



Final recommended questions for the 2011 Census in England and Wales

Qualifications

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1 Summary

Question development for the 2011 Census began in 2005. An iterative and comprehensive process of user consultation, prioritisation of user requirements, and both qualitative and quantitative question testing has been carried out to inform the decision on the question to be included in the 2011 Census. This paper outlines the development of the qualifications question, drawing on evidence from cognitive question testing, results of a series of postal tests, the 2007 Census Test, and other strands of research.

Information on qualifications held by respondents is an important output from the census. It is used to measure the education levels of the population both nationally and for regions and neighbourhoods. These data are then used to influence educational policy for academic and vocational training programmes, and for funding of schools, colleges, and universities.

The 2011 Census question fulfils the main user requirement to derive respondents' highest level of qualification. Following the review and prioritisation of user requirements the two questions on academic/vocational qualifications and professional qualifications from the 2001 Census have been combined into a single question for the 2011 Census.

Qualifications are a difficult population characteristic to measure, particularly with a self-completion questionnaire. Evaluation of the performance of the 2001 Census question led to some recommended changes that aim to increase the number of people who answer the question and the completeness and accuracy of the response given. The range of qualifications listed has been expanded to be more inclusive of the academic and vocational qualifications that are currently available, and to cover recently established qualifications. The response categories have been ordered hierarchically starting with the lowest qualification level and qualifications have been grouped according to level to minimise the space taken up on the questionnaire. Throughout the development process, the need for additional detail has been balanced against minimising the burden on respondents and maximising response rates to the question.

The questions presented over the page are the final recommended qualifications questions for the 2011 Census in England and Wales, subject to parliamentary approval:

Figure 1.1 – Final recommended qualifications question for England

25 Which of these qualifications do you have?

- Tick **every** box that applies if you have **any** of the qualifications listed
- If your UK qualification is not listed, tick the box that contains its nearest equivalent
- If you have qualifications gained outside the UK, tick the 'Foreign qualifications' box and the nearest UK equivalents (if known)
- 1- 4 O levels/CSEs/GCSEs (any grades), Entry Level, Foundation Diploma
- NVQ Level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic Skills
- 5+ O levels (passes)/CSEs (grade 1)/GCSEs (grades A*-C), School Certificate, 1 A level/ 2-3 AS levels/VCEs, Higher Diploma
- NVQ Level 2, Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft, BTEC First/General Diploma, RSA Diploma
- Apprenticeship
- 2+ A levels/VCEs, 4+ AS levels, Higher School Certificate, Progression/Advanced Diploma
- NVQ Level 3, Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National, RSA Advanced Diploma
- Degree (for example BA, BSc), Higher degree (for example MA, PhD, PGCE)
- NVQ Level 4-5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher Level
- Professional qualifications (for example teaching, nursing, accountancy)
- Other vocational/work-related qualifications
- Foreign qualifications
- No qualifications

Figure 1.2 – Final recommended qualifications question for Wales (in English language)

25 Which of these qualifications do you have?

- Tick **every** box that applies if you have **any** of the qualifications listed
- If your UK qualification is not listed, tick the box that contains its nearest equivalent
- If you have qualifications gained outside the UK, tick the 'Foreign qualifications' box and the nearest UK equivalents (if known)
- 1-4 O levels/CSEs/GCSEs (any grades), Entry Level
- NVQ Level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic Skills
- 5+ O levels (passes)/CSEs (grade 1)/GCSEs (grades A*-C), School Certificate, 1 A level/2-3 AS levels/VCEs, Welsh Baccaulaureate Intermediate Diploma
- NVQ Level 2, Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft, BTEC First/General Diploma, RSA Diploma
- Apprenticeship
- 2+ A levels/VCEs, 4+ AS levels, Higher School Certificate, Welsh Baccaulaureate Advanced Diploma
- NVQ Level 3, Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National, RSA Advanced Diploma
- Degree (for example BA, BSc), Higher degree (for example MA, PhD, PGCE)
- NVQ Level 4-5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher Level
- Professional qualifications (for example teaching, nursing, accountancy)
- Other vocational/work-related qualifications
- Foreign qualifications
- No qualifications

Figure 1.3 – Final recommended qualifications question for Wales (in Welsh language)

25 Pa rai o'r cymwysterau hyn sydd gennych?

- Ticiwch **bob** blwch sy'n berthnasol os oes gennych **unrhyw** rai o'r cymwysterau sydd wedi'u rhestru
- Os oes gennych gymhwyster o'r DU nad yw yn y rhestr, ticiwch y blwch sy'n cynnwys yr un sy'n cyfateb orau iddo
- Os oes gennych gymwysterau o'r tu allan i'r DU, ticiwch y blwch 'Cymwysterau tramor' a blychau'r cymwysterau sy'n cyfateb orau iddynt (os gwyddoch beth ydynt)
- 1-4 Lefel O/TAU/TGAU (unrhyw radd), Lefel Mynediad
- NVQ Lefel 1, GNVQ Sylfaen, Sgiliau Sylfaenol
- 5+ Lefel O (wedi pasio)/TAU (gradd 1)/TGAU (graddau A*-C), Tystysgrif Ysgol, 1 Lefel A/ 2-3 Lefel AS/VCE, Diploma Canolradd Bagloriaeth Cymru
- NVQ Lefel 2, GNVQ Canolradd, Crefft City and Guilds, Diploma Cyntaf/Cyffredinol BTEC, Diploma RSA
- Prentisiaeth
- 2+ Lefel A/VCE, 4+ Lefel AS, Tystysgrif Ysgol Uwch, Diploma Uwch Bagloriaeth Cymru
- NVQ Lefel 3, GNVQ Uwch, Crefft Uwch City and Guilds, ONC, OND, BTEC Cenedlaethol, Diploma Uwch (Advanced) RSA
- Gradd (er enghraifft BA, BSc), Gradd uwch (er enghraifft MA, PhD, TAR)
- NVQ Lefel 4 - 5, HNC, HND, Diploma Uwch (Higher) RSA, Lefel Uwch BTEC
- Cymwysterau proffesiynol (er enghraifft addysgu, nyrso, cyfrifyddiaeth)
- Cymwysterau galwedigaethol/cysylltiedig â gwaith eraill
- Cymwysterau tramor
- Dim cymwysterau

2 Introduction

The next census will take place on 27 March 2011. The topics to be included were announced in the 2011 Census White Paper, 'Helping to shape tomorrow', published in December 2008¹. A paper explaining the development process for the questions recommended for inclusion in the 2011 Census along with detailed recommendation papers for all topics is available on the ONS website at:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011-census/2011-census-questionnaire-content/question-and-content-recommendations-for-2011/index.html>.

