Drivers of centres' choice for vocational and technical qualifications

Factors determining which vocational and technical qualifications centres offer for 16-19 year-olds.

ofqual

Authors

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Drivers of choice for Vocational and Technical Qualifications

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Executive Summary

The vocational and technical qualifications (VTQ) market is probably less understood compared to general qualifications. For general qualifications, centres[1] tend to be focused on the quality of the qualification and whether it meets learners' needs rather than factors such as fees, but it is not known if the same themes are driving choices of vocational and technical qualifications and the awarding organisations that provide them. Previously, Ofqual sampled a small number of schools and colleges (as well as industry bodies) about factors that influence purchases of qualifications as part of a larger survey (Ofqual, 2015). This current research builds on that initial effort by using a new survey to target a larger sample, representative of all the main types of provider of VTQs to 16-19 year olds.

The survey, carried out by YouGov, comprised 3 main sections covering the background of respondents and the centres they represented, the drivers of choice of VTQ offerings and awarding organisations, and how centres manage their offerings (through review and changes to their offering). More than 500 responses from across England were received from people in a range of roles and from all of the main types of provider of VTQs. Responses related predominantly to level 3 qualifications (not surprising given the focus on learners aged 16-19) and to a range of subject areas.

The results highlighted how centres take a broad view when it comes to making choices about the VTQs they offer. Factors influencing choices may be categorised according to the group under focus: learners (for example, their interests and prospects), the centres themselves (for example, capacity), and employers (for example, qualifications equipping learners for work). Centres often appear to be balancing all 3 categories when making choices, but seem particularly committed to meeting learners' needs. Learner interests, the intrinsic educational value of qualifications, and how qualifications position learners for further study commonly and consistently influenced choices across centre types. This commitment to meeting learners' needs and interests sometimes appears to impose significant financial burdens on centres since it may prompt them to continue to offer courses that are not commercially viable.

While learner interest was overall the most influential driver of qualification provision according to this survey, there appeared to be a difference in the relative importance of drivers across different types of centre. Certainly, employer-focused drivers/factors (though subject to positive net rates of agreement) were often of lower prominence across the results overall, noting that colleges and training-providers seemed more attentive to employer needs than schools. Colleges appear to consider a very broad range of drivers in their choices of VTQs, but seem clear that VTQ choices can maximise their student recruitment ability and fulfil a remit to prepare learners for next steps (further study or employment). Schools generally exhibited lower levels of consensus about drivers of choice, which suggests a less clearly defined role for VTQs in schools (where our results indicated that VTQs are often taken up by small cohorts of 16-19 year old learners). Priorities, and therefore drivers, may vary more from centre to centre, perhaps responding to the specific context of a school, including factors such as the nature of the cohort, the availability of other local educational providers or the school's facilities.

When choosing awarding organisations, very similar sets of factors were reported across the different centre types. Course content and the ability to tailor it to learners, results and the reputation of the qualification and awarding organisation were the main reasons that centres chose a particular awarding organisation's qualification.

VTQ provision within centres appears to be dynamic with centres reporting that they actively manage their offering. The majority of centres undertake regular reviews whilst more than one-third of centres had recently stopped offering a VTQ and one-quarter returned information about at least one new or proposed qualification. This suggests that centres are implementing findings from their review processes and frequently making changes to their offering. When adding new qualifications to their VTQ offering, centre type was not an indicator of the sources of influence that might have input into choices, with as much variation between individual centres as between centre types. Centres usually seek the expertise of their own staff (teachers and senior management), but private training providers and FE colleges will just as frequently look outside to employers and industry bodies.

Our results provide preliminary evidence of the factors operating in the VTQ market, highlighting the key drivers of choice and how this may vary in different educational settings. The needs and interests of learners appear to be at the heart of decisions in many cases and contexts. We are planning to conduct further work to understand drivers of qualification choice from learners' perspectives.

1 Introduction

Qualifications in England are provided in a market. Schools, colleges and training providers (referred to in this report as centres[1]) can choose which vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) they offer. They can also choose which awarding organisation (AO) they use to offer the qualification. The choice of qualification taught in centres can be influenced by various factors. These may focus on the benefit for the individual student, such as meeting their interest or the demand of certain skills in the local job market. There are also institutional factors to consider, such as the availability of teachers or having the correct facilities in place. Performance table/accountability measures and funding considerations may also contribute towards the decisions that centres make (Ofqual 2019a).

In 2015, an Ofqual report titled 'School and college purchasing behaviours', (Ofqual, 2015) highlighted some common reasons for switching AO, which included the course content/syllabus, the advice of colleagues, and meeting the needs of students. When choosing qualifications, staff placed more importance on the content and structure of the qualification and whether it matched student needs rather than the fees an AO charged or their marketing materials. Similarly, in a report commissioned by Ofqual, Frontier Economics (2015) found that schools focused more on the quality of the syllabus which exam boards offer rather than the price. They also found that schools or colleges switched providers following relatively large changes in the quality of the qualification that the AO offered. Both reports conclude that the quality of the qualification offered is the key determinant for schools and colleges when choosing their provider, with price being a less important factor. However, these pieces of work were undertaken in light of the reform to GCSEs, AS and A levels and, as a result, focused on the drivers that influence the general qualifications (GQs) that centres choose. Much less is known about the drivers that influence choices in the VTQ sphere.

More recently, Ofqual issued a Call for Evidence (Ofqual 2019b), with a component focused on aspects of the decision-making process when making choices on qualification purchases, which included both VTQs and GQs. When qualification purchasers and industry bodies (whose views represent additional purchasers, such as employers) were asked about the factors that influence decisions, the most frequently cited factor was the content of the course. This was followed by the level of service and support the AO offered. Approximately 22% of respondents considered price to be a very important factor in determining their choice of qualification. There was a low response rate from qualification purchasers (with 6 schools and 3 colleges or training centres responding), so it cannot be assumed that these views are reflective of all centres that purchase these qualifications. However, the comments and responses of industry bodies generally aligned with the views of the qualification purchasers. In contrast to the views of qualification purchasers, industry bodies suggest that the importance of qualification cost is likely to increase due to the growing financial pressures on centres.

This new research aims to provide a broader and stronger evidence base around the reasons why centres choose to offer the vocational and technical subjects that they do to 16-19 year olds and the reasons centres choose the qualifications of particular

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[1] An organisation undertaking the delivery of an assessment (and potentially other activities) to learners on behalf of an awarding organisation

AOs. The research also covers the drivers of choice of new or proposed VTQs and behaviours around how centres manage their VTQ offering.

2 Methodology

2.1 Survey design

Ofqual commissioned YouGov to carry out a survey on the drivers that contribute towards the choices of Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs) offered to 16-19 year olds in centres. The survey comprised 3 major sections:

1. background information about respondents and the centres they represent,

2. drivers of choice of VTQ offerings (excluding functional skills training) and factors affecting AO choice for the largest 2 VTQs (highest uptake) already offered. In addition, the same set of questions were asked for up to 2 recent and/or proposed offerings,

3. how centres (represented by respondents) manage their offerings over time. This last section included reasons centres might switch AO, how often they review their offering, the commercial viability of courses, reasons for ceasing to offer a qualification, and the identities of influencers of choices of new offerings.

Ofqual was responsible for the overall design of the survey, while YouGov was responsible for the programming, hosting and administration of the online survey. A complete copy of the survey template is included in Appendix A.

2.2 Pilot study and fieldwork

A pilot study was used to test the functionality and routing of the survey template and determine the average completion time. Thirty respondents on the YouGov panel completed a draft survey online in March 2019 and feedback was solicited to identify possible areas of confusion. The pilot confirmed that the questions were well understood and that the routing worked as intended. Subsequently the survey was fully launched using YouGov's proprietary survey system and responses were received online between April and June 2019.

Respondents were sought using the YouGov panel, an external database of contacts provided by The Education Company, as well as an open link distributed by YouGov, Ofqual and Ofqual's partners (invitation letter included as Appendix B). The sampling of participants was designed with a view to achieving a sample representative of the wider population. The sample was designed to gather insight from establishment and department-level decision makers at schools, colleges and training centres that offer VTQs to 16-19 year-olds in England. The centre types that responses referred to were categorised into 6 groups: mainstream (state) schools, independent (private) schools, alternative and other provision schools, sixth form colleges, FE colleges, and private training providers (including employers).

2.3 Data verification, cleaning, weighting and analysis

The quality of data was assessed prior to weighting the results in order to obtain a final dataset for analysis. This involved recoding centre type and job role responses

to pre-coded lists where relevant. Responses were removed if respondents had not named a qualification or had reported qualifications that were not within the scope of the research.

A weighting scheme was constructed based on the number of learners aged 16-19 in each type of centre during the 2017/2018 academic year in order to provide a sample representative of the wider population. The number of learners aged 16-19 for mainstream schools, independent schools and alternative provision schools was extracted from the National Pupil Database. Only learners within these centre types that were taking VTQs were included in the totals. The numbers of learners taking VTQs at FE colleges, private/independent training providers and sixth form colleges were extracted from the Individualised Learner Record (ILR)[2]. For further information on the methodology, refer to the Appendix C.

Data were analysed in R using the *srvyr* and *survey* packages for manipulation and analysis of survey data (Ellis 2019; Lumley 2004, 2019) as well as the suite of *tidyverse* packages for data manipulation and visualisation (Wickham 2016; Wickham 2019; Wickham et al., 2019). Uncertainty in results (such as that due to small sample sizes) was considered and is visualised through the use of error bar plots (+/- 1 standard error). Multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) was used to quantify and simplify the variation in responses to whole sets of factors (such as the drivers of choice of existing qualifications). MCAs were performed on complete datasets (after imputing missing values using the R package *missMDA* [Josse & Husson 2016]) in R using the *FactoMineR* package (Le et al., 2008). The results of MCAs were also used to examine potential biases that could affect interpretation of results such as differing responses according to role, which - if present and not controlled for - could confound differences between centre types.

3 Results

3.1 Sampling

3.1.1 Number of respondents and weighting

The response rate from the external contact database was 1.7%. After data cleaning 503 individual survey responses were retained with representation from 6 types of centre (Table 1). The sample was a reasonable representation of the population in terms of centre types, although sixth form colleges were overrepresented (Table 1) and saw the biggest change in counts due to the weighting process.

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[2] Although the number of learners doing A levels and GCSEs has been excluded, some qualifications may remain in the ILR dataset that refer to qualifications that are not VTQs.

Table 1: *Number of respondents by centre type that returned data about existing qualification 1.*

Centre type	Number of respondents	Weighted counts
Mainstream (state) school	230	241
Independent (private) school	23	15
Alt/Other provision school	22	30
FE college	108	146
Private training provider	32	50
Sixth form college	88	20
Total	503	503

Note. Weighted counts are rounded to the nearest integer.

3.1.2 Respondent background

Background information was collected about the individual respondent (role and decision-making level) and the centre (single versus group of centres, location, size, as well as its type). The most common job role held by respondents was head or manager of a department (n = 122), but Senior Manager, Subject Leader and Vice Principal were other roles held by more than 50 respondents (Figure 1a). Most respondents were completing the survey on behalf of a single centre on one or multiple sites (Figure 1b). The geographical spread of the weighted sample across England's 9 regions as well as the regional breakdown by centre type is shown in Figure 1c.
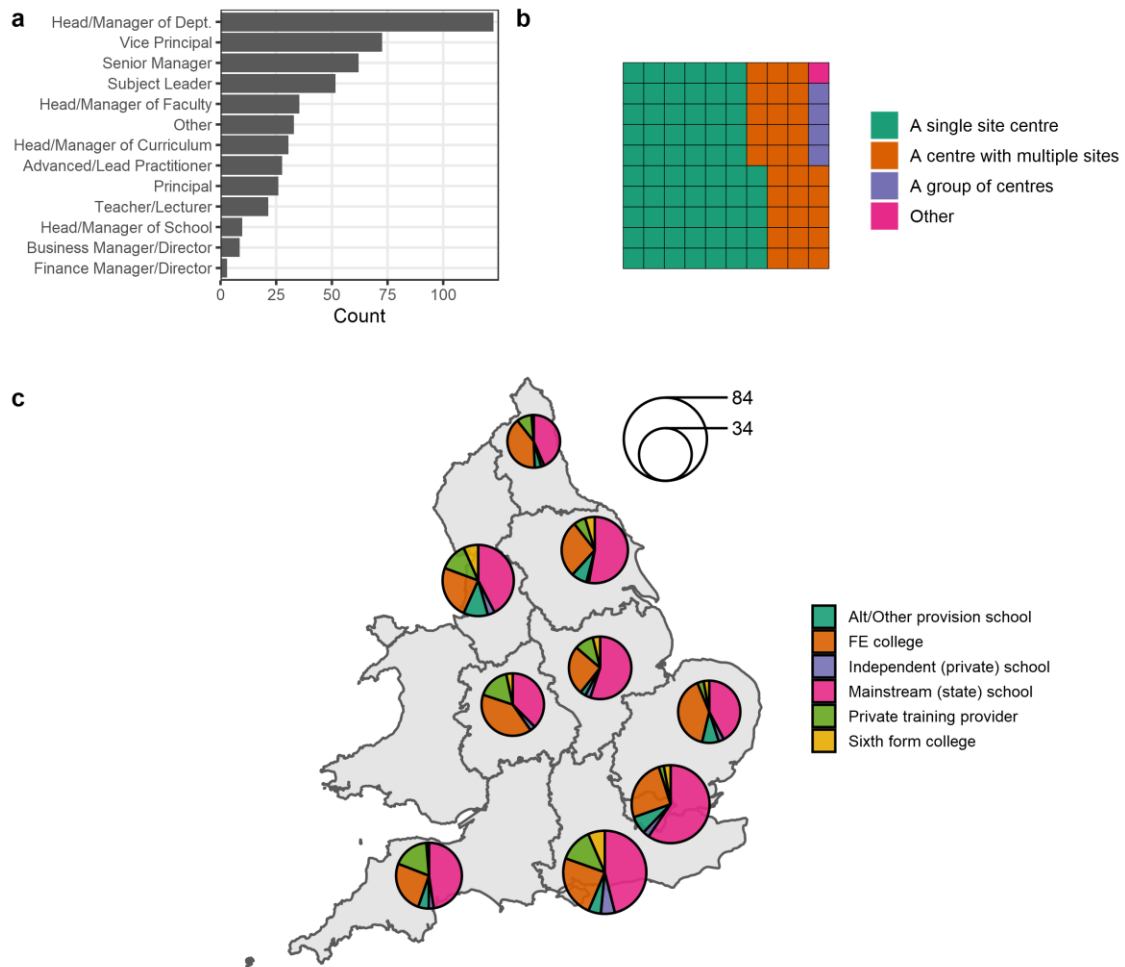
Figure 1: Characteristics of respondents in the weighted sample. a) Frequency of respondent roles. b) Remit of respondents. c) Regional composition of the sample by centre type. Pie charts show the proportion of respondents (after weighting) from each centre type. The size of the pie charts corresponds to the total weighted number of respondents in each region.

3.1.3 Qualification and centre background

Respondents provided background information about the qualifications responses referred to, including the subject area, level and number of learners. Health, Public Services and Care was the most common VTQ sector subject that respondents reported on (Figure 2). In all, 21% of responses about the top existing qualification concerned qualifications in this subject area. The proportions of responses concerning each subject area was similar for both existing and new qualifications, suggesting that there had not been any shifts in the appeal of any particular subject area. The rank order and proportion of responses of each subject sector area closely reflects the published numbers of certificates awarded (Ofqual 2019c) and provides further confidence that our sample is a fair representation of the population and VTQ market. 'Preparation for life and work' features less prominently in our sample because this subject area includes functional skills training, which we specifically asked survey participants to exclude from their responses.
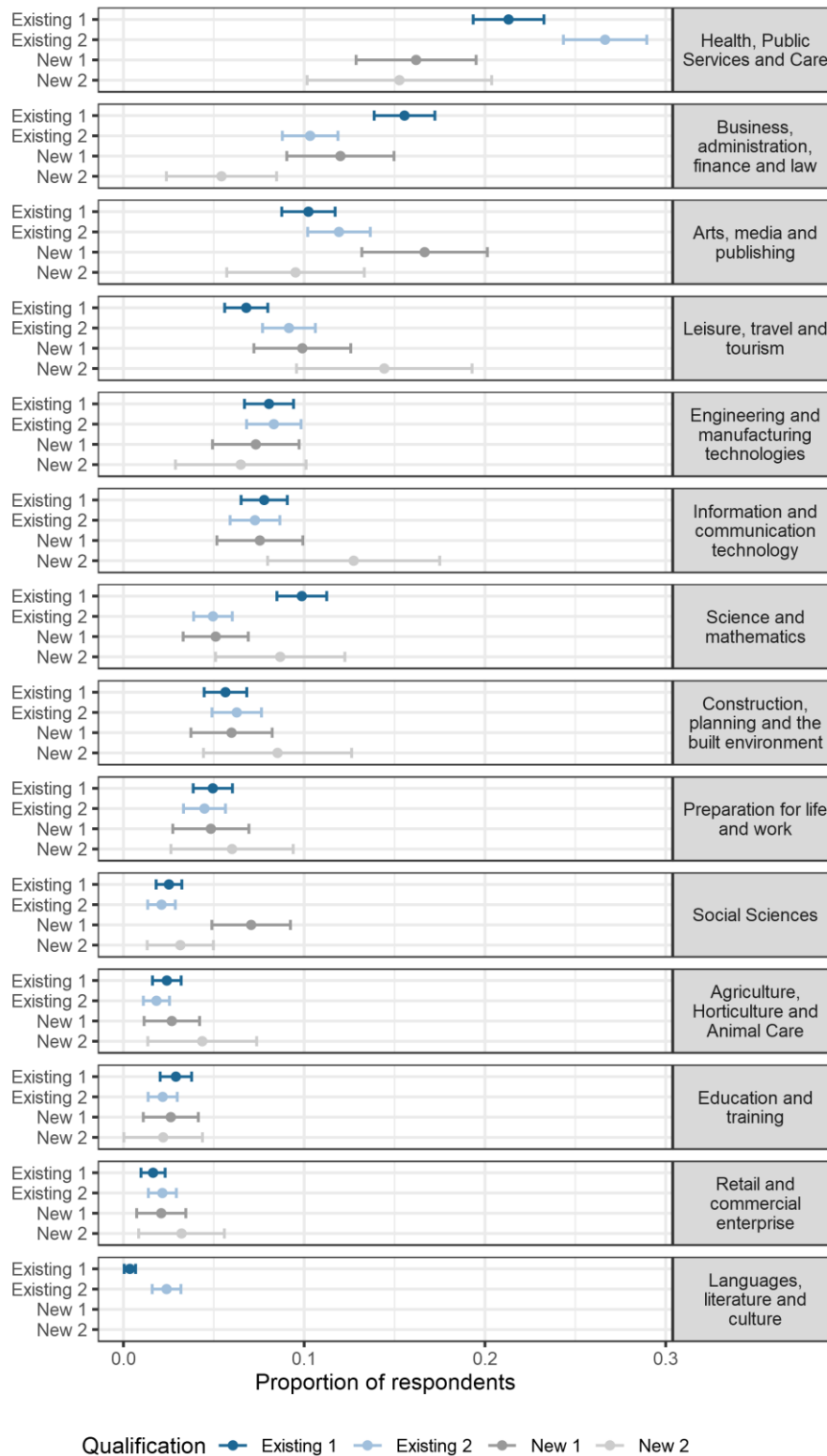
Figure 2: Subject areas that respondents referred to either as their largest 2 qualifications by uptake (existing 1 and 2) or qualifications they had recently introduced or were considering introducing (new 1 and 2). Error bars represent +/- 1 standard error.

