



Research and analysis

Qualification price statistics report: 2025

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Applies to England

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Introduction

Ofqual is the expert, independent qualifications regulator for England, regulating 255 awarding organisations and more than 10,100 active qualifications for which 11.8 million certificates were issued to students in the 2023 to 2024 academic year. These include vocational and technical qualifications, apprenticeship end-point assessments (EPAs), GCSEs, AS and A levels. We estimate that the market value of regulated qualifications in England, as represented by the revenue awarding organisations receive through standard qualification fees, is more than £900 million. The strong international reputation of our regulated qualifications underpins an extensive export market, with more than 8.5 million certificates being awarded to students outside of the UK in the 2023 to 2024 academic year.

We have an objective to ensure that regulated qualifications offer value for money. When considered as a whole, regulated qualifications provide significant value to students, apprentices and the broader economy as a result of being trusted indicators of an individual's capability. By accurately recording an individual's skills, they serve a crucial role in translating the significant investment that both individuals and society commit to education into a form that employers and educational institutions can meaningfully engage with.

By helping individuals to communicate their skills effectively, regulated

qualifications can reduce or remove the need for additional recruitment assessment processes by employers and higher education institutions, and they support individuals to find appropriate employment and education that matches their skills.

Decisions about value for money at a qualification level are ultimately in the hands of the schools, colleges and training providers who typically purchase qualifications, as they take into account a range of contextual factors including the needs of their students and their community. We are aware that education providers have been, and continue to be, deeply affected by an array of multifaceted challenges. This includes challenging macroeconomic headwinds and multiple, changing demands on school and college budgets.

We are aware that qualification fee rises contribute to challenging decisions, especially where finances are tight. We support qualification purchasers in making informed decisions about value for money by making a range of information available. We require awarding organisations to be transparent and publish their prices, and we also publish the Qualification Price Statistics reports which can be used to help purchasers better understand how their fees compare against market averages.

Methodology

Ofqual published its first [qualifications price index in 2019](#). In 2023, the QPS underwent a methodological improvement by basing price statistics on a census of qualification prices. Two types of price statistics are presented: year-on-year qualification price inflation over both calendar years 2023 (February 2023 to February 2024) and 2024 (February 2024 to February 2025), and the average qualification price weighted by certificate volumes.

These statistics are presented for a range of qualification sectors and sub-sectors. The average is weighted to make it more representative of the prices that qualification purchasers actually paid over the reporting period. This is achieved by calculating the average in such a way that more popular qualifications, as measured by certificate volumes, have a greater influence over the average price than less popular qualifications. To prevent misinterpretation of average price statistics, only the average price for the most recent collection is reported.

Ofqual collects current qualification prices for all qualifications on its [Register of regulated qualifications](#) that are available to new learners in England. Each collection is run in the first quarter of each calendar year. To be concise, the period February 2024 to February 2025 is referred to as the 'reporting period' for this release. Revisions to previously published data can be found in the annex.

Consistent with prior releases, price statistics are split between general qualifications (GQs), and vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs). GQs consist of GCSEs, AS and A levels, while VTQs are all qualifications other than

GQs and apprenticeship EPAs. Examples of VTQs include, but are not limited to, BTECs, Cambridge Nationals, and Functional Skills qualifications. Due to data availability, Project and T Level Technical Qualifications are not represented in the statistics presented in this report.

Price statistics for apprenticeship EPAs are included in the report for the first time. Apprenticeship EPAs have been weighted by completions data, as published in Ofqual's annual [Apprenticeship end-point assessments statistical report](#). However, the volume data for EPAs is not directly comparable to the volume data used for the other qualifications and completion volumes also cover a different time period – March to February. Additionally, EPAs are inherently different to most of the other types of qualifications that are captured within GQ and VTQs, including the way in which they are funded and the costs that awarding organisations are permitted to charge for through their fees. Care should therefore be taken in interpreting the price statistics for EPAs in relation to those of other qualification sectors.

Later in the year Ofqual will publish standard qualification fee data that contributes towards this publication.