This paper presents final recommendations for the question on qualifications in the 2011 Census for England and Wales. These recommendations are subject to parliamentary approval which ONS expects to receive in early 2010. This final recommended question is the end result of a thorough consultation and testing process.

Question development for the 2011 Census began in 2005. The starting point was the question used in the 2001 Census. An iterative and comprehensive process of user consultation, prioritisation of user requirements, and both qualitative and quantitative question testing has been carried out to inform the decision on the question to be included in the 2011 Census.

The question for England and Wales has been developed in close collaboration with the Welsh Assembly and the census offices of Scotland and Northern Ireland. A key aim of this collaboration was to minimise differences between questionnaires across the UK, although it is recognised that differing circumstances will sometimes require different approaches. A paper outlining the differences between census questionnaires in the UK will be available on the ONS website shortly.

This paper begins by outlining the user requirements for information on qualifications. It explains the testing process and the development of the qualifications question for England and Wales, including both the English and Welsh language versions. Finally, the recommended questions for the 2011 Census are presented and the impact of changes since the 2001 Census considered.

¹ This document is available on the ONS website at <http://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011-census/2011-census-questionnaire-content/2011-census-white-paper--english.pdf>.

3 User consultation

The inclusion of questions in the census must be supported by a clear user requirement for the information. The user consultation process for the 2011 Census began in 2005 with a general topics consultation. An expert in qualifications from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) (previously the Department for Education and Skills, or DfES) was chosen to act as a 'topic lead' to advise on question structure and conduct further consultations where necessary to refine the user requirements.

3.1 User requirements for information on qualifications

The most important measure for users is the highest level of qualifications held by individuals. Many data users look at qualifications information for small geographic areas, and conduct multivariate analysis, combining qualifications data with other variables collected in the census, such as ethnic group and economic activity status.

Another key requirement is for results to be comparable with those from the 2001 Census, but with revised response categories to account for the changing nature and complexity of qualifications. A question about qualifications has been included in all censuses since 1961, making comparability with previous results an important consideration for time-series analysis.

The consultation exercise did not identify a strong requirement to collect detailed information on professional qualifications, as was done in the 2001 Census, so this question has been removed.

3.2 Uses of qualifications data

Information on qualifications is widely used by central government departments, local and regional authorities, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), other public sector bodies, Learning Partnerships, academics, and research institutions.

Data about qualifications are used for evidence-based policy making, resource allocation targeted at disadvantaged areas and groups, and the provision of training services. The information is also required to understand participation and achievement in education across the whole population, and also to monitor the skill level of the workforce.

It is necessary to prioritise public funds where they will make the most difference. Central government and the devolved administrations have set demanding targets to improve the skills of young people and adults across the UK, across all skill levels. The local area data from the census is used for establishing a benchmark by assessing current skills among the population, and also to inform strategic planning at the local level.

Collecting information on qualifications in the census helps identify barriers to participation in the local labour market for minority groups. It also aids the identification of local employment patterns to focus interventions which aim to reduce skills gaps and shortages.

The small area data that the census provides is required by local authorities and others to identify neighbourhoods where high numbers of residents have low or no qualifications, so that employment and training related projects and programmes can be offered in these areas.

Qualifications data are also widely used in statistical applications, for example, they are used:

- as a proxy for skill levels, a related yet distinct measure
- to construct indices of deprivation
- for the derivation of other important indicators, such as the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC), which is in turn used in the derivation of the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC). These measures are critical to the understanding of social patterns and local labour markets

The census is the only source of information on qualifications that allows for analysis by other population characteristics, such as ethnicity, for small geographies. At local area level alternative sources of data do not contain a large enough sample to provide sufficiently accurate statistics.

3.3 Alternative qualifications questions considered

ONS conducted a thorough consultation with key users of qualifications data to determine if there was an alternative measure of qualifications that would be preferable to users of census data than what was collected in the 2001 Census. There was some support for alternative measures, but the majority of census users stated that alternatives would meet their requirements and, overall, ONS received a significantly stronger response from users opposed to these proposals.

The alternative questions and the possible impacts of changing the question are outlined below.

3.3.1 Highest level of qualification

One alternative would be to ask people to report only the highest level of qualification they have attained as this is the main user requirement, it was worth investigating the possibility of asking for the information directly rather than through derivation from all qualifications reported.

However, evidence from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and other sources shows that many individuals are unable to correctly identify the highest qualification that they hold. They are either unaware of the qualifications hierarchy or they focus only on qualifications relevant to their work or that they took most recently. Therefore, classification to the highest level of qualification held requires the recording of all academic, vocational, professional, and other qualifications held.

3.3.2. Completed stages of education

The United Nations guidelines for collecting qualifications data is for the highest level of education successfully completed, so a question phrased to ask respondents about this was a clear option. However it was found through testing that asking a question on completed stages of education as an alternative to the qualifications question is too vague. It could potentially be difficult to clearly define what is meant by 'completed' and would require lengthy instructions that exceed the space available on the questionnaire. The assumptions required, without explanation, are too great, for example, 'completion of school' does not necessarily mean that the person left school with any qualifications.

It is likely that this question would lead to an overestimation of people's actual qualifications. Further, it would not be comparable with other data sources (both from

within the UK and internationally), or earlier census data. It would not be possible to capture information from people who left school without any school level qualifications, but hold a vocational qualification - such as an apprenticeship.

Some countries include a question on completed stages of education, often alongside other questions about qualifications. However there is not space on the England and Wales census questionnaires for additional questions on qualifications.

3.3.3 Qualifications / training required for occupation

A question asking about qualifications or training required for the respondent's occupation would only measure the qualifications of people working in jobs that require specific qualifications. This question would not measure qualifications that people have but are not relevant to, or a requirement of, their job.

3.3.4 Age at time of finishing continuous full-time education

It has been suggested that a question asking for a respondent's age at the end of continuous full-time education could be used as a simpler proxy for assessing qualifications. Based on the age response given, the level of schooling most likely to have been completed by this age would be determined.

