Jan 2020 to Dec 2020	Rank Jan 2019 to Dec 2019	Rank Jan 2020 to Dec 2020	Rank Change
WJEC-CBAC	90,470	96,690	1	1	→ +0
City and Guilds of London Institute	79,035	61,450	2	2	→ +0
Pearson Education Ltd	38,020	43,005	3	3	→ +0
Agored Cymru	18,225	16,975	5	4	↑ +1
Highfield Qualifications	32,425	14,145	4	5	↓ -1
The London Institute of Banking & Finance	5,970	11,630	11	6	↑ +5
NCFE	6,325	6,655	10	7	↑ +3
Qualsafe Awards	14,700	5,535	6	8	↓ -2
VTCT	3,840	4,495	16	9	↑ +7
Trinity College London	8,530	4,190	8	10	↓ -2

Source: Qualifications Wales VQ data collection from awarding bodies

Due to the variety of qualifications offered by different awarding bodies, it is likely that individual awarding bodies have been affected differently by COVID-19. Table 4 shows the top ten awarding bodies by certificates over the period January 2020 to December 2020, compared to the previous 12 months. These ten awarding bodies accounted for 86.5% of all certificates awarded during this period. WJEC-CBAC retained its place as most certificating awarding body in the last 12 months, awarding over 90,000 certificates. Highfield Qualifications moved down a rank due to a 56.4% decrease in certificates and was overtaken by Agored Cymru who saw a smaller decrease in annual certificates.

The London Institute of Banking and Finance is a new entrant in the top 10 certificating awarding bodies, climbing from 11th to 6th in the rank order due to an annual certificate increase of 94.8%. This increase was driven by qualifications in the 'Preparation for Life and Work' and 'Business, Administration and Law' sectors. VTCT has also risen into the top 10 in Q4 with a 17.1% increase in annual certificates, moving from 16th to 9th place.

Qualsafe and Trinity College London remain in the top 10 but both saw large annual decreases in certificates of 62.3% and 50.9% respectively. Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music and Excellence, Achievement & Learning Limited have dropped out of the top 10 moving to 13th and 14th places, respectively.

Top certificating qualifications

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

Qualification	2019 Q4	2020 Q4
City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Communication Skills	915	1,535
City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Application of Number Skills	880	1,350
City & Guilds Level 1 Essential Application of Number Skills	510	960
Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International Speaking and Listening (Entry 3) (GESE Grade 5) (B1.1)	775	845
City & Guilds Level 1 Essential Communication Skills	255	830
City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Digital Literacy Skills	980	825
Highfield Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work (RQF)	1,790	720
QA Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work (RQF)	1,775	720
VTCT (ITEC) Level 2 Award in Infection Prevention (COVID-19) for Hairdressing and Barbering Services	0	645
VTCT (ITEC) Level 2 Award in Infection Prevention (COVID-19) for Beauty Therapy and Nail Services	0	630

Source: Qualifications Wales VQ data collection from awarding bodies

Table 5 shows the top ten qualifications with the highest number of certifications in the latest quarter compared to the number of certifications for the same qualifications in the same quarter of the previous year.

The top ten qualifications accounted for 9,055 certificates, which is 21.7% of all certificates awarded in 2020 Q4. Of these top ten qualifications, compared to the same quarter last year, City & Guilds Level 1 Essential Communication Skills saw the largest proportional increase (227.2%), followed by City & Guilds Level 1 Essential Application of Number Skills (87.3%). These proportional increases represent an increase in certificates of 575 and 445, respectively.

In positions 9 and 10 in table 5 are new awards introduced because of the COVID-19 pandemic. These two awards make up around 3% of the total number of certificates in the quarter, showing that COVID-19 has had a notable impact on certificate numbers. Further information on how the COVID-19 pandemic might affect these statistics can be found in the [introduction](#) of this release.

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

Qualification	Jan 2019 to Dec 2019	Jan 2020 to Dec 2020
WJEC Foundation/National Skills Challenge Certificate (Welsh Baccalaureate)	27,125	28,245
WJEC National/Foundation Welsh Baccalaureate	26,415	28,000
WJEC Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate (Welsh Baccalaureate)	11,660	11,770
WJEC Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate	9,945	10,355
LIBF Level 2 Certificate in Financial Capability and Careers Development	4,415	6,560
City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Communication Skills	4,665	4,350
Pearson Edexcel Level 2 Certificate in Personal and Social Development	3,040	4,170
NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Equality and Diversity	1,735	4,060
City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Application of Number Skills	4,205	3,855
City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Digital Literacy Skills	5,145	3,820

Source: Qualifications Wales VQ data collection from awarding bodies

Table 6 shows the top ten qualifications with the highest number of certifications in the latest 12 months compared to the number of certificates for the same qualifications in the previous 12 months. These ten qualifications accounted for 34.4% of all certificates awarded during the period January 2020 to December 2020.