Level 3 qualifications represented the top existing vocational and technical qualification offered to 16-19 year-olds for more than half of the respondents from each centre type (Figure 3). The exception was alternative and other provision schools, for whom responses mostly related to Level 1 qualifications. A large proportion of responses from private training providers (38%) did however relate to Level 2 qualifications. The patterns observed for subject area and level were very similar for each of the 2 largest qualifications by uptake (existing qualification 1 and 2). However, when thinking about new and proposed qualifications, the dominance of Level 3 qualifications only held for sixth form colleges (Figure 3). New or proposed offerings in other centre types were generally more evenly split between Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications, with one exception[3].
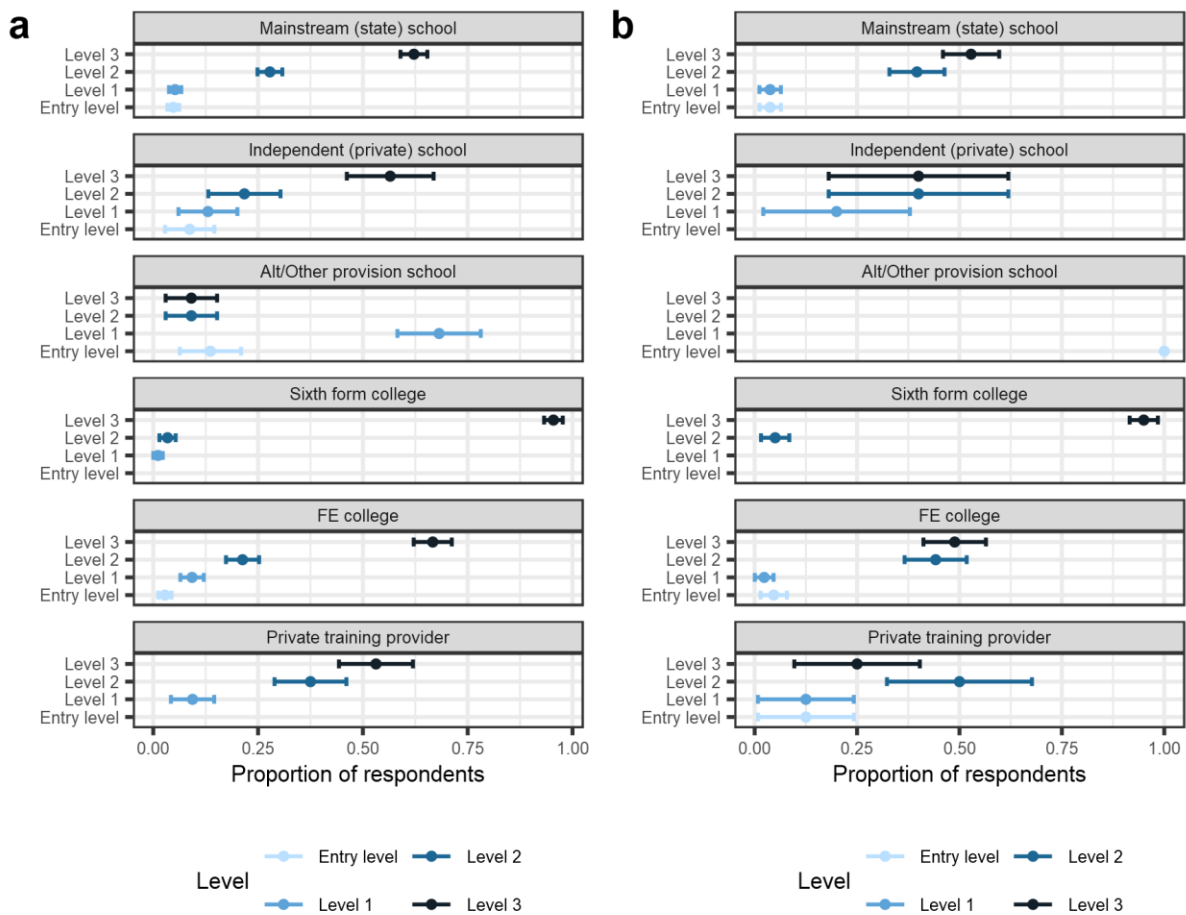
Figure 3: Qualification level by centre type. Vocational and technical qualification levels for a) top existing qualifications and b) new or proposed qualifications. Error bars represent +/- 1 standard error.

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[3] In alternative and other provision schools, only one respondent had new or proposed qualifications and this was at Entry level

The majority of survey responses providing information about 2 existing qualifications involved qualifications at the same level. Where established qualifications 1 and 2 were at different levels, approximately two-thirds involved one Level 3 qualification and one Level 2. When considering adding new VTQs, 26% of respondents were thinking of adding a qualification at a different level to that of their top existing offering(s).

There were big differences between types of centre in the number of learners enrolled for their vocational and technical qualifications (Figure 4). The vast majority of colleges and private training providers had large cohorts of students studying for their top 2 qualifications whereas schools often had smaller groups of less than 20 learners. These different settings might translate to somewhat different priorities when it comes to making choices about VTQ offerings.
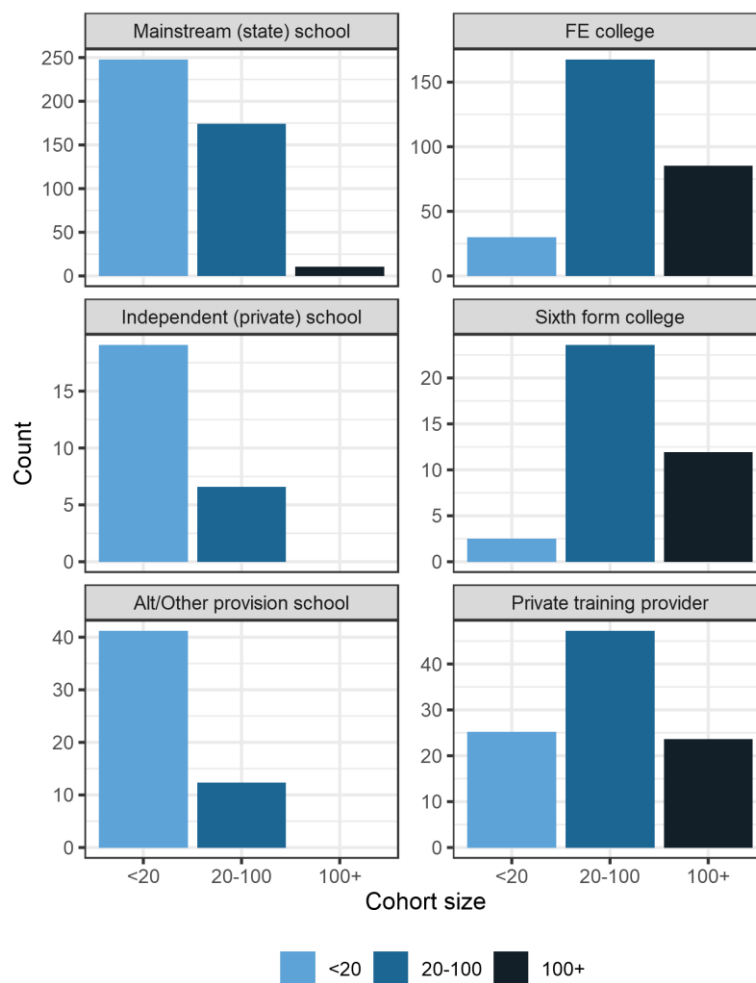
Figure 4: Cohort size variation between centre types. Respondents were asked for the number of learners enrolled for their top 2 existing qualifications (3 categories: less than 20 (<20), between 20 and 100 (20-100), and more than 100 (100+)). Weighted data are used and the responses for the qualifications are combined.

3.2 Drivers of choice around Vocational and Technical Qualifications

Survey respondents were asked to report on the extent to which a range of factors (which we refer to here as the 'drivers of choice') influenced their decisions to offer a qualification. The drivers fell into 3 high-level categories in terms of the group whose interests are principally addressed: learners, centres or employers (Table 2). Responses were recorded using a 5-point Likert scale (*strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *neither agree nor disagree*, *agree*, *strongly agree*) but have been collapsed to a 3-point scale (*disagree*, *neither agree nor disagree*, *agree*) in some of the analyses below.

Table 2: *Potential drivers of qualification choice: Shorthand and category of group principally affected.*

Shorthand	Complete driver statement	Category
Learner interest	We think learners and prospective learners are interested in this qualification	learner
Destinations	The destinations of previous learners in this qualification have been good	learner
Intrinsic	This qualification has intrinsic educational value	learner
Further study	The qualification is useful for further study	learner
Programme	This completes a programme of learning for students	learner
Employment	We think local employers tend to employ people with this qualification	employer
Job requirement	This qualification is a requirement for some jobs	employer
Capacity	We have the right facilities/teachers/trainers in place to offer this qualification	centre
Funding	This qualification attracts good funding	centre
Perform table	This qualification receives performance table/accountability measures	centre

It is worth noting that the high level categories are not necessarily fully delineated or mutually exclusive. For example, one could argue that 'This qualification is a requirement for some jobs' is just as much a learner focused driver as an employer focused driver given that it is likely to be in learners' best interests to be appropriately qualified for employment.

3.2.1 How established and new qualifications compared

All 503 respondents completed information about the drivers of choice for their top existing qualification and subsets also completed responses about a second existing qualification (84% of respondents), a new qualification (28% of respondents), and a second new qualification (12% of respondents) (Table 3). A higher proportion of respondents from colleges and private training providers than schools responded to survey items relating to a second existing qualification, which may reflect the increased VTQ provision in these types of centre. The colleges also yielded a higher proportion of responses regarding new VTQs whereas the rate of responses about new qualifications from private training providers was more similar to schools.

Table 3: *Number and percentage of respondents by centre type in the weighted sample that returned data about existing qualifications (EQ) and new qualifications (NQ).*

Centre type	Counts and proportions of respondents that answered questions about different survey categories of qualification						
	EQ1 count	EQ2 count	% EQ2	NQ1 count	% NQ1	NQ2 count	% NQ2
Mainstream (state) school	241	191	79	56	23	16	7
Independent (private) school	15	10	70	3	22	1	4
Alt/Other provision school	30	23	77	1	5	3	9
FE college	146	136	94	58	40	34	23
Private training provider	50	46	91	13	25	5	9
Sixth form college	20	18	89	9	45	5	24
Total	503	425	84	140	28	62	12

Note. Weighted counts are rounded to nearest integer.

Patterns of responses were highly similar regardless of whether respondents were thinking about their top existing VTQ offerings or new or proposed offerings (Table 2 and Appendix D.2). Of the 10 drivers of choice listed in Table 2 (excluding destinations since this driver could not be considered for new qualifications), the pattern of responses between existing qualifications 1 and 2 and new qualifications 1 and 2 only varied significantly ($p = 0.04$) for learner interest. This was explained mainly by differences in the strength of agreement between sets of the responses rather than the proportion of respondents that agreed (a greater proportion of respondents 'strongly agreed' that this was a driver of choice for new qualifications rather than existing). Since there was such a high degree of correspondence between qualifications, we have only reported results for the top existing qualification below but have provided additional details and figures for the other sets of responses in Appendices D.2 and E.3.

3.2.2 Key drivers and the effect of centre type

There were very high levels of agreement that learner interest (92%), capacity (89%), as well as qualifications serving as prerequisites for further study (87%) or having intrinsic value (83%) drive choices of qualifications (Figure 5). The destinations of previous learners is also a common driver of choice, particularly in the case of Level 3 qualifications (89%). In contrast, funding and performance tables as well as qualifications serving as a pre-requisite for jobs or leading to local employment appear to be considerably lower priorities (Figure 5). Overall, learner-focused drivers dominate with those five drivers (Table 2) in the top six factors. Centre-focused reasons are ranked 2nd (capacity, 89% agreement), 8th (performance table, 61%) and 10th (funding, 40%). The employer-focused drivers have positive net levels of agreement, but are ranked 7th (local employment, 66% agreement) and 9th (job requirement, 55%).
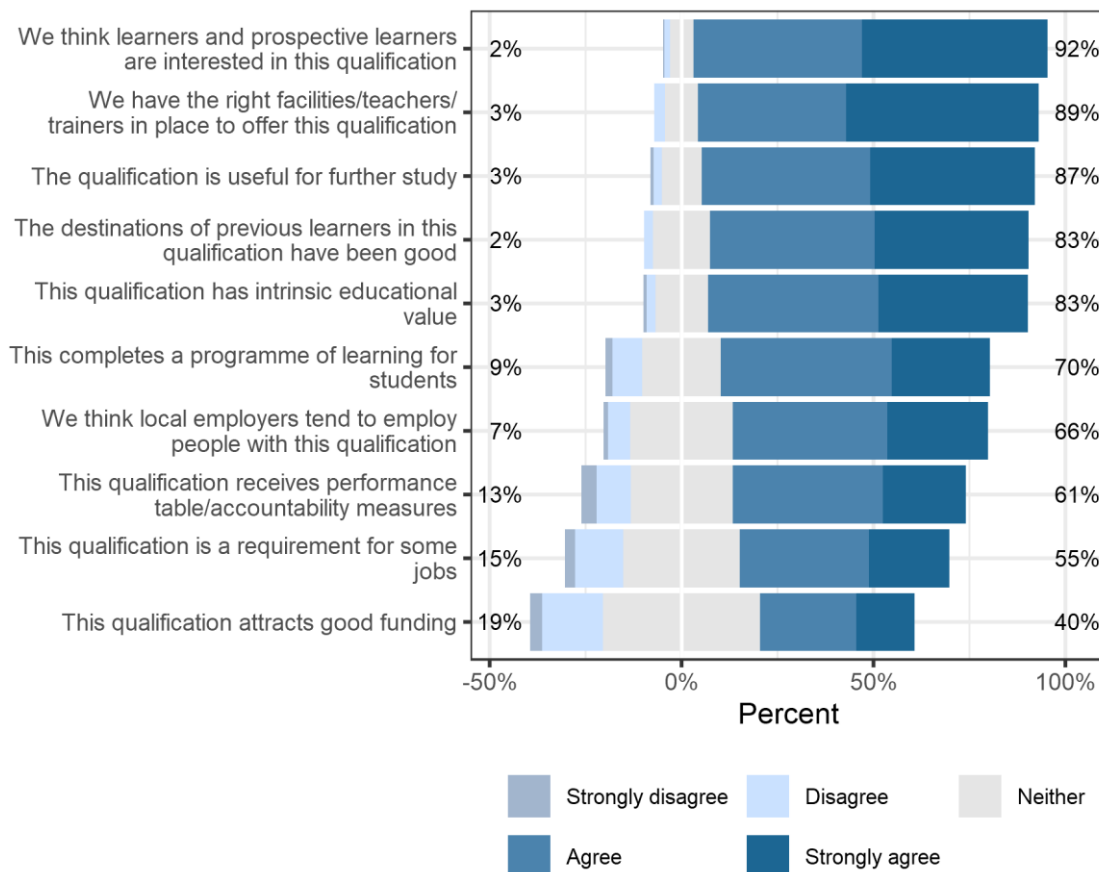
Figure 5: Overall views on drivers of choice of existing vocational and technical qualifications (all respondents). Drivers are rank ordered based on the overall level of agreement (highest agreement at the top). Responses were on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree - strongly disagree). Percentages at the sides of the plot represent total disagreement (percentage of respondents in weighted sample that disagreed or strongly disagreed; left-hand side) and total agreement (agreed or strongly agreed; right-hand side). The neutral category (neither agree nor disagree) is split evenly either side of 0%.

