

News story: Qualifications perception survey – latest results released

Ofqual has today (4 April 2019) published [Wave 17 of the annual qualifications perceptions survey](#). This information, published annually as Official Statistics, was carried out by the research organisation YouGov on our behalf. These regular survey outputs allow us to understand changes and variations of levels of understanding about qualifications among learners, parents, business groups, teachers, headteachers and the general public.

Some highlights from this year's survey:

GCSEs, AS and A levels

1. Overall confidence in GCSEs, AS and A levels was similar to wave 16 (conducted in late 2017).
2. Seven in ten (71%) stakeholders agreed that GCSEs 'are a trusted qualification', comparable with waves 16 and 15 (conducted in late 2016).
3. The proportion who said that 'GCSE standards are maintained year on year' was unchanged from the previous two waves (40%).
4. 8 in 10 (81%) stakeholders said that AS and A levels 'are a trusted qualification', the same as in wave 16. Half of respondents (49%) said that 'AS and A level standards are maintained year on year', consistent with the previous two waves.
5. Overall, levels of agreement that GCSE, AS and A level 'marking is accurate' were consistent with waves 16 and 15.

GCSE 9 to 1 grading

1. There has been an increase year-on-year since wave 14 (conducted in early 2016) in the proportion of stakeholders overall who correctly identified that 9 is the best grade GCSE students can get. In particular in this wave, the proportion of parents who correctly identified that 9 is the best grade rose to 85%, from 73% in wave 16. Seven in ten (69%) employers also correctly identified that grade 9 was the best grade, compared with 64% in wave 16.
2. We asked about the 9-9 to 1-1 grading scale for the new GCSE combined science for the first time this wave. Nearly nine in ten (88%) headteachers said they were aware of the new scale.

Review of marking, moderation and appeals

1. Overall, two thirds (64%) of respondents knew that there was a review of marking, moderation and appeals system for GCSEs, AS and A levels, up from 42% in wave 16. More than nine in ten (94%) headteachers and eight in ten (83%) teachers knew, up from 78% and 58% in wave 16 respectively.
2. There were also increases in the proportions of teachers who said the

systems for GCSEs and A levels were fair. The proportion who said the system for GCSEs was fair rose to 50% in wave 17, from 38% in wave 16. The proportion who said the system for A levels was fair rose to 49%, from 39%.

Special consideration, reasonable adjustments and malpractice

1. Three quarters (77%) of teachers and headteachers said they had 'adequate information' about arrangements for students eligible for special consideration. Nearly seven in ten (67%) said they had 'adequate information' about reasonable adjustments. Both outturns were consistent with wave 16.
2. The vast majority (86%) of teachers and headteachers said they had 'adequate information' about what constitutes malpractice for GCSEs, AS and A levels, and to whom they should report such incidents (88%). Both outturns were consistent with wave 16.

Applied Generals

1. Questions about Applied Generals were asked for just the second time in wave 17. Outcomes were consistent with wave 16.

Commenting on today's release, Dr Michelle Meadows, Deputy Chief Regulator, said:

We are pleased to see improvement in the proportion of teachers reporting knowledge of the system for reviews of marking, moderation and appeals for GCSEs, AS and A levels, and also in those reporting that the system is fair. We believe these outcomes reflect the important changes to our rules that we introduced in summer 2017, and our collective work with exam boards to engage and inform schools and colleges.

We also welcome the further improvement seen in levels of understanding of the new 9 to 1 GCSE grading scale among parents and employers.

We focused our communication effort over the past year on raising awareness in schools and colleges of the 9-9 to 1-1 grading scale for the new GCSE combined science. Today's results indicate good progress had been made by the time this survey was conducted in late 2018, and we are doing more on this front ahead of this year's exams.

Other results in this wave show general stability in levels of trust, perceived marking accuracy, and maintenance of standards across GCSEs, AS and A levels. We recognise the importance of public confidence in these qualifications. To that end, we are delivering a broad range of communications this year, including

work to reduce incidents of malpractice in exams, to support students in their exam preparation, and to explain further how we maintain standards in these qualifications.

