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Official Statistics

Annual Qualifications Market Report: 2021 to 2022 academic year

Published 23 March 2023

Applies to England

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This release provides information on the number and types of qualifications available for award and the number of certificates awarded by Ofqual-recognised awarding organisations in England during the 2021 to 2022 academic year. It also includes some statistics on regulated qualifications certified in international jurisdictions by recognised awarding organisations.

1. Key headlines



The key headlines in the qualifications market for the 2021 to 2022 academic year in England were:

1. There were 11,400 active qualifications (available qualifications with certificates) in the academic year 2021 to 2022, a 2.9% decrease on the previous year.
2. In total 11.0 million certificates were issued for GCSE, AS, A level and vocational and other qualifications in England over the 2021 to 2022 academic year, up 2.1% compared to the 2020 to 2021 academic year.
3. There were 6.1 million GCSE, AS and A level certificates awarded in the 2021 to 2022 academic year, down by 0.8% compared to the previous year.
4. There were 4.9 million certificates awarded for vocational and other qualifications in the 2021 to

2022 academic year, up by 5.8% compared to the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

- The awarding organisations with the largest market shares in the academic year 2021 to 2022 were AQA (34.2%), Pearson (20.5%), OCR (6.7%) and City & Guilds (5.1%).

The release covers regulated qualifications across general qualifications (GCSE, AS and A level), and vocational and other qualifications. Please note where this release refers to 'vocational and other' qualifications, this means all qualifications other than general qualifications, apprenticeship end-point assessments (EPAs) and T Level Technical Qualifications (TQs). Further information on the qualifications included in this release is found in the [background notes](#) accompanying this release.

Alternative arrangements for many assessments were in place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year in response to continuing disruption due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The 2021 to 2022 academic year saw the return of exams and other formal assessments, with some adaptations. The trends seen in the 2021 to 2022 academic year, particularly when compared against the 2020 to 2021 academic year, may have been affected as a result. More information on these arrangements can be found in the [background notes](#) for this release.

2. Number of awarding organisations offering regulated qualifications

Any organisation that wants to offer regulated qualifications in England has to be recognised by Ofqual. Any new awarding organisation needs to meet Ofqual's [Criteria for Recognition](#) and, once recognised, all awarding organisations need to continue to meet Ofqual's [General Conditions of Recognition](#).



	2017 to 2018	2018 to 2019	2019 to 2020	2020 to 2021	2021 to 2022
Number of awarding organisations	154	160	164	178	229

There were 229 Ofqual-recognised awarding organisations during the 2021 to 2022 academic year. This number includes 38 awarding organisations who delivered EPAs for apprenticeship standards only during the 2021 to 2022 academic year, and 46 awarding organisations that had no active qualifications (available qualifications with certificates) during the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

Please note that elsewhere in the report, statistics on qualifications and certifications do not include apprenticeship EPAs.

3. Regulated qualifications

Information on qualifications including title, type, awarding organisation, sector subject area and level is taken from the [Register of Regulated Qualifications](#).

3.1 Number of available qualifications



	2017 to 2018	2018 to 2019	2019 to 2020	2020 to 2021	2021 to 2022
Number of qualifications with certificates	12,757	12,269	11,647	11,729	11,387
Number of qualifications without certificates	6,773	6,726	6,808	6,423	6,186
Total number of qualifications	19,530	18,995	18,455	18,152	17,573

There were 17,600 qualifications available to certificate in the 2021 to 2022 academic year. This is a 3.2% decrease compared to the previous year, continuing the downward trend seen over the past 5 years. No certificates will have been issued for some qualifications because they are new and/or require a 1 or 2 year course of study before students can certificate.

Of these available qualifications, 11,400 had certifications in the 2021 to 2022 academic year, a 2.9% decrease compared to the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

3.2 Number of available qualifications by type

Qualification types are used to describe the nature of qualifications and are contained within the [Register of Regulated Qualifications](#).

Qualification type	Number of qualifications available to certificate in 2020 to 2021	Number of qualifications available to certificate in 2021 to 2022	Number of qualifications with certificates in 2020 to 2021	Number of qualifications with certificates in 2021 to 2022
GCSE (9 to 1)	144	140	139	140
A level	148	137	137	137
AS	136	96	109	96
Vocationally-Related Qualification	8,389	8,113	5,202	5,099
Occupational Qualification	4,982	4,860	3,037	2,867
Other Life Skills Qualification	1,821	1,740	1,310	1,311
Other Vocational Qualification	868	874	548	581
Performing Arts Graded Examination	564	627	437	462
Other General Qualification	505	487	385	327

English For Speakers of Other Languages	349	367	225	242
Functional Skills	205	98	180	98
Essential Digital Skills	16	16	9	16
Project	14	11	10	9
Advanced Extension Award	1	1	1	1
QCF	6	6	0	1
Retired Qualifications	4	0	0	0
Total	18,152	17,573	11,729	11,387



Qualification type	Percentage change in the number of qualifications with certifications by qualification type between 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022
GCSE (9 to 1)	0.7%
A level	0.0%
AS	-11.9%
Vocationally-Related Qualification	-2.0%
Occupational Qualification	-5.6%
Other Life Skills	0.1%

Qualification

Other Vocational Qualification	6.0%
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Performing Arts Graded Examination	5.7%
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Other General Qualification	-15.1%
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English For Speakers of Other Languages	7.6%
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Functional Skills	-45.6%
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Essential Digital Skills	77.8%
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Project	-10.0%
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Advanced Extension Award	0.0%
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QCF	0.0%
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Retired Qualifications	0.0%
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Total	-2.9%
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The largest proportional increase in the number of available qualifications with certificates was seen in the [new Essential Digital Skills qualifications](#) (up by 77.8% this year).

