

Annual Qualifications Market Report 2017 to 2018 academic year

Annual

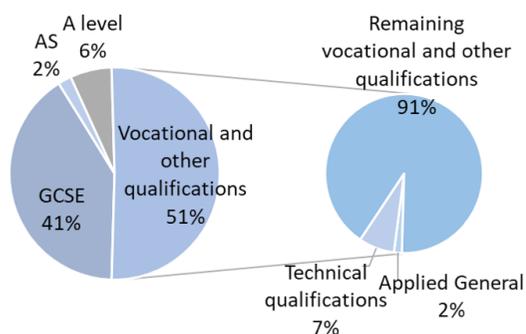
Published: 14 February 2019

Coverage: England

Official statistics

This release provides information on the number and types of qualifications available for award in England over the academic year 2017/18 and the number of certificates awarded by recognised awarding organisations. Headline statistics are presented on this page, followed by further detail.

11.5 million certificates in 2017/18

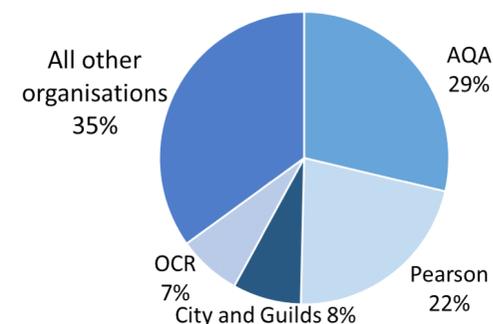


Most popular sector subject area

Preparation for life and work is the largest subject area within "vocational and other" qualifications category, with just under 1.5 million certificates awarded.



Market share of awarding organisations



Available regulated qualifications

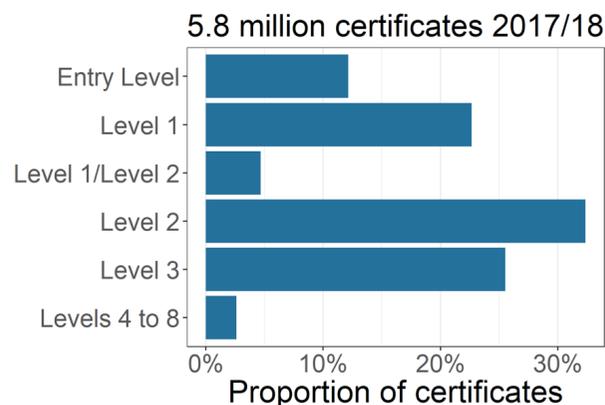
20.8K

Available qualifications in 2017/18. 8% decrease on the previous year (22.5K)

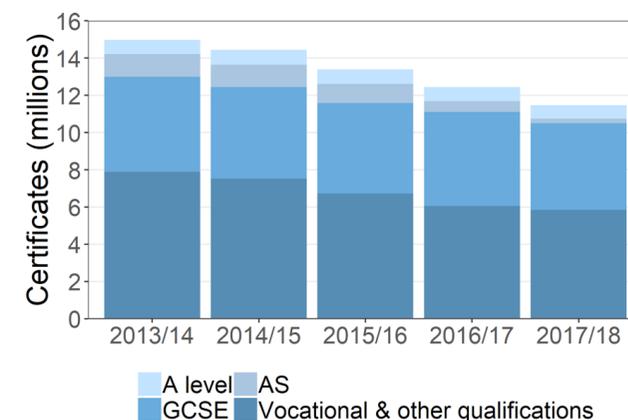
12.7K

Available qualifications with certificates in 2017/18. 2% decrease on the previous year (12.9K)

Vocational & other qualifications by level



Overall certificates continue to decline



| | |
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Comments and feedback are welcome

Annual Qualifications Market Report

This report presents data on the number and types of qualifications available for award in England over the academic year 2017/18 by recognised awarding organisations; organisations which are recognised by Ofqual to develop, deliver and award qualifications can be found on Ofqual's [Register of Regulated Qualifications](#), referred to as the Register in this report.

For the purpose of this report, the 2017/18 academic year is considered the start of October 2017 to the end of September 2018. It provides an overview of the qualifications market and offers a single reference point about participants in the market.

Data presented in this release covers the number of awarding organisations, regulated qualifications and certificates awarded for all types of qualifications. The report also shows the market share of certificates for GCSEs, AS and A levels by awarding organisation and subject. The market share of certificates for vocational and other qualifications is presented by sector subject area, awarding organisation and qualification level.

This report is produced annually and is based primarily on information that Ofqual holds or collects from awarding organisations and the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) on behalf of certain awarding organisations.

Note that where this report refers to 'vocational and other' qualifications, this means all qualifications other than GCSEs, AS or A levels.

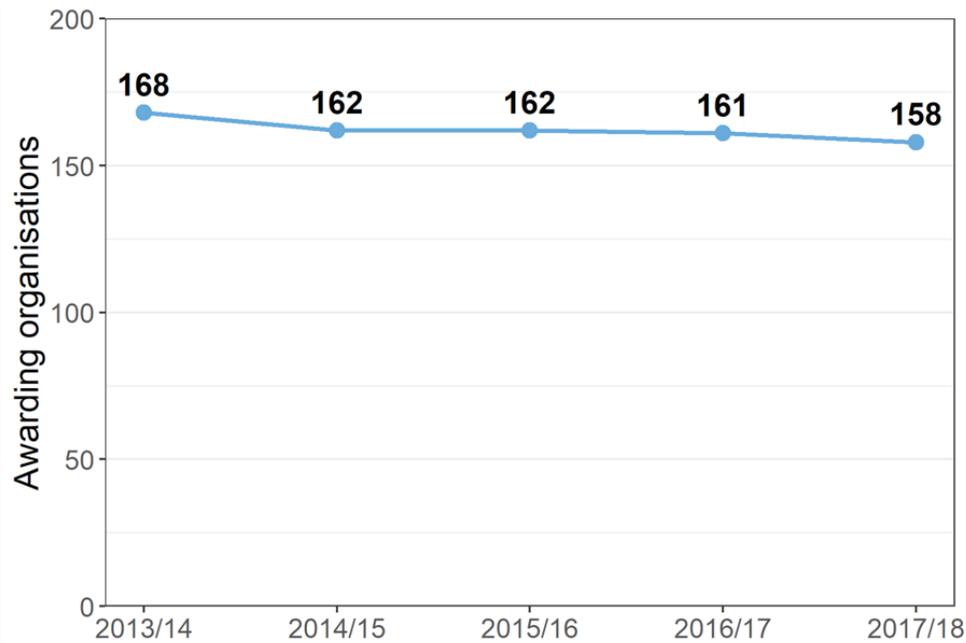
Figures for number of certificates are rounded to the nearest 5, with values 1 to 4 denoted "0~". Figures for the number of qualifications are not rounded. Further information on this release is available in the [background information](#) as well as [data tables](#) accompanying this report.

Awarding organisations

Any organisation that wants to offer regulated qualifications in England has to be recognised by Ofqual. Since July 2011, 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](#).

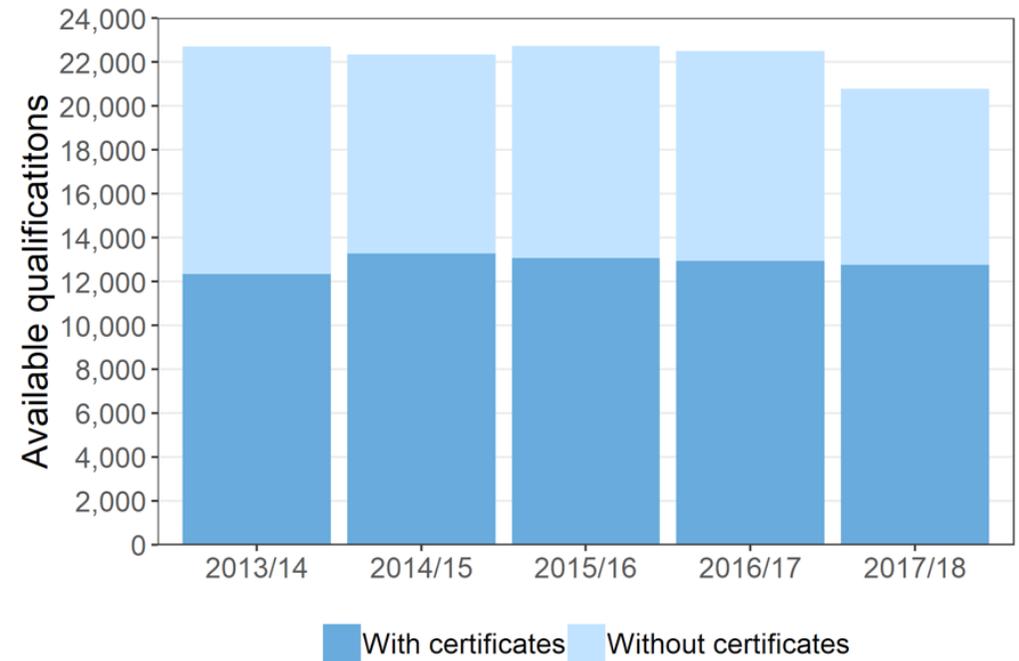
Information on qualifications (covering title, type, awarding organisation, sector subject area and level) is taken from the Register.

