



# Technical and Professional Qualifications (Vocational)

## Northern Ireland Quarterly Bulletin

Background information accompanying the  
statistical release

January to March 2018

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## 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 January to March 2018 (quarter 1, 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 only for England, and responsibility for publishing data for learners 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On 1 October 2015, the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) requirements were withdrawn.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.

<b>Qualification type</b>	<b>Current levels</b>
English for speakers of other languages	Entry Level, Levels 1, 2 and 3
Entry Level	Entry
Free-standing mathematics qualification	Levels 1, 2, 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/Level 2
GCSE	Level 1/Level 2
Higher Level	Levels 4 to 8
Key skills	Levels 1 to 4
NVQ	Levels 1 to 5
'Other general' qualification	Levels 1, 1/2, 2 and 3
Occupational qualification	Levels 1 to 4
Project	Levels 1 to 3
QCF	Entry Level, Levels 1 to 8
Vocationally related qualification	Entry Level, Levels 1 to 8

This release presents data on regulated vocational and other qualifications coloured in the table above.

Northern Ireland Essential Skills data is subsumed within the qualification types "Entry Level" and "Other General Qualification." As Essential Skills certifications are not currently categorised as such, they are not separately reported.

### **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 compares the data over time and checks 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. Where this is the case, the data in the relevant category is not charted. Because there may be small numbers of certifications in the period January to March in some categories in Northern Ireland, quarterly movements are not charted.

### **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 9.30 a.m. 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**

Figures in the statistics and commentary for the number of certificates issued are rounded to the nearest 10 for ease of understanding. If the value is less than 5, it is represented as 0~. A 0 represents zero achievements. In general, unrounded values are used to derive percentages. As a result of rounded figures, the percentages shown in charts/tables may not necessarily add up to 100.

In the datasets published alongside this publication, the figures are rounded to the nearest 5 (values less than 5 are represented as 0~). A 0 represents zero achievements. This is to ensure the data does not reveal information about an individual student.

## Status

These statistics are classified as Official Statistics.

## Glossary

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

## Useful links

The data tables and dataset accompanying this release are 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 [info@ccea.org.uk](mailto:info@ccea.org.uk).

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

This publication is available at <http://ccea.org.uk/regulation>.

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