The largest proportional decrease in the number of qualifications with certificates was seen in Functional Skills qualifications (FSQs) in the 2021 to 2022 academic year (down by 45.6%), compared to the previous year. This decrease can be attributed to legacy FSQs being withdrawn from the market and no longer being available to certificate in the 2021 to 2022 academic year, following [FSQ reform](#).

In terms of raw numbers, Occupational and Vocationally-Related qualifications saw the largest decreases in the number of qualifications with certificates (down by 170 and 105, respectively).

4. Certificates awarded for regulated qualifications

4.1 Overall number of certificates



	2017 to 2018	2018 to 2019	2019 to 2020	2020 to 2021	2021 to 2022
A level	736,090	720,225	716,825	760,835	767,875
AS	237,775	98,745	68,365	55,060	55,290
GCSE	5,035,565	5,119,705	5,309,585	5,299,130	5,244,790
Vocational & other qualifications	5,871,140	5,825,910	4,260,435	4,671,660	4,943,260
Total	11,880,570	11,764,585	10,355,215	10,786,685	11,011,215

The total number of certificates awarded for all qualifications (A level, AS, GCSE and vocational and other qualifications) in the 2021 to 2022 academic year was 11.0 million, up 2.1% compared to the previous year.

The overall number of certificates for A level qualifications has increased by just under 1% compared to the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

AS qualifications also saw a small increase in the number of certificates (up by less than 1% compared to the 2020 to 2021 academic year). However, the number of certificates seen in the 2021 to 2022 academic year remains substantially lower than the number seen prior to the decoupling of AS from A levels as part of [government policy reforms](#).

The overall number of certificates for GCSE qualifications has decreased, by 1.0%.

There has been an increase in the overall number of certificates in vocational and other qualifications (up by 5.8%) compared to the 2020 to 2021 academic year. Despite this increase,

figures remain lower than the pre-COVID-19 pandemic level.

4.2 Number of certificates by qualification type

Qualification type	Number of certificates in 2020 to 2021	Share of certificates in 2020 to 2021	Number of certificates in 2021 to 2022	Share of certificates in 2021 to 2022
GCSE (9 to 1)	5,299,130	49.1%	5,244,790	47.6%
A level	760,835	7.1%	767,875	7.0%
AS	55,060	0.5%	55,290	0.5%
Vocationally-Related Qualification	2,015,970	18.7%	2,019,660	18.3%
Occupational Qualification	596,990	5.5%	590,465	5.4%
Other Vocational Qualification	398,270	3.7%	535,405	4.9%
Performing Arts Graded Examination	388,030	3.6%	451,760	4.1%
Other General Qualification	391,070	3.6%	395,670	3.6%
English For Speakers of Other Languages	307,655	2.9%	349,680	3.2%
Functional Skills	302,275	2.8%	324,230	2.9%
Other Life Skills Qualification	216,790	2.0%	210,125	1.9%

Project	52,100	0.5%	52,475	0.5%
Essential Digital Skills	2,350	<0.1%	13,510	0.1%
Advanced Extension Award	85	<0.1%	175	<0.1%
QCF	75	<0.1%	95	<0.1%
Retired Qualifications	0	0.0%	5	<0.1%
Total	10,786,685	100.0%	11,011,215	100.0%



Qualification type **Percentage change in the number of certificates awarded between 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022**

GCSE (9 to 1) -1.0%

A level 0.9%

AS 0.4%

Vocationally-Related Qualification 0.2%

Occupational Qualification -1.1%

Other Vocational Qualification 34.4%

Performing Arts Graded Examination 16.4%

Other General Qualification 1.2%

English For Speakers of Other Languages 13.7%

Functional Skills	7.3%
Other Life Skills Qualification	-3.1%
Project	0.7%
Essential Digital Skills	474.6%
Advanced Extension Award	105.8%
QCF	27.4%
Retired Qualifications	0.0%
Total	2.1%

The largest proportional increase in the number of certificates in the 2021 to 2022 academic year among vocational and other qualifications was seen in Essential Digital Skills qualifications (up by 474.6%, equivalent to an increase of 11,200 certificates). The [introduction of statutory entitlement to Essential Digital Skills qualifications](#) is likely to be a key driver for this increase.

The largest percentage decrease in the number of certificates among vocational and other qualifications has been in Other Life Skills qualifications (down by 3.1%, equivalent to 6,700 certificates). Occupational qualifications also saw a decrease in certificates (down by 1.1%, equivalent to 6,500 certificates).

4.3 Awarding organisations with the highest number of certificates

Awarding organisation	Number of certificates in 2020 to 2021	Number of certificates in 2021 to 2022
AQA Education	3,758,930	3,767,880
Pearson Education Ltd	2,357,010	2,259,950
OCR	750,680	741,235

City and Guilds of London Institute	551,165	556,600
WJEC	443,715	458,530
NCFE	368,890	332,180
Highfield Qualifications	222,000	301,680
Qualsafe Awards	180,400	238,490
Trinity College London	196,205	190,435
First Aid Awards Ltd	124,955	179,855
Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music	167,560	171,460
Training Qualifications UK Ltd	110,535	105,180
Ascentis	85,710	94,690
NOCN	88,865	85,905
VTCT	105,065	85,490
Gateway Qualifications Limited	48,440	67,210
Qualifications Network	43,525	65,365
LAMDA	55,135	65,335
RLSS UK Qualifications	53,880	60,440
Cambridge English	44,115	53,130
Other organisations	1,029,905	1,130,170
Total	10,786,685	11,011,215



Awarding organisation

**Percentage change in the number of certificates awarded
between 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022**

