

Most qualifications have a difficulty level. The higher the level, the more difficult the qualification is.

England, Wales and Northern Ireland

There are 9 Qualifications

Entry Level

Each entry level qualification is available at three sub-levels - 1, 2 and 3. Entry level 3 is the most difficult.

Entry Level qualifications are:

- entry level award
- entry level certificate (ELC)
- entry level diploma
- entry level English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)
- entry level essential skills
- entry level functional skills
- Skills for Life

Level 1

Level 1 qualifications are:

- first certificate
- GCSE - grades 3, 2, 1 or grades D, E, F, G
- level 1 award
- level 1 certificate
- level 1 diploma
- level 1 ESOL
- level 1 essential skills
- level 1 functional skills
- level 1 national vocational qualification (NVQ)
- music grades 1, 2 and 3

Level 2

Level 2 qualifications are:

- CSE - grade 1
- GCSE - grades 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4 or grades A*, A, B, C
- intermediate apprenticeship
- level 2 award
- level 2 certificate
- level 2 diploma
- level 2 ESOL
- level 2 essential skills
- level 2 functional skills
- level 2 national certificate

- level 2 national diploma
- level 2 NVQ
- music grades 4 and 5
- O level – grade A, B or C

Level 3

Level 3 qualifications are:

- A level
- access to higher education diploma
- advanced apprenticeship
- applied general
- AS level
- international Baccalaureate diploma
- level 3 award
- level 3 certificate
- level 3 diploma
- level 3 ESOL
- level 3 national certificate
- level 3 national diploma
- level 3 NVQ
- music grades 6, 7 and 8
- tech level

Level 4

Level 4 qualifications are:

- certificate of higher education (CertHE)
- higher apprenticeship
- higher national certificate (HNC)
- level 4 award
- level 4 certificate
- level 4 diploma
- level 4 NVQ

Level 5

Level 5 qualifications are:

- diploma of higher education (DipHE)
- foundation degree
- higher national diploma (HND)
- level 5 award
- level 5 certificate
- level 5 diploma
- level 5 NVQ

Level 6

Level 6 qualifications are:

- degree apprenticeship
- degree with honours - for example bachelor of the arts (BA) honours, bachelor of science
- (BSc) honours
- graduate certificate
- graduate diploma
- level 6 award
- level 6 certificate
- level 6 diploma
- level 6 NVQ
- ordinary degree without honours

Level 7

Level 7 qualifications are:

- integrated master's degree, for example master of engineering (MEng)
- level 7 award
- level 7 certificate
- level 7 diploma
- level 7 NVQ
- master's degree, for example master of arts (MA), master of science (MSc)
- postgraduate certificate
- postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE)
- postgraduate diploma

Level 8

Level 8 qualifications are:

- doctorate, for example doctor of philosophy (PhD or DPhil)
- level 8 award
- level 8 certificate
- level 8 diploma