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Accredited official statistics

Background information for vocational and other qualifications quarterly: July to September 2025

Published 20 November 2025

Applies to England

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Provide your feedback

We welcome your feedback on our publications. If you have any comments on this statistical release, or how to improve it to meet your needs, please [complete our short survey](#) or data.analytics@ofqual.gov.uk.

Purpose

This release presents information on the number of certificates issued for regulated vocational and other qualifications from July to September (quarter 3 2025) in England.

Geographical coverage

The data covers regulated qualifications in England.

Description

Ofqual regulates qualifications and assessments in England. This release includes data on vocational and other qualifications awarded in England.

This release does not include GCSEs, AS and A levels, Advanced Extension Awards, Extended Project Qualifications (EPQ), apprenticeship end-point assessments (EPAs), and T Level Technical Qualifications. The number of certificates issued for GCSEs, AS and A levels, advanced extension

awards, and Extended Project Qualifications (EPQ) can be found on the website of the [Joint Council for Qualifications \(JCQ\)](#). Reporting arrangements for EPAs and T Levels are different. The awarding organisations that conduct EPAs do not issue certificates. Instead, certificates are requested from the Department for Education on behalf of apprentices, and are issued under Section A3 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. [Statistics on apprenticeships](#) are published by the Department for Education. Ofqual regulates the Technical Qualification included in the [T Level](#). There is not a certificate for the Technical Qualification itself. T Level certificates are issued by the Department for Education and are therefore not included in this report. For overall T Level outcomes, please see the [T Level results](#) published by the Department for Education.

Data tables accompanying this release show the number of certificates issued broken down by awarding organisation, sector subject area, qualification type, and level of qualification. Some tables also show the number of qualifications with certificates issued to contextualise changes in certificate numbers.

Comparisons in this release are mainly made with data from the same quarter of the previous year and the 12-month period up to the end of the same quarter of the previous year.

Qualification level

Regulated qualifications are assigned a level from [entry level through to level 8](#) broadly indicating the relative level of demand of the qualification. Levels are assigned on [Ofqual's Register](#) by the awarding organisation with reference to [Ofqual's published level descriptors](#).

Sector subject area

Sector subject area is a classification of qualifications into business sectors or subject areas maintained by Ofqual. There are 15 sector subject areas, which each include several second-tier sector subject areas. Sector subject areas are assigned on [Ofqual's Register](#) by the awarding organisation with reference to [Ofqual's published list of sector subject areas](#).

Qualification type

Regulated qualifications are classified into different qualification types.

Qualification types are classified into 3 broad categories:

- 1) General.
- 2) Life and personal skills.
- 3) Vocational, technical and professional.

Some qualification types are 'regulatory types' which means they are subject to the General Conditions of Recognition as well as specific additional regulatory requirements or other restrictions (such as subject or qualification level conditions). Other qualification types are subject only to the General Conditions of Recognition. Qualification type category is selected by the awarding organisation for the purposes of transparency on [Ofqual's Register](#).

Qualification types provide information which complements that provided by the sector subject area classification. Qualification type can give an indication of a number of features, such as the nature of the qualification, the type of assessment, the qualification level and guided learning hours.

Table 1 gives a further breakdown of the structure of qualification types. As noted above, not all qualification types

listed here are reported in this release.

Table 1:

Broad qualification type	Specific qualification type	Status	Reported in this release
General	Advanced extension award	Regulatory type	No
General	GCE A level	Regulatory type	No
General	GCE AS level	Regulatory type	No
General	GCSE (9 to 1)	Regulatory type	No
General	Project	Regulatory type	No
General	Other general qualification	Other qualification type	Yes
Life and personal skills	English for Speakers of Other Languages	Regulatory type	Yes
Life and personal skills	Functional Skills	Regulatory type	Yes
Life and personal skills	Digital Functional Skills qualifications	Regulatory type	Yes
Life and personal skills	Essential digital skills	Regulatory type	Yes

Life and personal skills	Other life skills	Other qualification type	Yes
Life and personal skills	Key skills	Retired type	Yes
Life and personal skills	Basic skills	Retired type	Yes
Vocational, technical and professional	Technical Qualification	Regulatory type	No
Vocational, technical and professional	End-point assessment	Regulatory type	No
Vocational, technical and professional	Occupational qualification	Other qualification type	Yes
Vocational, technical and professional	Vocationally-related qualification	Other qualification type	Yes
Vocational, technical and professional	Performing arts graded examinations	Other qualification type	Yes
Vocational, technical and professional	Other vocational qualification	Other qualification type	Yes
Vocational, technical and professional	National Vocational Qualification	Retired type	Yes
Vocational, technical and	Technical Occupation	Regulatory type	Yes

professional	Qualifications		
Vocational, technical and professional	Alternative Academic Qualifications	Regulatory type	Yes
Vocational, technical and professional	Apprenticeship Assessment Qualification	Regulatory type	No

Ofqual revised the list of qualification types in consultation with awarding organisations in 2018. Qualification types listed as ‘retired type’ in Table 1 may still be reported on, where awarding organisations have not yet finished migrating their qualification types. Further detail on the changes to qualification types can be found in the [background notes for vocational and other qualifications quarterly: July to September 2022](#).