AQA Education	0.2%
Pearson Education Ltd	-4.1%
OCR	-1.3%
City and Guilds of London Institute	1.0%
WJEC	3.3%
NCFE	-10.0%
Highfield Qualifications	35.9%
Qualsafe Awards	32.2%
Trinity College London	-2.9%
First Aid Awards Ltd	43.9%
Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music	2.3%
Training Qualifications UK Ltd	-4.8%
Ascentis	10.5%
NOCN	-3.3%
VTCT	-18.6%
Gateway Qualifications Limited	38.7%
Qualifications Network	50.2%
LAMDA	18.5%
RLSS UK Qualifications	12.2%
Cambridge English	20.4%
Other organisations	9.7%

Total	2.1%
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The 20 awarding organisations that reported the highest volume of all certificates in the 2021 to 2022 academic year awarded 89.7% of all certificates. Qualifications Network and Cambridge English are new to the top 20 this year, whilst University of the Arts London and Excellence, Achievement & Learning Limited left the top 20.

Highfield Qualifications had the largest increase in the number of certificates (up by 79,700) compared with the previous year.

Qualifications Network has had the largest percentage increase in certificates between 2021 to 2022 and the previous year (up by 50.2%, an increase of 21,800 certificates).

5. General qualifications

5.1 Market share: GCSE

The GCSE market continued to be relatively stable in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.



	2017 to 2018	2018 to 2019	2019 to 2020	2020 to 2021	2021 to 2022
AQA	61.1%	61.4%	61.7%	62.0%	62.4%
OCR	7.6%	7.2%	6.9%	6.8%	6.7%
Pearson	25.4%	25.5%	25.4%	25.2%	24.7%
WJEC	5.9%	5.9%	6.0%	6.0%	6.2%

5.2 Number of certificates awarded in the top 10 GCSE subjects in the academic

year 2021 to 2022

Number of certificates awarded in the top 10 GCSE subjects in the academic year 2021 to 2022

Subject	AQA	OCR	Pearson	WJEC	Total
Combined science	667,960	33,250	123,660	0	824,870
Mathematics	193,060	58,100	492,995	9,105	753,255
English language	572,455	8,400	68,900	76,035	725,795
English literature	452,690	6,995	50,690	52,270	562,650
History	89,110	18,190	149,215	19,930	276,440
Geography	181,335	25,435	47,575	15,650	269,995
Religious studies	132,180	6,695	46,215	50,055	235,145
Art and design subjects	122,850	21,605	32,575	12,910	189,940
Biology	137,760	10,495	22,900	0	171,160
Chemistry	132,005	10,015	22,400	0	164,420

Number of certificates awarded in the top 10 GCSE subjects in the academic year 2020 to 2021

Subject	AQA	OCR	Pearson	WJEC	Total
Combined science	665,720	36,360	126,820	0	828,895
Mathematics	203,170	59,945	519,390	9,510	792,015
English language	594,485	9,465	71,810	78,565	754,325
English literature	443,975	8,430	56,830	53,170	562,405
History	92,625	20,115	149,050	11,035	272,825
Geography	176,425	25,435	46,885	15,250	263,995

Religious studies	128,900	7,305	47,975	49,655	233,835
Art and design subjects	125,225	21,525	34,175	13,145	194,075
Biology	136,350	10,885	22,900	0	170,140
Chemistry	131,430	10,385	22,745	0	164,560

The total number of certificates for GCSEs has decreased by 1.0% between the 2020 to 2021 academic year and the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

The top 10 highest volume subjects account for 79.6% of all GCSE certificates, 0.4 percentage points less than in the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

AQA has the largest market share in 8 of the 10 highest volume subjects. Pearson has the largest share in the remaining 2 subjects: mathematics and history.

Among the top 10 highest volume subjects, mathematics and English language have seen the largest drop in the number of certificates issued (down by 38,800 and 28,500 respectively compared to the 2020 to 2021 academic year). The biggest increases in the number of certificates were for geography and history (up by 6,000 and 3,600 respectively). Among the top 10 highest volume subjects, geography also saw the largest proportional increase in the number of certificates (up by 2.3% from the 2020 to 2021 academic year).

The market share of awarding organisations in all GCSE subjects in the 2021 to 2022 is given in the [data tables accompanying this release \(Table 8\)](#).

Please note, combined science certificates have been double counted throughout the report and data tables to reflect the fact that they count as 2 GCSEs.

5.3 Market share: AS



	2017 to 2018	2018 to 2019	2019 to 2020	2020 to 2021	2021 to 2022
AQA	39.2%	43.0%	43.4%	43.9%	40.1%
OCR	24.1%	22.4%	22.8%	22.4%	23.4%

Pearson	31.0%	27.9%	27.1%	25.6%	27.5%
WJEC	5.7%	6.8%	6.6%	8.1%	8.9%

AQA has seen a decrease (down by 3.7%) in its share of the AS market. All other awarding organisations saw increases to their market share, with Pearson seeing the largest percentage increase in its market share (up by 1.9% in the 2021 to 2022 academic year).