Key findings

In February 2025:

the mean price of a GCSE was

£57

the mean price of an A level was

£128

the mean price of VTQs overall was

£72

- This ranged from **£43** for entry level VTQs through to **£269** for level 4 and above VTQs

Average qualification price inflation was lower in 2024 than in 2023:

GQ inflation fell from 6.2% to

4.8%

and VTQ inflation fell from 5.3% to

4.1%

Apprenticeship end-point assessment inflation over 2024 was

1.8%

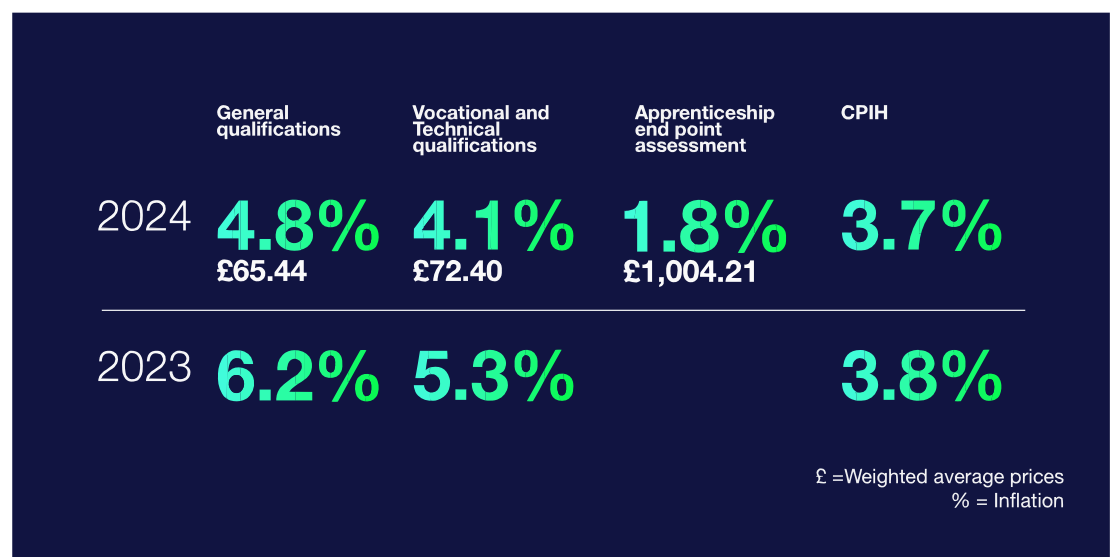
Between February 2024 and February 2025 qualification price inflation remained slightly above consumer price inflation (3.7%) but below wage inflation (5.8%).

To account for substantial macroeconomic and sectoral change, we also consider total price changes between February 2021 and February 2025. Over this period GQ and VTQ prices have increased by less than either consumer prices or wages.

Qualification prices over the reporting period

Consumer inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index including owner-occupier's housing costs (CPIH) is referred to in this report to support interpretation of the findings, as are other relevant contextual reference data points. There is not a requirement that qualification prices inflation matches consumer price inflation.