There are several drawbacks to this approach, which resulted in it not being recommended for the 2011 Census. Some of the situations where this approach fails to accurately record people's highest level of qualifications include:

- people who hold an apprenticeship but left school without any school level qualifications
- people doing courses while at work
- people undertaking part-time education
- people at further education establishments, where courses range from basic skills through to qualifications level 4
- people who left school at a young age but returned to full-time education later in life. These respondents may find it difficult to respond to this question. While the LFS does ask this question, there is limited room on a self-completion questionnaire to provide enough guidance that respondents will read and understand before responding to the question

Having considered these alternative measures and consulted users, the strongest user requirement of determining the highest level of qualifications attained required the collection of information on all academic, vocational, and professional qualifications, from which the highest qualification could then be derived. None of these alternative questions would be able to adequately satisfy this requirement.

4 Methods of question testing

This section gives an overview of the research and question testing that was completed in the development of the content for the 2011 Census. The relevant findings from these tests are discussed in the following section on the development of the qualifications question.

4.1 Qualitative testing

The Data Collection Methodology (DCM) branch of ONS was commissioned to carry out a programme of cognitive question testing on census questions in English and in Welsh. The English language testing began in February 2005, and the Welsh language testing began in October 2007. The aim of this testing was to develop questions that are designed to collect accurate and meaningful information that meets user requirements, to minimise the burden on respondents, and to conform as closely as possible to best practice of questionnaire design.

The qualitative testing was split into four main phases:

1. Pre-testing for the 2007 Census Test (February 2005 to April 2006)
2. Whole Questionnaire Testing for the 2007 Census Test (June to August 2006)
3. Testing for the 2009 Census Rehearsal
 - Wave 1 (November 2006 to January 2007)
 - Wave 2 (April to May 2007)
 - Wave 3 (July to September 2007)
 - Wave 4 (October to November 2007)
 - Wave 5 (January to March 2008)
 - Wave 6 (April to July 2008)
 - Welsh language testing, Wave 1 (October to November 2007)
 - Welsh language testing, Wave 2 (June to July 2008)
4. Testing for the 2011 Census
 - Wave 7 (March to April 2009)
 - Whole Questionnaire Testing—English language (June to July 2009)
 - Whole Questionnaire Testing—Welsh language (June to July 2009)

The qualifications question has been tested since the first phase of testing which began in 2005.

4.2 Quantitative testing

ONS has also conducted quantitative question testing at various intervals since 2006 using a variety of methodologies.

4.2.1 Lambeth Postal Test

During June and July 2006, a test of postal enumeration procedures was carried out in the London Borough of Lambeth. Although this was designed to test aspects of the census field operation, it also allowed the opportunity to analyse and evaluate the performance of the questions. A response rate of 25 per cent was obtained and the data was keyed for 366 households and 787 individual respondents. Some of this

data was analysed to help inform the development of the qualifications question prior to the 2007 Census Test.

4.2.2 2007 Postal Test

ONS ran a postal test in April 2007. Although the main objective was not to test individual questions, it did provide valuable information on the acceptability and understanding of definitions, and both new and updated questions. The qualifications question was only included for half of the sample of 10,400 households.

4.2.3 2007 Census Test and 2007 Census Test Evaluation Survey

A large-scale census test, covering 100,000 households, was carried out across England and Wales in May 2007. The questionnaire that was used for the test was 24 pages long and included four pages of individual questions per person for five respondents. This allowed the opportunity to test new and updated questions.

From June to July 2007, a sample of 2007 Census Test households who returned valid 2007 Census Test questionnaires ('respondents'), and a sample of households who did not return a questionnaire ('non-respondents'), were asked to participate in the Census Test Evaluation Survey (CTES). One individual from each household that agreed to participate (preferably the individual who completed the household section of the questionnaire and, failing that, their own individual section) was interviewed.

Respondents were asked a number of questions equivalent to those asked in the 2007 Census Test and what they thought about the questions asked in the 2007 Census Test, including the qualifications question. Non-respondents were asked different questions such as why they were unable to return their 2007 Census Test questionnaire. Analysis of the results of the CTES together with analysis of the Census Test was used to assess the overall quality of question responses.

As the qualifications question used in the 2007 Census Test had been expanded to better record all academic and vocational qualifications and the question was longer than that used in the 2001 Census, the CTES was used to establish whether a shortened version of the question would be adequate. The qualifications question was re-asked in the CTES with a reduced number of categories, to see if the same quality of data could be collected. Respondents were also asked to list all the qualifications they held individually, in order to determine whether there were any common qualifications that had been excluded from the question.

Please refer to the 2007 Census Test report for greater detail, available on the ONS website at <http://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011-census/2011-census-project/2007-test/2007-test-questionnaire-evaluation.pdf>.

4.2.4 2008 Postal Test

In July 2008, two postal surveys were carried out, one across the whole of England, and the other in Northampton, an area which has a high concentration of migrants. The total sample was 20,400 addresses, and the main purpose of the test was to investigate any impact on response rates of including a question on intended length of stay in the UK for non-UK born respondents who arrived in the previous year. However, the test also allowed valuable analysis to be conducted on the performance of the questions being developed for the 2009 Census Rehearsal.

4.2.5 March 2009 Postal Test

In March 2009, a postal test was conducted with the primary aim of assisting the development of questions relating to the student population. Around 20,000 questionnaires were sent to areas selected for characteristics that were desirable for the purposes of the test. This test allowed valuable analysis to be conducted on the performance of the questions being developed for the 2011 Census.

4.2.6 July 2009 Postal Test

In July 2009, a postal test was conducted with the primary aim of testing the questions relating to ethnicity and identity. 27,000 questionnaires were sent to areas selected for characteristics that were desirable for the purposes of the test. This test allowed valuable analysis to be conducted on the performance of the questions being developed for the 2011 Census.

5 Development of the question

This section provides a detailed description of how the qualifications question evolved from the beginning of testing through to the finalisation of the question. It uses relevant evidence gathered from the strands of testing described in the preceding section of the paper.