The number of awarding organisations remains steady



There are 3 fewer awarding organisations in 2017/18, compared to 2016/17.

The number of available qualifications declines



There is an 8% decrease in the number of qualifications available to certificate in 2017/18, compared to the previous year. Some available qualifications have no certificates because they are new and may require a 1 or 2 year course of study before students can certificate.

Qualification type

Qualification types are used to describe the nature of qualifications and are contained within the Ofqual register.

The large percentage increase in GCSE (9 to 1) is explained by [reforms to GCSEs](#). The reformed GCSE (9 to 1) qualifications are counted separately from the legacy GCSE (A* to G) qualifications. The largest increase in the number of qualifications in 2017/18 was seen in Vocationally-Related Qualifications. This increase can partially be attributed to [Ofqual's decision to revise the list of available qualification types](#) during the 2017/18 academic year.

The largest decrease in the number of qualifications available to certificate was seen in QCF due to this revision and the removal of QCF design rules on 31 December 2017.

Vocationally-Related qualifications see the largest increase in the number of available qualifications this year

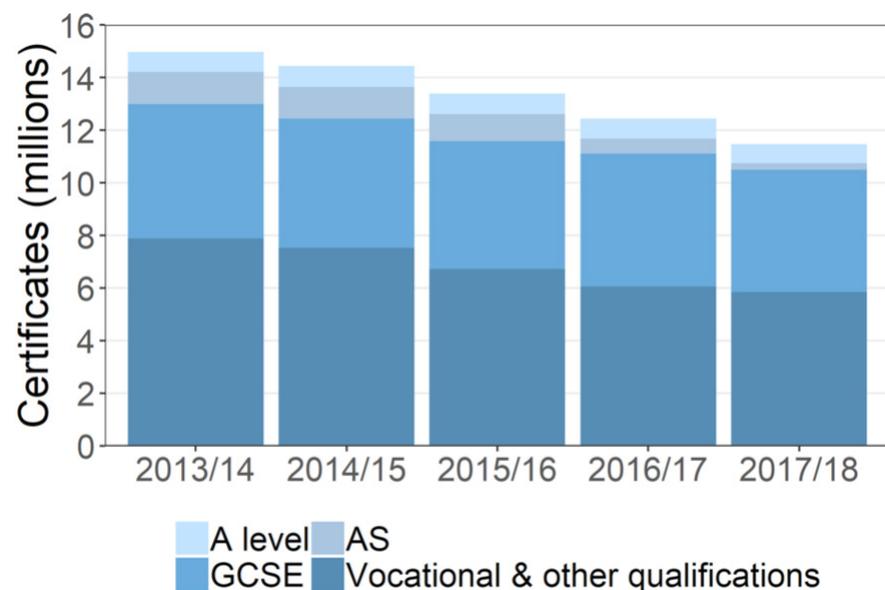
| Qualification type | Number of qualifications available to certificate | | Number of qualifications with certificates | | Percentage change in number of qualifications with certificates in 2017/18 from 2016/17 | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|----|-----|------|
| | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | -100% | -50% | 0% | 50% | 100% |
| End-Point Assessment | 1 | 39 | 0 | 5 | | | | | |
| GCSE (9 to 1) | 95 | 96 | 12 | 96 | | | | | |
| Other Vocational Qualification | 565 | 713 | 370 | 487 | | | | | |
| Vocationally-Related Qualification | 6,741 | 7,259 | 4,446 | 4,978 | | | | | |
| Occupational Qualification | 4,282 | 4,621 | 2,914 | 3,159 | | | | | |
| Project | 14 | 14 | 12 | 13 | | | | | |
| Other Life Skills Qualification | 1,429 | 1,542 | 1,108 | 1,173 | | | | | |
| Advanced Extension Award | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | |
| Basic Skills | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | | |
| Functional Skills (QCF) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | | |
| English For Speakers of Other Languages | 316 | 309 | 208 | 207 | | | | | |
| Performing Arts Graded Examination | 389 | 395 | 351 | 348 | | | | | |
| Other General Qualification | 575 | 570 | 432 | 421 | | | | | |
| Entry Level | 75 | 68 | 62 | 56 | | | | | |
| Functional Skills | 227 | 181 | 203 | 179 | | | | | |
| Higher Level | 24 | 23 | 7 | 6 | | | | | |
| GCE A Level | 316 | 258 | 271 | 228 | | | | | |
| GCE AS Level | 339 | 287 | 294 | 247 | | | | | |
| Free Standing Mathematics Qualification | 13 | 9 | 9 | 6 | | | | | |
| GCSE (A* to G) | 345 | 212 | 335 | 180 | | | | | |
| QCF | 6,656 | 4,153 | 1,904 | 955 | | | | | |
| Principal Learning | 11 | 6 | 3 | 1 | | | | | |
| Key Skills | 46 | 3 | 1 | 0 | | | | | |
| National Vocational Qualification | 40 | 31 | 4 | 0 | | | | | |
| Total | 22,500 | 20,790 | 12,947 | 12,746 | | | | | |

Notes: The percentage change for GCSE (9 to 1) and End-Point Assessment was greater than the range shown on the chart and have therefore been restricted to 100% to aid better interpretation of the rest of the chart.

Certificates awarded for all qualifications

The total number of certificates awarded fell by just over 8% compared to the previous year, continuing the trend seen over several years (see notes).

Fall in the number of overall certificates



AS qualifications see the largest percentage decrease in the number of certificates (down by 59% compared to 2017/18). This could partly be due to the decoupling of AS from A levels as part of [government policy reforms](#).

The number of certificates for A levels, GCSEs and vocational and other qualifications has declined slightly.

| Qualification | 2013/14 | | 2014/15 | | 2015/16 | | 2016/17 | | 2017/18 | | Percentage change 2016/17 & 2017/18 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------------------------------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | |
| A level | 776,860 | 5% | 791,000 | 5% | 774,845 | 6% | 764,715 | 6% | 732,720 | 6% | -4% |
| AS | 1,214,790 | 8% | 1,196,390 | 8% | 1,020,705 | 8% | 582,115 | 5% | 236,175 | 2% | -59% |
| GCSE | 5,102,145 | 34% | 4,923,105 | 34% | 4,862,795 | 36% | 5,039,850 | 40% | 4,664,250 | 41% | -7% |
| Vocational and other qualifications | 7,889,960 | 53% | 7,527,905 | 52% | 6,730,975 | 50% | 6,060,815 | 49% | 5,838,425 | 51% | -4% |
| Total | 14,983,755 | 100% | 14,438,405 | 100% | 13,389,325 | 100% | 12,447,495 | 100% | 11,471,565 | 100% | -8% |

Notes: For more information on entries in GCSEs, AS and A levels please refer to the report on [Entries and late entries for GCSE, AS and A level: 2017 to 2018 academic year](#).

Qualification uptake

There are significant differences between qualifications in terms of the numbers of certificates awarded. A GCSE in an EBacc subject may have several hundred thousand certificates, while a niche vocational qualification may attract in the order of a hundred candidates in a given year.

Percentage of certificates awarded against available qualifications 2017/18

A quarter of certificates are awarded against fewer than 1% of the available qualifications

| Percentage of certificates | GCSE, AS and A level qualifications | | Vocational and other qualifications | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| | Number of qualifications available | Proportion (%) | Number of qualifications available | Proportion (%) |
| 25% | 4 | <1% | 45 | <1% |
| 50% | 13 | 2% | 265 | 1% |
| 75% | 52 | 6% | 956 | 5% |
| 90% | 133 | 16% | 2,342 | 12% |
| 100% | 754 | 88% | 12,121 | 60% |

The top few qualifications by number of certificates awarded account for a significant proportion of certificates awarded in 2017/18.

For GCSEs, AS and A levels, a quarter of all certificates awarded were awarded against just 4 qualifications, which represents less than 1% of the available qualifications.