Overall

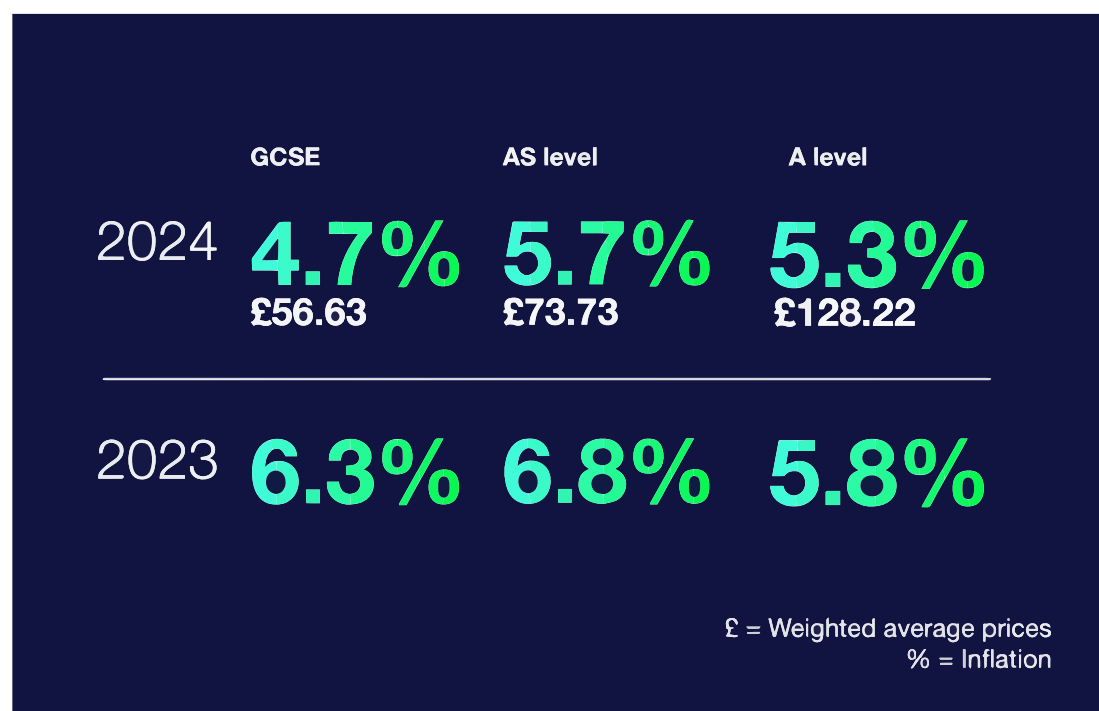


	Weighted average price 2024	Inflation 2024	Inflation 2023 (revised)
GQ	£65.44	4.8%	6.2%
VTQ	£72.40	4.1%	5.3%
Apprenticeship EPAs	£1,004.21 (11.4% of funding band)	1.8%	No data
CPIH	Not applicable	3.7%	3.8%

GQ and VTQ prices in the 2024 reporting period were £65 and £72 respectively. Both GQ and VTQ inflation rates fell in the 2024 reporting period compared with the 2023 reporting period, with GQ inflation falling by 1.4 percentage points to 4.8% and VTQ inflation falling by 1.2 percentage points to 4.1%. CPIH fell, only marginally, between the 2 reporting periods, by 0.1 percentage points, meaning that while qualification price rises remained above consumer price rises, the gap narrowed significantly.

The average EPA fee was £1,004 in the 2024 reporting period and apprenticeship EPA inflation was 1.8% over the 2024 reporting period, significantly below consumer price inflation. Care should be taken in comparing the high-level average price of EPAs with GQ or VTQs due to structural differences in their design, cost drivers and market structures. There is a maximum level of funding available for apprenticeships and the [Department for Education](#) (DfE) expects that EPA costs should not exceed 20% of this funding. The average weighted EPA fee as a proportion of its respective maximum funding is 11.4%.

General qualifications



	Weighted average price 2024	Inflation 2024	Inflation 2023 (revised)
GCSE	£56.63	4.7%	6.3%
AS Level	£73.73	5.7%	6.8%
A Level	£128.22	5.3%	5.8%
GQ (total)	£65.44	4.8%	6.2%

The weighted average prices for each qualification type as reported in February 2025 are £57 for GCSEs, £74 for AS levels and £128 for A levels.

The inflation rate of GCSE, AS Level and A Level qualifications over the same period were 4.7%, 5.7% and 5.3% respectively. In line with the overall GQ finding of falling inflation rates, all 3 types of qualification experienced rates of inflation that were below those experienced in the 2023 reporting period, although the extent of the difference varied. GCSEs experienced the largest fall in inflation rates, falling by 1.6 percentage points while A Levels fell by 0.5 percentage points from 5.8%.

Vocational and technical qualifications

The VTQ sector consists of more than 9,700 qualifications which cover skills

relevant to the full range of economic activity and range from short courses that can be completed within a single day through to qualifications that require study across multiple years. We have provided price statistics for VTQs by level and subject area, and we note that even within these sub-sectors there will be significant variation.