The qualifications question first underwent preliminary testing in 2005, during the pre-testing for the 2007 Census Test. The 2001 Census question was used as a starting point for testing. The question was then included in two waves of Whole Questionnaire Testing for the 2007 Census Test; in a series of postal tests; in six waves of testing for the 2009 Census Rehearsal; and two stages of testing for the 2011 Census (Wave 7 and Whole Questionnaire Testing). The question was also tested in three waves of Welsh language testing, prior to both the 2009 Census Rehearsal and 2011 Census.

The complex nature of qualifications causes difficulties where the collection method is a self-completion questionnaire with only one or two questions about the topic. There is limited space on the census questionnaire in which to ask the qualifications question. In comparison, the Labour Force Survey (LFS), which is administered by an interviewer, contains a number of questions that relate to education and qualifications. Thus it is extremely important that the question and its response categories are carefully worded and designed to make it as easy as possible for respondents to provide a complete and accurate response to the question.

As explained in section 3.1, the main user requirement is for information on all qualifications obtained, from which highest qualification can be determined. ONS has worked closely with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) (and its predecessor, the Department for Education and Skills, or DfES) to devise a question that meets user requirements and fits within the amount of space available on the questionnaire.

5.1 Performance of the 2001 Census questions

Figure 5.1 – Qualifications questions, 2001 Census

16 Which of these qualifications do you have?
♦ *✓ all the qualifications that apply or, if not specified, the nearest equivalent.*

<input type="checkbox"/> 1+ O levels/CSEs/GCSEs (any grades)	<input type="checkbox"/> NVQ Level 1, Foundation GNVQ
<input type="checkbox"/> 5+ O levels, 5+ CSEs (grade 1), 5+ GCSEs (grades A-C), School Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/> NVQ Level 2, Intermediate GNVQ
<input type="checkbox"/> 1+ A levels/AS levels	<input type="checkbox"/> NVQ Level 3, Advanced GNVQ
<input type="checkbox"/> 2+ A levels, 4+ AS levels, Higher School Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/> NVQ Levels 4-5, HNC, HND
<input type="checkbox"/> First Degree (eg BA, BSc)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Qualifications (eg City and Guilds, RSA/OCR, BTEC/Edexcel)
<input type="checkbox"/> Higher Degree (eg MA, PhD, PGCE, post-graduate certificates/diplomas)	<input type="checkbox"/> No Qualifications

17 Do you have any of the following professional qualifications?
♦ *✓ all the boxes that apply.*

<input type="checkbox"/> No Professional Qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/> Qualified Dentist
<input type="checkbox"/> Qualified Teacher Status (for schools)	<input type="checkbox"/> Qualified Nurse, Midwife, Health Visitor
<input type="checkbox"/> Qualified Medical Doctor	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Professional Qualifications

In the 2001 Census, there were two qualifications questions (about academic / vocational qualifications and professional qualifications) and both were asked of people aged 16 to 74 years of age. The questions were identical in England and Wales. The purpose of the questions was to determine the highest level of qualification that respondents held. The first question was presented in two columns; the first column listed academic qualifications and the second column listed vocational qualifications. The second question listed four specific professional qualifications, in addition to 'no professional qualifications' and 'other professional qualifications'.

The qualifications question had tick-box options only (no write-in option), to reduce respondent burden and the need for coding of write-in responses. The list of qualifications given was not complete, given the number of possible qualifications that people may have. Despite the inclusion of only some qualifications in the list, the number of qualifications that were listed, and the acronyms, made the response categories look fairly complex compared to those in other questions.

In general, the question performed well and data users were satisfied by the format and objective to collect all qualifications that apply. However, comparisons of 2001 Census results and Labour Force Survey (LFS) qualifications data found a higher than expected proportion of people in the census reporting 'no qualifications' (22 per cent in the 2001 Census compared to 16 per cent in the LFS). There was also a lower proportion of people with intermediate / higher level qualifications in the census, particularly for older people and an under-reporting of lower level and vocational-type qualifications in the 2001 Census (Heap, 2005²).

The 2001 Census question grouped vocational qualifications such as City and Guilds, RSA/OCR and BTEC/Edexcel together. These qualifications range from the lowest to the highest levels of qualification making it difficult to assess the highest qualification level held by people reporting them. Data from the LFS has highlighted that 1.7million out of 30.4 million people aged 16-59 held these vocational qualifications as their highest level of qualification.

The rate of question non-response in the 2001 Census was 6.2 per cent for educational qualifications and 17.2 per cent for professional qualifications. Some of the non-response for both questions could be due, in part, to those people whose qualifications were not listed that did not know how to respond, or people with qualifications gained abroad who did not answer the question.

The Census Quality Survey³ (CQS) interviews conducted for the 2001 Census showed that some respondents disregarded the instructions to include all qualifications and recorded only the one they thought was their highest. The CQS also found that some respondents forgot some of their qualifications, particularly those obtained many years ago. Respondents were more likely to forget qualifications that were not relevant to their current occupation.

Problems were also caused by changes in academic and vocational qualifications over time. The large number of possible qualifications meant that the examples given

² Heap, D. (2005) "Comparison of 2001 Census and Labour Force Survey labour market Indicators: Technical Report", *Labour Market Trends*, Jan 2005, 33- 48

³ This report is available on the National Statistics website at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=14212>

in the response categories could not be complete. Many respondents were unsure how qualifications that were not listed fitted into the options given, and some were reluctant to guess which category was the nearest equivalent, as instructed.

5.2 Addressing issues for the 2011 Census question

5.2.1 Length of the question

In an attempt to address some of the issues with the 2001 question, the question was redesigned for 2011 to provide a more comprehensive list of qualifications, to try and increase the number of people responding to the question and reporting that they have qualifications. However, this also means the question will be longer than the 2001 question. The qualifications question places a higher burden on the respondents than most others. They have to look through and comprehend a long list of qualifications, before remembering and then identifying their own qualifications. Throughout the development process every effort has been made to achieve a balance between listing an adequate number of response options to aid respondent's self-categorisation, and not becoming so burdensome that it potentially becomes a barrier to response.

5.2.1.1 Shorter options considered

ONS worked with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) (and its predecessor, the Department for Education and Skills, DfES) to develop a shorter version of the question with a reduced number of response categories. Underlying this alternative question was the assumption that someone with a qualification that was not listed would be able to determine the equivalent qualification in the list of response categories given.

Different versions of shorter questions were tested, ones that grouped qualifications by level, with academic and vocational qualifications together and others that separated academic and vocational qualifications.