The multiple correspondence analysis revealed a clear effect of centre type on responses about drivers of qualification choice but other supplementary variables describing the respondent (role and decision level) or centre (scope [for example single or multiple sites, etc] and geographical region) had little or no effect on responses (Appendix D.1). On capacity and learner interest, there were consistent, high levels of agreement between centre types (Figure 6). At least 4 out of 5 respondents from each centre type agreed that these were drivers of choice for their top existing VTQ. However, the importance of the employment, destinations, and job requirement drivers varied considerably more based on the types of centre where respondents worked, with levels of agreement varying by as much as 42% for the job requirement driver (Table 4). Independent (private) schools generally had the lowest levels of agreement (for 6 of the 10 potential drivers) but did have the equal highest level of agreement about capacity being a driver. Likewise, mainstream (state) schools generally had relatively low levels of agreement about the importance of most drivers, but had a slightly higher level of agreement compared to other centre types that performance tables were a driver of choice. In contrast, independent training providers showed the highest levels of agreement for 7 of the 10 drivers of choice.
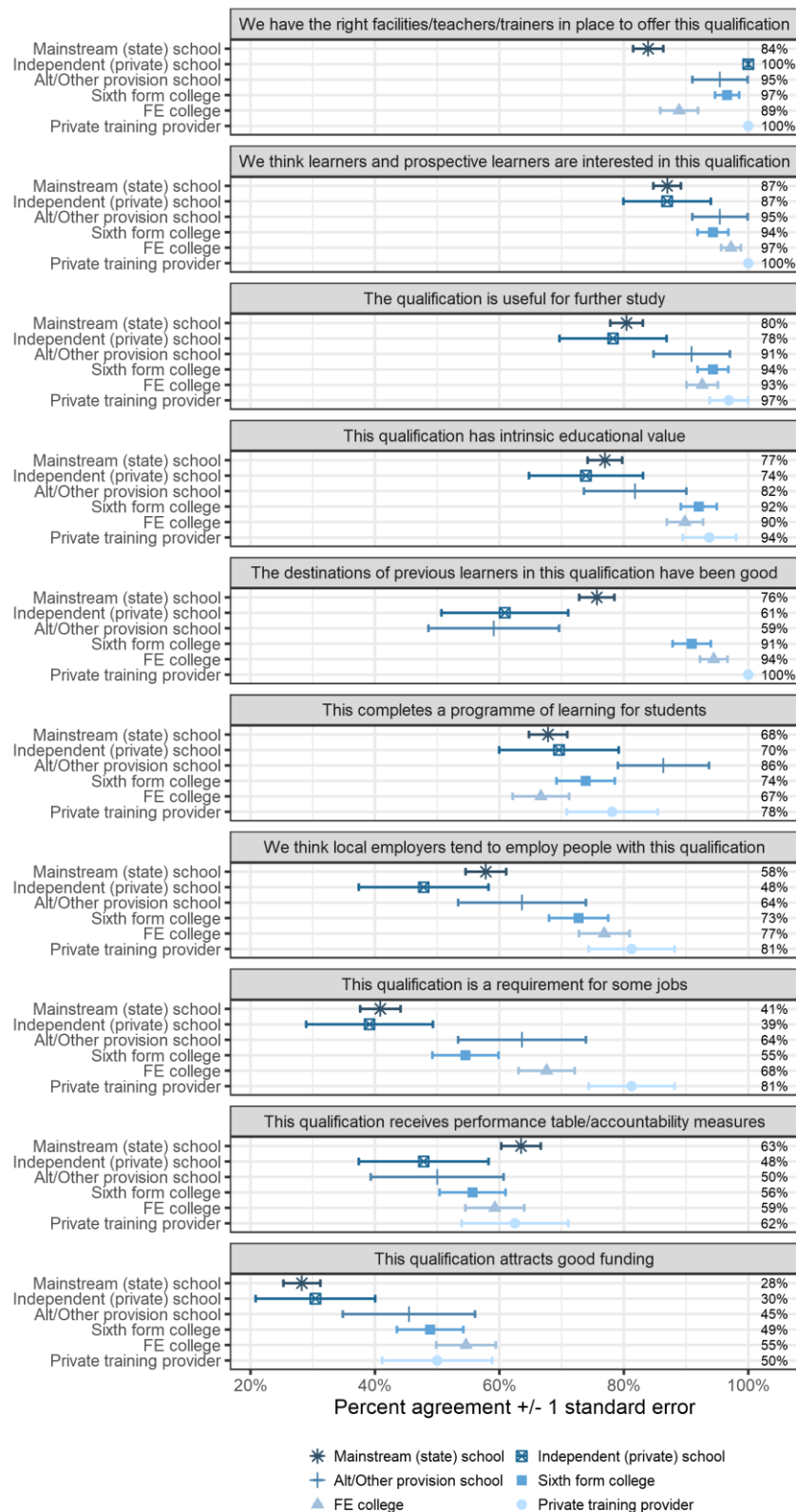
Figure 6: Drivers of choice for existing vocational and technical qualifications by centre type. Percent of respondents (+/- 1 standard error) who agreed that the drivers listed had influenced choice (responses collapsed to a 3-point scale [agree - disagree]). Drivers are rank ordered based on the overall level of agreement (highest agreement at the top). Percentages at the right of the plot represent total agreement (percentage of respondents in the weighted sample who agreed or strongly agreed).

Table 4: *Amount of variation between centre types in levels of agreement about drivers of choice of qualifications.*

Driver	Min.	Centre type with minimum	Max.	Centre type with maximum	Range
Learner interest	87	Mainstream (state) school & Independent (private) school	100	Private training provider	13
Capacity	84	Mainstream (state) school	100	Private training provider & Independent (private) school	16
Perform table	48	Independent (private) school	63	Mainstream (state) school	16
Further study	78	Independent (private) school	97	Private training provider	19
Intrinsic	74	Independent (private) school	94	Private training provider	20
Programme	67	FE college	86	Alt/Other provision school	20
Funding	28	Mainstream (state) school	55	FE college	26
Employment	48	Independent (private) school	81	Private training provider	33
Destinations	59	Alt/Other provision school	100	Private training provider	41
Job requirement	39	Independent (private) school	81	Private training provider	42

3.2.3 Contrasts in the outlooks of schools, colleges and private training providers

The results of the multiple correspondence analysis revealed a separation of schools and colleges in their responses to drivers of choice for the top existing qualifications (Appendix D.1). To examine this difference further we used a 'radar plot' to view the level of agreement to all of the potential drivers simultaneously. In a radar plot, polygons can be used to represent categories of respondents. The polygon area scales (though not linearly) with the level of agreement within categories to the survey items, whilst the orientation of the polygon can identify potentially differing priorities.

When comparing the responses received from schools, colleges and private training providers using the radar approach outlined above, the polygon shapes were quite similar, indicating that a similar set of drivers are at play in each setting (Figure 7). However, schools and colleges contrast in the size of their polygons, reflecting differing levels of consensus recorded. Schools have a smaller polygon reflecting

that their responses to individual drivers were more variable than colleges, generally exhibiting lower overall agreement on most individual drivers than colleges.
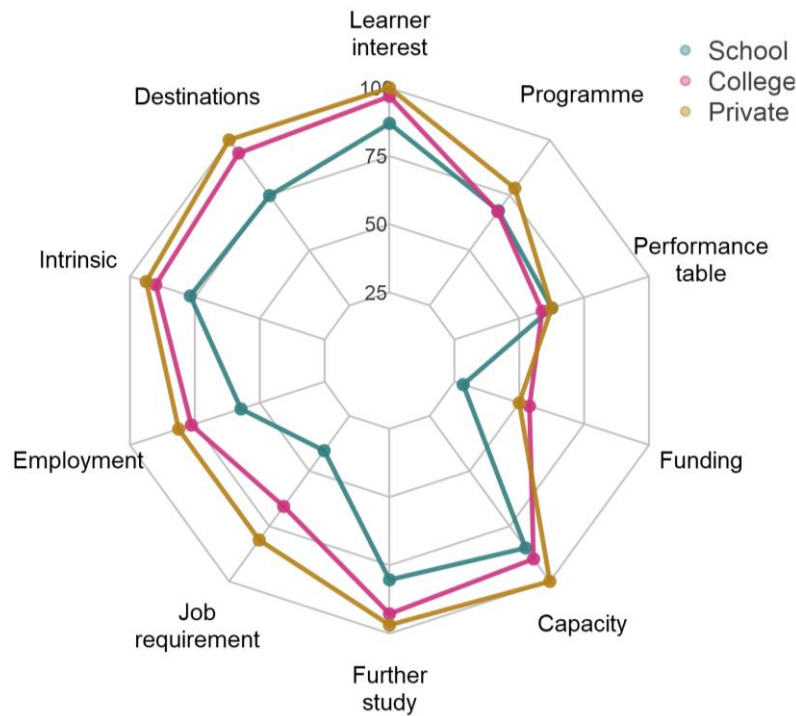
Figure 7: Variation in levels of consensus regarding drivers of choice for vocational and technical qualifications between centre types. Agreement (proportion of respondents who replied 'strongly agree' or 'agree') with each driver is presented on its own axis (scaled from 25 to 100% with higher values towards the outer edge of the plot). Mainstream (state), independent (private) and alternative/other provision schools were combined as 'Schools'. FE and sixth form colleges were combined as 'Colleges'. Private training providers is abbreviated to 'Private' in the legend.

This analysis suggests that colleges have a broad and commonly shared outlook when it comes to selecting VTQs, whereas there is more variability within schools. VTQ choice at individual schools may be subject to narrower sets of drivers and the composition of sets may vary more between schools. To examine this we first collapsed the Likert data to a 3-point scale and then, for each centre type, we counted the number of distinct patterns of responses across all 10 questions about drivers and calculated the proportion of respondents that shared each response pattern. For example, one unique pattern of response might be to agree with all 10 drivers, another might be to agree with the first 5 and disagree with the remainder. FE colleges were more homogeneous than schools: 30% of respondents from FE colleges shared the top pattern of responses and only 8 patterns captured the responses of more than 50% of respondents (Table 5; Appendix D.3). In contrast, mainstream schools were much more variable in their responses: only 13% of respondents shared the top pattern of responses and 25 patterns were needed to capture the responses of more than 50% of respondents.

Table 5: *Diversity of responses about drivers for qualification choice by centre type. Number of different response patterns returned by at least half and all respondents.*

	Number of unique patterns required to capture the responses of the majority of respondents	
Centre type	50%	100%
Mainstream (state) school	25	140
Independent (private) school	10	22
Alt/Other provision school	6	17
FE college	8	57
Private training provider	4	20
Sixth form college	13	57

The most common response pattern for most centre types was to agree that all drivers affected the choice of qualifications offered.

3.2.4 Factors determining choice of awarding organisation

The survey also gathered responses about the importance of 11 factors that influence centres' choice of a particular AO's qualification and why they continued to partner with that AO when there might be a choice of other courses in the same subject area. As for the drivers of choice for qualifications, responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale (here, very unimportant to very important).

Few respondents overall agreed that a lack of choice, the availability of direct claim status arrangements or fees were important in determining where they buy VTQ qualifications from (Figure 8). More important was the course content (most agreement) and the results of students from a learner perspective (though results clearly also reflect on the centre), and the support offered and provision for tasks from the centre perspective, as well as the standing of the specification and the AO (probably influenced by previous dealings). There were higher levels of strong agreement that results were a reason for switching than observed for other factors (Figure 8) despite some variation in overall agreement between centre types (results were always a factor for private training providers; Figure 9). Other factors that varied between centre types included direct claims status arrangements, which were more often a factor for FE colleges and private training providers than other centre types (Figure 9). FE colleges and private training providers along with alternate provision schools also more frequently placed importance on fees. Private training providers also placed a little more emphasis on service, past results and the standing of the AO but, otherwise, the responses were quite consistent between centre types (Appendix E).
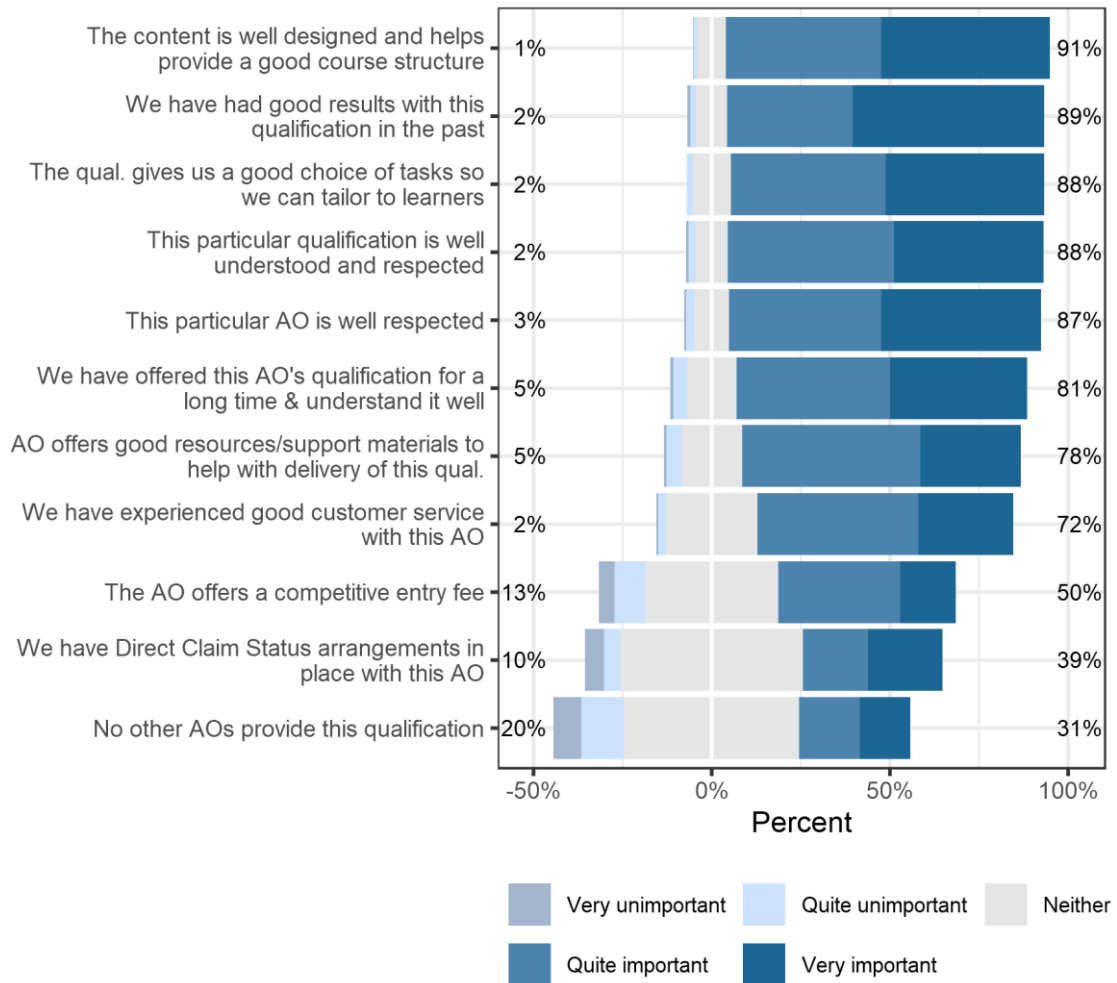
Figure 8: Overall importance of factors that might influence the choice of awarding organisation. Factors are rank ordered based on the overall level of agreement (highest proportion at the top). Responses were on a 5-point Likert scale (very important - very unimportant). Percentages at the sides of the plot represent the percentage of respondents in weighted sample who considered a factor quite unimportant or very unimportant (left-hand side) and the percentage who thought a factor quite important or very important (right-hand side). The neutral category (neither important nor unimportant) is split evenly either side of 0%.
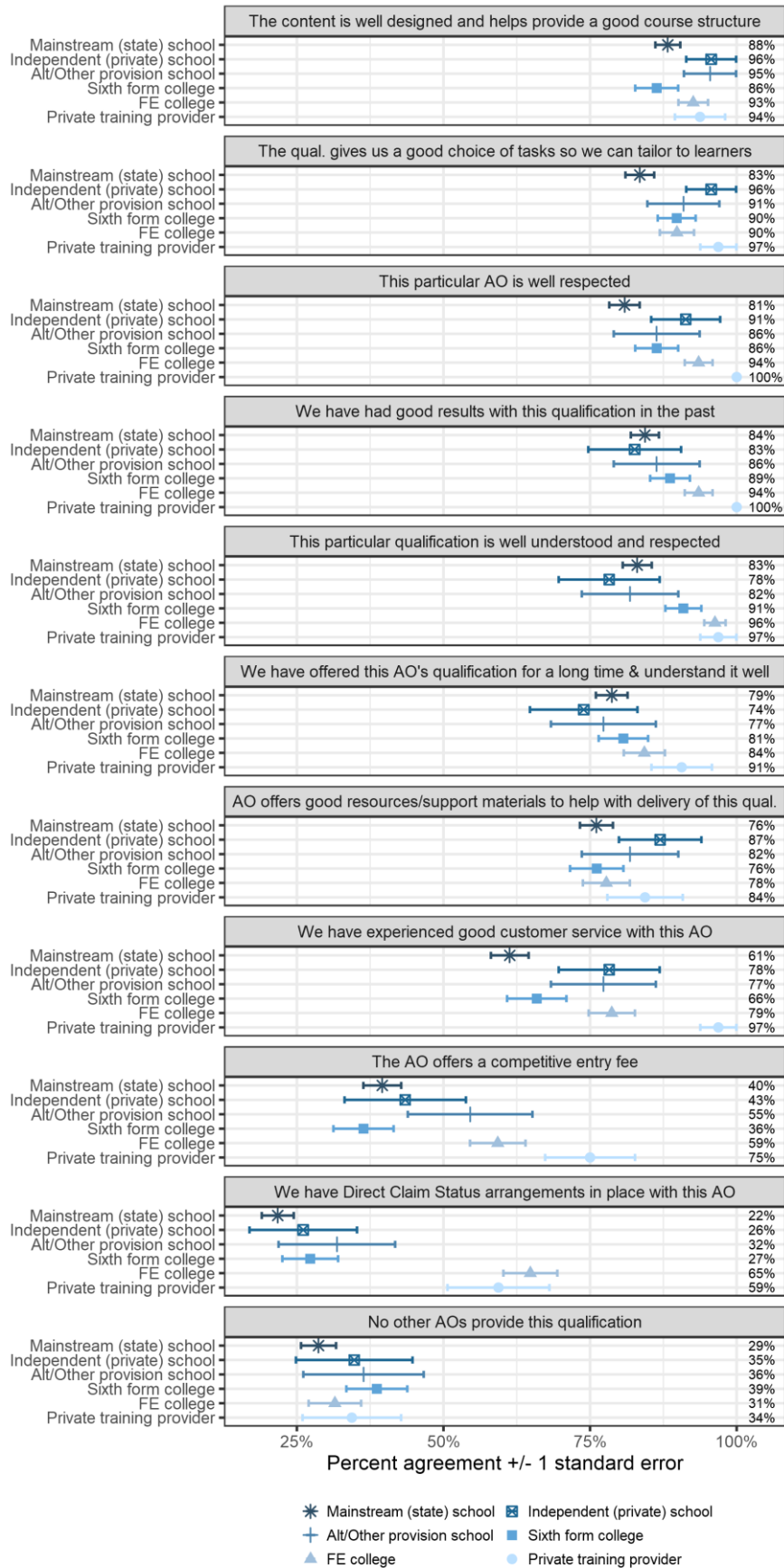
Figure 9: The impact of centre type on the importance of factors that influence the choice of awarding organisation for the top existing qualification. Percent of

respondents (+/- 1 standard error) who agreed that the factors listed were important in choice (responses collapsed to a 3-point scale [Important - unimportant]). Drivers are rank ordered based on the overall level of agreement (highest proportion at the top). Percentages at the right of the plot represent total agreement (percentage of respondents in weighted sample that considered factor quite important or very important).