In vocational and other qualifications, a quarter of all certificates were awarded against 45 qualifications, which was less than 1% of the available qualifications. Almost 40% of vocational and other qualifications available to certificate had no certificates awarded.

Notes: The number of vocational and other qualifications given here includes 126 qualifications which were either no longer available to certificate in 2017/18, or were not offered in England (they were offered in either Wales or Northern Ireland), but had certificates awarded against them. There were 3 such qualifications for GCSE, AS and A level.

Awarding organisations with the highest number of certificates

NCFE had the largest increase in certificates compared with the previous year, largely due to increases in the number of certificates for Level 2 and Level 1 qualifications. The increase in the number of certificates for The Learning Machine was driven by increases in the number of certificates in the Information and Communication Technology sector subject area. The 20 awarding organisations that reported the highest volume of all certificates in 2017/18 awarded just under 88% of all certificates. The Learning Machine, British Safety Council, BIIAB and the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing are new to the top 20 this year. The top 5 awarding organisations by volume accounted for 69% of all certificates. The organisations are displayed below in order of volume of certificates in 2017/18.

Top five awarding organisations remain the same this year, despite reduction in total number of certificates awarded

| Awarding organisation | Number of certificates | | Percentage change in certificates awarded | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------|------|----|-----|------|
| | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | -100% | -50% | 0% | 50% | 100% |
| AQA Education | 3,402,495 | 3,289,355 | | | | | |
| Pearson Education Ltd | 2,867,925 | 2,487,875 | | | | | |
| City and Guilds of London Institute | 925,495 | 878,640 | | | | | |
| OCR | 1,218,840 | 805,960 | | | | | |
| NCFE | 316,995 | 402,400 | | | | | |
| WJEC-CBAC | 424,905 | 376,950 | | | | | |
| Highfield Qualifications | 242,825 | 302,315 | | | | | |
| Trinity College London | 207,110 | 224,415 | | | | | |
| Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music | 216,100 | 213,120 | | | | | |
| Qualsafe Awards | 181,485 | 201,965 | | | | | |
| NOCN | 95,870 | 134,890 | | | | | |
| First Aid Awards Ltd | 104,495 | 105,205 | | | | | |
| The Learning Machine | 29,535 | 103,105 | | | | | |
| Ascentis | 70,915 | 96,950 | | | | | |
| Cambridge Assessment English | 159,235 | 87,215 | | | | | |
| Training Qualifications UK Ltd | 71,230 | 82,415 | | | | | |
| British Safety Council | 52,510 | 64,465 | | | | | |
| Excellence, Achievement & Learning Limited | 68,430 | 64,105 | | | | | |
| BIIAB | 63,620 | 63,250 | | | | | |
| Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing | 53,365 | 56,755 | | | | | |
| Other organisations | 1,674,115 | 1,430,210 | | | | | |
| Total | 12,447,495 | 11,471,565 | | | | | |

All organisations that offered AS qualifications (AQA, OCR, Pearson and WJEC) saw decreases in the number of certificates for the qualifications.

OCR and Pearson saw the largest decrease in number of certificates. This is largely due to decreases in the number of certificates for GCSEs as well as AS qualifications.

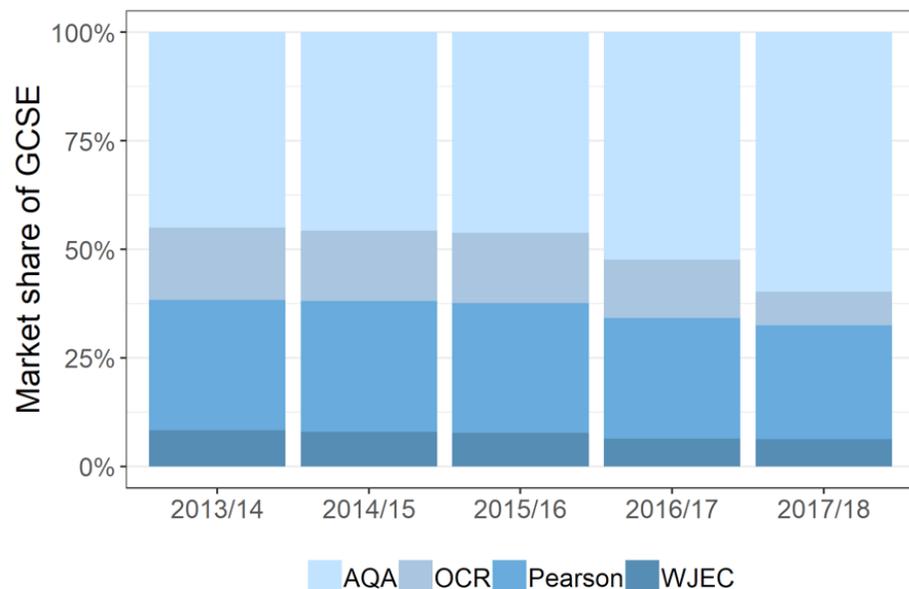
The decrease in the number of certificates for Cambridge Assessment English is driven by decreases in the number of certificates for the Preparation for Life and Work and Languages, Literature and Culture sector subject areas.

Notes: the percentage change for The Learning Machine was greater than the range on the chart and has therefore been restricted to 100% to aid better interpretation of the rest of the chart. Data for all awarding organisations is available in the accompanying data tables (Table 3).

Market share: GCSE

There are four main awarding organisations in the England GCSE market: AQA, OCR, Pearson and WJEC.

GCSE – AQA has increased its market share this year



The total number of certificates for GCSE has slightly decreased (by 7%) between 2016/17 and 2017/18. This decrease is mainly driven by the new combined science qualification replacing the legacy science and additional science qualifications in 2017/18 (see notes).

AQA has increased its market share of GCSE. This is mainly due to the increase in the number of certificates in combined science, biology, chemistry, religious studies, physics, geography, food preparation and nutrition and English language, with AQA having the main market share in these qualifications.

WJEC has had a relatively stable market share, whereas Pearson's and OCR's market share has decreased. A breakdown of GCSE market share by subject is given on the following page of this report.

| Awarding Organisation | Percentage share | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 |
| AQA | 45% | 46% | 46% | 52% | 60% |
| OCR | 17% | 16% | 16% | 13% | 8% |
| Pearson | 30% | 30% | 30% | 28% | 26% |
| WJEC | 8% | 8% | 8% | 6% | 6% |

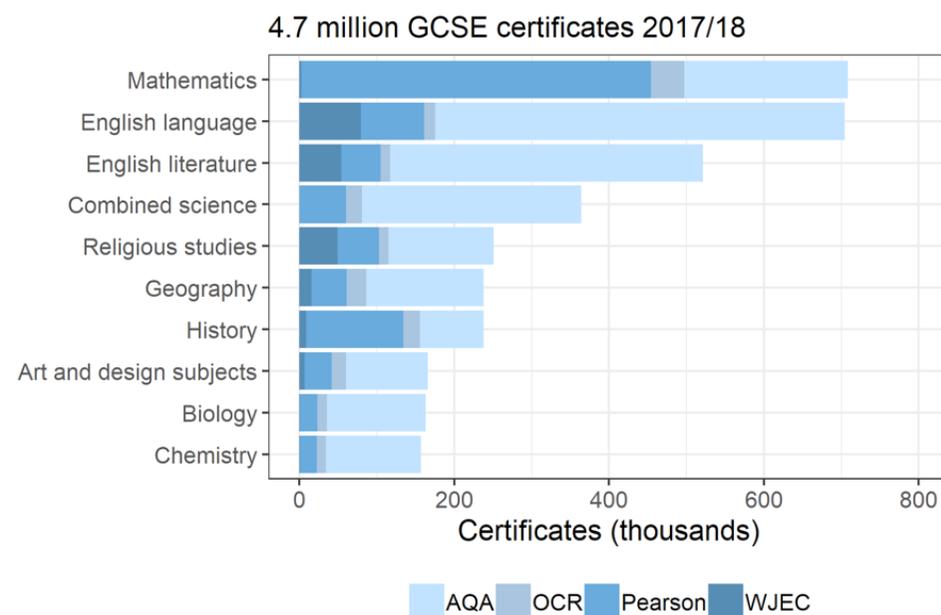
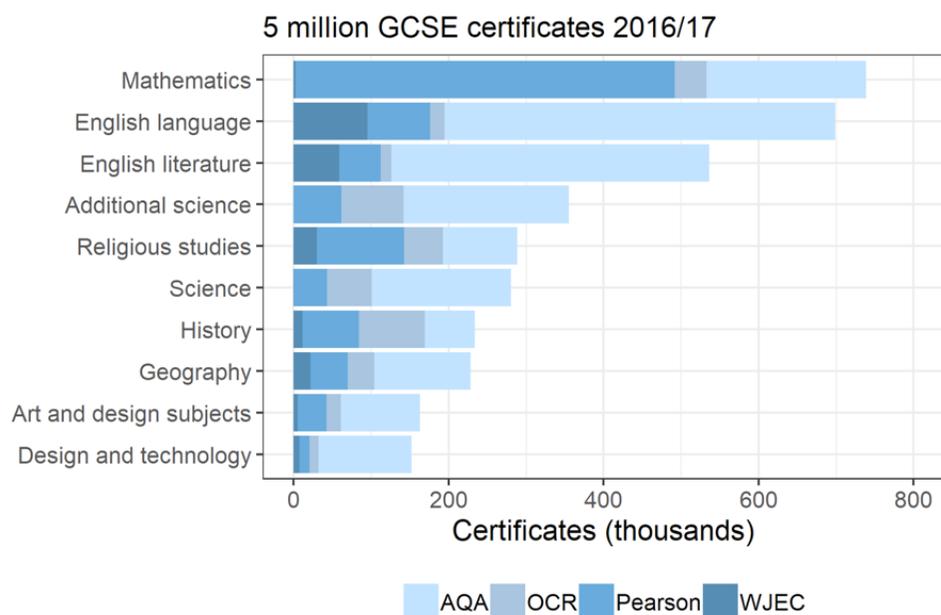
Notes: Students taking the combined science qualification will receive an award worth [2 GCSEs](#). However, in this report each award is counted as a single certificate.