Figure 5.2 Pre-2007 Testing Wave 2 (version 2)

Which of these qualifications do you have?

all of the qualifications that apply, or if not specified, the nearest equivalent.

1+ O levels/CSEs/GCSEs (any grades), NVQ Level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic Skills or equivalent

5+ O levels (any grade)/CSEs (grade 1)/GCSEs (grades A*-C), School Certificate, 1+ A levels/AS levels, NVQ Level 2, Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft or equivalent

Trade Apprenticeship

2+ A levels, 4+ AS levels, Higher School Certificate, NVQ Level 3, Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National or equivalent

First degree (eg BA, BSc), Higher Degree (eg MA, PhD, PGCE), NVQ Level 4-5, HNC, HND, or equivalent

Professional qualifications (eg teaching, nursing, accountancy)

Other vocational/work related qualifications

No qualifications

While this option would reduce both the perceived complexity of the question for respondents and the amount of space taken up on the questionnaire, there were concerns about the impact of shortening the qualifications listed. Reducing the number of qualifications listed could result in respondents incorrectly categorising themselves to the wrong equivalent level of qualification. This would impact on the quality of information collected.

Cognitive testing of the shorter question found that some respondents, particularly older respondents, found it more difficult to correctly identify their qualifications. This group were less familiar with modern qualifications terms, and tended to under-report their qualifications. A change that would worsen the situation is a serious risk to the performance of the question.

After the 2007 Census Test, a shorter qualifications question was asked to respondents in the Census Test Evaluation Survey (CTES) to see if there was any difference in the quality of response between the two questions. Results showed that only 36.5 per cent of people gave the same answers in both the Census Test and the CTES. It could be concluded that the respondents in the CTES had difficulty in identifying their qualifications as there was a reduction in the number of response categories available. There were notable reductions in the number of responses provided for the categories '1+ O-levels', '5+ O-levels' and 'professional qualifications', with reductions of 27.0 per cent, 18.0 per cent and 11.6 per cent respectively, compared to the Census Test. In terms of the responses given for 'no qualifications', there was an increase in responses of 6.6 per cent in the CTES.

As result of the testing described above, it was decided that a shorter question would result in poorer data quality than a slightly longer question that had more coverage of the range of academic and vocational qualifications available.

5.2.1.2 Additional qualifications listed for 2011

The response categories have been expanded to be more inclusive of those with lower level qualifications and vocational qualifications. Some of the vocational qualifications that were previously grouped together under 'other qualifications' have been listed separately and a number of previously unlisted qualifications have been added.

The frequency of responses to the qualifications question in the Labour Force Survey and advice from topic experts was used to guide the choice of qualifications that are listed in the response categories.

The Census Test Evaluation Survey (CTES) was also used to see if there were any qualifications that were frequently held by respondents that weren't listed. This was determined by asking respondents in the CTES to freely list all their qualifications. However, there did not appear to be any qualifications not listed in the question that were reported in significant numbers.

Entry level and Basic skills

A category for Entry Level and Basic skills qualifications has been developed to better enable people who have this level of qualification to answer the question. If someone had obtained one of these qualifications, but nothing higher, previously there would not have been an obvious category for that person to select.

Vocational Certificates in Education (VCEs)

VCEs were added because they are the vocational equivalent to AS and A levels. If someone had completed two or more VCEs - and no A levels - it was unclear which option they should tick.

Apprenticeships

Estimates from the Labour Force Survey indicate that about 2 million people in the UK hold an apprenticeship as their highest qualification. The 2001 Census did not

have a tick-box for apprenticeships, and it is unclear how these people would have responded to the qualifications question. It is most likely they did one of four options:

- attempt to identify the nearest equivalent qualification (same level as apprenticeship)
- report their next highest qualification (below their apprenticeship)
- report 'no qualifications'
- provide no response—a response would later be imputed for them

Those that chose to report 'no qualifications' may partially account for the census having a higher proportion of people reporting no qualifications compared to the Labour Force Survey (22 per cent versus 16 per cent). By adding a dedicated tick-box for apprenticeships it will be clear to those respondents that they should tick the 'apprenticeships' response. In the 2007 Census Test, 4.9 per cent of respondents ticked 'apprenticeship'.

Early versions of the new apprenticeship tick-box used the wording 'trade apprenticeship', which caused some uncertainty among respondents who were unsure of the distinction between trade and modern apprenticeships. This continued into the pre-testing for the 2007 Census Test where some people commented that they did not consider all apprenticeships to be trade-related. As a result, the response option was amended to 'Apprenticeship' for future testing, and was found to work well.

Diplomas

In England, Foundation Diploma, Higher Diploma and Progression/Advanced Diplomas are new qualifications that became available in September 2008 and have been added to the English questionnaires.

Welsh Baccaulaureate

The Welsh Baccaulaureate Intermediate Diploma and Welsh Baccaulaureate Advanced Diploma are new qualifications in Wales that have been added to the Welsh questionnaires.

Other vocational / work-related qualifications

Without a dedicated tick-box for all other vocational/work-related qualifications, people doing courses at work may not record any qualifications gained in this way. These qualifications could be seen as gaining skills specific to their employment rather than qualifications more generally. Providing this non-specific tick-box will serve as a 'catch all' for those people with this type of qualification who may be unsure where to record it.

Foreign qualifications

The increasing occurrence of people with qualifications gained outside the UK has strengthened the case for the addition of a new tick-box to allow these cases to be reported consistently. Section 5.2.2.4 discusses this requirement in greater detail.

Further tick boxes that could not be accommodated

While the list of qualifications has expanded where possible, there is a limit to the number of response categories and space taken on the questionnaire before the complexity and response burden becomes too great. There have been requests from some users for the further division of some response categories in order to identify separate qualifications within a category, for example to separate degree and higher degree into undergraduate, post-graduate, and PhD level qualifications.

The question is structured around National Qualification Framework (NQF) levels so that academic and vocational qualifications for each NQF level are listed separately. In order to separate undergraduate and post-graduate qualifications, for example, the NVQ Level 4-5 category would have to be split into two. This would increase the space needed on the questionnaire for this question beyond the space that is available. There was insufficient evidence for the need for this distinction to justify making this change, given that other text would have to be removed to create space for it.