5.4 Number of certificates awarded in the top 10 AS subjects in the academic year 2021 to 2022



Number of certificates awarded in the top 10 AS subjects in the academic year 2021 to 2022

Subject	AQA	OCR	Pearson	WJEC	Total
Mathematics	1,025	1,420	4,645	0	7,090
Psychology	4,515	395	500	215	5,625
Biology	2,670	1,585	560	115	4,930
Sociology	3,605	570	0	160	4,335
Chemistry	1,640	1,945	460	115	4,160
Mathematics (further)	535	685	2,260	0	3,480
Business studies	1,350	60	1,235	145	2,790
Physics	1,390	960	355	Fewer than 5	2,705
History	930	385	1,080	0	2,400
Economics	795	235	1,105	100	2,235

Number of certificates awarded in the top 10 AS subjects in the academic year 2020 to 2021

Subject	AQA	OCR	Pearson	WJEC	Total
Mathematics	900	1,165	4,290	0	6,355
Psychology	4,245	465	580	160	5,450
Biology	2,235	1,470	560	140	4,410
Sociology	3,435	640	0	130	4,210
Mathematics (further)	710	810	2,605	0	4,125
Chemistry	1,285	1,965	380	145	3,775
Physics	1,450	960	290	10	2,710
Business studies	1,260	80	1,075	185	2,600
Art and design subjects	930	725	0	830	2,485
History	920	360	1,075	0	2,355

The total number of certificates for AS qualifications has increased by 0.4% between the 2020 to 2021 academic year and the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

The top 10 highest volume subjects account for 71.9% of all AS certificates, 2.0 percentage points more than in the 2020 to 2021 academic year. The top 10 AS subjects changed slightly between the 2020 to 2021 academic year and the 2021 to 2022 academic year, with economics entering the top 10 and art and design subjects leaving.

AQA has the largest market share in 5 of the 10 highest volume subjects. Pearson has the largest share in 4 of the remaining subjects: mathematics, further mathematics, economics and history. OCR has the largest share in 1 subject: chemistry.

There has been a small increase in the number of certificates for most of the highest volume AS subjects since the 2020 to 2021 academic year. The largest increase was seen for mathematics, with an increase of 735 certificates between the 2020 to 2021 academic year and the 2021 to 2022 academic year. The largest decrease in the number of certificates was seen for further mathematics, with 645 fewer certificates than in the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

The market share of awarding organisations in all AS subjects in the 2021 to 2022 academic year is given in the [data tables accompanying this release \(Table 9\)](#).

5.5 Market share: A level



	2017 to 2018	2018 to 2019	2019 to 2020	2020 to 2021	2021 to 2022
AQA	46.3%	45.4%	45.7%	45.9%	46.3%
OCR	22.7%	21.6%	21.0%	20.9%	20.7%
Pearson	24.7%	26.7%	26.7%	27.0%	26.5%
WJEC	6.3%	6.3%	6.5%	6.2%	6.4%

The A level market continued to be relatively stable in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

5.6 Number of certificates awarded in the top 10 A level subjects in the academic year 2021 to 2022



Number of certificates awarded in the top 10 A level subjects in the academic year 2021 to 2022

Subject	AQA	OCR	Pearson	WJEC	Total
Mathematics	12,715	13,830	60,790	0	87,335
Psychology	61,030	5,595	4,995	2,125	73,745
Biology	34,875	20,775	6,535	2,090	64,280
Chemistry	23,825	24,460	5,075	90	53,450
History	19,225	10,295	12,690	0	42,205
Sociology	36,535	3,640	0	1,870	42,045
Art and design subjects	21,195	5,935	7,950	6,515	41,590

Business studies	15,965	1,170	17,715	3,225	38,080
Physics	20,045	11,385	3,625	565	35,620
Economics	13,190	2,755	18,165	925	35,030

Number of certificates awarded in the top 10 A level subjects in the academic year 2020 to 2021

Subject	AQA	OCR	Pearson	WJEC	Total
Mathematics	13,665	14,230	64,040	0	91,935
Psychology	56,285	5,265	4,700	1,950	68,200
Biology	35,100	21,030	6,760	2,210	65,100
Chemistry	25,175	26,145	5,625	130	57,080
History	19,640	9,455	12,705	0	41,800
Sociology	34,145	3,670	0	1,635	39,450
Art and design subjects	19,940	5,570	7,790	5,865	39,160
Physics	21,300	12,050	4,150	595	38,095
English literature	15,095	9,430	9,185	2,505	36,215
Business studies	15,170	1,070	15,805	3,100	35,145

The total number of certificates for A levels has increased by 0.9% between the 2020 to 2021 academic year and the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

The top 10 highest volume subjects account for 66.9% of all A level certificates, 0.5% less than in the 2020 to 2021 academic year. In the 2021 to 2022 academic year, English literature left the top 10 highest volume A level subjects whilst economics entered. Out of the top 10 A level subjects in the 2021 to 2022 academic year, mathematics, chemistry and physics have seen a drop in the number of certificates issued (down by 4,600, 3,600 and 2,500 respectively compared to the 2020 to 2021 academic year). Psychology saw the largest increase in the number of certificates issued (up by 5,500).

The market share of awarding organisations in all A level subjects in the 2021 to 2022 academic year is given in the [data tables accompanying this release \(Table 10\)](#).

6. Vocational and other qualifications

6.1 Number of certificates in vocational and other qualifications by sector subject area

[Sector subject areas \(SSAs\)](#) is a classification of qualifications into business sectors or subject areas maintained by Ofqual. There are 15 SSAs in total.

Sector subject area	Number of certificates in 2020 to 2021	Share of certificates in 2020 to 2021	Number of certificates in 2021 to 2022	Share of certificates in 2021 to 2022
Health, Public Services and Care	1,081,975	23.2%	1,270,215	25.7%
Preparation for Life and Work	870,040	18.6%	936,245	18.9%
Arts, Media and Publishing	633,175	13.6%	687,080	13.9%
Business, Administration and Law	383,295	8.2%	335,095	6.8%
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	323,800	6.9%	307,855	6.2%
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	301,020	6.4%	299,815	6.1%
Retail and Commercial	295,390	6.3%	297,790	6.0%

Enterprise

Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	238,930	5.1%	252,640	5.1%
Information and Communication Technology	152,300	3.3%	133,550	2.7%
Science and Mathematics	106,520	2.3%	111,505	2.3%
Languages, Literature and Culture	73,955	1.6%	96,280	1.9%
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	87,850	1.9%	95,840	1.9%
Education and Training	81,725	1.7%	74,150	1.5%
Social Sciences	31,930	0.7%	36,180	0.7%
History, Philosophy and Theology	9,760	0.2%	9,030	0.2%
Total	4,671,660	100.0%	4,943,260	100.0%