3.3 Management of VTQ offerings

3.3.1 Reasons for switching awarding organisations

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed that a range of factors would prompt them (or had prompted them in the past) to consider switching awarding organisation for qualifications. Assessment problems was the most commonly agreed reason for switching AO (Figure 10), though independent and mainstream schools and sixth form colleges also showed similar levels of agreement that poor results prompted a switch (Figure 11). Personnel changes, price rises and employers favouring qualifications provided by other AOs were all less frequent reasons for switching overall (Figure 10).
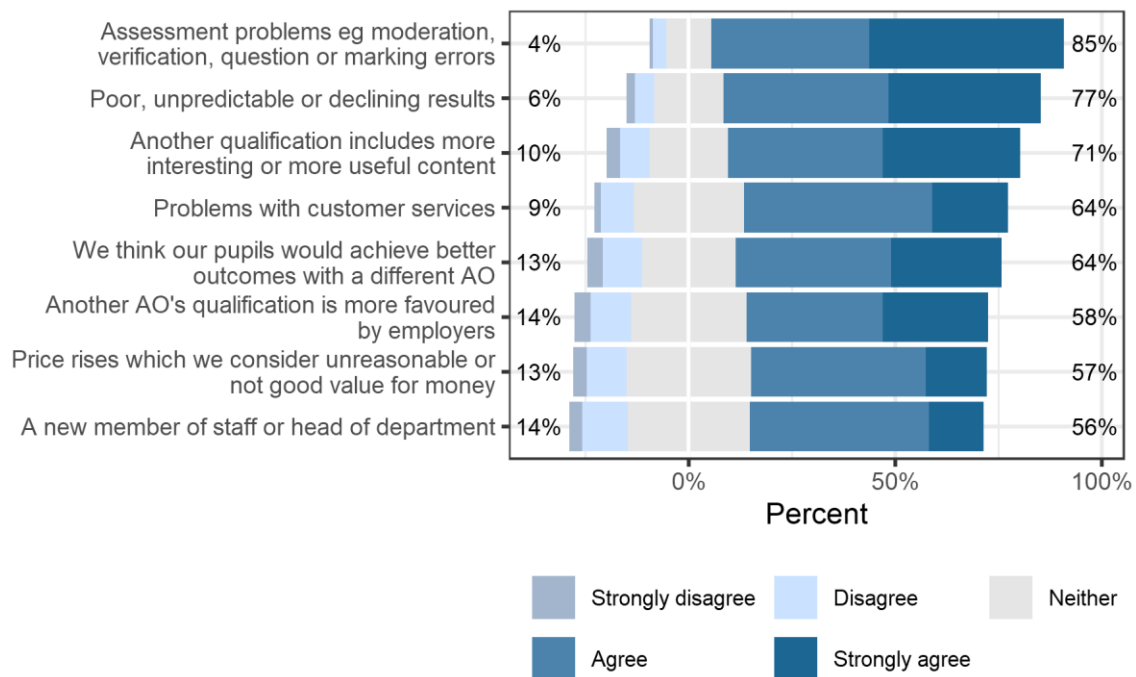
Figure 10: Reasons for switching awarding organisation as provider of vocational and technical qualifications. Drivers are rank ordered based on the overall level of agreement (highest proportion at the top). Responses were on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree - strongly disagree). Percentages at the sides of the plot represent total disagreement (percentage of respondents in weighted sample that disagreed or strongly disagreed; left-hand side) and total agreement (agreed or strongly agreed; right-hand side). The neutral category (neither agree nor disagree) is split evenly either side of 0%.

Private training providers were less likely than other centre types to switch on the basis of being attracted by the content of other courses, because they thought learners would have better outcomes with another AO (both of which were frequently factors for sixth form colleges) or due to personnel changes, but price rises were more likely to prompt them to switch than other centre types (except perhaps FE colleges) despite being one of the least frequent reasons for switching overall. In line with the responses about factors determining AO choice, customer service problems ranked second of reasons that prompt switching among private training providers, behind only assessment problems.
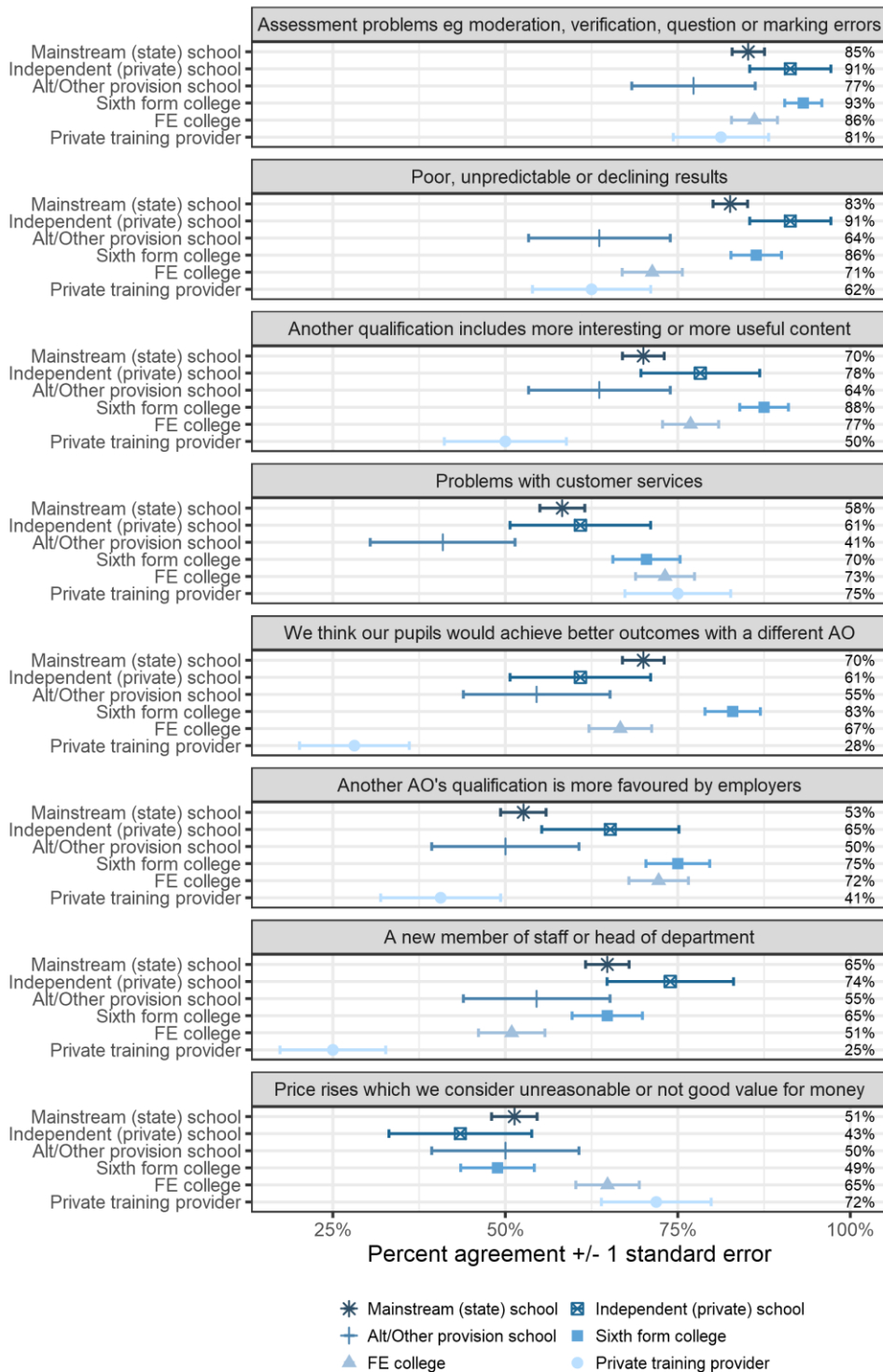
Figure 11: Effect of centre type on the reasons for switching awarding organisation as provider of vocational and technical qualifications. Percent of respondents (+/- 1 standard error) who agreed that the factors listed had influenced decision (responses collapsed to a 3-point scale [agree - disagree]). Factors are rank ordered based on the overall level of agreement (highest proportion at the top). Percentages at the right of the plot represent total agreement (percentage of respondents in weighted sample that agreed or strongly agreed).

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3.3.2 Centre review of VTQ offerings

Regular review of a centre's VTQ offerings was common across all centre types (Figure 12). Annual reviews were most frequent but the periodicity varied within individual types of centre as well as between centre types (though to a lesser extent). FE colleges tended to review their offerings most frequently, with more than three-quarters of respondents stating that reviews occurred at least every 2 years.
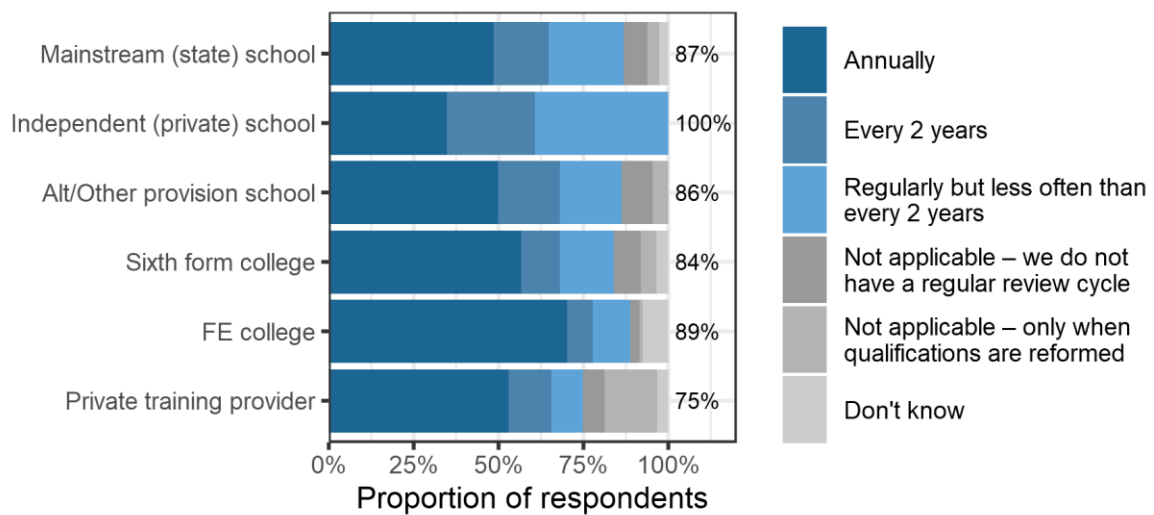
Figure 12: Frequency of review of vocational and technical qualifications by centre type. Percentages on the right-hand side of the plot represent the proportion that conduct regular review (any interval; filled with shades of blue).

3.3.3 Retention of courses that are not commercially viable

Respondents in approximately one in 5 centres stated that the centre they worked in was offering qualifications that were not commercially viable, ranging from 14 to 23% depending on centre type (Figure 13a). Meeting learner needs and being able to offer a breadth of choice appeared to be the most common reasons to continue to offer qualifications under these circumstances (Figure 13b). FE colleges agreed almost unanimously that they continued to offer some qualifications in order to meet local employer needs in spite of these not being commercially viable, but mainstream (state) schools were not continuing to offer such qualifications for this reason (Appendix F).

a

Centre type	Yes	No	Don't know
Private training provider	16	72	12
FE college	23	52	25
Sixth form college	22	57	22
Alt/Other provision school	14	68	18
Independent (private) school	17	70	13
Mainstream (state) school	21	56	23

b
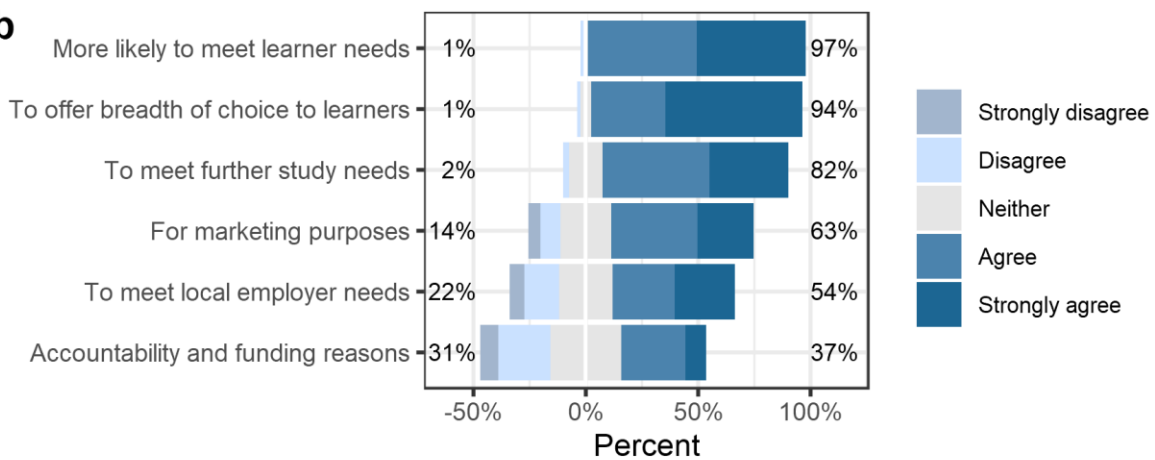
Figure 13: Vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) that are not commercially viable. a) Proportion of respondents (as percentage) at centres that offered VTQs that were not commercially viable. b) Agreement with a set of potential reasons that qualifications that were not commercially viable continued to be offered. Factors are rank ordered based on the overall level of agreement (highest proportion at the top). Responses were on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree - strongly disagree). Percentages at the sides of the plot represent total disagreement (percentage of respondents in weighted sample that disagreed or strongly disagreed; left-hand side) and total agreement (agreed or strongly agreed; right-hand side). The neutral category (neither agree nor disagree) is split evenly either side of 0%.

3.3.4 Qualifications that are no longer offered

Overall, 35% of the sample had recently stopped offering at least one qualification. However, there was quite a lot of variation between centre types; the frequency was twice as high in sixth form colleges (50%) compared to private training providers (25%) (Figure 14). There was no clear pattern of stopping offering some qualifications to replace them with others as only about half of respondents (51%) who stated that their centre had recently stopped offering a qualification also completed details about a new qualification that had been added to their VTQ offering.
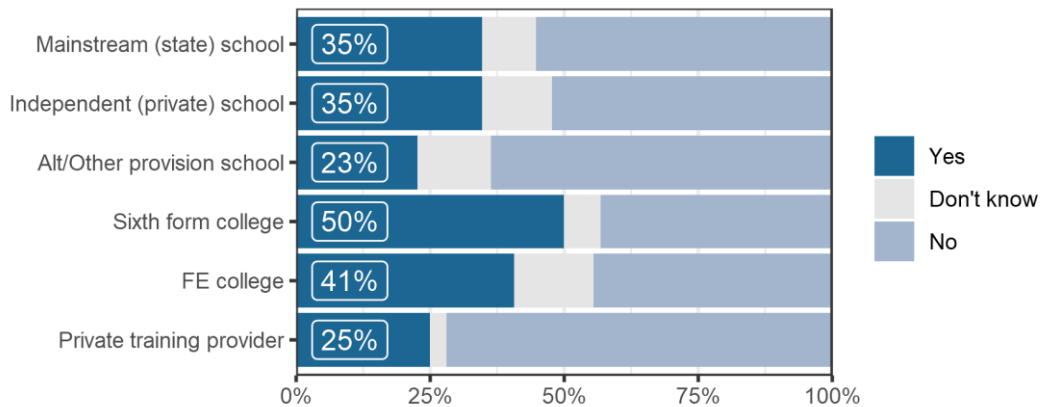
Figure 14: Proportion of respondents from centres that had recently stopped offering one or more vocational and technical qualification.