Press release: Lease-based providers of specialised supported housing

Addendum to Regulator of Social Housing's October 2018 Sector risk profile

News story: Rail stations in line for £300 million funding boost to improve disabled access

- 73 stations to benefit from a share of £300 million Access for All funding
- latest move towards a fully inclusive transport network will make it easier for disabled people to use more of the rail network
- 75% of rail journeys now made through step-free stations

Disabled rail passengers across Britain will benefit from better access at stations thanks to a £300 million government investment.

Transport Minister [Nusrat Ghani has announced that over the next 5 years journeys will be opened up across Britain](#) as upgrades, including footbridges and lifts, make it easier for disabled people to travel on the UK's rail network.

Several other stations will also see smaller scale improvements such as tactile paving on platform edges or adjustable ticket counters, to allow disabled passengers to travel with confidence.

The improvements at 73 stations will be funded as part of the Department for Transport's [Inclusive Transport Strategy](#), published last year. The funding will also benefit those with health conditions or older people with impairments, along with people travelling with children, heavy luggage or shopping.

Transport Accessibility Minister Nusrat Ghani will say today (4 April 2019):

Transport is vital for connecting people with work, friends and family, but also to enable them to enjoy visiting some of the wonderful cultural, historical and natural sites across the UK.

We want the 13.9 million disabled people in Britain to be empowered to travel independently, which is why I am delighted to announce this roll out of upgrades across the rail network.

Over the next 5 years these newly accessible stations will open up routes across the country, helping us move closer to a transport sector that is truly accessible.

Following nominations from the rail industry, stations were selected based on a range of criteria including footfall weighted by disability in the area, value for money, and local factors such as proximity to a hospital. The stations were also chosen to represent a fair geographical spread across the country.

The Access for All programme was first launched in 2006 and has delivered more than 200 accessible routes into selected stations so far.

A further 1,500 stations have received smaller scale improvements such as accessible toilets, platform humps to reduce stepping distances and improvements to help those with a visual or hearing impairment.

Keith Richards, Chair of the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, said:

The Access for All programme has already delivered significant improvements in access to rail travel for disabled people over the last 13 years. It's crucial to continually build on that.

"The announcement is very welcome and must go hand-in-hand with clear and practical information to ensure that disabled people are aware of what improvements have been made, and that more travel options are now possible as a result.

We are working with the government to deliver a commitment to accelerate improvements, to target the funding effectively, and to monitor and assess outcomes.

This is a step towards the target set out in the Inclusive Transport Strategy to create a transport system that offers equal access by 2030 and to make travel easier for disabled people. A genuinely inclusive transport system – including the design of all future transport technologies – is central to this government's mission to build a country that works for everyone and forms a crucial part of the [Future of Mobility Grand Challenge](#) which will put

the UK at the forefront of transport innovation.

[Press release: Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Libya – April 2019](#)

Mr Martin Reynolds CMG has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to Libya.

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Mr Martin Reynolds CMG has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to Libya in succession to Mr Frank Baker CMG OBE who will be leaving the Diplomatic Service. Mr Reynolds will take up his appointment in April 2019.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Full name: Martin Reynolds

2014 to 2018 FCO, Principal Private Secretary, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
2011 to 2014 Pretoria, Deputy High Commissioner
2007 to 2011 Brussels, Counsellor, Trade, Development and Wider World, UK Permanent Representation to the EU
2006 to 2007 Brussels, First Secretary, Enlargement and Western Balkans, UK Permanent Representation to the EU
2005 to 2006 FCO, Head, Enlargement Group, EU Directorate
2004 to 2005 FCO, Head, Enlargement Section, EU Directorate
2002 to 2004 FCO, Strategic Policy Adviser, Strategy and Innovation Directorate
1998 to 2002 Singapore, Second Secretary, Economics
1997 to 1998 FCO, Desk Officer, Falkland Islands

Further information

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Thank you for your feedback