Sector subject area **Percentage change in the number of certificates awarded between 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022**

Health, Public Services and Care 17.4%

Preparation for Life and Work 7.6%

Arts, Media and Publishing 8.5%

Business, Administration and Law	-12.6%
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	-4.9%
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	-0.4%
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	0.8%
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	5.7%
Information and Communication Technology	-12.3%
Science and Mathematics	4.7%
Languages, Literature and Culture	30.2%
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	9.1%
Education and Training	-9.3%
Social Sciences	13.3%
History, Philosophy and Theology	-7.5%
Total	5.8%

There were 4.9 million certificates awarded in vocational and other qualifications in the 2021 to 2022 academic year. This is up 5.8% compared to the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

The largest increase in the number of certificates awarded in vocational and other qualifications was seen in Health, Public Services and Care SSA (up by 188,200 certificates). Business, Administration and Law saw the most substantial decline in the number of certificates awarded (down by 48,200).

6.2 Number of certificates in vocational and other qualifications by level

[Qualification level](#) gives an indication of the relative level of demand of the qualification, with higher levels being more difficult. The content and number of study hours, however, can vary significantly within a qualification level.



Qualification level	Number of certificates in 2017 to 2018	Number of certificates in 2018 to 2019	Number of certificates in 2019 to 2020	Number of certificates in 2020 to 2021	Number of certificates in 2021 to 2022
Entry Level	710,965	701,525	504,330	506,470	588,090
Level 1	1,325,810	1,270,820	805,625	832,720	898,115
Level 1/Level 2	272,605	315,400	397,705	421,770	407,040
Level 2	1,917,490	1,811,560	1,257,525	1,351,330	1,389,190
Level 3	1,492,070	1,570,755	1,163,695	1,396,790	1,511,230
Level 4 to 8	152,200	155,850	131,555	162,580	149,595

Numbers of Entry Level, Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 certificates continued to increase in the 2021 to 2022 academic year, with the greatest increase in numbers seen in Level 3 (up by 114,400 certificates since 2020 to 2021).

The trend of increases for Level 1/Level 2 certificate numbers reversed in the 2021 to 2022 academic year, with a decrease of 14,700 certificates compared to the 2020 to 2021 academic year. However, the number of Level 1/Level 2 certificates (407,000) remains higher than that observed before the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

The number of certificates in Levels 4 to 8 has also decreased this year, down by 8% to 149,600 certificates.

6.3 Awarding organisations with the highest number of certificates awarded in vocational and other qualifications

Awarding organisation	Number of certificates in 2020 to 2021	Number of certificates in 2021 to 2022
Pearson Education Ltd	802,730	745,055
City and Guilds of London Institute	551,165	556,600
NCFE	368,890	332,180
Highfield Qualifications	222,000	301,680
Qualsafe Awards	180,400	238,490
OCR	220,390	219,585
Trinity College London	196,205	190,435
First Aid Awards Ltd	124,955	179,855
Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music	167,560	171,460
AQA Education	100,345	116,290
Training Qualifications UK Ltd	110,535	105,180
Ascentis	85,710	94,690
NOCN	88,865	85,905
VTCT	105,065	85,490
WJEC	71,845	78,710
Gateway Qualifications Limited	48,440	67,210
Qualifications Network	43,525	65,365
LAMDA	55,135	65,335

RLSS UK Qualifications	53,880	60,440
Cambridge English	44,115	53,130
Other organisations	1,029,905	1,130,170
Total	4,671,660	4,943,260



Awarding organisation	Percentage change in the number of certificates awarded between 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022
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Pearson Education Ltd	-7.2%
City and Guilds of London Institute	1.0%
NCFE	-10.0%
Highfield Qualifications	35.9%
Qualsafe Awards	32.2%
OCR	-0.4%
Trinity College London	-2.9%
First Aid Awards Ltd	43.9%
Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music	2.3%
AQA Education	15.9%
Training Qualifications UK Ltd	-4.8%
Ascentis	10.5%
NOCN	-3.3%
VTCT	-18.6%

WJEC	9.6%
Gateway Qualifications Limited	38.7%
Qualifications Network	50.2%
LAMDA	18.5%
RLSS UK Qualifications	12.2%
Cambridge English	20.4%
Other organisations	9.7%
Total	5.8%

The 20 awarding organisations that reported the highest volume of certificates awarded in vocational and other qualifications in the 2021 to 2022 academic year awarded 77.1% of all certificates awarded in vocational and other qualifications. Qualifications Network and Cambridge English are new to the top 20 this year. University of the Arts London and Excellence, Achievement & Learning Limited left the top 20 between the 2020 to 2021 academic year and 2021 to 2022 academic year.

Highfield Qualifications has had the largest increase (up by 79,700) in certificates compared with the previous year.

Qualifications Network showed the largest percentage increase in certificate numbers (up by 50.2% to 65,400 certificates).

Please note data for all awarding organisations is available in [the Vocational and Other qualifications quarterly](#) published by Ofqual.

7. In focus: technical and applied qualifications

Technical and applied qualifications are vocational qualifications designated as such according to Department for Education criteria and can count towards [school and college performance tables](#).

Applied qualifications (known as Applied General qualifications) are for students who want to continue their education through applied learning and offer a progression route to employment or

higher education. Applied General qualifications are all Level 3 qualifications aimed at post-16 students.

Technical qualifications comprise Tech Levels, Technical Certificates and Technical Awards. The purpose of technical qualifications is to equip students with applied knowledge and associated practical skills not usually associated with general qualifications. They are Level 1, 1/2, 2 and 3 qualifications.