New Technical Occupation Qualifications (TOQs) and Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) were introduced for first teaching in August 2025. Technical Occupation Qualifications are sometimes known as reformed Technical Qualifications. This is an overarching term for two different qualification types: Technical Occupational Entry and Technical Specialist. The term “reformed Technical Qualification” does not include Technical Qualifications (TQs) that sit within the T Level programme.

Awarding organisations

Awarding organisations refer to organisations recognised by Ofqual to develop, deliver and award qualifications. Awarding organisations are assigned unique Ofqual recognition numbers. Awarding organisations may sometimes change the legal entity which they are recognised under, for example as a result of a merger with another organisation. This results in a new Ofqual recognition number. In this report, figures are grouped by the

awarding organisation's name as stated on [Ofqual's Register](#), rather than their recognition number, therefore where an organisation's legal entity has changed but their name on the Register remains the same, they are reported as one awarding organisation. Figures reported by recognition number are available from the [statistical dataset](#) published each quarter.

Context

From the 2022 to 2023 academic year onwards, exams and other formal assessments returned to pre-pandemic arrangements following the disruption due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In the 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021 academic years, alternative arrangements were put in place. Further details on these arrangements are available in [previous reports](#).

Changes in the number of qualifications being offered is not the only reason for changes in certificate numbers. Certification and qualification figures can be impacted by a number of external factors, including changes to the Department for Education's [performance table qualification lists](#) or the academic cycle. For example, we expect a peak in the total number of certificates in quarter 3 each year following level 1/2 and level 3 results days.

One student may receive multiple certificates. Trends in the number of certificates issued over time may reflect changes in the number of students taking those qualifications, but this is not the only potential explanation.

Data source

Information on qualifications (title, type, awarding organisation, sector subject area and level) is taken from [Ofqual's Register of](#)

[Regulated Qualifications](#), which gives information on regulated qualifications and recognised awarding organisations in England (and Northern Ireland). Data on the number of certificates issued is sent by awarding organisations to Ofqual. Information on Ofqual's Register is self-reported by awarding organisations and may change.

Limitations

There is potential for error in the information provided by awarding organisations. Ofqual compares the data over time and checks for systematic issues, giving awarding organisations the opportunity to double-check the numbers provided. The figures reported in this release reflect the certificates issued by awarding organisations at the time of data collection.

Quality assurance

Quality assurance procedures are carried out as explained in the [Quality Framework for Statistical Publications](#) published by Ofqual to ensure the accuracy of the data and to challenge or question it, where necessary. Publication may be deferred if the statistics are not considered fit for purpose.

Published data

The [dataset used to produce this release](#) is available separately, and can be explored visually in our [interactive visualisation for Vocational and other qualifications over time](#).

Revisions

Once published, the statistical release is not usually revised. If data was revised after publication, for example to insert late data or to correct an error, the revision will be included in subsequent releases. Subsequent releases may also reflect where qualifications were re-categorised to a different type, level, sector subject area or awarding organisation.

Confidentiality and rounding

To ensure confidentiality of the published accompanying data, figures have been rounded to the nearest 5. If the value is less than 5, it is represented as “fewer than 5” and 0 represents zero certificates.

Where individual rounded values have been presented in a table along with their sum total, this total may be slightly different to the sum of the individual rounded values. This is because the total has been calculated using the original unrounded values.

We also use unrounded values to derive percentages. Percentages are then rounded to one decimal place. Due to this rounding, percentages may not always add to up exactly 100%.

For more information, see our [Rounding policy for statistical publications](#).

Status

These statistics are classified as [accredited official statistics](#) (referred to as National Statistics in the Statistics and

Registration Service Act 2007).

These accredited official statistics have been independently reviewed by the [Office for Statistics Regulation](#) (OSR). They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

You are welcome to contact us directly at data.analytics@ofqual.gov.uk with any comments about how we meet these standards. Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the [OSR website](#).

Related publications

[Vocational and other qualifications over time](#): this interactive visualisation allows you to explore the number of certificates issued in England for vocational and other qualifications regulated by Ofqual from 1 January 2012 onwards.

[Vocational qualifications dataset](#): certificates issued for vocational and other qualifications (excluding GCSEs, AS and A levels, Advanced Extension Awards, apprenticeship end-point assessments, Extended Project Qualifications and T Level Technical Qualifications). The data that is underlying this release.

[Annual qualifications market report](#): the annual qualifications market report is published by Ofqual. It presents data on the number of qualifications available for award by Ofqual-recognised awarding organisations and certificates awarded for these qualifications.

[Further education and skills](#): the quarterly Statistical First Release, published by the Department for Education, reports statistics about learner participation, outcomes and highest qualification held in the further education and skills sector.

[A level and other 16 to 18 results](#): statistics published by the Department for Education covering A level and other results for 16- to 18-year-olds.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency's [Individualised Learner Record](#) data and the Department for Education's [National Pupil Database \(NPD\)](#) provide data on graded qualifications and data broken down by region. The latter also provides data on progression between award, certificate and diploma, and number of registrations.

For any related publications for qualifications offered in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland please contact the respective regulators – [Qualifications Wales](#), [CCEA Regulator](#) and the [Scottish Qualifications Authority \(SQA\)](#).

Useful links

You can find additional information related to this release in the:

- [Report and data tables](#) accompanying this release
- [Definitions](#) of important terms used in this release
- [Policies and procedures](#) that Ofqual follows for production of statistical releases

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