Respondents described the reasons for recently ceasing to offer qualifications in a free entry field of the questionnaire and we categorised these responses. In total, there were 148 meaningful responses and student uptake (48% of responses) was the main reason by a considerable distance. The availability of suitably qualified staff was the second most common reason (16%). Despite not appearing to be key drivers of choice for qualifications, financial reasons and qualifications ceasing to be eligible for performance tables were reasons for ceasing to offer qualifications in 14% and 5% of responses respectively.

3.3.5 Sources of suggestions for new VTQ offerings

We asked respondents where suggestions for new VTQ qualifications/new subject areas not currently offered might come from. The agreement levels were lower than seen in responses to earlier questions, suggesting that the sources of influence when it comes to decisions were more variable from centre to centre regardless of centre type (Figure 15). Teaching staff and senior management seemed to be key influencers, though not in private training providers. Independent schools were less frequently influenced by government policy than other centre types and sixth form colleges appeared to be more open to networking/discussion with external sources of interest or expertise, such as prospective learners or other local educational institutions. The influence of awarding organisations on our sample was on a par with government and they appeared to have slightly more sway in colleges and private training providers than other types of centre. Similarly, employers/industry bodies seemed to have less influence in schools than they do in colleges and private training providers.
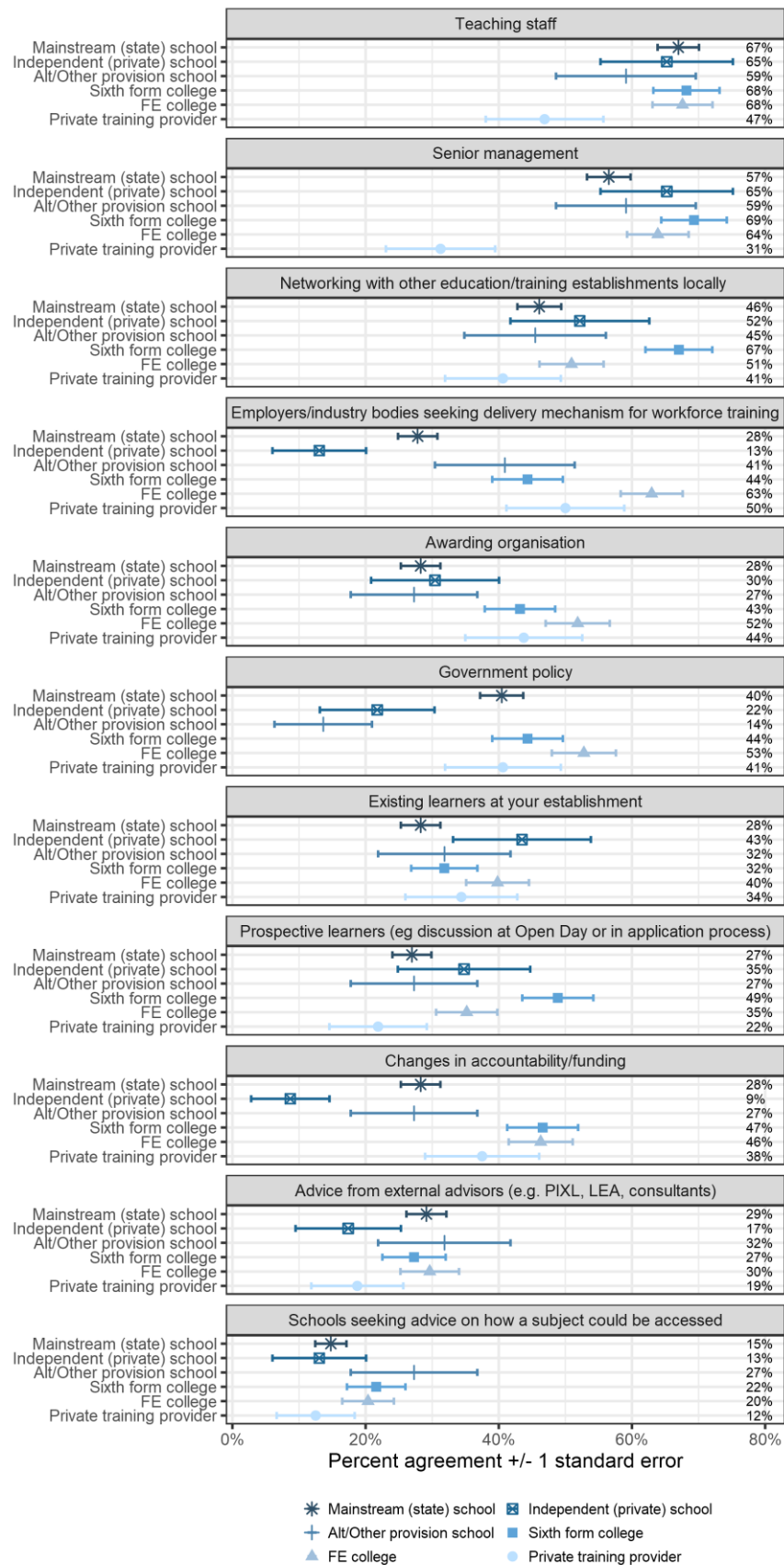
Figure 15: Influencers of vocational and technical qualification choice by centre type. Influencers are rank ordered according to overall level of agreement (highest at the top). Responses were on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree - strongly disagree).

Percentages at the right of the plot represent total agreement (percentage of respondents in weighted sample that agreed or strongly agreed). Given the low levels of agreement consistent across centre types, 'Don't know' and 'Other' categories are not shown.

4 Discussion

Research aimed at understanding VTQ choice is rare despite these qualifications forming a large share of the qualifications market, often being seen as a direct route into employment, and qualifying for performance table points in some cases. To address this lack of information, Ofqual conducted this survey of centre staff which focused on the drivers of choice for qualifications and the factors determining the awarding organisation selected to provide qualifications for learners aged 16-19 years. Responses were sought from a variety of respondents and then weighted in order to return a dataset that provided a fair representation of the population.

The response to the survey was very good with more than 500 respondents in total from all the major types of centre and from each of the 9 regions in England. The majority of responses related to Level 3 qualifications (consistent with the focus on 16-19 year olds), although the existing qualifications discussed by private training providers were split more evenly between levels 2 and 3 than other centre types, and in thinking about new qualifications, the popularity of Level 2 qualifications was almost equal to Level 3. Qualifications from a broad range of subject areas were discussed but Health, Public Services and Care qualifications were the most common, accounting for approximately one-quarter of the existing qualifications discussed.

A key result is that responses appear to show that centres take a broad view when it comes to making choices about VTQ offerings. Across the board, it seems that centres are trying to balance a range of factors when making choices, including those that are principally focused on learners (such as their interests and prospects) as well as those focused on the centres themselves (such as centre capacity). Having said that, centres seem particularly committed to meeting learners' needs: learner interest, the intrinsic educational value of qualifications, and how qualifications position learners for further study appear to be factors that usually influence choices in all centre types (with consistent levels of agreement across different centre types). In line with a focus on learners' needs and interests, centres seem dedicated to offering a choice even when it means incurring financial burdens by continuing to offer courses that are not commercially viable.

Positioning learners at the heart of decision-making is ostensibly a positive thing to do in any centre of education, but it may not necessarily best serve learners if future educational and employment pathways are not fully considered. Therefore, the observation that employer-focused drivers (qualifications being a requirement for jobs or tending to lead to securing work locally) do not appear to be influencing choice to the same degree could be a point of interest. Employer-focused drivers ranked lowly among drivers overall and it is initially unclear whether VTQ provision is focused on the 'supply' of suitably educated or qualified students for work. This perhaps indicates that despite a generally learner focused set of drivers, the future employment opportunities of learners may not be as much of a significant driver as

might have been expected. However, there appeared to be a difference in such drivers between different types of centre. Certainly, colleges seemed more attentive to employer needs than schools and their responses were often in line with private training providers.

The survey responses suggest that colleges consider a very broad range of drivers in their choices of VTQs and this outlook is common across centres. Choices appear to be made with a balance of attracting sizeable cohorts and providing pathways to further study or employment in mind. However, schools and colleges differed in their general level of consensus about drivers of choice, seemingly because of the greater variation between individual schools in the drivers they prioritise. It is possible that this arises because VTQs are the main type of qualification offered by colleges and that colleges are clear that VTQ choices can maximise their student recruitment ability and that their remit is to prepare learners for next steps. On the other hand, there is perhaps less of a clearly defined role for VTQs in schools (where our results indicate that VTQs are often taken up by small cohorts of 16-19 year-old learners) meaning that priorities, and therefore drivers, will vary more from centre to centre, perhaps responding to the specific context of a school (such as nature of cohort, other local education providers, school facilities etc).

Course content and the ability to tailor it to learners, results and the reputation of the qualification and awarding organisation were the main reasons that centres chose a particular awarding organisation's qualification. Overall, different centre types seemed to be driven by very similar sets of factors when making choices between different AOs. One driver that featured more often for FE colleges and private training providers than for other centre types was existing status for Direct Claims Status (DCS). It is likely that part of the reason for this is that DCS facilitates more of a 'roll on, roll off' model of education provision (rather than enrolling on an academic-year basis), which is more closely aligned to the operating models typical in those sectors.

The results of the survey give a clear impression that VTQ provision is dynamic and that centres are managing their offering actively, irrespective of what factors are driving choices. The large majority of centres reported regularly reviewing their VTQ offering, many at least every 2 years. We also found that a large proportion of centres (35%, ranging from 23% to 50% by centre type) had recently stopped offering a VTQ, whilst 28% returned information about at least one new or proposed qualification, suggesting that change is common. Some individual centres may have been swapping out one qualification for another (half of respondents working at centres that had recently stopped offering a qualification told us about at least one new qualification) but others may have streamlined their offering. Centres switched awarding organisations for the same reasons that typically govern any 'consumer' transaction: problems with the product (including the results) and the service.

Sources of influence of VTQ choices may vary between individual centres as much as between centre types. It is common for centres to look internally to their own staff (teachers and senior management) when seeking expertise to inform choices, but private training providers and FE colleges will just as frequently look outside to employers and industry bodies. Interestingly, awarding organisations appear to have a similar degree of influence as government, which seems to influence choice in independent (private) and alternate/other provision schools only very rarely. However, a weakness of our approach here is that we do not have information on

the factors shaping the experience and view of individual teachers and senior managers, so it is possible that some of the influence of government is exercised implicitly by contributing to the outlook of those groups of centre staff who were the most frequent sources of influence according to our results.

Funding appeared to be a more frequent driver of choice in colleges and private training providers than in schools (where the contribution of VTQs to overall budgets may be relatively small if provision is weighted towards GQs), but funding and fees were generally found to be of little importance across the survey as a whole. This is a potentially interesting result but it is possible that the wording of the question ('the qualification attracts good funding') limited the proportion of respondents that highlighted it as a driver in their choices. For example, it is possible that respondents thought that while 'funding rather than no funding' is important, the qualification they were referring to did not necessarily attract 'good' funding. Discussing funding relative to the cost of courses may have resulted in funding receiving greater prominence. Having said that, the overall lack of emphasis on funding and fees does align with previous preliminary findings (Frontier Economics 2015; Ofqual 2015; 2019b).

Our results provide much needed information about the factors operating in the VTQ market, which has received little research attention previously. The survey focused on how centres make choices, revealing that learners' needs and interests heavily influence centres, which further highlights the need for greater understanding of how learners themselves are making choices. Therefore, additional research focused on learners is much needed, unpacking their own set of drivers, as well as whether they have access to sufficient information, and whether centres are making the right choices from their perspectives.

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Appendix A – Survey

Ofqual Vocational Qualifications 2019

About the survey

YouGov has been commissioned by Ofqual to carry out some important research to learn more about the drivers that contribute towards the qualifications schools, colleges and training providers offer. This is to help Ofqual understand why these establishments offer the specific vocational and technical qualifications that they do for 16-19 year olds, and why they choose the awarding organisations they do to provide these vocational and technical qualifications.

This survey is designed to be completed by providers of education and training. For the purpose of this survey we are interested in vocational and technical qualifications taken by 16-19 year olds at Entry Level, Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3. This survey is **not** about GCSEs, A Levels, AS Levels or Functional Skills.

Your response

As with all YouGov studies, your opinions and views will remain entirely confidential and will not be reported in a way that can identify either individuals or individual establishments.

Completing this survey should **take you no longer than 10 minutes**. You have been selected at random to take part in this survey and please do take the opportunity to take part based on your current experience.

Simply **click the button below to start the survey**

---

*Question type: **Text***

Thank you for taking the time to start this survey. YouGov and Ofqual appreciate your interest but this survey does need you to have knowledge of your establishment's process for selecting vocational and technical qualifications.

Please click the grey button below to exit the survey.

---

*Question type: **Single***

[Q1] What type of establishment do you work for?

<1>	Mainstream (state) school
<2>	Independent (private) school
<3>	Alternative provision school
<4>	Other provision school
<5>	General and tertiary college (incl. FE college)
<6>	Private/independent training provider (incl. employers)
<7>	Sixth form college
<8>	Other (please state) (open [Q1_other]) [open]

---

*Question type: **Single***

[Q2] What best describes your role at the establishment you work for?

<1>	Advanced/Lead Practitioner	<8>	Principal
<2>	Business Manager/Director	<9>	Senior Manager
<3>	Finance Manager/Director	<10>	Subject Leader
<4>	Head/Manager of Curriculum	<11>	Vice Principal
<5>	Head/Manager of Department	<13>	Teacher/Lecturer
<6>	Head/Manager of Faculty	<12 fixed>	Other (please state) (open [Q2_other]) [open]
<7>	Head/Manager of School		

---

*Question type: **Single***

[Q5] In which region is your establishment based?

<1>	East of England	<7>	South West
<2>	East Midlands	<8>	West Midlands
<3>	London	<9>	Yorkshire and the Humber
<4>	North East	<10>	Wales
<5>	North West	<11>	Scotland
<6>	South East	<12>	Northern Ireland

---

*Question type: **Single***

[Q3] Would you describe yourself as... ?

<1>	A department-level decision maker
<2>	An establishment-level decision maker
<3 fixed>	Other type of decision maker (please state) (open [Q3_other]) [open]
<4 fixed>	None of these

---

*Question type: **Single***

[Q4] When answering questions on the vocational and technical qualifications your establishment offers, which of the following will this refer to?

<1>	A single site centre
<2>	A centre with multiple sites
<3>	A group of centres
<4 fixed>	Other (please state) (open [Q4_other]) [open]

---

*Question type: **Single***

[Q7] Approximately how many 16-19 year-old learners are enrolled at your establishment in the academic year 2018-2019?

<1>	<100
<2>	100-500
<3>	501-1000

<4>	1001-5000
<5>	5001+

---

*Question type: **Multiple***

[Q13a] Please list the top 2 <u>vocational or technical qualifications</u> with the highest uptake in your department or establishment below.

The responses you provide here will be shown to you again in later questions when we ask you for more information about these qualifications, so please provide a clear response.

<1>	undefined (open [Q13a_open1]) [open]
<2>	undefined (open [Q13a_open2]) [open]

#Question display logic: if Q13a_open1

---

*Question type: **Text***

Thinking about {this qualification}, please fill in the details below.

---

*Question type: **Dropdown***

[Qx1_mod1] Subject area

<1>	Health, Public Services and Care	<9>	Arts, media and publishing
<2>	Science and mathematics	<10>	History, philosophy and theology
<3>	Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	<11>	Social Sciences
<4>	Engineering and manufacturing technologies	<12>	Languages, literature and culture
<5>	Construction, planning and the built environment	<13>	Education and training
<6>	Information and communication technology	<14>	Preparation for life and work
<7>	Retail and commercial enterprise	<15>	Business, administration, finance and law
<8>	Leisure, travel and tourism		

---

*Question type: **Open***
#any

[Qx2_mod1_open] Awarding organisation

---

*Question type: **Dropdown***

[Qx3_mod1] Level

<1>	Entry level
<2>	Level 1
<3>	Level 2

<4>	Level 3

---

*Question type: **Open***
#any

[Qx4_mod1] Qualification title

---

*Question type: **Open***
#any

[Qx5_mod1] Qualification Number (if known)

---

*Question type: **Single***

[Qx6a_mod1] Approximate number of students starting this qualification each year

<1>	<20
<2>	20-100
<3>	100+

---

*Question type: **Grid***
#max number of choices per page: 5

[Q14a_mod1] Continuing to think about qualification 1, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the following are reasons that you choose to offer and continue to offer this qualification in your establishment?