Please note, the figures in this section relate only to technical and applied qualifications that were included in the respective year's performance tables.

7.1 Share of technical and applied qualifications in the 2021 to 2022 academic year by qualification category

Qualification category	Number of certificates	Share
Applied Generals	225,790	4.6%
Tech Levels	53,725	1.1%
Technical Awards	405,410	8.2%
Technical Certificates	19,055	0.4%
Remaining vocational and other qualifications	4,239,275	85.8%

Applied General qualifications saw 225,800 certificates issued, making up 4.6% of vocational and other certificates in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

The 478,200 technical qualifications certificates awarded in the 2021 to 2022 academic year can be further broken down into:

- 405,400 Technical Awards, which are Level 1, Level 2 or Level 1/Level 2 qualifications and designed for study at key stage 4 (14 to 16 year olds). They require the same or more guided learning hours as a GCSE.
- 19,100 Technical Certificates, which are Level 2 qualifications designed for study at key stage 5 (16 to 19 year olds) and are intended for students who wish to specialise in a specific industry or prepare for a particular job.
- 53,700 Tech Levels, which are also designed for study at key stage 5. These are Level 3

qualifications.

7.2 Number of technical and applied qualifications certificates by sector subject area

Sector subject area	Applied Generals	Technical Awards	Technical Certificates	Tech Levels	Total
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	26,145	98,340	180	2,065	126,725
Business, Administration and Law	62,745	45,615	8,320	5,475	122,155
Arts, Media and Publishing	14,530	100,005	80	4,560	119,175
Health, Public Services and Care	35,535	68,770	425	11,775	116,505
Information and Communication Technology	17,310	25,335	475	5,050	48,170
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	5,455	28,055	650	6,100	40,260
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	1,245	28,590	2,280	1,290	33,400
Social Sciences	33,120	0	0	0	33,120
Science and Mathematics	29,640	0	0	0	29,640
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	65	8,680	3,350	5,365	17,455
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	0	2,020	3,300	12,055	17,375
Total	225,790	405,410	19,055	53,725	703,985



Sector subject area	Percentage change in the number of certificates awarded between 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	1.0%
Business, Administration and Law	-2.1%
Arts, Media and Publishing	-4.2%
Health, Public Services and Care	2.3%
Information and Communication Technology	-4.9%
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	2.6%
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	-6.7%
Social Sciences	22.1%
Science and Mathematics	3.5%
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	4.5%
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	-4.5%
Total	-0.1%

Social Sciences saw the largest increase in the number of certificates awarded in the 2021 to 2022 academic year compared to the 2020 to 2021 academic year (up by 6,000 certificates).

The largest decrease in numbers was seen in Arts, Media and Publishing with a decrease of 5,300 certificates between the 2020 to 2021 academic year and 2021 to 2022 academic year. This was mainly due to a decrease in Technical Award certificates.

Tech Levels in Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies saw the largest proportional increase (up by 45.5%) in the number of certificates compared to other qualification categories and SSAs in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

7.3 Distribution of Technical and Applied General certificates by sector subject area



Sector subject area	Applied Generals	Technical Awards	Technical Certificates	Tech Levels
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	0.0%	11.6%	19.0%	69.4%
Arts, Media and Publishing	12.2%	83.9%	0.1%	3.8%
Business, Administration and Law	51.4%	37.3%	6.8%	4.5%
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	0.4%	49.7%	19.2%	30.7%
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	13.6%	69.7%	1.6%	15.2%
Health, Public Services and Care	30.5%	59.0%	0.4%	10.1%
Information and Communication Technology	35.9%	52.6%	1.0%	10.5%
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	20.6%	77.6%	0.1%	1.6%
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	3.7%	85.6%	6.8%	3.9%
Science and Mathematics	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Social Sciences	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	32.1%	57.6%	2.7%	7.6%

Different SSAs have a different mix of technical and applied qualifications. For instance, the Arts, Media and Publishing sector is dominated by Technical Awards and the Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care sector is dominated by Tech Levels. The Science and Mathematics and Social Sciences SSAs consist entirely of Applied General qualifications.

7.4 Number of technical and applied qualifications certificates by awarding organisation

Awarding organisation	Applied Generals	Technical Awards	Technical Certificates	Tech Levels	Total
Pearson Education Ltd	147,125	199,055	1,810	15,235	363,225
OCR	25,645	136,515	765	8,135	171,065
WJEC	35,810	36,390	0	0	72,200
NCFE	185	20,535	0	10,755	31,475
City and Guilds of London Institute	0	940	7,775	11,095	19,810
Association of Accounting Technicians	0	0	7,810	5,475	13,285
The London Institute of Banking & Finance	10,655	0	0	0	10,655
RSL Awards Ltd	0	8,570	10	1,160	9,740
AQA Education	3,105	1,080	0	10	4,190
University of the Arts London	3,235	0	0	0	3,235
VTCT	25	1,440	515	400	2,375
Excellence, Achievement & Learning Limited	0	430	245	855	1,530

AIM Qualifications	0	0	0	500	500
The Institute of the Motor Industry	0	335	75	10	420
Active IQ	0	0	55	95	150
Skills and Education Group Awards	0	125	0	0	125
1st4sport Qualifications	5	0	0	0	5
Total	225,790	405,410	19,055	53,725	703,985

Pearson was the single largest provider of Applied Generals and Technical Awards due to its Level 3 Applied General and Level 1/Level 2 Technical BTEC qualifications. The Association of Accounting Technicians and City and Guilds were the largest providers of Technical Certificates, and Pearson, City and Guilds and NCFE were the largest providers of Tech Levels.



