

Decisions on our proposal to change Ofqual’s statistical releases: Vocational Quarterly and Annual Qualifications Market Report



Summary of our decisions

As we proposed in our consultation, we have decided to:

- merge Vocational and Other Qualifications Quarterly (VQ quarterly) reports with Annual Qualifications Market Report (AQMR) to produce a new *Annual qualifications market report*;
- publish the new report annually;
- continue publishing General Qualifications (GQ) dataset annually; and
- continue publishing VQ datasets quarterly (and introduce supporting headline statistics every quarter for vocational qualifications).

New Annual Qualifications Market Report

We have decided to introduce a new, single, consolidated report of qualifications AQMR for both general and vocational qualifications. We will publish this report annually and it will replace the existing Annual Qualifications Market Report and VQ quarterly reports.

This will provide a more comprehensive picture of the trends in qualifications in a given academic year, and avoid duplication of content between the two existing reports. Based on responses to our consultation we believe that the resulting publication will be more useful to our readers in understanding the developments in the area of qualifications and market shares of awarding organisations in both GQ and VQ sectors. The changes will also give us an opportunity to make the resulting publication clearer as well as more engaging, and informative.

We plan to expand the scope of the resulting AQMR to include additional VQ content that is currently only available in the existing VQ quarterly report. This will ensure that trends given in the current VQ quarterly report are reported in the new AQMR. We will carry on publishing the GQ dataset annually along with the AQMR. While respondents to our consultation said that they will not find the continued annual release of GQ data very useful, we have decided to carry on publishing this dataset

as three out of the four respondents to the consultation were organisations working mainly in the field of vocational qualifications.

Data and headline statistics

We realise the importance of quarterly updates of the VQ market for our users and will therefore carry on publishing VQ datasets every quarter – but will discontinue the report in its current format. Instead, we will start providing headline statistics every quarter, along with data, so that we can highlight key trends and provide a useful summary for a quarter. The headline statistics that we plan to publish every quarter are:

- number of qualifications and certificates by level, type and sector subject area;
- number of certificates awarded in the past 5 years;
- number of certificates by second-tier sector subject area;
- 50 qualifications with the highest number of certificates; and
- 50 awarding organisations with the highest number of certificates.

We will compare the statistics of the quarter to relevant historical data. We believe that these headline statistics will give a full picture of trends every quarter. The headline statistics will be reviewed at regular intervals if the nature of the qualifications market and user need requires. We plan to publish separate headline statistics for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

We have consulted the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) in implementing these changes. We believe that the release of data and headline statistics aligns with the [UK Statistics Authority's Business plan 2016-2020](#) which aims to focus “on the release of data, metadata and key headlines, moving away from traditional ‘statistical bulletins’ and static publications whenever appropriate, informed by users.”

Status of statistical releases

The updated VQ quarterly has retained its National Statistics status subject to on-going conversations with the [Office for Statistics Regulation](#) (the regulatory arm of the UKSA). The new AQMR will continue to be classed as Official Statistics. We will publish any change of status of these publications.

Next steps

The AQMR for academic year 2015-16 will be released in the old format as scheduled (July 2017). We intend to publish the new AQMR for the academic year 2016-17 in January 2018 and in each January thereafter.

The changes to VQ quarterly will be first implemented for the Q1 2017 data (due to be released in July 2017). The intended timeline of the changes for the upcoming releases is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Timeline for upcoming releases

	Jan 2017	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan 2018
Existing AQMR (+ annual GQ dataset)							2015 -16						
New AQMR (+ annual GQ dataset)													2016 -17
Existing VQ quarterly (+ quarterly VQ dataset)			Q4 2016										
New VQ headline trends (+ quarterly VQ dataset)							Q1 2017		Q2 2017			Q3 2017	