Certificates awarded in GCSE subjects in 2017/18

GCSEs are typically taken at the end of year 11 by students aged 16. There has been a decrease in the overall number of certificates in 2017/18 compared to 2016/17 due to the introduction of the new GCSE combined science replacing the legacy GCSE science and GCSE additional science this year. Mathematics continued to have the highest volume of certificates this year, despite the numbers of certificates having reduced slightly since 2016/17.

The top 10 highest volume subjects account for 75% of all GCSE certificates, 2 percentage points more than 2016/17. AQA has the largest market share in 8 of the 10 highest volume subjects. The market share of GCSE qualifications in particular has changed since reform, with schools re-evaluating the specifications for which their students are entered in reformed subjects. There has been an increase in the number of certificates for biology and chemistry (up 23% and 19% respectively from 2016/17) which are included in the top 10 highest volume GCSE subjects in 2017/18. This is likely due to the fact that in 2017/18 the only way a candidate can receive 3 science GCSEs is through separate sciences due to the removal of science, additional science and further additional science.

10 highest volume GCSE subjects



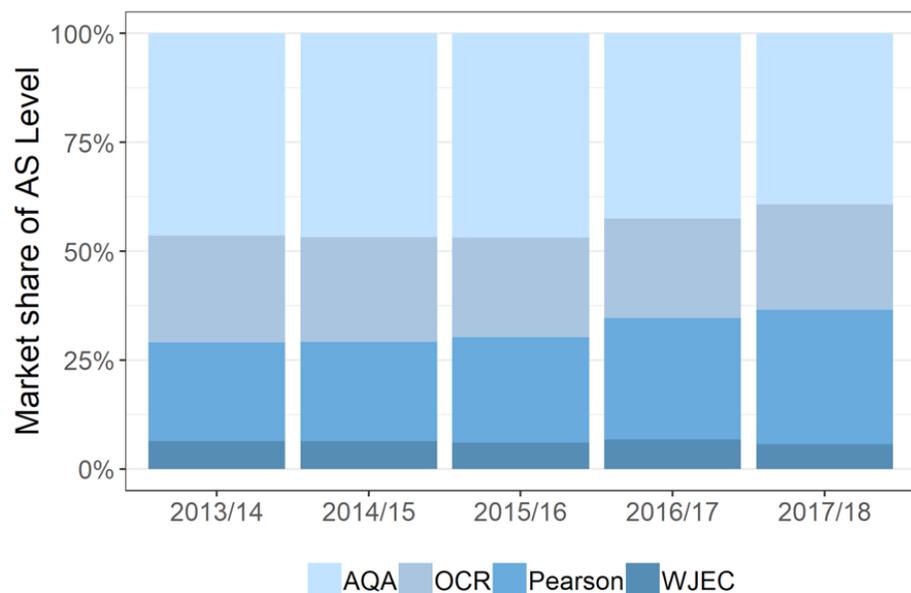
Notes: The number of certificates awarded against English language in 2016/17 contains around 70K certificates from legacy GCSE English and GCSE English language. The market share of awarding organisations in all GCSE subjects is given in the data tables accompanying this release (Table 7).

Market share: AS and A level

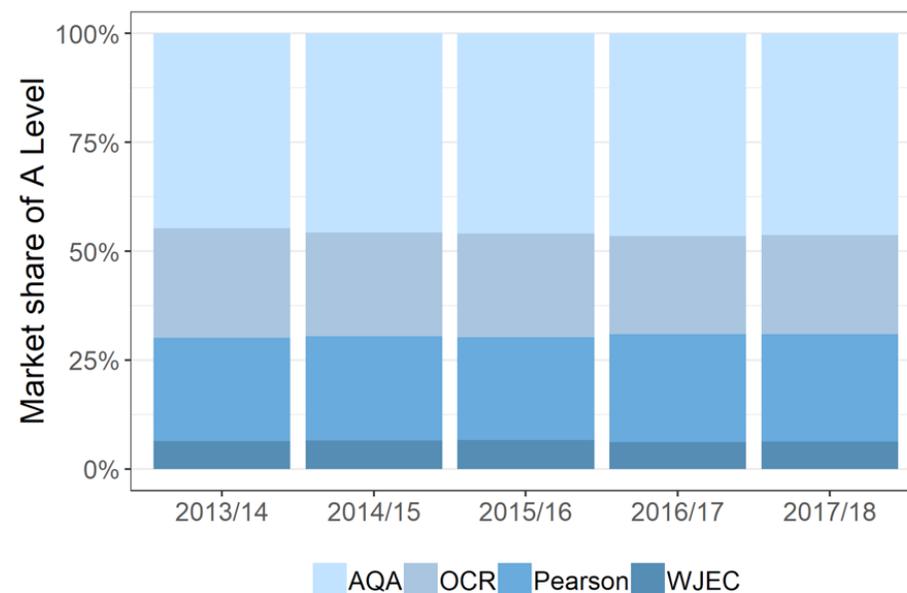
The AS market is changing due to the phased AS and A level reforms, with different subjects being reformed in different years. The total number of AS certificates in 2017/18 declined by 59%. Within this shrinking market, there are changes in market shares of awarding organisations, including a fall for AQA and increases for Pearson and OCR, probably in part representing the phasing of different subjects in reform. Pearson's market share has increased because it has the market share in mathematics, which is in Phase 3 of reform.

The A level market has been comparatively stable, with only a slight decline in the number of certificates in recent years (falling 4% between 2016/17 and 2017/18) and only slight changes in awarding organisations' market share as a whole and in individual subjects.

AS level – some changes in market shares



A level – market shares largely stable



| Awarding Organisation | Percentage share | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 |
| AQA | 46% | 47% | 47% | 42% | 39% |
| OCR | 25% | 24% | 23% | 23% | 24% |
| Pearson | 23% | 23% | 24% | 28% | 31% |
| WJEC | 6% | 6% | 6% | 7% | 6% |

| Awarding Organisation | Percentage share | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 |
| AQA | 45% | 46% | 46% | 47% | 46% |
| OCR | 25% | 24% | 24% | 22% | 23% |
| Pearson | 24% | 24% | 24% | 25% | 25% |
| WJEC | 6% | 7% | 7% | 6% | 6% |