Awarding organisation	Percentage change in the number of certificates awarded between 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022
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Pearson Education Ltd	-0.4%
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OCR	3.7%
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WJEC	9.4%
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NCFE	-11.2%
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City and Guilds of London Institute	-5.8%
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Association of Accounting Technicians	-30.3%
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The London Institute of Banking & Finance	5.0%
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RSL Awards Ltd	8.8%
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AQA Education	-31.8%
University of the Arts London	68.0%
VTCT	-28.9%
Excellence, Achievement & Learning Limited	30.2%
AIM Qualifications	2.2%
The Institute of the Motor Industry	-51.2%
Active IQ	-42.3%
Skills and Education Group Awards	-19.7%
1st4sport Qualifications	-98.7%
Total	-0.1%

Association of Accounting Technicians saw the largest overall drop in the number of technical and applied qualification certificates in the 2021 to 2022 academic year compared to the previous year, down by 5,800 certificates.

WJEC and OCR saw the largest increases in the number of certificates awarded (up by 6,200 and 6,000 respectively) compared to the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

8. In focus: Functional Skills qualifications

Functional Skills are qualifications that cover the fundamental and applied skills that help people to get the most from everyday life, education and work. Functional Skills qualifications are available in English, mathematics and ICT at the following levels: Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2.

8.1 Number of certificates in Functional Skills qualifications



	2017 to 2018	2018 to 2019	2019 to 2020	2020 to 2021	2021 to 2022
Number of certificates	705,610	614,290	447,670	302,275	324,230

The overall number of certificates awarded in Functional Skills qualifications has increased by 7% (22,000) in the 2021 to 2022 academic year compared to the 2020 to 2021 academic year, reversing the downward trend seen over the last 4 years. There are a number of factors that may have influenced the trend over time, to a greater or lesser extent. These are discussed in the [background notes](#) accompanying this release.

8.2 Number of certificates of Functional Skills qualifications by subject



Subject	2017 to 2018	2018 to 2019	2019 to 2020	2020 to 2021	2021 to 2022
mathematics	320,450	287,945	205,710	138,265	158,365
English	278,385	243,605	189,345	131,930	143,915
ICT	106,775	82,740	52,610	32,080	21,950

There were increases in the number of certificates across mathematics and English in the 2021 to 2022 academic year compared to the 2020 to 2021 academic year (up by 20,100 and 12,000 certificates respectively). The number of certificates in Functional Skills qualifications in ICT decreased (down by 10,100) compared to the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

8.3 Number of certificates of Functional Skills by level



Qualification level	2017 to 2018	2018 to 2019	2019 to 2020	2020 to 2021	2021 to 2022
Entry Level	216,480	208,250	136,600	110,465	129,450
Level 1	230,270	171,455	132,505	78,245	79,810
Level 2	258,860	234,585	178,560	113,560	114,970

There was an increase in the number of certificates in Functional Skills qualifications across all levels in the 2021 to 2022 academic year compared to the 2020 to 2021 academic year. The largest increase in the number of certificates was in Entry Level qualifications, up by 19,000 certificates.

8.4 Number of certificates of Functional Skills qualifications by awarding organisation

Awarding organisation	Number of certificates in 2020 to 2021	Number of certificates in 2021 to 2022
Pearson Education Ltd	144,205	153,800
City and Guilds of London Institute	104,185	108,080
NCFE	25,500	22,965
AQA Education	8,510	16,455
NOCN	5,500	6,490
Highfield Qualifications	3,850	6,405
Open Awards	2,645	4,730
VTCT	2,245	2,675
OCR	3,220	2,165

Future (Awards and Qualifications) Ltd	225	350
Skillsfirst Awards Ltd	1,580	125
SFJ Awards	330	Fewer than 5
Excellence, Achievement & Learning Limited	280	0
Total	302,275	324,230



Awarding organisation	Percentage change in the number of certificates awarded between 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022
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Pearson Education Ltd	6.7%
City and Guilds of London Institute	3.7%
NCFE	-9.9%
AQA Education	93.4%
NOCN	18.0%
Highfield Qualifications	66.4%
Open Awards	78.8%
VTCT	19.1%
OCR	-32.8%
Future (Awards and Qualifications) Ltd	54.7%
Skillsfirst Awards Ltd	-92.2%
SFJ Awards	-99.7%

Excellence, Achievement & Learning Limited	-100.0%
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Total	7.3%
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There were 12 awarding organisation issuing certificates in Functional Skills qualifications in the 2021 to 2022 academic year, down from 13 in the previous year.

Most awarding organisations awarded more certificates in Functional Skills qualifications in comparison to the 2020 to 2021 academic year. Of those with a decrease in the number of certificates awarded, NCFE saw the greatest decline in the number of certificates in the 2021 to 2022 academic year compared to the 2020 to 2021 academic year (down by 2,500).

Excellence, Achievement & Learning Limited issued no certificates for Functional Skills qualifications this year.

9. In focus: International market

Ofqual-regulated awarding organisations offer a wide selection of regulated qualifications outside the UK. These [qualifications, offered internationally, are protected by Ofqual regulation](#) so long as they are also taken by learners in England. The [certification data for delivery of regulated qualifications outside the UK](#) was collected for the third time in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

9.1 Number of certificates of regulated qualifications awarded outside the UK

Year	Number of certificates
2019 to 2020	4,879,965
2020 to 2021	5,774,990
2021 to 2022	6,730,445

In total 6.7 million certificates were awarded for 2,600 different regulated qualifications to students outside the UK over the 2021 to 2022 academic year, up by 17% compared to the previous year.