VTQs by qualification level



	Weighted average price 2024	Inflation 2024	Inflation 2023 (revised)
Entry Level	£42.61	3.9%	4.9%
Level 1	£51.97	3.6%	6.3%
Level 1/ Level 2	£80.56	5.5%	5.1%
Level 2	£59.67	3.6%	5.5%
Level 3	£90.17	4.5%	5.1%
Level 4+	£268.88	3.3%	5.3%

It is generally the case that higher qualification levels are associated with higher fees. Weighted average fees range from £43 for entry level VTQs through to £269 for level 4+ VTQs.

Inflation was variable across VTQs grouped by qualification level, ranging from 3.3% for level 4+ VTQs through to 5.5% for level1/level 2 qualifications. Almost all qualification level groupings experienced lower inflation levels over the 2024 reporting period relative to the 2023 reporting period, with level 1 qualifications experiencing the largest fall of 2.7 percentage points.

VTQs by Sector Subject Area (SSA)

SSA	Weighted average price 2024	Inflation 2024	Inflation 2023 (revised)
Health, Public Services and Care	£41.10	4.0%	5.0%
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	£89.86	5.9%	7.3%
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	£77.99	4.8%	5.2%
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	£81.44	4.8%	6.1%
Digital Technology	£95.70	4.7%	5.7%
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	£64.65	5.6%	7.1%
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	£91.98	4.2%	4.4%
Arts, Media and Publishing	£85.49	5.3%	5.2%
Education and Training	£84.92	4.3%	4.5%
Preparation for Life and Work	£40.47	3.2%	5.2%
Business, Administration and Law	£187.78	3.0%	5.5%
Languages and Academic Subjects	£88.80	2.7%	4.6%

Average prices in February 2025 ranged from £40 for VTQs in the Preparation for Life and Work SSA through to £188 for Business, Administration and Law VTQs.

The composition of qualification levels within each SSA influences price differences. For example, entry level qualifications, which are generally cheaper relative to higher-level qualifications as noted above, accounted for around half of certificates awarded within the Preparation for Life and Work SSA compared with less than 1% of the certificates awarded within the Business, Administration and Law SSA.

Inflation rates varied from 2.7% for Languages and Academic Subjects (a grouping of several of the smallest SSAs by certificate volume), through to 5.9%

for Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care.

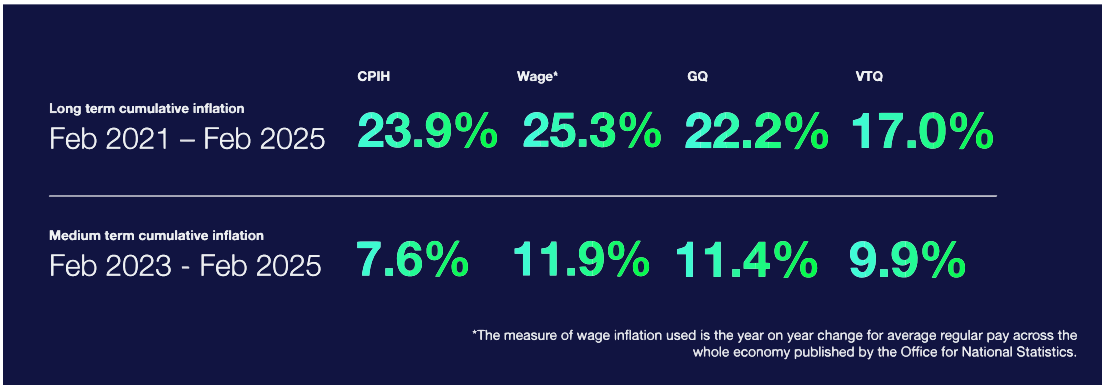
The inflation rate over the 2024 reporting period fell for SSAs relative to last year, with Preparation for Life and Work (2 percentage point fall), and Languages and Academic Subjects (1.9 percentage points) seeing the largest falls.

Context

A wide variety of factors, including general economic conditions and education policy, may contribute to price levels. This section of the report provides a broader perspective to contextualise the price statistics presented above. A substantial proportion of awarding organisations costs stem from their workforce, so we have considered prices rises in light of wage inflation. We have also taken a long-term view by considering the overall change in prices between February 2021 and February 2025, as well as a medium-term view by considering the period of February 2023 to February 2025.