-[Q14a_1_mod1]	We think learners and prospective learners are interested in this qualification
-[Q14a_2_mod1]	The destinations of previous learners in this qualification have been good
-[Q14a_3_mod1]	This qualification has intrinsic educational value
-[Q14a_4_mod1]	We think local employers tend to employ people with this qualification
-[Q14a_5_mod1]	This qualification is a requirement for some jobs
-[Q14a_6_mod1]	The qualification is useful for further study
-[Q14a_7_mod1]	We have the right facilities/teachers/trainers in place to offer this qualification
-[Q14a_8_mod1]	This qualification attracts good funding
-[Q14a_9_mod1]	This qualification receives performance table/accountability measures
-[Q14a_10_mod1]	This completes the programme of learning for students
<1>	Strongly agree
<2>	Agree
<3>	Neither agree nor disagree
<4>	Disagree
<5>	Strongly disagree

---

*Question type: **Dyngrid***

[Q15a_mod1] Considering qualification 1, there may be similar qualifications at the same level and within the same subject area provided by alternative awarding organisations.

How important or unimportant were the following factors in choosing to offer and continuing to offer qualification 1 with the current awarding organisation you are using? Please select all that apply.

-[Q15a_1_mod1]	We have offered this awarding organisation's qualification for a long time and we understand it well
-[Q15a_2_mod1]	This particular qualification is well understood and respected
-[Q15a_3_mod1]	This particular awarding organisation is well respected
-[Q15a_4_mod1]	We have had good results with this qualification in the past
-[Q15a_5_mod1]	The awarding organisation offers a competitive entry fee
-[Q15a_6_mod1]	We have Direct Claim Status arrangements in place with this awarding organisation
-[Q15a_7_mod1]	The awarding organisation offers good resources/support materials to help with the delivery of this qualification
-[Q15a_8_mod1]	The content is well designed and helps provide a good course structure
-[Q15a_9_mod1]	The qualification gives us a good choice of tasks so we can tailor to our learners
-[Q15a_10_mod1]	We have experienced good customer service with this awarding organisation
-[Q15a_11_mod1]	No other awarding organisations provide this qualification
<1>	Very important
<2>	Quite important
<3>	Neither important nor unimportant
<4>	Quite unimportant
<5>	Very unimportant

#Question display logic: if Q13a_open2

Question type: Text

Thinking about qualification 2, please fill in the details below.

Question type: Dropdown

[Qx1_mod2] Subject area

<1>	Health, Public Services and Care	<9>	Arts, media and publishing
<2>	Science and mathematics	<10>	History, philosophy and theology
<3>	Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	<11>	Social Sciences
<4>	Engineering and manufacturing technologies	<12>	Languages, literature and culture
<5>	Construction, planning and the built environment	<13>	Education and training
<6>	Information and communication technology	<14>	Preparation for life and work
<7>	Retail and commercial enterprise	<15>	Business, administration, finance and law

<8>   Leisure, travel and tourism

---

*Question type: **Open***
#any

[Qx2_mod2_open] Awarding organisation

---

*Question type: **Dropdown***

[Qx3_mod2] Level

<1>   Entry level

<2>   Level 1

<3>   Level 2

<4>   Level 3

---

*Question type: **Open***
#any

[Qx4_mod2] Qualification title

---

*Question type: **Open***
#any

[Qx5_mod2] Qualification Number (if known)

---

*Question type: **Single***

[Qx6a_mod2] Approximate number of students starting this qualification each year

<1>   <20

<2>   20-100

<3>   100+

---

*Question type: **Grid***
#max number of choices per page: 5

[Q14a_mod2] Continuing to think about qualification 2, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the following are reasons that you choose to offer and continue to offer this qualification in your establishment?

-[Q14a_1_mod2]   We think learners and prospective learners are interested in this qualification

-[Q14a_2_mod2]   The destinations of previous learners in this qualification have been good

-[Q14a_3_mod2]   This qualification has intrinsic educational value

-[Q14a_4_mod2]   We think local employers tend to employ people with this qualification

-[Q14a_5_mod2]   This qualification is a requirement for some jobs

-[Q14a_6_mod2]   The qualification is useful for further study

-[Q14a_7_mod2]   We have the right facilities/teachers/trainers in place to offer this qualification

-[Q14a_8_mod2]   This qualification attracts good funding

-[Q14a_9_mod2]   This qualification receives performance table/accountability measures

-[Q14a_10_mod2]   This completes the programme of learning for students

<1>   Strongly agree

<2>   Agree

<3>   Neither agree nor disagree

<4>   Disagree

<5>   Strongly disagree

---

*Question type: **Dyngrid***

[Q15a_mod2] Considering qualification 2, there may be similar qualifications at the same level and within the same subject area provided by alternative awarding organisations.

How important or unimportant were the following factors in choosing to offer and continuing to offer qualification 2 with the current awarding organisation you are using? Please select all that apply.

-[Q15a_1_mod2]	We have offered this awarding organisation's qualification for a long time and we understand it well
-[Q15a_2_mod2]	This particular qualification is well understood and respected
-[Q15a_3_mod2]	This particular awarding organisation is well respected
-[Q15a_4_mod2]	We have had good results with this qualification in the past
-[Q15a_5_mod2]	The awarding organisation offers a competitive entry fee
-[Q15a_6_mod2]	We have Direct Claim Status arrangements in place with this awarding organisation
-[Q15a_7_mod2]	The awarding organisation offers good resources/support materials to help with the delivery of this qualification
-[Q15a_8_mod2]	The content is well designed and helps provide a good course structure
-[Q15a_9_mod2]	The qualification gives us a good choice of tasks so we can tailor to our learners
-[Q15a_10_mod2]	We have experienced good customer service with this awarding organisation
-[Q15a_11_mod2]	No other awarding organisations provide this qualification
<1>	Very important
<2>	Quite important
<3>	Neither important nor unimportant
<4>	Quite unimportant
<5>	Very unimportant

---

*Question type: **Single***

[Q16] Are there any _vocational or technical qualifications_ you have recently started offering or are currently under consideration to offer at your establishment?

<1>   Yes

<2>   No

<3>   Don't know

---

*Question type: **Multiple***

[Q17] Please list 2 _vocational or technical qualifications_ you have recently started offering or are currently under consideration to offer at your establishment. If there are less than two, please answer this with the one qualification that meets this criteria.

The responses you provide here will be shown to you again in later questions when we ask you for more information about these qualifications, so please provide a clear response.

<1>	undefined (open [Q17_open1]) [open]	
<2>	undefined (open [Q17_open2]) [open]	

---

*Question type: **Text***

Thinking about qualification 3, please fill in the details below.

---

*Question type: **Dropdown***

[Qy1_mod1] Subject area

<1>	Health, Public Services and Care	<9>	Arts, media and publishing
<2>	Science and mathematics	<10>	History, philosophy and theology
<3>	Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	<11>	Social Sciences
<4>	Engineering and manufacturing technologies	<12>	Languages, literature and culture
<5>	Construction, planning and the built environment	<13>	Education and training
<6>	Information and communication technology	<14>	Preparation for life and work
<7>	Retail and commercial enterprise	<15>	Business, administration, finance and law
<8>	Leisure, travel and tourism		

---

*Question type: **Open***
#any

[Qy2_mod1_open] Awarding organisation

---

*Question type: **Dropdown***

[Qy3_mod1] Level

<1>	Entry level
<2>	Level 1
<3>	Level 2

<4>   Level 3

---

*Question type: **Open***
#any

[Qy4_mod1] Qualification title

---

*Question type: **Open***
#any

[Qy5_mod1] Qualification Number (if known)

---

*Question type: **Grid***
#max number of choices per page: 5

[Q18a_mod1] Still thinking about qualification 3, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the following statements are reasons that you are thinking of choosing to offer this qualification in your establishment soon?

-[Q18a_1_mod1]	We think learners and prospective learners will be interested in this qualification
-[Q18a_2_mod1]	This qualification has intrinsic educational value
-[Q18a_3_mod1]	We think local employers tend to employ people with this qualification
-[Q18a_4_mod1]	This qualification is a requirement for some jobs
-[Q18a_5_mod1]	The qualification is useful for further study
-[Q18a_6_mod1]	We have the right facilities/teachers/trainers in place to offer this qualification
-[Q18a_7_mod1]	This qualification attracts good funding
-[Q18a_8_mod1]	This qualification receives performance table/accountability measures
-[Q18a_9_mod1]	This completes the programme of learning for students
<1>	Strongly agree
<2>	Agree
<3>	Neither agree nor disagree
<4>	Disagree
<5>	Strongly disagree

---

*Question type: **Dyngrid***

[Q19_mod1] How important or unimportant are the following factors in choosing an awarding organisation to provide qualification 3?

-[Q19_1_mod1]	We already offer qualifications in the same subject area from this awarding organisation
-[Q19_2_mod1]	This particular qualification is well understood and respected
-[Q19_3_mod1]	This particular awarding organisation is well respected
-[Q19_4_mod1]	The awarding organisation offers a competitive entry fee
-[Q19_12_mod1]	We think we would get good results with this qualification
-[Q19_5_mod1]	We have DCS arrangements in place with this awarding organisation

-[Q19_6_mod1]	The awarding organisation offers good resources/support materials to help with the delivery of this qualification
-[Q19_7_mod1]	The content is well designed and helps provide a good course structure
-[Q19_8_mod1]	The qualification gives us a good choice of tasks so we can tailor to our learners
-[Q19_9_mod1]	We have experienced good customer service with this awarding organisation
-[Q19_11_mod1]	No other awarding organisations provide this qualification
<1>	Very important
<2>	Quite important
<3>	Neither important nor unimportant
<4>	Quite unimportant
<5>	Very unimportant

#Question display logic: if Q17_open2

---

*Question type: **Text***

Thinking about qualification 3, please fill in the details below.

---

*Question type: **Dropdown***

[Qy1_mod2] Subject area

<1>	Health, Public Services and Care	<9>	Arts, media and publishing
<2>	Science and mathematics	<10>	History, philosophy and theology
<3>	Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	<11>	Social Sciences
<4>	Engineering and manufacturing technologies	<12>	Languages, literature and culture
<5>	Construction, planning and the built environment	<13>	Education and training
<6>	Information and communication technology	<14>	Preparation for life and work
<7>	Retail and commercial enterprise	<15>	Business, administration, finance and law
<8>	Leisure, travel and tourism		

---

*Question type: **Open***
#any

[Qy2_mod2_open] Awarding organisation

---

*Question type: **Dropdown***

[Qy3_mod2] Level

<1>	Entry level
<2>	Level 1
<3>	Level 2
<4>	Level 3

---

*Question type: **Open***
#any

[Qy4_mod2] Qualification title

---

*Question type: **Open***
#any

[Qy5_mod2] Qualification Number (if known)

---

*Question type: **Grid***
#max number of choices per page: 5

[Q18a_mod2] Still thinking about qualification 3, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the following statements are reasons that you are thinking of choosing to offer this qualification in your establishment soon?

-[Q18a_1_mod2]	We think learners and prospective learners will be interested in this qualification
-[Q18a_2_mod2]	This qualification has intrinsic educational value
-[Q18a_3_mod2]	We think local employers tend to employ people with this subject/qualification
-[Q18a_4_mod2]	This subject/qualification is a requirement for some jobs
-[Q18a_5_mod2]	The subject/qualification is useful for further study
-[Q18a_6_mod2]	We have the right facilities/teachers/trainers in place to offer this subject/qualification
-[Q18a_7_mod2]	This subject/qualification attracts good funding
-[Q18a_8_mod2]	This subject/qualification receives performance table/accountability measures
-[Q18a_9_mod2]	This completes the programme of learning for students
<1>	Strongly agree
<2>	Agree
<3>	Neither agree nor disagree
<4>	Disagree
<5>	Strongly disagree

---

*Question type: **Dyngrid***

[Q19_mod2] How important or unimportant are the following factors in choosing an awarding organisation to provide qualification 3?

-[Q19_1_mod2]	We already offer qualifications in the same subject area from this awarding organisation
-[Q19_2_mod2]	This particular qualification is well understood and respected
-[Q19_3_mod2]	This particular awarding organisation is well respected

-[Q19_4_mod2]	The awarding organisation offers a competitive entry fee
-[Q19_12_mod2]	We think we would get good results with this qualification
-[Q19_5_mod2]	We have DCS arrangements in place with this awarding organisation
-[Q19_6_mod2]	The awarding organisation offers good resources/support materials to help with the delivery of this qualification
-[Q19_7_mod2]	The content is well designed and helps provide a good course structure
-[Q19_8_mod2]	The qualification gives us a good choice of tasks so we can tailor to our learners
-[Q19_9_mod2]	We have experienced good customer service with this awarding organisation
-[Q19_11_mod2]	No other awarding organisations provide this qualification
<1>	Very important
<2>	Quite important
<3>	Neither important nor unimportant
<4>	Quite unimportant
<5>	Very unimportant

---

*Question type: **Grid***
#max number of choices per page: 5

[Q20a] To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would prompt you (or have prompted you in the past) to consider switching awarding organisation for one or more qualifications?

-[Q20a_1]	A new member of staff or head of department
-[Q20a_2]	Price rises which we consider unreasonable / not good value for money
-[Q20a_3]	Problems with customer services
-[Q20a_4]	Problems in the assessment (e.g. moderation, verification, question paper errors, marking errors)
-[Q20a_5]	Poor or declining results
-[Q20a_6]	We think our pupils would achieve better outcomes with a different AO
-[Q20a_7]	Another AO's qualification is more favoured by employers
-[Q20a_8]	Another qualification includes more interesting/more useful content
<1>	Strongly agree
<2>	Agree
<3>	Neither agree nor disagree
<4>	Disagree
<5>	Strongly disagree

---

*Question type: **Single***

[Q21] How often do you typically review the qualifications you use/offer?

<1>	Annually
<2>	Every 2 years
<3>	Regularly but less often than every 2 years

<4>	Not applicable – we do not have a regular review cycle
<5>	Not applicable – only when qualifications are reformed
<96>	Don't know

---

*Question type: **Single***

[Q22] Are there any qualifications your establishment/department offers that are not commercially viable?

<1>	Yes
<2>	No
<3>	Don't know

---

*Question type: **Grid***
*#Question display logic: **If [Q22] - Yes is selected***

[Q23a] To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following statements are reasons that you choose to offer and continue to offer qualifications that are not commercially viable?

-[Q23a_1]	To offer breadth of choice to learners
-[Q23a_2]	More likely to meet learner needs
-[Q23a_3]	To meet local employer needs
-[Q23a_7]	To meet further study needs
-[Q23a_4]	For marketing purposes (e.g. make the overall programme offered by the establishment more interesting/complete)
-[Q23a_5]	Accountability and funding reasons
<1>	Strongly agree
<2>	Agree
<3>	Neither agree nor disagree
<4>	Disagree
<5>	Strongly disagree

---

*Question type: **Single***

[Q24] Are there any qualifications that you've recently stopped offering?

<1>	Yes
<2>	No
<3>	Don't know

---

*Question type: **Open***
#any
*#Question display logic: **If [Q24] - Yes is selected***

[Q25] Why have you stopped offering this/these qualification(s) at your establishment?

Not Sure

---

*Question type: **Multiple***
#row order: randomize

[Q26] Where would suggestions for a new subject area/qualification <u>not</u> offered by your department/establishment come from? Please select all that apply.

<1>	Employers or industry body groups seeking a delivery mechanism for education/training for workforce/future workforce	<8>	Awarding organisation
<2>	Schools seeking advice on how a subject could be accessed	<9>	Government policy
<3>	Networking with other education/training establishments locally	<10>	Changes in accountability/funding
<4>	Prospective learners (e.g. discussion at Open Day or in learner application process)	<11>	Advice from external advisors (e.g. PIXL, LEA, consultants)
<5>	Existing learners at your establishment	<12 fixed>	Other (please state) (open [Q26_other]) [open]
<6>	Teaching staff	<13 fixed xor>	Don't know
<7>	Senior management		

---

*Question type: **Open***
#any

[Q6] Ofqual would like to conduct some regional analysis of the results from this research, and would be interested in knowing the postcode for your primary location. This information would be kept strictly confidential in accordance with the Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct, and would not be used to identify you as an individual.

 If you are happy to provide the **postcode** for your establishment, please enter it below. If not, please select the 'Prefer not to say' option.

Prefer not to say

---

*Question type: **Single***

[Q_permission_external] Ofqual may conduct some follow-up research. Would you be interested in taking part in this follow-up study? The research may be conducted online or over the telephone, and you would be contacted again in advance to confirm that you are still interested in taking part.

 All responses will be treated in the strictest confidence and you would not be identified in any way, in line with the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct. All data collected during the research process would be for internal use only, and would not be shared with any third parties.

<1>	Yes, I am interested in taking part
<2>	No, I am not interested in taking part

---

*Question type: **Open***
#any

[Q28] Could you please provide us with your email address in case we would like to contact you in the future to explore your views in more detail?

---

*Question type: **Open***
#any

[Q29] Do you have any final comments?

---

*Question type: **Text***

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Appendix B – Survey invitation sent to external contact database

YouGov
What the world thinks

ofqual

Dear Sir or Madam,

The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) has commissioned YouGov, an independent market research agency, to conduct a national online survey with schools, colleges and training providers in England to better understand the factors that determine the vocational and technical qualifications they choose to offer.

YouGov has been commissioned by Ofqual to carry out this **important research**. The findings of this survey will be used by Ofqual to inform their current and future regulatory strategy and their work with the Department for Education.

Participants from your school, college or centre have been selected at random to take part in this survey from a database of publicly available public sector contacts maintained and supplied by The Education Company [http://educationcompany.co.uk/privacy-policy].

We will be sending an invitation to complete this survey to staff in your institution **at the start of next week**, and it should **take no longer than 10 minutes**. We want to inform you of it beforehand so you are aware. Please do forward this important survey to the named individual(s) when the invitation(s) arrives.

YouGov will collect the survey responses and provide anonymous insights to Ofqual – this means that it will not be possible to identify individual respondents from the answers they provide.

