

Perceptions of qualifications in England

News story

The results of Ofqual's surveys of perceptions of general qualifications and vocational and technical qualifications in England.



Ofqual has today (1 July 2020) published [Wave 18 of the annual qualifications perceptions survey for general qualifications](#). This information, published annually as Official Statistics, was carried out by the research organisation YouGov on our behalf.

We have also published today, our third survey on the [Perceptions of Vocational and Technical Qualifications](#). The survey was also carried out by YouGov.

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.

Please note that the responses presented in these reports do not relate to the exceptional arrangements being put in place this year in response to coronavirus (COVID-19). They refer only to the normal arrangements in place in 2019.

Highlights from the general qualifications survey:

GCSEs, AS and A levels

- the perception of GCSEs being trusted qualifications has increased, with approximately 74% agreeing with this statement in the current wave compared with 71% in wave 17
- consistent with the previous three waves, 41% stakeholders agreed that GCSE standards are maintained year-on-year, and 49% for AS and A level

- the proportion agreeing that AS and A levels are trusted qualifications was 82%, which is consistent with the previous four waves
- the proportion of stakeholders who agreed that the marking of GCSEs, AS and A levels is accurate was consistent with wave 17, with four in ten stakeholders in agreement in wave 18

Applied General qualifications

- in line with wave 17, a quarter agreed that Applied General qualifications are trusted qualifications and that standards are maintained year-on-year, higher than in waves 16 and 17

GCSE 9 to 1 grading

- there has been a sustained increase in knowledge of the 9 to 1 grading scale, with 9 in 10 stakeholders correctly identifying that 9 is the highest grade that students can get, compared to under 7 in 10 stakeholders in wave 14

Special consideration, reasonable adjustments and malpractice

- overall, 8 in 10 teachers and headteachers agreed that they have adequate information about the arrangements that are available for a GCSE or AS/A level student who is eligible for special consideration. This was in line with the previous wave, and an increase in levels of agreement from waves 15 and 16
- consistent with waves 15, 16 and 17, the majority (86%) of teachers and head teachers agreed that they have adequate information about what constitutes malpractice for GCSEs, AS and A levels

Reviews of marking and moderation, and appeals (ROMMA)

- seven in ten stakeholders were aware that there is a review of marking and moderation, and appeals (ROMMA) system for GCSE, AS and A level results. Consistent with the previous wave, a similar proportion of stakeholders agreed that the ROMMA system is fair for GCSEs and AS/A levels. There was an increase in headteachers' levels of agreement compared to wave 17

Highlights from the Vocational and Technical skills survey:

Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs)

- the vast majority (88%) of training providers, 70% of learners and

nearly half of employers said they value VTQs

- approximately two-fifths of employers reported having a very or quite good understanding of VTQs, with large employers being the most likely to see the value of VTQs
- among learners who had started or completed a VTQ, the most frequently perceived benefit was an increase in confidence using their vocational / technical skills

Functional Skills qualifications (FSQs)

- the majority of training providers (64%) and learners (54%) said that they value FSQs and a significant proportion of these agreed that FSQs offer value for money
- medium-sized and large employers were significantly more likely than smaller employers to agree that their organisation values FSQs

End-point assessments (EPAs)

- overall, there was a strong sense that apprenticeships are good preparation for work – with the majority (84%) of providers, learners (81%) and employers (74%) in agreement on this
- 3 in 5 providers reported having a very or quite good understanding of EPAs of apprenticeships, with two-thirds confirming that they know the difference between apprenticeship frameworks and the new apprenticeship standards
- nearly 8 in 10 providers were aware that EPAs are specific to apprenticeship standards

Please note that YouGov and Ofqual advise against drawing conclusions based on differences in the data in comparison with waves 1 and 2 of the VTQ survey. This is due to key changes in the sampling approach and survey mode made for wave 3.

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