



# Technical and Professional (Vocational) Qualifications

**Background information accompanying the statistical release:**

CCEA Vocational Qualification Bulletin 2018 Q3

Reporting Date: July to September 2018 (Q3)

Publication Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018

## Information about the statistics

### Purpose

This release presents information on the number of certificates issued for qualifications regulated by CCEA, other than GCSE, AS and A level. It covers certificates issued during July to September (quarter 3, 2018).

Data tables accompanying this release show the number of awards broken down by awarding organisation, sector subject area, type of qualification, and level of qualification. 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. This is because of seasonal changes in the number of certificates issued over the year.

### Geographical coverage

The data cover qualifications regulated by CCEA in Northern Ireland.

Prior to quarter 4 2017 Ofqual published aggregated data for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Since then Ofqual publishes data for England only and responsibility for publishing data for qualifications in Northern Ireland and Wales has passed to CCEA and Qualifications Wales respectively.

### Description

Since May 2016 CCEA has been the regulator for all qualifications and assessments in Northern Ireland. This bulletin includes data on Technical and Professional (Vocational) qualifications awarded in Northern Ireland.

Regulated qualifications are classified into different qualification types with an associated level, which is indicative of the level of demand. The table below shows the current levels for each type of qualification and the relationship between them. Level 3 is at about the same level of demand, but not necessarily the same size, as an A level, and level 2 is at about the same level of demand as a GCSE at grade C or above.

On 1 October 2015, the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) requirements were withdrawn. From that date, the QCF type has ceased to exist. However, for administrative reasons, until the new system was introduced in summer 2016, awarding organisations could still use the QCF type on the system for new qualifications when no other type was appropriate, and so the QCF type persists in the data. A full list of qualification types is displayed below.

Qualification type	Current levels
English for speakers of other languages	Entry Level, Levels 1, 2 and 3
Entry Level	Entry Level
Free-standing mathematics qualification	Levels 1, 2 and 3
Functional skills	Entry Level, Levels 1 and 2
GCE A level	Level 3
GCE AS qualification	Level 3
GCSE (9 to 1)	Level 1/2
GCSE	Level 1/2
Higher Level	Levels 4 to 8
Key skills	Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4
NVQ	Levels 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
'Other general' qualification	Levels 1, 1/2, 2 and 3
Occupational qualification	Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4
Project	Levels 1, 2 and 3
QCF	Entry Level, Levels 1 to 8
Vocationally related qualification	Entry Level, Levels 1 to 8

*Table 1 The levels of study of qualification types*

This release presents data on regulated vocational and other qualifications coloured blue in table 1.

Northern Ireland Essential Skills data were contained within the qualification types Entry Level and 'Other General' Qualification. A new qualification type Essential Skills (Northern Ireland) has been created and from quarter 3 2018 essential skills certifications will be reclassified to this type.

## Data source

Information on qualifications (covering title, type, awarding organisation, sector subject area and level) is taken from the [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 awarded are sent by awarding organisations to Ofqual, which supplies the Northern Ireland extract of this data to CCEA.

## Limitations

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.

CCEA cannot guarantee the number of certificates submitted is correct and there may be systematic bias when the information is supplied, although awarding organisations are expected to provide the correct data. CCEA and Ofqual compare the data over time and check 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.

Large percentage movements in data may not be significant if based on relatively small numbers of certifications. Because of this percentages will not be given or charted for values which have a denominator of less than 50.

## Quality assurance

Quality assurance procedures are carried out as explained in the [Quality Assurance Framework for Statistical Publications](#) published by Ofqual to ensure the accuracy of the data on which this publication is founded.

CCEA manages the quality of the statistics produced by means of quality scrutiny which is external to the producers of the report to assure accuracy and quality.

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

## Published data

The [data underlying these statistics](#) are published alongside this statistical release at 9.30am on the day of release.

## Revisions

Once published, data on the number of certificates issued for any qualification are not usually subject to revision, although subsequent releases may be revised to insert late data or to correct an error. Qualifications may also be re-categorised to a different type, level, sector subject area or awarding organisation. In some cases, data may be amended to reflect the new categorisation.

## Confidentiality and rounding

None of the figures in the statistics and commentary are rounded. This is a change in rounding policy from publications of the VQ bulletin prior to 2018 quarter 2 in which all figures were rounded to the nearest 10 and non-Zero figures below 5 were represented as ~0.

In the dataset published alongside this publication figures below 5 are masked to protect the confidentiality of individuals. Non-zero figures below 5 are represented as a dash (—).

## Status

These statistics are classified as Official Statistics.

## Glossary

Definitions of important terms used in this release are [available online](#).

## Useful links

The dataset accompanying this release is available separately.

## Feedback

We welcome your feedback on our publications. Should you have any comments on this statistical release and how to improve it to meet your needs please contact us at [ccearegulation@ccea.org.uk](mailto:ccearegulation@ccea.org.uk).

We wish to make our publications widely accessible. Please contact us at [ccearegulation@ccea.org.uk](mailto:ccearegulation@ccea.org.uk) if you have any specific accessibility requirements.

This publication is available at [ccea.org.uk/regulation](http://ccea.org.uk/regulation).

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