Please note that this research is being conducted by YouGov plc in accordance with the Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct. Under MRS rules, all information given will be kept strictly confidential, unless given permission otherwise.

If you or your colleagues have any questions about the survey, please contact YouGov at education@yougov.com or Aneesa Khan at Ofqual at aneesa.khan@ofqual.gov.uk.

Thank you in advance for your time and assistance.

YouGov Plc and Ofqual

To unsubscribe, please click here

This research is being conducted by YouGov plc in accordance with the MRS Code of Conduct. Under MRS rules, all information you give will be kept anonymous and non-attributable, unless you should give permission otherwise.

For more information on YouGov visit https://yougov.com

Appendix C – YouGov Methodology Statement

Introduction

Background

1.   This document outlines the methodology for the Ofqual Drivers of Choice for Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs) Survey. This project was commissioned by Ofqual and carried out by YouGov.

Context

2.   In April 2010, the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 established Ofqual as an independent statutory body with responsibility for the regulation of general and vocational qualifications in England, taking over the regulatory role of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). Ofqual began its work on 08 April 2008, initially operating as part of the QCA. Ofqual regulates general and vocational qualifications in England (and until May 2016, vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland as well).

3.   Ofqual regulates by recognising and monitoring organisations that deliver qualifications and assessments. Ofqual ensures that children, young people and adult learners get the results their work deserves, that standards are maintained and that qualifications count now and in the future. Ofqual makes sure that the qualifications available meet the needs of learners and employers.

4.   Ofqual has a statutory objective to promote public confidence in regulated qualifications and National Assessment arrangements.

5.   The aim of this research study was to provide a statistically representative evidence base around:

6.   The reasons centres choose to offer the VTQs that they do to 16-19 year olds

7.   The reasons centres choose particular Awarding Organisations (AOs) for those VTQs

8.   Ofqual is seeking to understand what the most important factors are and whether they differ by various characteristics.

Technical Report

Overview of method

9.   The Ofqual Drivers of Choice for Vocational and Technical Qualifications Survey was carried out by YouGov, on behalf of Ofqual. The survey was conducted online using YouGov's proprietary survey system.

10.   Fieldwork was undertaken between the 29th March and 6th June 2019. The total number of responses was 503 establishment and department-level decision makers at schools, colleges and training centres which offer vocational and technical qualifications in England (including Chief Executives, Head Teachers, Heads of Department, Subject Leaders, etc.). These respondents were screened to ensure they had knowledge of their establishment's process for selecting vocational and technical qualifications.

This report provides an overview of the data collection, sampling and data processing methods used.

Summary of our approach

YouGov's approach to conducting this study encompassed the following actions and deliverables:

■   Design, programming, hosting and administration of the online survey

■   Use of a combination of sample sources: the YouGov panel, an external database of contacts provided by The Education Company, and an open link distributed by YouGov, Ofqual and Ofqual's partners

■   Piloting of the survey to a total of c.30 respondents on the YouGov panel, including a thorough review of the initial results and the provision of feedback to Ofqual

■   Distribution of a series of 'warm-up' letters, survey invitations and reminders over the course of the fieldwork period

■   Data verification, cleaning and weighting after the completion of fieldwork to ensure a high-quality sample was delivered

■   Provision of the data in Excel and SPSS

Fieldwork

The approach to fieldwork included a preliminary survey pilot among a sample of 30 respondents between March 29th and April 1st 2019. The purpose was to gain feedback on the questions to identify any areas of confusion, test the functionality/routing and determine the average completion time. Following the pilot, the open-ended responses were analysed which resulted in modifying the wording for an establishment category in addition to further wording amends to improve

understanding. The pilot confirmed that the questions were well understood and that the routing was correct, and subsequently the survey was fully launched.

The main stage of fieldwork began on 4th April 2019, with the survey closing on the 6th June 2019.

The table below details the schedule followed for sending email invitations and reminders to the external contact database (further details regarding this source to follow in the next section). To ensure a maximum response rate, respondents were sent up to three reminders, spaced out at regular intervals. Invites were co-branded with the Ofqual and YouGov logos (see *Appendix B*).

Table C1: *Email distribution schedule for external contact database*

Description	Size of batch	Warm-up letter	Invitation	Reminder #1	Reminder #2	Final reminder	Close date
Secondary schools, Grammar schools, Sixth Form colleges, Independent schools (batch 1)	4986	N/A	04-Apr	30-Apr	07-May	13-May	06-Jun
Further Education, Pupil Referral Unit	4265	04-Apr	09-Apr	30-Apr	07-May	13-May	06-Jun
Secondary schools, Grammar schools, Sixth Form colleges, Independent schools (batch 2)	1662	25-Apr	30-Apr	07-May	N/A	13-May	06-Jun
Private training providers (batch 1)	75	N/A	01-May	N/A	N/A	13-May	06-Jun
Emails to private training providers (batch 2)	109	N/A	30-May	N/A	N/A	N/A	06-Jun

The response rate from the external contact database was 1.7%[4].

Sampling

11. The sampling of participants was designed with a view to achieving a sample representative of the wider population. The sample was designed to gather insight from establishment and department-level decision makers at schools, colleges and training centres which offer vocational and technical qualifications in England.

12. This provided coverage across the following stakeholder and centre types, with the descriptions and final achieved sample sizes for each group detailed in the tables below.

Table C2: *Sample coverage by stakeholder type*

Stakeholder type	Description	Achieved sample[5]
Establishment Level Decision Makers	These stakeholders are the decision makers for whole establishments. Including: Principals, Chief Executives, Deputy Principals, Finance Directors, Executive Head Teachers and Head Teachers, within the centre types listed in Table C3	205
Department Level Decision Maker	These stakeholders are decision makers at departmental level and may include: Director of Curriculum, Head of Department, Curriculum Managers and Subject Leaders within the centre types listed in Table C3	259

---

[4] Response rate calculated before any data cleaning

[5] The majority of the sample are categorised as either establishment or department-level decision makers, except for a small number who have been categorised in another way. The overall sample includes five teachers from the external contact database who did not identify as either type of decision maker though demonstrated sufficient knowledge of the vocational qualifications offered and gave valid answers throughout the survey, hence were kept in the final achieved sample.

Table C3: *Sample coverage by centre type*

Centre type	Description	Achieved sample
Mainstream (state) school	State-funded secondary schools, Academies or Free Schools with sixth form centres offering education for learners aged 16-19 at A Level and its equivalent	230
Independent (private) school	Independent, independent special school, international school	23
Alternative provision school / other provision school	Academies or Free Schools without sixth form centres, special schools, hospital schools, special colleges, pupil referral unit (PRU), secure unit or alternative provision schools	22
FE college (General and tertiary colleges)	Further education colleges that offer qualifications and education for learners aged 16+	108
Private/independent training provider (incl. employers)	Private Training Providers, also known as independent learning providers or independent training providers (ITPs), that offer vocational courses and training to young people and adults	32
Sixth form college	Colleges that offer qualifications and education for learners aged 16-19 including Free Schools who offer only education for learners 16-19 year old	88

Sample frame

The samples of establishment and department-level decision makers were drawn from three sources.

1. Education Company Education list

Firstly, contacts in schools were drawn from the Education Company's Education List. Containing over 5 million education data profiles, including 400,000 named education professionals including email addresses, and details and profiles of more than 100,000 schools, this list is the most accurate and comprehensive education data set available anywhere in the UK.

This was used as a database to select contacts in centres to be surveyed. The database contained named contacts with generic centre email addresses that allowed the survey to be targeted at specific individuals in the specified centres.

2. YouGov Panel

The survey was also conducted using YouGov's online research panel, made up of over 1 million UK adults who have consented to participate in surveys with YouGov. Establishment and department-level decision makers registered to the panel who work at schools, colleges and training centres that offer vocational and technical qualifications were pre-screened and subsequently invited to take part in the survey.

3. Open link

An open link to the survey was shared by YouGov with private training providers, as well as by Ofqual and their partners.

Data verification and cleaning

A stage of data verification was undertaken to assess the quality of the achieved sample prior to weighting the results. The objective of this activity was to agree the final dataset for analysis.

The following data cleaning processes took place:

■ The open-ended responses to the job role and centre type questions were reviewed. Re-codes were made to assign cases into the pre-coded lists where relevant.

■ The qualification types provided on an open-ended basis were reviewed. Where respondents had failed to name a qualification, or had reported qualifications that were not relevant to the study, they were removed from the dataset.

■ The comments at the end of the survey were reviewed and any respondents for whom the survey was deemed to not be relevant were removed.

Achieved sample size and weighting

In order to make a survey sample representative, the data can be 'weighted' to adjust the contribution of individual respondents to the aggregated figures. This means that if the sample is not proportionally representative of the target population for certain demographics or groups, their answers are given more or less 'weight' in the overall results in order to accurately reflect the wider population. Weighting happens at the end of the data processing phase on cleaned data and is a standard industry-accepted fine-tuning measure.

The weighting scheme was constructed based on data provided by Ofqual on the number of learners aged 16-19 in each type of centre during the 2017/2018 academic year. The number of learners aged 16-19 for mainstream schools, independent schools and alternative provision schools was extracted from the NPD. The number of learners for these centre categorisations refer only to learners who are taking VTQs. The number of learners from general and tertiary colleges, private/independent training providers and sixth form colleges was extracted from the Individualised Learner Record (ILR).[6]

From this, a representative profile of the wider population was developed which was used to weight the data.

---

[6] It is worth noting that although the number of learners doing A levels and GCSEs has been excluded, some qualifications may remain in the ILR dataset which refer to qualifications that are not VTQs.

The unweighted achieved sample size and breakdown by centre categorisation is shown in Table C4. Alongside this the weighted base size and weight factor applied are shown.

The unweighted base represents the number of complete survey responses from each group, and the weighted base reflects the adjustments made to correct for any sample bias. The weight factor demonstrates how the 'weight' of each group's response has been increased or decreased in the process of weighting the data.

Table C4: *Unweighted and weighted sample size comparison*

	Unweighted base	Weighted base	Weight factor
Mainstream (state) school	230	241	1.05
Independent (private) school	23	15	0.66
Alternative provision school/other provision school	22	30	1.37
General and tertiary college (incl. FE college)	108	146	1.35
Private/independent training provider (incl. employers)	32	50	1.57
Sixth form college	88	20	0.23

Appendix D – Drivers of choice for qualifications

D.1 - Effect of supplementary variables on responses

Multiple correspondence analysis revealed that the type of centre ('establishment') influenced responses about drivers of qualification choice more than other variables related to the background information of the respondent or centre ('supplementary variables'), indicated by the distance of variables from the origin when variance was viewed in only two dimensions (Figure D1a).
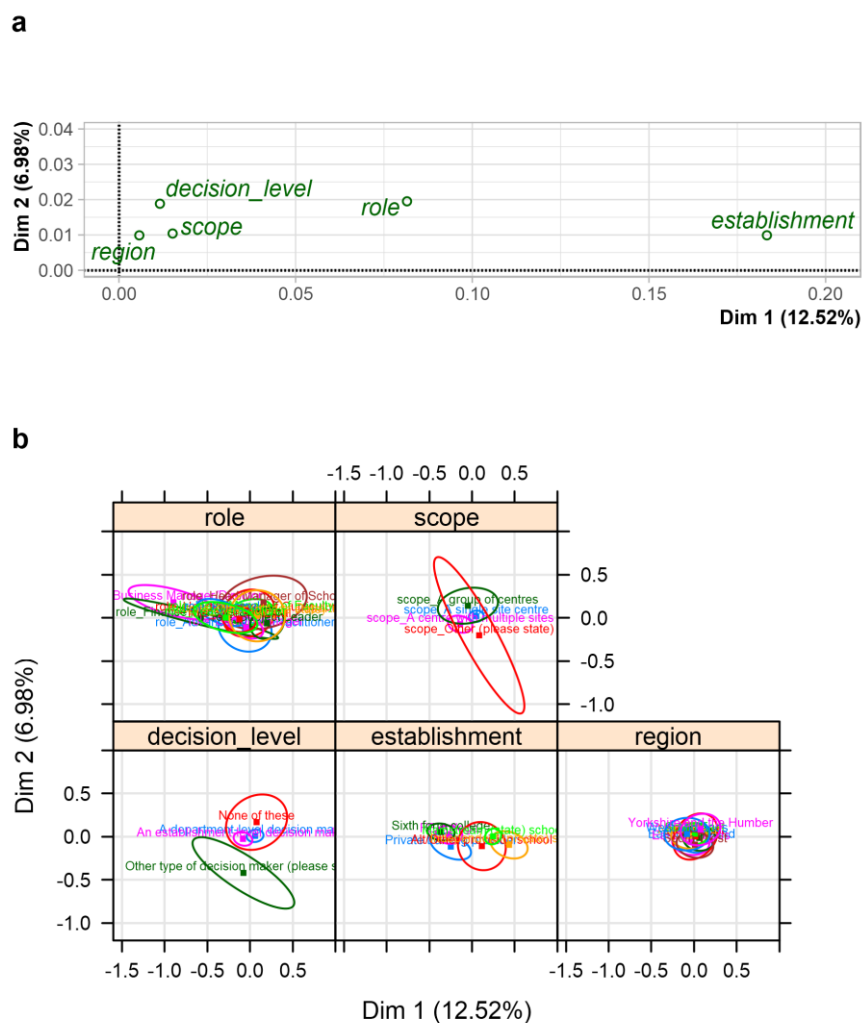

Figure D1: Effect of respondent and centre background information (supplementary variables) on responses relating to drivers of choice of top existing qualifications. Results of multiple correspondence analysis on raw data. The plots' axes represent dimensions 1 and 2 with percent variance explained, shown in parentheses alongside axes labels. a) Influence of each supplementary variable on responses, b) Confidence intervals (95%) around the mean of each factor level of supplementary variables

In addition to an effect of centre type ('establishment') on responses there is a smaller effect of the respondent's role (Figure D1a). The effect of role appears to be largely due to the responses of Business Managers and Finance Managers (Figure D1b) who were responsible for a very small proportion of responses and are unlikely to confound interpretation of other effects (Table D1).

Table D1: *Composition of sample by respondent role and centre type as percentage. Columns sum to 100% (+/-1% due to rounding).*

Role	Private training provider	FE college	Sixth form college	Alt/Other provision school	Independent (private) school	Mainstream (state) school
Advanced/Lead Practitioner	16	8	3	9	0	2
Business Manager/Director	9	2	0	0	0	0
Head/Manager of Curriculum	3	12	6	0	4	4
Head/Manager of Department	6	15	28	27	26	33
Head/Manager of Faculty	3	4	11	0	13	10
Principal	16	6	11	5	0	3
Senior Manager	16	3	10	23	22	16
Subject Leader	9	13	10	0	4	10
Vice Principal	9	19	12	5	13	14
Other (please state)	9	8	2	9	9	5
Teacher/Lecturer	3	7	3	9	9	2
Finance Manager/Director	0	2	1	0	0	0
Head/Manager of School	0	1	0	14	0	2

D.2 - Comparison of responses relating to the top two existing qualifications and new qualifications

A large majority of survey respondents (84%) completed responses about two existing qualifications. We examined variation in the responses about qualifications 1 and 2 using multiple correspondence analysis and found them broadly very similar (results not shown). The level of agreement in responses about drivers of choice of existing qualifications was very similar between the two qualifications (Figure D2). The percent variation was within 2% for all drivers apart from 'Employment' (6% difference between qualifications), 'Job requirement' (9%) and 'Funding' (7%). Responses about new or proposed qualifications were also very similar to those relating to the top existing qualifications (Figure D3).