Qualifications that form part of the Welsh Bacc framework make up the top four qualifications awarded over the past 12 months, with WJEC Foundation/National Skills Challenge Certificate (Welsh Baccalaureate) at the top with 28,245 certificates. 2017 was the first year in which this qualification, along with the WJEC National/Foundation Welsh Baccalaureate, were certificated. More information about the Welsh Bacc and Skill Challenge Certificate, and how they affect these statistics, can be found in the [external influences](#) section of the background notes.

Aside from the Welsh Bacc and Skills Challenge Certificate qualifications, the most awarded qualifications were the LIBF Level 2 Certificate in Financial Capability and Careers Development and the City & Guilds Level 2 Essential Digital Literacy Skills.

Background Notes

Status

On 21 November 2017 the National Assembly for Wales approved the [Official Statistics \(Wales\) Order 2017](#) which named Qualifications Wales as one of the bodies that are in scope of the [Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007](#). We have developed our processes to ensure we are fully meeting our obligations as an official statistics producer, allowing this statistical release to be formally published as an official statistic.

Data Source

The number of certifications awarded for each vocational or other qualification in Quarter 4 2020 (October – December 2020) 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 Qualifications](#).

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 purposes.

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 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.

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 \(QiW\) database](#).

Methodology

We have developed our own method for producing and reporting these statistics, which differs slightly from the method used by Ofqual when producing historical statistics for Wales. 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 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).

Qualification characteristics included in this report, such as subject sector area (SSA) and level, are based on the Ofqual register and the QiW database. For quarters up to and including 2018 Q4, 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 from the 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 2019 Q1. 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 2019 Q1 onwards will be taken from our database. 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 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.

Qualification Types and Levels

Each qualification is ascribed a level. Levels are described in the [Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales](#). Table 7 shows how levels relate to the types of vocational and other qualifications on the Ofqual register and QiW.

Table 7: Qualification types and corresponding levels

Qualification type	Current levels	Qualification type	Current levels
Basic Skills	Entry Level, Levels 1 and 2	Key skills	Levels 1 to 4
CVET ²	Levels 1 to 6	NVQ	Levels 1 to 5
End-Point Assessment	Levels 2 to 7	Other general qualification	Levels 1, 1/2, 2 and 3
English for speakers of other languages	Entry Level, Levels 1, 2 and 3	Other life skills qualification	Entry Level, Levels 1, 2 and 3
Essential Skills Wales	Entry Level, Levels 1, 2 and 3	Other vocational qualification	Entry Level, Levels 1 to 4
Free-standing mathematics qualification	Levels 1, 2 and 3	Occupational qualification	Levels 1 to 4
Functional skills	Entry Level, Levels 1 and 2	QCF ³	Entry Level, Levels 1 to 8
Higher Level	Levels 4 to 8	Vocationally related qualification	Entry Level, Levels 1 to 8
IVET ⁴	Entry Level, Levels 1 to 5	Welsh Baccalaureate ⁵	Levels 1, 1/2, 2 and 3

² 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 [Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales](#)).

³ 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.

⁴ 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 [Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales](#)).

⁵ 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](#)', which was commissioned by the Welsh Government in 2011, the new Welsh Bacc was introduced for first teaching from September 2015. When the Welsh Government introduced the Welsh Bacc, it announced a [policy of universal adoption](#). This means that the Welsh Bacc is available to all schools and FE Colleges to offer, as opposed to only those approved to offer it, which was the case with the legacy Welsh Bacc. The policy 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 count⁶.

Geographical Coverage

This release presents data on the number of certifications for vocational and other qualifications for quarter 4 (October – December 2020) for centres located in Wales. This release does not include vocational and other qualifications taken outside of

⁶ Further information on changes to performance measures in Wales can be found on the [Welsh Government website](#).

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 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 Sources](#). Historical data has been subject to Ofqual's quality assurance procedures, which are carried out as explained in the [Quality Assurance Framework for Statistical Publications](#) published by Ofqual to ensure the accuracy of the data and to challenge or question it, where necessary. More information is also included in the background notes of the [Ofqual vocational and other qualifications quarterly release](#).

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 statistical outputs policy](#), figures fewer than 5 but greater than 0 are replaced with a *. This is to ensure that data does not reveal an individual candidate. All figures for the number of certificates issued are rounded. In the commentary and tables, they are rounded to the nearest 5. All percentages within the commentary are based on actual figures. Figures have been rounded independently and therefore may not sum to the total.

Users of these statistics

These statistics are likely to be of interest to Qualifications Wales, Ofqual, awarding bodies, and the Welsh Government. We welcome feedback from users to gain a better understanding of who our users are over time. Qualifications Wales uses these statistics to inform understanding of certification patterns, and to help aid monitoring of vocational qualifications.

Related statistics and publications

[Ofqual publish statistics on vocational qualifications for England.](#)

[Research and Statistics published by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment \(CCEA\).](#)

[Statistics published by the Scottish Qualifications Authority \(SQA\).](#)

[Statistics published by Eurostat.](#)

Useful information

A [glossary of terms](#) is available on our website to help you interpret this release. You can find information about future publications on the [Qualifications Wales website](#).

The [QiW database](#) gives information on approved and designated qualifications which are eligible for public funding in Wales.

Next update

June 2021 (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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