5.2.2 Improving the quality of responses

5.2.2.1 Response rates

A key objective underlying many of the changes to this question is to increase the number of people responding to the question. By making the response categories more current, descriptive, and inclusive of most people's situations, respondents' understanding of the question is improved and should result in a higher level of response, and better quality data as a result.

In the 2007 Census Test the non-response rate to the qualifications question was 8.6 per cent. In the postal tests in 2008 and 2009 the response rates have been 6.6 per cent, and 6.2 per cent respectively. This is around the same as the non-response rate in the 2001 Census which was 6.2 per cent.

Response rates in test situations are generally lower than for an actual census, given that participation is voluntary and there is less general awareness of a test compared to the publicity surrounding a census. It is known that the demographics of the respondents to the tests do not reflect the general population and include a much higher percentage of older respondents for whom a question on qualifications is seen as less relevant. For example, in the 2008 postal test, the majority of this non-response rate (4.5 percentage points) can be attributed to people over State Pension Age. It may be that these respondents did not feel that the categories applied to their qualifications. The response rates to the qualifications questions in the various tests are therefore encouraging.

In the 2008 Census Test, responses to the 'no qualifications' category were relatively high with 23.3 per cent of respondents selecting this option. However, the majority of these responses were from respondents over State Pension Age (15.4 percentage points). Respondents in this age group are more likely to have no qualifications than those in younger age groups due to changes in the education system over time.

5.2.2.2 Recording all qualifications held

As explained in section 3.1, the main user requirement is for information on highest qualification held but in order to obtain this, all qualifications need to be listed so that highest qualification can be derived. This is because many individuals are unable to correctly identify the highest qualification they hold. They are either unaware of the qualifications hierarchy or else they focus on qualifications relevant to their work or those that they took most recently.

In order to derive the highest qualification, respondents should ideally select all the qualifications that they hold. In early stages of testing, the instruction in the question asked respondents to tick all the response categories that apply to their qualifications. However, investigation revealed that some respondents failed to report all their qualifications, for a variety of reasons.

In case people were either not noticing or misunderstanding the instruction. In Wave 2 of pre-testing prior to the 2007 Census Test the word 'all' was underlined to emphasise to respondents that they should report every qualification that they hold. It was found that, compared to Wave 1, respondents seemed to be more successful in ticking all of their qualifications. Later, in Whole Questionnaire Testing for the 2007 Census Test, the underlining was replaced by bold font, in an attempt to further draw attention to the request to report all qualifications. It was found that respondents who failed to report all of their qualifications did so primarily because they had forgotten about them. It was also found that some respondents who no longer used their qualifications in a work setting sometimes chose not to report them because they saw these qualifications as inconsequential.

Another concern (first found in Wave 2 of pre-testing for the 2007 Census Test) was that the guidance to tick 'all of the qualifications that apply' was wrongly interpreted by some respondents to mean that the box should only be ticked if the respondent has all of the qualifications listed within this option. The revised instruction dealt with this concern by clearly explaining 'if you have **any** of the qualifications listed'. This change would also address the suggestion that respondents were misunderstanding the instruction with the word 'all' by ticking all response categories in error, regardless of whether or not they had the qualification listed. However, there was no evidence to suggest this was occurring during the tests.

Following Wave 3 of the testing for the 2009 Census Rehearsal, it was recommended to consider changing the word 'all' to 'every' in the first instruction and presenting it in bold font. In later stages of testing, bold face text on the words 'every' and 'any' in the instruction 'tick **every** box that applies if you have **any** of the qualifications listed' was found to be successful in emphasising the request to indicate all qualifications.

In early testing it was found that respondents with more than five O levels tended not to tick the '1+ O levels' option. Respondents generally thought that by having selected a box that contained a higher qualification, there was no need to select the lower qualifications, as these were assumed.

In the Lambeth Test, some respondents ticked the '1+ O levels' box and the '5+ O levels' box, but then went back and blacked out the '1+ O levels' box, indicating that people did not read or did not understand the 'tick all boxes that apply' instruction.

Modifications to the guidance notes were made in an attempt to resolve the issue. In Wave 3 of the testing for the 2009 Rehearsal, some did not tick the option for 1+ O levels because they said that the 5+ O levels tick-box 'covers it', but the occurrence of this finding was not as pronounced as it was in Wave 1 and 2.

In Wave 6 of the testing for the 2009 Rehearsal, the response options were made mutually exclusive, so '1+ O levels' was changed to '1 – 4 O levels'. Wave 6 results indicated that the question was now generally collecting accurate data, with most respondents ticking all their qualifications as requested.

In pre-testing prior to the 2007 Census Test, it was found that older respondents experienced more difficulty than younger respondents in reporting their qualifications. This was either because the respondent found it more difficult to recall their qualifications, the qualification was no longer common and not listed and the respondent was unsure of the current equivalents, the respondent failed to locate the qualification in the list provided, or the respondent did not consider that their qualification would be useful to mention.

5.2.2.3 Recording equivalents for qualifications not listed

It is not possible to include all qualifications among those listed in the response categories, because of the limited space on the questionnaire. In order to correctly derive respondents' highest qualification level, it is important that people can determine the equivalent from those listed if their exact qualification does not appear.

Increasing the number of response options should mean that fewer respondents have to rely on finding an equivalent to report their qualifications; however in some cases this will still be necessary. Early testing used a combined instruction, asking respondents to indicate both 'all' level and 'equivalents' if necessary, as shown below:

Figure 5.3 – Combined instruction

Which of these qualifications do you have?

all of the qualifications that apply, or if not specified, the nearest equivalent.

1+ O levels/CSEs/GCSEs (any grades), NVQ Level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic Skills or equivalent

5+ O levels (any grade)/CSEs (grade 1)/GCSEs (grades A*-C), School Certificate, 1+ A levels/AS levels, NVQ Level 2, Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft or equivalent

Trade Apprenticeship

2+ A levels, 4+ AS levels, Higher School Certificate, NVQ Level 3, Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National or equivalent

First degree (eg BA, BSc), Higher Degree (eg MA, PhD, PGCE), NVQ Level 4-5, HNC, HND, or equivalent

Professional qualifications (eg teaching, nursing, accountancy)

Other vocational/work related qualifications

No qualifications

This was later split into two instructions, because testing the different versions had suggested that this made it easier for the respondent to read, and highlighted the fact that the respondent should select an equivalent qualification if the one they have is not listed.