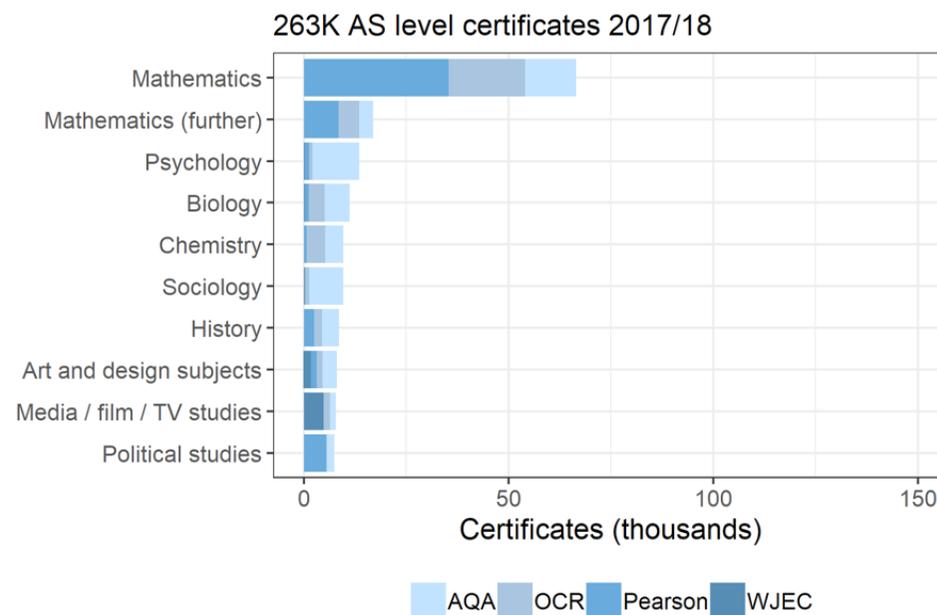
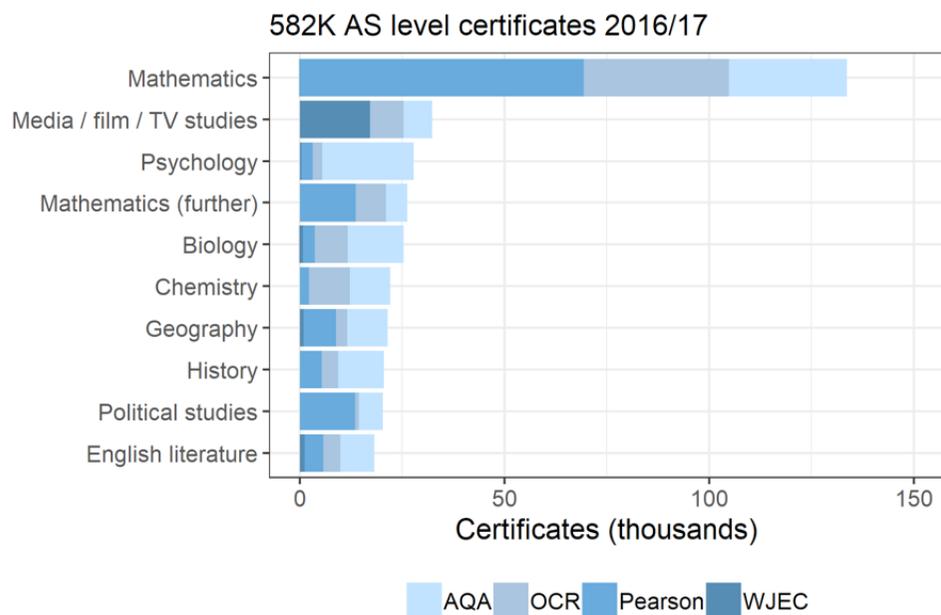
Certificates awarded in AS subjects in 2017/18

AS qualifications are typically taken at the end of year 12 by students aged 17. The programme of qualification reform and changes to funding and enrolment patterns mean that very little has remained the same for AS this year compared to last year.

The overall volume of AS certificates has declined in almost all the subjects.

The top 10 highest volume subjects account for around 68% of all AS certificates, 8 percentage points more than 2016/17. Subject areas in the top 10 with reformed specifications have all seen a drop in certificates. This is particularly noticeable for AS mathematics and media / film/ TV studies where certificates for the decoupled AS were first awarded in 2017/18.

10 highest volume AS subjects



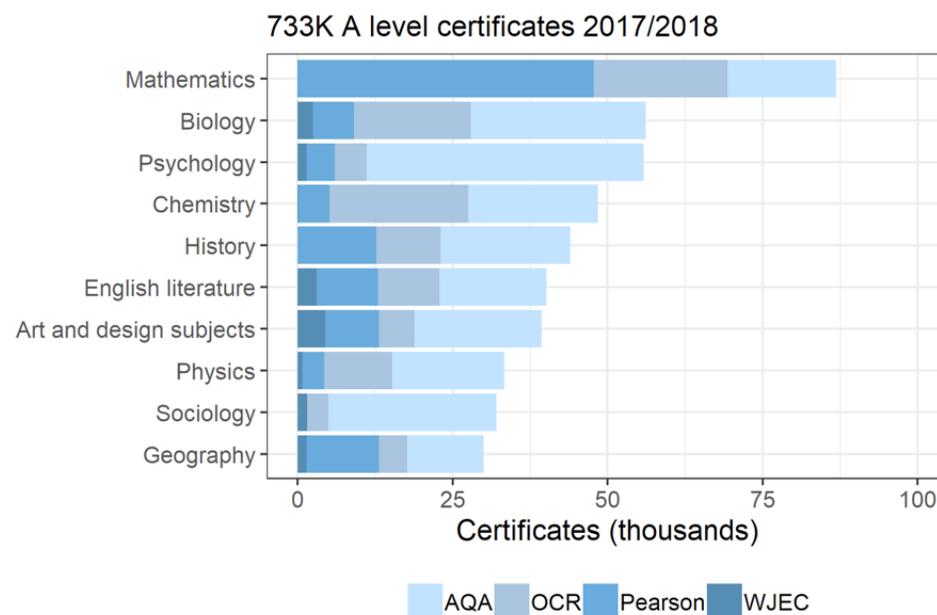
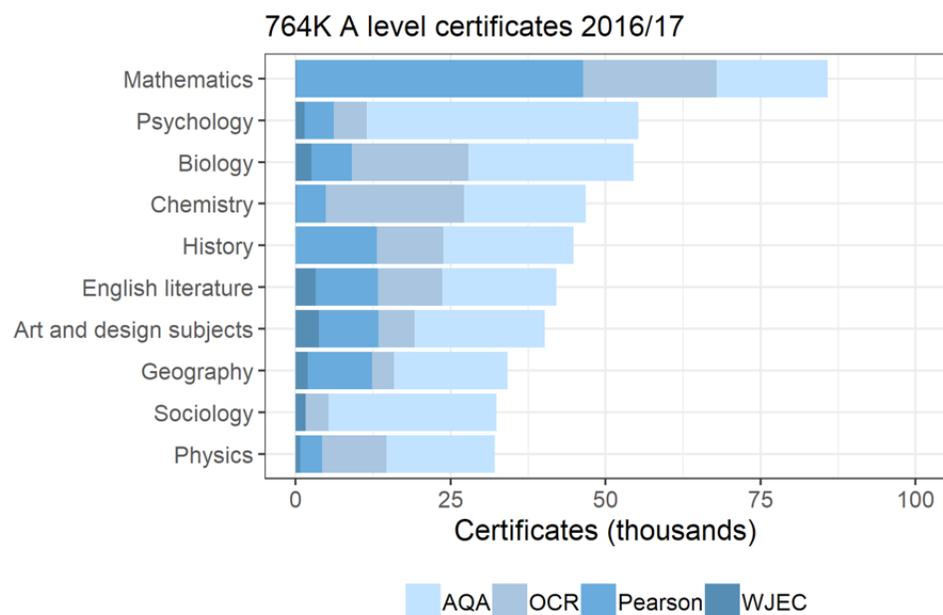
Notes: The market share of awarding organisations in all AS level subjects is given in the data tables accompanying this release (Table 8).

Certificates awarded in A level subjects in 2017/18

A level qualifications are typically taken at the end of year 13 by students aged 18.

The top 10 highest volume subjects account for 64% of all A level certificates, 3 percentage points more than 2016/17. The total number of A level certificates has been relatively stable. Additionally, each of the top 10 subjects has a similar number of certificates in 2017/18 compared to 2016/17.

10 highest volume A level subjects



Notes: The market share of awarding organisations in all A level subjects is given in the data tables accompanying this release (Table 9).

