



Charter House
Black Prince Yard
207/209 High Street
Berkhamsted
Hertfordshire
HP4 1AD

+44 (0) 1442 870800

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ABC Consumer Magazines – Standards Update

This document details a change that has been agreed to the Reporting Standards for Consumer Magazines. You can view the updated ABC Reporting Standards on our [website](#).

Have a suggestion or a query about a rule?

As an ABC member you can ask us to look at any aspect of the information we publish or the rules behind them. If you have any suggestions or comments please contact your ABC Account Manager, Charlotte Brown (charlotte.brown@abc.org.uk) or any member of the ABC team.

Differing numbers of print & digital issues in a reporting period

[Effective from periods ending December 2026]

It's foreseeable that publishers may increasingly choose to issue digital only issues in a usually mixed format publication, leading to different numbers of print and digital issues within the same reporting period under a single ABC certificate.

Although the overall average circulation across all issues remains arithmetically correct, dividing format totals by the total number of issues can distort the apparent average for print and for digital when considered in isolation.

This might complicate scenarios where the conversation centres on the circulation to be achieved by advertising in either the print or digital format alone, as the relevant average would have to be calculated from the available data.

Therefore, where a publication reports a different number of print and digital issues on the same ABC certificate, an additional table will be included on the certificate showing the number of issues for each format and their respective averages.

This change is intended solely to provide additional transparency and make it easier for users of ABC data to understand circulation delivered through each format where publication frequencies differ.

The updated Standards reflect this change, which is shown by the shaded text below.

Issues to be included/excluded [extract]

Reporting

You will report the following which will be reported on the ABC Certificate:

1. Number of issues included in the circulation claim.

a. If the number of print issues differs from the number of digital issues published during the reporting period, for example where an issue is published in digital format only, you must include an additional table showing:

i. The number of issues published in each format; and

ii. The average circulation for each format

Illustration:

	Combined	Print	Digital
Issues in period	12	11	12
Average Circulation by format	15,167	10,000	6,000

Note:

- The additional table will only appear where the number of print and digital issues in the period differs.
- The 'Combined' column will correspond to the certificate's headline circulation and total number of issues.

2. Details of any issues excluded from the circulation claim, including for each:

a. The general reason for exclusion.

b. The total net circulation.