Figure 5.4 – Instruction separated into two bullets

Which of these qualifications do you have?

- ◆ Consider each option below and ✓ the box if you have any of the qualifications listed.
- ◆ If your qualification is not listed, please ✓ the option that contains its nearest equivalent.

- 1+ O levels/CSEs/GCSEs (any grade), NVQ Level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic Skills or equivalent
- 5+ O levels (any grade)/CSEs (grade 1)/GCSEs (grades A*-C), School Certificate, 1+ A levels/AS levels/VCEs, NVQ Level 2, Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft, BTEC First/General Diploma, RSA Diploma or equivalent
- Trade Apprenticeship
- 2+ A levels/VCEs, 4+ AS levels, Higher School Certificate, NVQ Level 3, Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National, RSA Advanced Diploma or equivalent
- First degree (eg BA, BSc), Higher Degree (eg MA, PhD, PGCE), NVQ Level 4-5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher Level or equivalent
- Professional qualifications (eg teaching, nursing, accountancy)
- Other vocational/work related qualifications
- Foreign qualifications
- No qualifications

The examples given within the professional qualifications category were teaching, nursing, and accountancy. When asked during cognitive testing, some respondents felt that the examples given may be too narrow and that as a result some people may be put off from ticking that particular option if they had a professional qualification that was not listed. However, it was found in testing situations that people did tick the professional qualifications option to demonstrate that they held qualifications in areas such as environmental management, banking, and engineering.

The final question also has two separate instructions.

Figure 5.5 – Instructions for recording all qualifications – 2011 Census

25 Which of these qualifications do you have?

- Tick every box that applies if you have any of the qualifications listed
- If your UK qualification is not listed, tick the box that contains its nearest equivalent

5.2.2.4 Recording foreign qualifications

The issue of qualifications gained outside the UK is of great importance given the ever increasing mobility of the population. In recent years the number of UK residents going overseas for education, and immigrants to the UK who have completed all or some of their studies outside the UK, has increased. The qualifications question must adapt to reflect this reality.

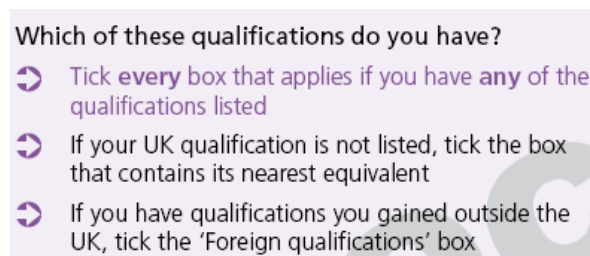
The UN recommendations for census collection state that special attention needs to be paid to establishing the appropriate qualification level equivalent for persons who received their education under a foreign system.

It could be assumed that some of the over-reporting of people stating they had no qualifications in the 2001 Census was due to people who had foreign qualifications being unsure how to record these in the response categories. Introducing a foreign qualifications tick-box makes it more likely that people will select a response and not leave the question blank or choose the no qualifications tick-box.

When it was decided that the addition of a foreign qualifications tick-box was important, there remained uncertainty over whether to instruct respondents to tick only the foreign qualifications tick-box, or to tick it and also the tick-boxes for the UK equivalents. While it would be useful to know the actual levels of qualifications held, it was recognised that determining these equivalents may be difficult for people not familiar with the UK system. For some qualifications, such as degrees, it is simple but for certain lower level qualifications the task becomes more difficult.

The version tested in many waves ,up to and including the rehearsal question, requested that respondents with foreign qualifications tick this category only.

Figure 5.6 Instructions in qualifications question – 2009 Census Rehearsal



The intention with this question is that people with UK qualifications not listed should select an equivalent response, whereas anyone with a qualification gained outside the UK should tick the foreign qualifications box and not attempt to choose an equivalent. This approach allows for meaningful comparison with the Labour Force Survey (LFS), where all foreign qualifications are coded as 'other'. It also minimises the response burden, as it has been found that it is often difficult for people with foreign qualifications to identify a UK equivalent. It was initially thought that with this option, LFS data could be used to apportion out those with foreign qualifications into the appropriate National Qualification Framework (NQF) levels. However, this would require the addition of a new question in the LFS, and there is uncertainty whether this would be possible.

Although this approach appeared to work well in cognitive testing, concerns were raised that the first and the third instructions could be seen as contradictory for people with both foreign and UK qualifications. This is supported by evidence from the 2007 test and 2008 postal test that over half of respondents using the foreign qualifications tick box also ticked equivalent qualifications. In the 2007 Census Test, 6.4 per cent of respondents ticked to say they had a foreign qualification, of these 85.7 per cent were born outside the UK and 41.2 per cent only ticked the foreign qualifications tick-box. In the 2008 Postal Test, 3.2 per cent of respondents ticked to say they had foreign qualifications, of these 83.6 per cent were born outside the UK and 49.7 per cent only ticked the foreign qualification box.

The instruction for those with foreign qualifications was then changed to 'if you have qualifications gained outside the UK, tick the 'Foreign qualifications' box and the nearest UK equivalents (if known)', in order to ensure that the highest qualification can still be derived for those with foreign qualifications. The '(if known)' statement

was added to reflect the fact that, for many people with foreign qualifications, it could be very difficult for them to classify their qualifications using an unfamiliar system that could be markedly different to the one they are used to. This option has not been tested on a large scale to date but, based on previous testing findings, it reflects the approach that respondents are likely to take when answering the question.

5.3 Final question recommendations

The final outcome of the consultation and testing process was a question to be asked to all people aged 16 and over in England and Wales that meets user requirements while minimising respondent burden and improving understanding of how respondents are expected to report their qualifications.

The qualifications are ordered hierarchically starting with the lowest qualification level at the top of the list, with the exception of the three special categories at the bottom, for 'other vocational/work-related qualifications', 'foreign qualifications' and 'no qualifications'.

The content of the question in England and Wales is identical with the exception of the three items concerning Diplomas / Welsh Baccalaureates in the response categories. These differences were agreed upon as a result of consultation with the appropriate education departments in England and Wales.

The following questions are the final recommended questions for England, Wales (in English), and Wales (in Welsh), subject to parliamentary approval.