Certificates awarded in vocational and other qualifications

The number of certificates in vocational and other qualifications fell by 4% between 2016/17 and 2017/18. The figure below shows the trends in the total number of certificates awarded for vocational and other qualifications for the 20 awarding organisations that reported the highest volume of certificates in 2017/18. These organisations awarded 76% of all certificates in 2017/18. The organisations are displayed in order of the number of certificates in this year.

| Awarding organisation | Number of certificates | | Percentage change in certificates awarded | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------|------|----|-----|------|
| | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | -100% | -50% | 0% | 50% | 100% |
| Pearson Education Ltd | 1,116,205 | 1,014,780 | | | | | |
| City and Guilds of London Institute | 925,495 | 878,640 | | | | | |
| NCFE | 316,995 | 402,400 | | | | | |
| Highfield Qualifications | 242,825 | 302,315 | | | | | |
| Trinity College London | 207,110 | 224,415 | | | | | |
| OCR | 234,170 | 220,510 | | | | | |
| Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music | 216,100 | 213,120 | | | | | |
| Qualsafe Awards | 181,485 | 201,965 | | | | | |
| NOCN | 95,870 | 134,890 | | | | | |
| First Aid Awards Ltd | 104,495 | 105,205 | | | | | |
| The Learning Machine | 29,535 | 103,105 | | | | | |
| Ascentis | 70,915 | 96,950 | | | | | |
| Cambridge Assessment English | 159,235 | 87,215 | | | | | |
| Training Qualifications UK Ltd | 71,230 | 82,415 | | | | | |
| AQA Education | 161,890 | 69,915 | | | | | |
| British Safety Council | 52,510 | 64,465 | | | | | |
| Excellence, Achievement & Learning Limited | 68,430 | 64,105 | | | | | |
| BIIAB | 63,620 | 63,250 | | | | | |
| Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing | 53,365 | 56,755 | | | | | |
| LAMDA | 63,935 | 56,300 | | | | | |
| Other organisations | 1,625,400 | 1,395,705 | | | | | |
| Total | 6,060,815 | 5,838,425 | | | | | |

The decline in the number of certificates awarded by AQA can be explained by the removal of Level 1/ Level 2 qualifications from school performance tables in 2017 and the removal of level 2 Further Mathematics from school performance tables in 2016. Cambridge Assessment English has also seen a notable drop in the number of certificates due to the withdrawal of Skills for Life qualifications.

Notes: The percentage change for The Learning Machine was greater than the range on the chart and has therefore been restricted to 100% to aid better interpretation of the rest of the chart. Data for all awarding organisations is available in the [Vocational and Other Qualifications Quarterly](#) published by Ofqual.

Vocational and other qualifications by sector subject area

The table shows the number of certificates awarded in qualifications other than GCSE, AS and A level in each subject sector area (SSA). Each SSA represents a broad subject domain. There are 15 sector subject areas in total.

| Sector subject area | Number of certificates | | Percentage share in 2017/18 | Percentage change in number of certificates 2016/17 to 2017/18 | | | | | Number of awarding organisations with certificates | | Change in the number of awarding organisations 2016/17 to 2017/18 |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------|----|-----|------|----------------------------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | | -100% | -50% | 0% | 50% | 100% | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | |
| Preparation for Life and Work | 1,513,995 | 1,472,150 | 25% | | | | | | 45 | 47 | ↑ |
| Health, Public Services and Care | 1,095,215 | 1,135,300 | 19% | | | | | | 65 | 61 | ↓ |
| Arts, Media and Publishing | 744,050 | 735,305 | 13% | | | | | | 34 | 34 | ↔ |
| Business, Administration and Law | 423,085 | 429,625 | 7% | | | | | | 73 | 73 | ↔ |
| Retail and Commercial Enterprise | 445,365 | 407,385 | 7% | | | | | | 57 | 55 | ↓ |
| Leisure, Travel and Tourism | 328,730 | 344,620 | 6% | | | | | | 37 | 37 | ↔ |
| Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | 299,905 | 343,415 | 6% | | | | | | 34 | 33 | ↓ |
| Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | 314,970 | 297,845 | 5% | | | | | | 48 | 46 | ↓ |
| Information and Communication Technology | 344,270 | 273,750 | 5% | | | | | | 26 | 27 | ↑ |
| Languages, Literature and Culture | 187,505 | 117,045 | 2% | | | | | | 16 | 17 | ↑ |
| Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care | 91,295 | 87,800 | 2% | | | | | | 29 | 29 | ↔ |
| Education and Training | 80,020 | 86,060 | 2% | | | | | | 62 | 61 | ↓ |
| Science and Mathematics | 156,095 | 79,575 | 1% | | | | | | 16 | 16 | ↔ |
| History, Philosophy and Theology | 24,360 | 16,930 | 0.3% | | | | | | 10 | 10 | ↔ |
| Social Sciences | 11,955 | 11,625 | 0.2% | | | | | | 11 | 9 | ↓ |
| Total | 6,060,815 | 5,838,425 | 100% | | | | | | | | |

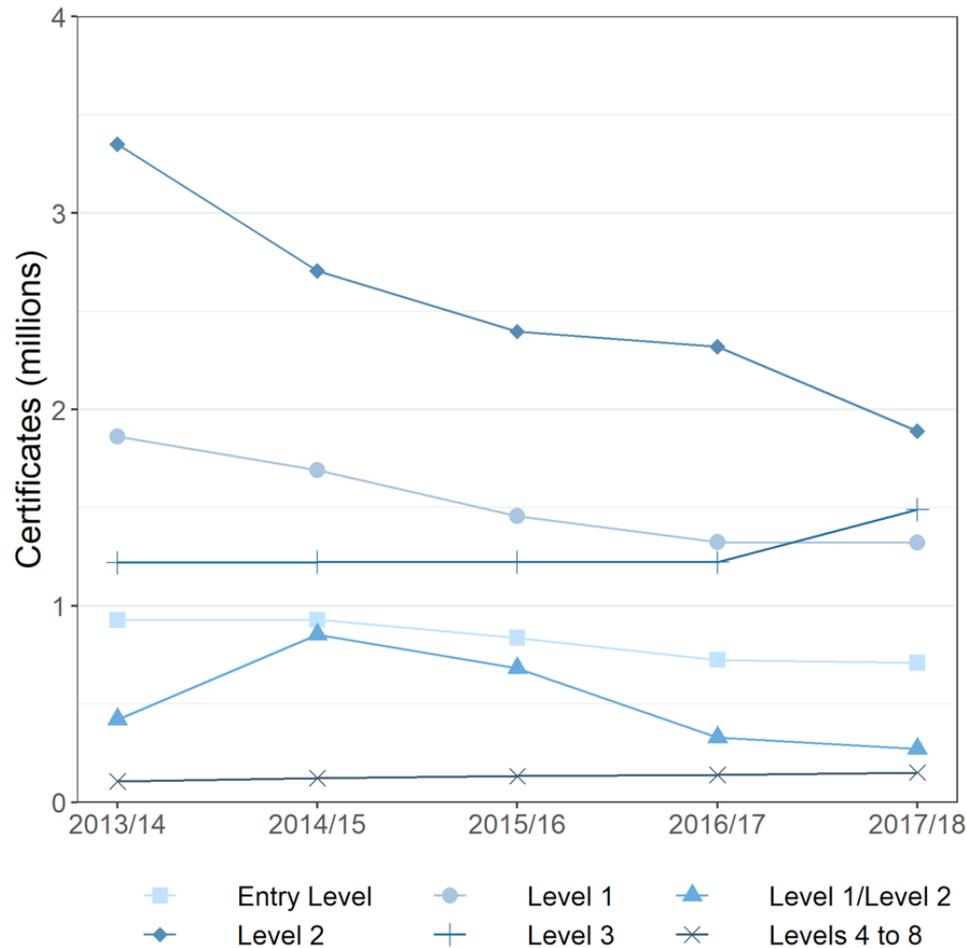
Consistent with the overall picture of a reduction in the volume of certificates, most sector subject areas have seen a slight decline. Languages, literature and culture, science and mathematics and information and communication technology have the most substantial declines due to the qualifications in these areas (Level 1/Level 2 and Level 2 certificates) no longer contributing to school performance tables due to changes in government requirements.

The largest increase in the number of certificates was seen in the health, public services and care sector. The largest increases in this sector were in several Level 3 'First Aid at Work' qualifications.

Vocational and other qualifications by level

Qualification level gives an indication of the difficulty of the qualification, with higher levels being more difficult. However, the content and number of study hours can vary significantly within a qualification level. More information on qualification level can be found [here](#).

Level 1 and Level 2 certificate numbers continue to decline



Certificates in Entry Level and Levels 4 to Level 8 have remained relatively stable over the last five years.

The increase in Level 3 certificates in 2017/18 is attributed to an increase in the number of certificates in several Level 3 'First Aid at Work' qualifications. The decline in Level 1/Level 2 certificates in the last three years is due to a small number of high volume qualifications no longer contributing to school performance tables.

The five year decline in Level 1 certificates and Level 2 certificates also reflects changes in the qualifications offered in schools as the range of qualifications which can contribute to performance tables or EBacc have changed in response to the [Wolf Report](#).