Macroeconomic context

The table and chart below show the overall price changes and plot the annual inflation rates for consumer price inflation, wage inflation and top-level GQ and VTQ inflation.



Measure	Long term cumulative inflation February 2021 to February 2025	Medium term cumulative inflation February 2023 to February 2025
CPIH	23.9%	7.6%
Wage*	25.3%	11.9%
GQ	22.2%	11.4%
VTQ	17.0%	9.9%

*The measure of wage inflation used is the [year on year change for average regular pay across the whole economy](#) published by the Office for National Statistics.

The UK economy is recovering from a period of instability driven by the COVID-19 pandemic and broader geopolitical events. These led CPIH inflation to rise to a peak of nearly 10% in late 2022, with the labour market response seeing average regular pay growth remaining above 5% since the middle of 2022. In response to the high levels of inflation, the Bank of England base rate has increased from 0.1% in late 2021 through to 4.5% in February 2025, increasing the cost of borrowing and servicing some existing debt.

As the chart above shows, the 'shape' of qualification inflation follows CPIH inflation, offset by around one year, and also closely follows the pattern and magnitude of wage inflation changes. This suggests that recent qualification inflation can be seen as a delayed response to significant macroeconomic shocks and may partly be driven by the labour-intensive nature of awarding organisation operations. Looking ahead, the [2024 Autumn Budget](#) set out a rise to both the minimum wage and employers National Insurance Contributions, which was implemented in April 2025.

Sectoral context

Alongside macroeconomic changes, other factors within the sector may also influence awarding organisations. To ensure safe delivery in the face of changing threats, awarding organisations must ensure that they are resilient to delivery disruptions including in relation to cyber security. Additionally, there are several current reform programmes affecting the qualifications landscape, including the design and delivery of T Levels, reformed Technical Occupational Qualifications

and Alternative Academic Qualifications and changes to apprenticeship EPAs. Future changes may be initiated by the Curriculum and Assessment Review. The upfront investment in reform-related development may be seen in several ways, such as being spread across an awarding organisation's portfolio or through changes to prices between a reformed qualification and its predecessor.

Annex: Revisions

There are revisions to the inflation rates published in the [Qualification Price Statistics 2024 report](#). This is due to 2 reasons. Firstly, there have been revisions to historic certificates data for some awarding organisations. Secondly, some awarding organisations provided corrected fee data following publication of the 2024 document. The net effect of these changes is relatively minor; however, attention should be drawn to the VTQ SSA breakdowns of 'construction, planning and the built environment' and 'preparation for life and work'. The former's inflation rate was revised down by 2.4 percentage points, while the latter was revised up by 1.8 percentage points.

Qualification grouping	February 2023 to February 2024: Inflation as originally published	February 2023 to February 2024: revised inflation
GQ – overall	6.4%	6.2%
VTQ – overall	5.5%	5.3%
GCSE	6.6%	6.3%
AS level	6.8%	6.8%
A level	5.8%	5.8%
VTQ – agriculture, horticulture and animal care	7.2%	7.3%
VTQ – arts, media and publishing	5.3%	5.2%
VTQ – business, administration and law	5.6%	5.5%
VTQ – construction, planning and the built environment	8.5%	6.1%

VTQ – education and training	4.8%	4.5%
VTQ – engineering and manufacturing technologies	5.9%	5.2%
VTQ – health, public service and care	5.0%	5.0%
VTQ – digital technology	5.8%	5.7%
VTQ – languages and academic subjects	4.7%	4.6%
VTQ – leisure, travel and tourism	5.4%	4.4%
VTQ – preparation for life and work	3.4%	5.2%
VTQ – retail and commercial enterprise	7.0%	7.1%
VTQ – entry level	5.5%	4.9%
VTQ – level 1	5.1%	6.3%
VTQ – level 1/level 2	5.1%	5.1%
VTQ – level 2	5.6%	5.5%
VTQ – level 3	5.5%	5.1%
VTQ – level 4+	5.7%	5.3%

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