9.2 Number of certificates of regulated qualifications awarded outside the UK by type

Qualification type	Number of certificates in 2020 to 2021	Number of certificates in 2021 to 2022	Share of certificates in 2020 to 2021	Share of certificates in 2021 to 2022
English for Speakers of Other Languages	4,010,380	4,780,605	69.4%	71.0%
Other General Qualification	1,079,285	1,105,615	18.7%	16.4%
Performing Arts Graded Examination	393,750	535,890	6.8%	8.0%
Vocationally-Related Qualification	200,805	215,065	3.5%	3.2%
GCSE (9 to 1)	35,560	35,330	0.6%	0.5%
Other qualifications	55,215	57,940	1.0%	0.9%
Total	5,774,990	6,730,445	100.0%	100.0%



Qualification type Percentage change in the number of certificates awarded between 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022

English for Speakers of Other Languages	19.2%
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Other General Qualification	2.4%
Performing Arts Graded Examination	36.1%
Vocationally-Related Qualification	7.1%
GCSE (9 to 1)	-0.7%
Other qualifications	4.9%
Total	16.5%

The top 5 highest volume qualification types accounted for 99.1% of all certificates issued outside the UK. English for Speakers of Other Languages had the highest number of certificates issued, followed by Other General Qualification and Performing Arts Graded Examinations.

Only GCSE (9 to 1) saw a decrease (down by 230) in the number of certificates awarded outside the UK in the 2021 to 2022 academic year compared to the previous year. The largest increase in the number of certificates awarded outside the UK was among English for Speakers of Other Languages regulated qualifications, up by 770,200 compared to the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

9.3 Number of certificates of regulated qualifications awarded outside the UK by level

Qualification level	Number of certificates in 2020 to 2021	Number of certificates in 2021 to 2022	Share of certificates in 2020 to 2021	Share of certificates in 2021 to 2022
Entry Level	917,080	1,199,140	15.9%	17.8%
Level 1	2,138,690	2,640,315	37.0%	39.2%
Level 1/Level 2	151,615	162,045	2.6%	2.4%
Level 2	1,244,260	1,328,565	21.5%	19.7%

Level 3	1,246,200	1,322,030	21.6%	19.6%
Level 4 to 8	77,145	78,350	1.3%	1.2%
Total	5,774,990	6,730,445	100.0%	100.0%



Qualification level	Percentage change in the number of certificates awarded between 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022
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Entry Level	30.8%
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Level 1	23.5%
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Level 1/Level 2	6.9%
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Level 2	6.8%
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Level 3	6.1%
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Level 4 to 8	1.6%
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Total	16.5%
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Level 1 regulated qualifications had the highest number of certificates issued outside the UK in the 2021 to 2022 academic year, accounting for 39.2% of the non-UK total.

All qualification levels saw an increase in the number of certificates issued outside the UK in the 2021 to 2022 academic year compared to the 2020 to 2021 academic year. The highest rise in the number of non-UK certificates was among Level 1 regulated qualifications, up by 501,600 compared to the 2020 to 2021 academic year. Entry Level regulated qualifications saw the highest proportional increase in the number of certificates issued outside the UK, up by 30.8% compared to the previous year (equal to an increase of 282,100 certificates).

9.4 Awarding organisations with the highest number of certificates of regulated qualifications awarded outside the UK

Awarding organisation	Number of certificates in 2020 to 2021	Number of certificates in 2021 to 2022
Cambridge English	3,364,140	3,647,700
International Baccalaureate Organisation	1,076,275	1,102,070
Pearson Education Ltd	433,505	746,865
Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music	174,260	220,260
LanguageCert	61,970	197,180
Trinity College London	175,025	184,475
Royal Academy of Dance	76,685	154,270
WSET Awards	68,150	72,630
Learning Resource Network	56,035	55,040
RSL Awards Ltd	24,975	33,365
VTCT	24,465	29,930
English Speaking Board (International) Ltd	21,980	27,040
The British Council	0	25,090
City and Guilds of London Institute	22,115	24,410
NOCN	26,135	23,080
AQA Education	20,695	20,580
Highfield Qualifications	13,770	19,565
University of West London	13,595	18,490
Qualifi Ltd	16,695	16,125

AIM Qualifications	8,085	12,150
Other organisations	96,440	100,130
Total	5,774,990	6,730,445



Awarding organisation	Percentage change in the number of certificates awarded between 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022
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Cambridge English	8.4%
International Baccalaureate Organisation	2.4%
Pearson Education Ltd	72.3%
Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music	26.4%
LanguageCert	218.2%
Trinity College London	5.4%
Royal Academy of Dance	101.2%
WSET Awards	6.6%
Learning Resource Network	-1.8%
RSL Awards Ltd	33.6%
VTCT	22.3%
English Speaking Board (International) Ltd	23.0%
The British Council	Inf
City and Guilds of London	10.4%

Institute

NOCN	-11.7%
AQA Education	-0.6%
Highfield Qualifications	42.1%
University of West London	36.0%
Qualifi Ltd	-3.4%
AIM Qualifications	50.3%
Other organisations	3.8%
Total	16.5%

The 20 awarding organisations that reported the highest volume of non-UK certificates of regulated qualifications in the 2021 to 2022 academic year awarded 98.5% of all regulated qualifications certificates issued outside the UK. The British Council is new to the top 20 this year after gaining Ofqual recognition in July 2021.

Pearson Education Ltd and Cambridge English saw the largest increases in certificates compared with the previous year (up by 313,400 and 283,600 certificates respectively), mainly due to increases in the number of certificates awarded for English for Speakers of Other Languages qualifications.

LanguageCert has had the largest percentage increase (up by 218.2%) in certificate numbers compared to 2020 to 2021. The increase in the certificate numbers was also due to increases in the number of certificates for English for Speakers of Other Languages qualifications.

Data for all awarding organisations is available in the [accompanying data tables \(Table 22\)](#).

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