Vocational and other qualifications by qualification type

The qualification type with the biggest increases in certificates are Vocationally-Related Qualifications. This increase can partially be attributed to [Ofqual's decision to revise the list of available qualification types](#) during the 2017/18 academic year. The largest decrease in the number of qualifications available to certificate was seen in QCF due to this revision and the removal of QCF design rules. The reduction in the number of certificates in Other General Qualification and Entry Level can all be attributed to this revision.

Large increase in the number of certificates in Vocationally-Related Qualifications

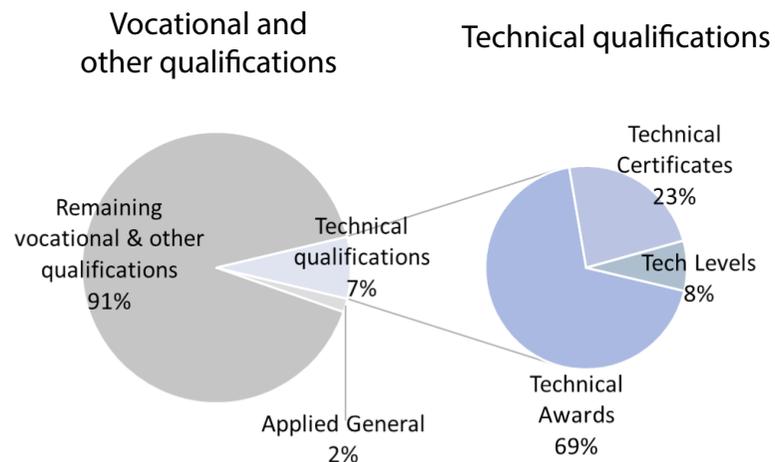
| Qualification Type | Number of certificates | | Percentage change in certificates awarded | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------|------|----|-----|------|
| | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | -100% | -50% | 0% | 50% | 100% |
| End-Point Assessment | 0 | 40 | | | | | |
| Essential Skills (Northern Ireland) | 115 | 300 | | | | | |
| Other Vocational Qualification | 200,990 | 382,535 | | | | | |
| Vocationally-Related Qualification | 2,018,655 | 2,417,950 | | | | | |
| English For Speakers of Other Languages | 327,870 | 372,040 | | | | | |
| Other Life Skills Qualification | 256,160 | 283,670 | | | | | |
| Occupational Qualification | 688,590 | 748,325 | | | | | |
| Project | 48,360 | 49,050 | | | | | |
| Basic Skills | 0~ | 0~ | | | | | |
| Functional Skills (QCF) | 0 | 0~ | | | | | |
| Performing Arts Graded Examination | 468,055 | 463,090 | | | | | |
| Functional Skills | 754,475 | 701,585 | | | | | |
| Other General Qualification | 349,450 | 278,825 | | | | | |
| Higher Level | 255 | 180 | | | | | |
| Advanced Extension Award | 275 | 175 | | | | | |
| Entry Level | 36,855 | 19,130 | | | | | |
| Free Standing Mathematics Qualification | 9,260 | 2,895 | | | | | |
| QCF | 898,055 | 118,555 | | | | | |
| Principal Learning | 445 | 15 | | | | | |
| Key Skills | 2,620 | 60 | | | | | |
| National Vocational Qualification | 320 | 0~ | | | | | |
| Total | 6,060,815 | 5,838,425 | | | | | |

Notes: The percentage change for Essential Skills (Northern Ireland) and End-Point Assessment was greater than the range on the chart and have therefore been restricted to 100% to aid better interpretation of the rest of the chart.

IN FOCUS: Technical Qualifications

Technical Qualifications are designated as such according to Department for Education criteria and can count towards school [performance tables](#). The purpose of Technical Qualifications is to equip students with applied knowledge and associated practical skills not usually associated with general qualifications.

7% of the 5.8 million Vocational and other qualifications certificates were awarded in Technical Qualifications

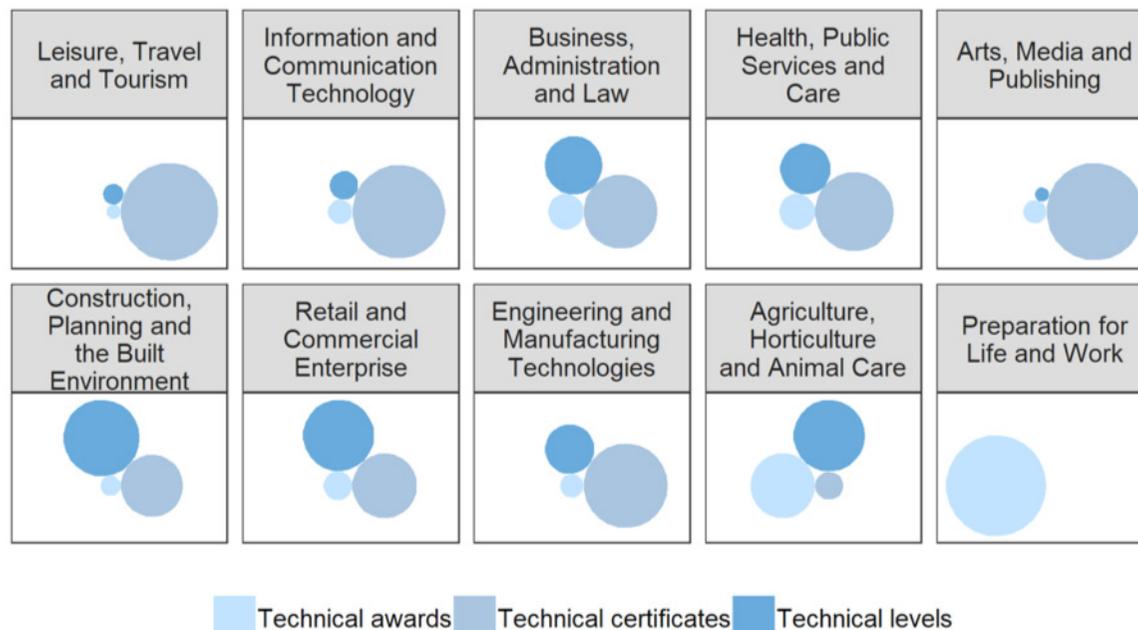


The 428K technical qualification certificates awarded in 2017/18 comprise:

- **Technical Awards:** these are designed for study at key stage 4 (14-16 year olds) and require the same or more guided learning hours as a GCSE. These are Level 1, Level 2 or Level 1/ Level 2 qualifications. There were just under 294K certificates in Technical Awards in 2017/18.
- **Technical Certificates:** these are 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. They are Level 2 qualifications. There were just over 100K certifications in Technical Certificates in 2017/18.
- **Tech Levels,** like Technical Certificates, are designed for study at key stage 5. These are Level 3 qualifications. There were just under 34K certificates in Tech Levels in 2017/18.

Technical Qualifications and sector subject area

Different sector subject areas have a different profile of type of technical qualifications. For instance, the Arts, Media and Publishing sector is dominated by Technical Certificates whereas Preparation for Life and Work comprises entirely of Technical Awards.



Number of certificates in Technical Qualifications in 2017/18

| Sector subject area | Certificates 2017/18 | | | Total certificates | | Percentage change in number of certificates 2016/17 to 2017/18 | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------|----|-----|------|
| | Technical awards | Technical certificates | Technical levels | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | -100% | -50% | 0% | 50% | 100% |
| Leisure, Travel and Tourism | 62,515 | 2,795 | 1,350 | 63,315 | 66,660 | | | | | |
| Information and Communication Technology | 53,165 | 5,005 | 3,645 | 196,495 | 61,820 | | | | | |
| Business, Administration and Law | 32,290 | 19,840 | 7,515 | 45,720 | 59,645 | | | | | |
| Health, Public Services and Care | 36,640 | 15,085 | 7,505 | 53,875 | 59,235 | | | | | |
| Arts, Media and Publishing | 49,100 | 1,035 | 2,760 | 71,875 | 52,895 | | | | | |
| Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | 17,595 | 26,540 | 1,890 | 55,530 | 46,025 | | | | | |
| Retail and Commercial Enterprise | 14,995 | 18,175 | 2,950 | 34,455 | 36,120 | | | | | |
| Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | 16,025 | 5,520 | 1,230 | 53,515 | 22,770 | | | | | |
| Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care | 965 | 6,250 | 5,145 | 21,440 | 12,360 | | | | | |
| Preparation for Life and Work | 10,630 | 0 | 0 | 3,670 | 10,630 | | | | | |
| Total | 293,920 | 100,250 | 33,990 | 599,895 | 428,160 | | | | | |

Notes: The percentage change for Preparation for Life and Work was greater than the range on the chart and has therefore been restricted to 100% to aid better interpretation of the rest of the chart.