Figure 5.7 – Final recommended qualifications question for England

- 25** Which of these qualifications do you have?
- Tick **every** box that applies if you have **any** of the qualifications listed
 - If your UK qualification is not listed, tick the box that contains its nearest equivalent
 - If you have qualifications gained outside the UK, tick the 'Foreign qualifications' box and the nearest UK equivalents (if known)
 - 1- 4 O levels/CSEs/GCSEs (any grades), Entry Level, Foundation Diploma
 - NVQ Level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic Skills
 - 5+ O levels (passes)/CSEs (grade 1)/GCSEs (grades A*-C), School Certificate, 1 A level/ 2-3 AS levels/VCEs, Higher Diploma
 - NVQ Level 2, Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft, BTEC First/General Diploma, RSA Diploma
 - Apprenticeship
 - 2+ A levels/VCEs, 4+ AS levels, Higher School Certificate, Progression/Advanced Diploma
 - NVQ Level 3, Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National, RSA Advanced Diploma
 - Degree (for example BA, BSc), Higher degree (for example MA, PhD, PGCE)
 - NVQ Level 4-5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher Level
 - Professional qualifications (for example teaching, nursing, accountancy)
 - Other vocational/work-related qualifications
 - Foreign qualifications
 - No qualifications

Figure 5.8 – Final recommended qualifications question for Wales (in English language)

- 25** Which of these qualifications do you have?
- Tick **every** box that applies if you have **any** of the qualifications listed
 - If your UK qualification is not listed, tick the box that contains its nearest equivalent
 - If you have qualifications gained outside the UK, tick the 'Foreign qualifications' box and the nearest UK equivalents (if known)
 - 1 - 4 O levels/CSEs/GCSEs (any grades), Entry Level
 - NVQ Level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic Skills
 - 5+ O levels (passes)/CSEs (grade 1)/GCSEs (grades A*-C), School Certificate, 1 A level/ 2-3 AS levels/VCEs, Welsh Baccaulaureate Intermediate Diploma
 - NVQ Level 2, Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft, BTEC First/General Diploma, RSA Diploma
 - Apprenticeship
 - 2+ A levels/VCEs, 4+ AS levels, Higher School Certificate, Welsh Baccaulaureate Advanced Diploma
 - NVQ Level 3, Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National, RSA Advanced Diploma
 - Degree (for example BA, BSc), Higher degree (for example MA, PhD, PGCE)
 - NVQ Level 4-5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher Level
 - Professional qualifications (for example teaching, nursing, accountancy)
 - Other vocational/work-related qualifications
 - Foreign qualifications
 - No qualifications

Figure 5.9 – Final recommended qualifications question for Wales (in Welsh language)

- 25** Pa rai o'r cymwysterau hyn sydd gennych?
- Ticiwch **bob** blwch sy'n berthnasol os oes gennych **unrhyw rai** o'r cymwysterau sydd wedi'u rhestru
 - Os oes gennych gymhwyster o'r DU nad yw yn y rhestr, ticiwch y blwch sy'n cynnwys yr un sy'n cyfateb orau iddo
 - Os oes gennych gymwysterau o'r tu allan i'r DU, ticiwch y blwch 'Cymwysterau tramor' a blychau'r cymwysterau sy'n cyfateb orau iddynt (os gwyddoch beth ydynt)
 - 1-4 Lefel O/TAU/TGAU (unrhyw radd), Lefel Mynediad
 - NVQ Lefel 1, GNVQ Sylfaen, Sgiliau Sylfaenol
 - 5+ Lefel O (wedi pasio)/TAU (gradd 1)/TGAU (graddau A*-C), Tystysgrif Ysgol, 1 Lefel A/ 2-3 Lefel AS/VCE, Diploma Canolradd Bagloriaeth Cymru
 - NVQ Lefel 2, GNVQ Canolradd, Crefft City and Guilds, Diploma Cyntaf/Cyffredinol BTEC, Diploma RSA
 - Prentisiaeth
 - 2+ Lefel A/VCE, 4+ Lefel AS, Tystysgrif Ysgol Uwch, Diploma Uwch Bagloriaeth Cymru
 - NVQ Lefel 3, GNVQ Uwch, Crefft Uwch City and Guilds, ONC, OND, BTEC Cenedlaethol, Diploma Uwch (Advanced) RSA
 - Gradd (er enghraifft BA, BSc), Gradd uwch (er enghraifft MA, PhD, TAR)
 - NVQ Lefel 4 - 5, HNC, HND, Diploma Uwch (Higher) RSA, Lefel Uwch BTEC
 - Cymwysterau proffesiynol (er enghraifft addysgu, nysio, cyfrifyddiaeth)
 - Cymwysterau galwedigaethol/cysylltiedig â gwaith eraill
 - Cymwysterau tramor
 - Dim cymwysterau

6 Impact of changes since the 2001 Census on comparability

In the 2001 Census a routing instruction, prior to the questions on qualifications and labour market activity, directed only people aged 16 to 74 to answer the qualifications questions. For the 2011 Census the routing instruction has changed. Everyone 16 and over will be directed to answer these questions.

This change was made in response to a user need for labour market questions to be asked of everyone age 16 and over. Labour market and qualifications questions share the same routing question, and the addition of a separate routing question for the qualifications question was not advisable. In the final outputs, the age range in the 2011 Census could be replicated by excluding respondents aged 75 and over based on their date of birth.

The detailed information available from the 2001 Census on professional qualifications will not be available from the 2011 Census.

A summary of the main changes to the question on academic and vocational qualifications since 2001 are as follows:

- qualifications listed have been updated and expanded to provide an increased number of response categories
- more specific wording for other qualifications tick-box to ensure the inclusion of vocational and work related qualifications
- new foreign qualifications tick-box

Work on census outputs is in the early stages, however it is not expected that these changes will have a significant impact on comparability.

7 Conclusion

A number of changes have been made from the 2001 Census question with the aim of improving the quality of the data collected. These are:

- one question rather than two which incorporates academic, vocational and professional qualifications.
- a more comprehensive list of qualifications especially with regard to lower level qualifications and vocational qualifications
- a foreign qualifications tick box with instructions for recording the equivalent UK qualification.

Indications from testing the qualifications question for the 2011 Census show that these changes have improved respondent understanding and should bring about improvements in the quality of the data collected.