Technical qualifications by awarding organisation

| Awarding Organisation | Certificates 2017/18 | | | Total Certificates | | Percentage change in number of certificates 2016/17 to 2017/18 | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------|----|-----|------|
| | Technical awards | Technical certificates | Technical levels | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | -100% | -50% | 0% | 50% | 100% |
| Pearson Education Ltd | 176,475 | 20,775 | 4,255 | 235,535 | 201,505 | | | | | |
| OCR | 44,330 | 4,950 | 4,585 | 41,955 | 53,865 | | | | | |
| City and Guilds of London Institute | 495 | 46,090 | 6,695 | 86,605 | 53,280 | | | | | |
| NCFE | 24,160 | 0 | 6,000 | 19,465 | 30,165 | | | | | |
| The Learning Machine | 23,625 | 0 | 0 | 6,430 | 23,625 | | | | | |
| Association of Accounting Technicians | 0 | 11,300 | 7,515 | 8,650 | 18,810 | | | | | |
| VTCT | 1,490 | 9,610 | 1,510 | 13,945 | 12,610 | | | | | |
| The London Institute of Banking & Finance | 10,630 | 0 | 0 | 3,670 | 10,630 | | | | | |
| WJEC-CBAC | 8,565 | 0 | 0 | 3,445 | 8,565 | | | | | |
| NOCN | 0 | 5,100 | 1,250 | 0 | 6,350 | | | | | |
| Rock School Ltd | 3,115 | 0~ | 1,800 | 3,065 | 4,920 | | | | | |
| Cskills Awards, part of the NOCN Group | 0 | 750 | 230 | 9,650 | 980 | | | | | |
| The Institute of the Motor Industry | 520 | 300 | 25 | 10,885 | 845 | | | | | |
| Active IQ | 0 | 580 | 55 | 5,950 | 635 | | | | | |
| Excellence, Achievement & Learning Limited | 370 | 165 | 65 | 1,525 | 600 | | | | | |
| BPEC Certification Ltd | 0 | 385 | 0 | 570 | 385 | | | | | |
| Skills and Education Group Awards | 55 | 240 | 0 | 260 | 295 | | | | | |
| 1st4sport Qualifications | 95 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 100 | | | | | |
| Central Qualifications | 0 | 10 | 0 | 125 | 10 | | | | | |
| AQA Education | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | | |
| BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT | 0 | 0 | 0 | 146,400 | 0 | | | | | |
| Chartered Institute for Securities & Investment | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | | |
| Chartered Institute of Legal Executives | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | | |
| Council for Awards in Care, Health and Education | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | | |
| Education & Media Services Ltd trading as ITEC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 225 | 0 | | | | | |
| IMI Awards Ltd | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | | |
| YMCA Awards | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,535 | 0 | | | | | |
| Total | 293,920 | 100,250 | 33,990 | 599,895 | 428,160 | | | | | |

Overall there was a decline of 29% in the number of certificates awarded in technical qualifications in 2017/18 compared to 2016/17. A large proportion of this drop was due to the fall in the number of certificates awarded by BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, due to its Level 2 ECDL Certificate in IT Application Skills no longer being awarded.

Pearson is the single largest provider of technical awards due to its Level 1/Level 2 BTEC qualifications.

City and Guilds dominate the Technical certificate market and the Association of Accounting Technicians is the largest provider of Technical levels.

Notes: The percentage changes for The Learning Machine, Association of Accounting Technicians, The London Institute of Banking & Finance and WJEC-CBAC was greater than the range on the chart and have therefore been restricted to 100% to aid better interpretation of the rest of the chart.

IN FOCUS: Certificates awarded in Applied General Qualifications

Applied General Qualifications are designated as such according to Department for Education criteria and can count towards school [performance tables](#). They are for students who want to continue their education through applied learning. They offer a progression route to employment or Higher education. They are all Level 3 qualifications aimed at post-16 learners. Applied Generals have a smaller volume of certificates compared to Technical Qualifications at 2% of the Vocational and other qualification certificates.

There were 57% fewer Applied General certificates in 2017/18 than in the previous year, driven by [substantial changes](#) in the list of applied general qualifications that are eligible for reporting in performance tables. From 2017/18, all applied general qualifications must meet the full requirements to be reported in performance tables. As a result, the list of eligible applied general qualifications changed significantly from 2016/17 to 2017/18; [over 90% of Applied General qualifications eligible in 2016/17 were no longer eligible in 2017/18](#).

Applied Generals represent 2% of Vocational and other qualifications

| Awarding organisation | Number of certificates | | Percentage change in certificates awarded | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------|------|----|-----|------|
| | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | -100% | -50% | 0% | 50% | 100% |
| AQA Education | 65 | 4,100 | | | | | |
| The Learning Machine | 10 | 80 | | | | | |
| WJEC-CBAC | 605 | 5,715 | | | | | |
| The London Institute of Banking & Finance | 7,015 | 7,680 | | | | | |
| 1st4sport Qualifications | 0 | 0 | | | | | |
| OCR | 13,585 | 11,490 | | | | | |
| VTCT | 160 | 60 | | | | | |
| Pearson Education Ltd | 180,225 | 65,910 | | | | | |
| NCFE | 50 | 10 | | | | | |
| Chartered Institute for Securities & Investment | 15 | 0~ | | | | | |
| University of the Arts London | 20,715 | 0 | | | | | |
| Total | 222,445 | 95,045 | | | | | |

The decrease in the number of certificates for Pearson and University of the Arts London can be attributed to changes in performance table eligibility in 2017/18. The increase in the number of certificates for WJEC and AQA can be attributed to changes in performance table eligibility in 2017/18.

The largest provider of Applied Generals is Pearson, whose qualifications represent 64% of all Applied General certificates. The London Institute of Banking & Finance has the second highest volume of certificates (around 15%).

Notes: The percentage changes for AQA Education, The Learning Machine and WJEC-CBAC were greater than the range on the chart and have therefore been restricted to 100% to aid better interpretation of the rest of the chart.

Applied General Qualifications by sector subject area

Applied General Qualifications span multiple sector subject areas. Due to the nature of these qualifications the distribution of sector subject areas is different to those of Technical Qualifications.

Business, Administration and Law is the largest sector of Applied General Qualifications

| Sector subject area | Number of certificates | | Percentage share in 2017/18 | Percentage change in number of certificates 2016/17 to 2017/18 | | | | | Number of awarding organisations with certificates | | Change in the number of awarding organisations 2016/17 to 2017/18 |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------|----|-----|------|----------------------------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | | -100% | -50% | 0% | 50% | 100% | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | |
| Social Sciences | 410 | 5,250 | 5.5% | | | | | | 1 | 1 | — |
| Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | 675 | 1,625 | 1.7% | | | | | | 2 | 2 | — |
| Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | 75 | 80 | 0.1% | | | | | | 2 | 1 | ↓ |
| Business, Administration and Law | 54,385 | 30,335 | 31.9% | | | | | | 4 | 5 | ↑ |
| Science and Mathematics | 23,595 | 12,645 | 13.3% | | | | | | 2 | 4 | ↑ |
| Health, Public Services and Care | 32,210 | 17,175 | 18.1% | | | | | | 2 | 2 | — |
| Information and Communication Technology | 24,005 | 10,150 | 10.7% | | | | | | 2 | 2 | — |
| Retail and Commercial Enterprise | 505 | 165 | 0.2% | | | | | | 2 | 1 | ↓ |
| Arts, Media and Publishing | 45,435 | 10,090 | 10.6% | | | | | | 5 | 3 | ↓ |
| Leisure, Travel and Tourism | 40,930 | 7,535 | 7.9% | | | | | | 3 | 3 | — |
| Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care | 150 | 0 | 0.0% | | | | | | 1 | 0 | ↓ |
| Preparation for Life and Work | 65 | 0 | 0.0% | | | | | | 1 | 0 | ↓ |
| Total | 222,445 | 95,045 | 100% | | | | | | | | |

There is a decline in the number of certificates in Applied General Qualifications across major sector subject areas in 2017/18. Only Social Sciences, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies and Construction, Planning and the Built Environments experienced an increase in the number of certificates.

Notes: The percentage changes for Social Sciences and Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies were greater than the range on the chart and have therefore been restricted to 100% to aid better interpretation of the rest of the chart



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