a Percent variation: Existing qualification 1 vs qualification 2

b

Driver	Qual. 1	Qual. 2	Difference
Learner Interest	92	92	0
Destinations	83	85	2
Intrinsic	83	85	2
Employment	66	72	6
Job Requirement	55	64	9
Further Study	87	86	1
Capacity	89	89	0
Funding	40	47	7
Perform Table	61	62	1
Programme	70	71	1
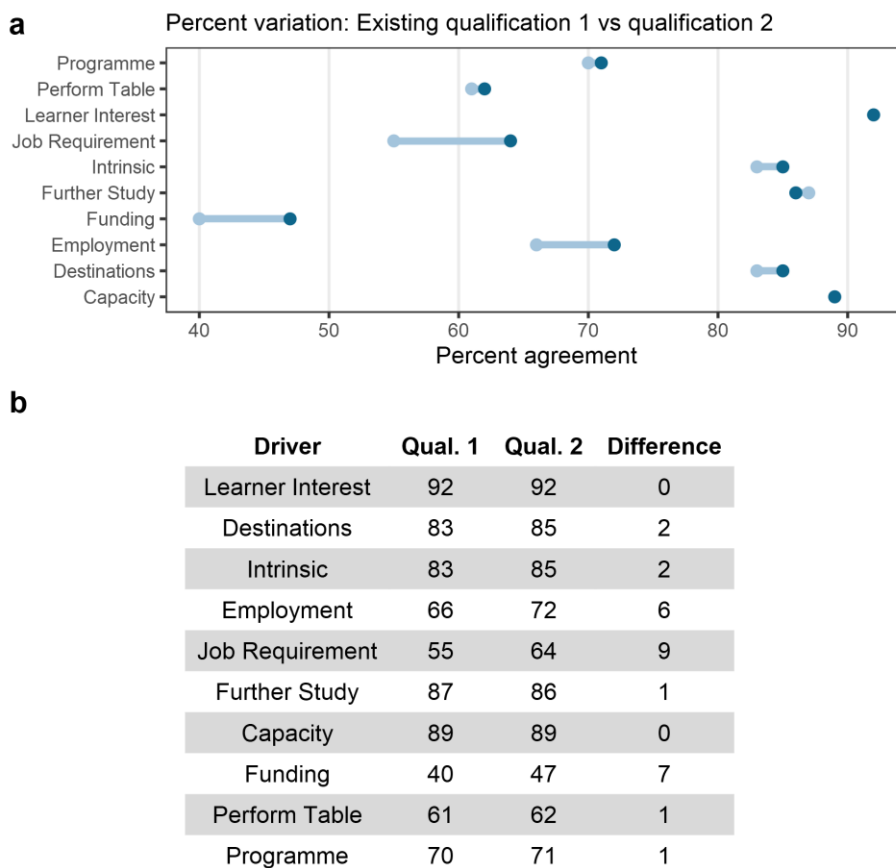
Figure D2: Percent variation in agreement in responses to drivers of choice for centres' top two existing qualifications
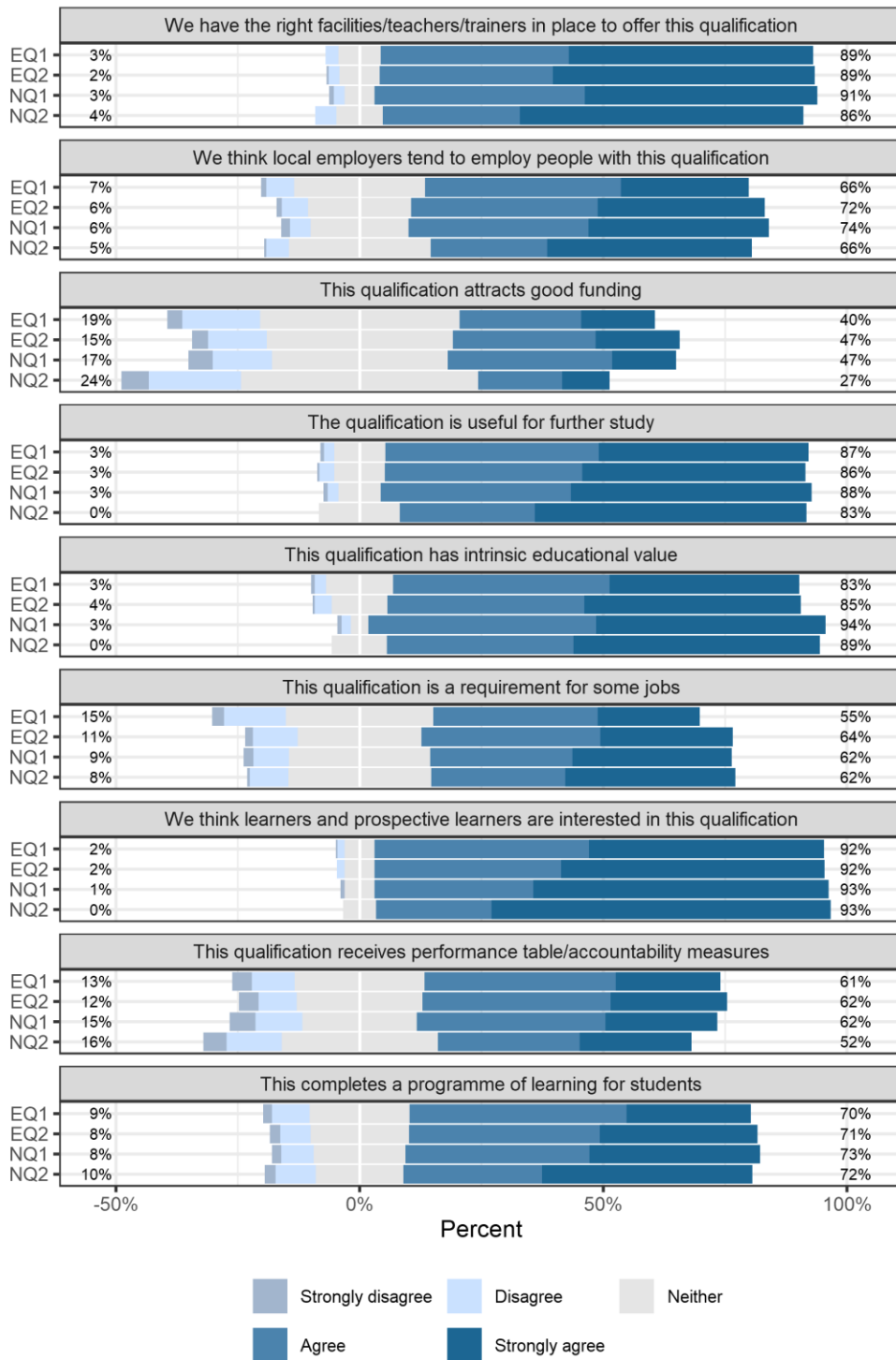
Figure D3: Comparison of patterns of responses about drivers of choice of existing (established) qualifications and new qualifications. EQ 1 & 2 = Established qualifications, NQ 1 & 2 = new qualifications

D.2.1 - New or proposed qualifications by centre type
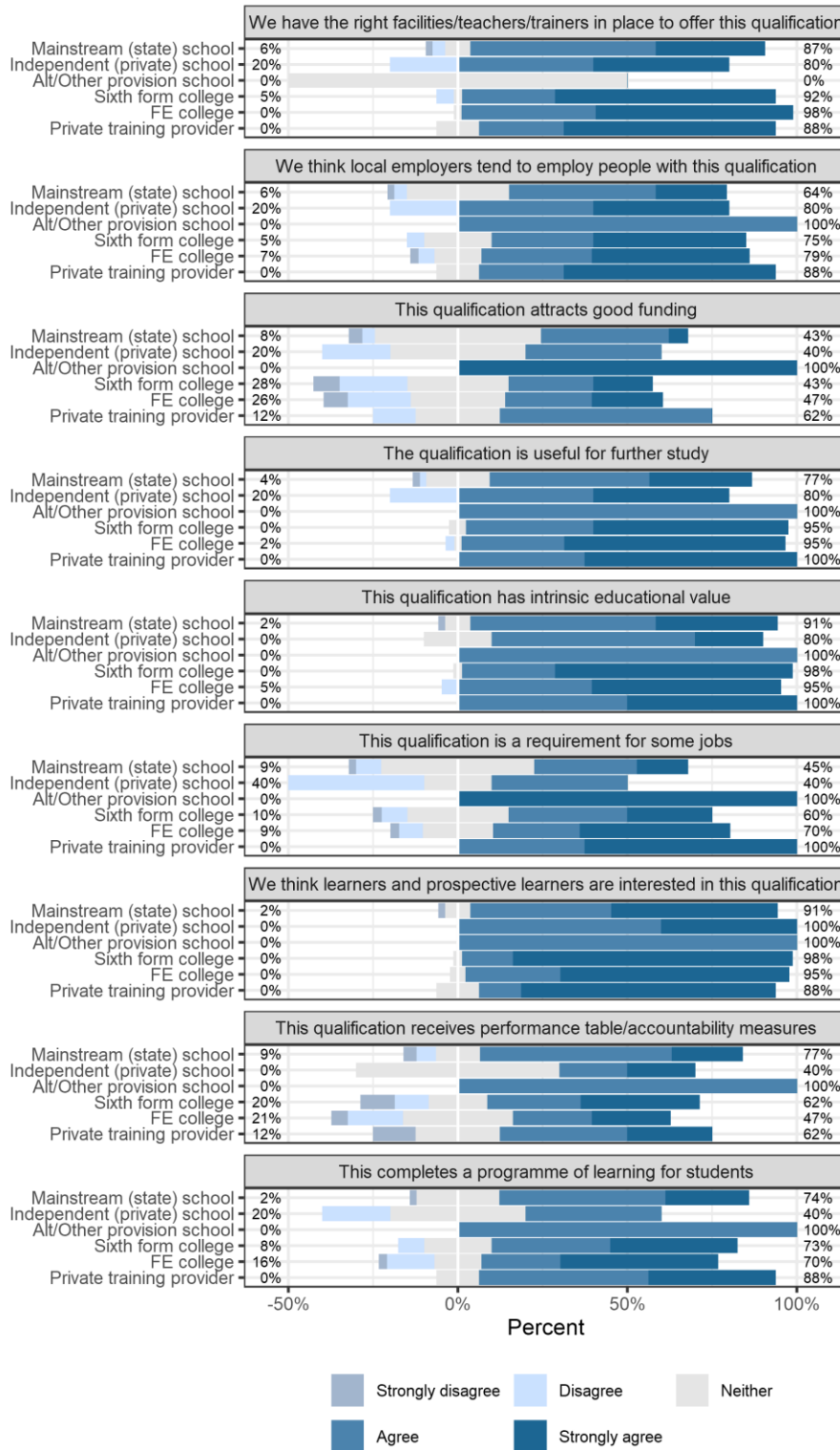
Figure D4: Drivers of choice of new or proposed qualifications by centre type. Responses were on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree). Percentages at the sides of the plot combine respondents in the weighted sample who selected disagree or strongly disagree (left-hand side), or agree or strongly agree (right-hand side). The neutral category (neither agree nor disagree) is split evenly either side of 0%.

D.3 - Unique patterns of response

Respondents from mainstream (state) schools generated more unique patterns of responses than those from other centre types. This is partially explained by there being more respondents from mainstream (state) schools (larger sample sizes recover more rare responses that may be present in a population), but also represents the broader range of priorities compared to other centre types (Figure D5).
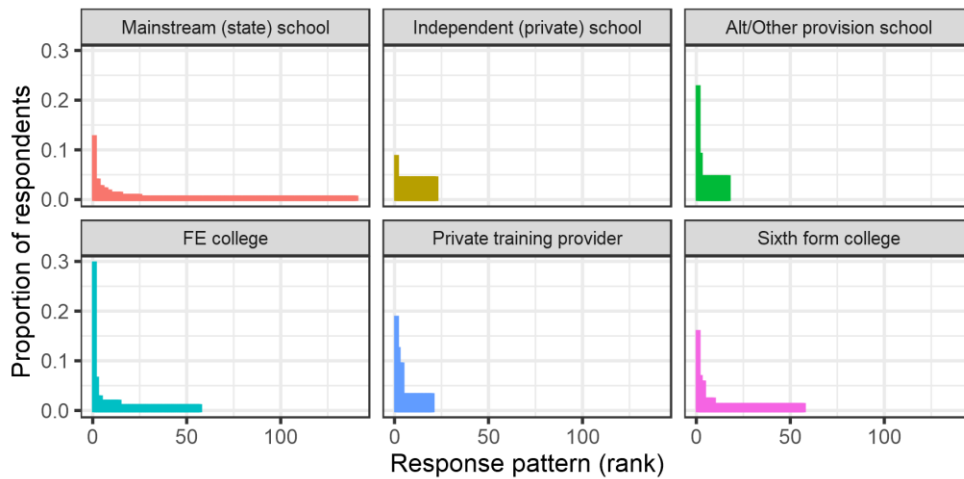
Figure D5: Proportion of respondents in each centre type who shared each unique response pattern (eg agree with all drivers) with respect to their top existing qualification.

Appendix E - Choice of awarding organisation

E.1 - Effect of supplementary variables on responses

As found with responses relating to drivers of choice for qualifications, MCA indicated that the type of centre was the main factor influencing responses about the choice of awarding organisation with other supplementary variables having negligible or no effect (Figure E1a). Centre type also had a weaker influence on responses to factors affecting AO choice with categories overlapping more than observed for drivers of qualification choice (Figure E1b and Figure D1b).
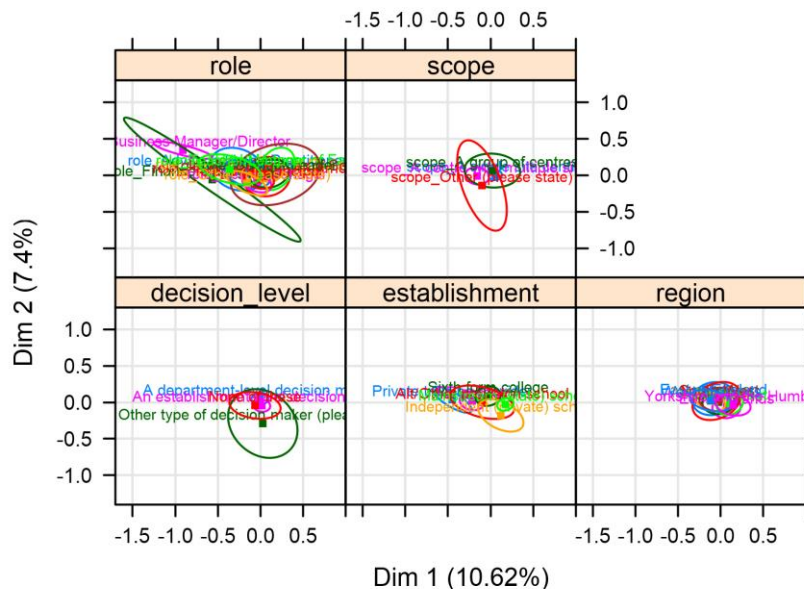
Figure E1: Effect of respondent and centre background information (supplementary variables) on responses relating to choice of awarding organisation providing top existing qualifications. Results of multiple correspondence analysis on raw data. The plots' axes represent dimensions 1 and 2 with percent variance explained, shown in parentheses alongside axes labels. a) Influence of each supplementary variable on responses, b) Confidence intervals (95%) around each factor level of supplementary variables

E.2 - Variation in responses by centre type
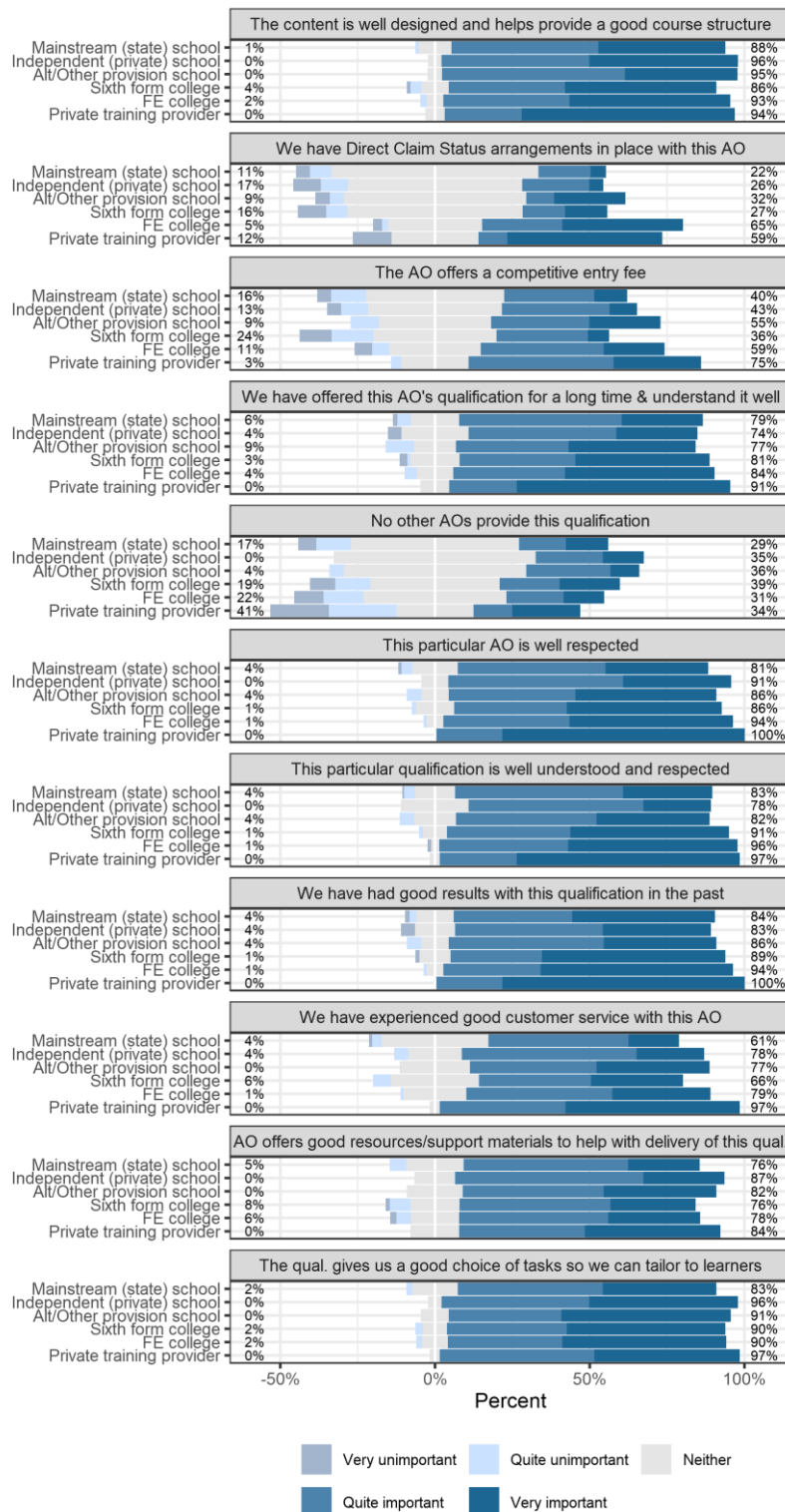
Figure E2: Factors affecting choice of awarding organisation (AO) providing the top existing qualification by centre type. Responses were on a 5-point Likert scale (Very important - very unimportant). Percentages at the sides of the plot combine respondents in weighted sample who selected quite unimportant or very unimportant (left-hand side) or quite important or very important (right-hand side). The neutral category (neither important nor unimportant) is split evenly either side of 0%.

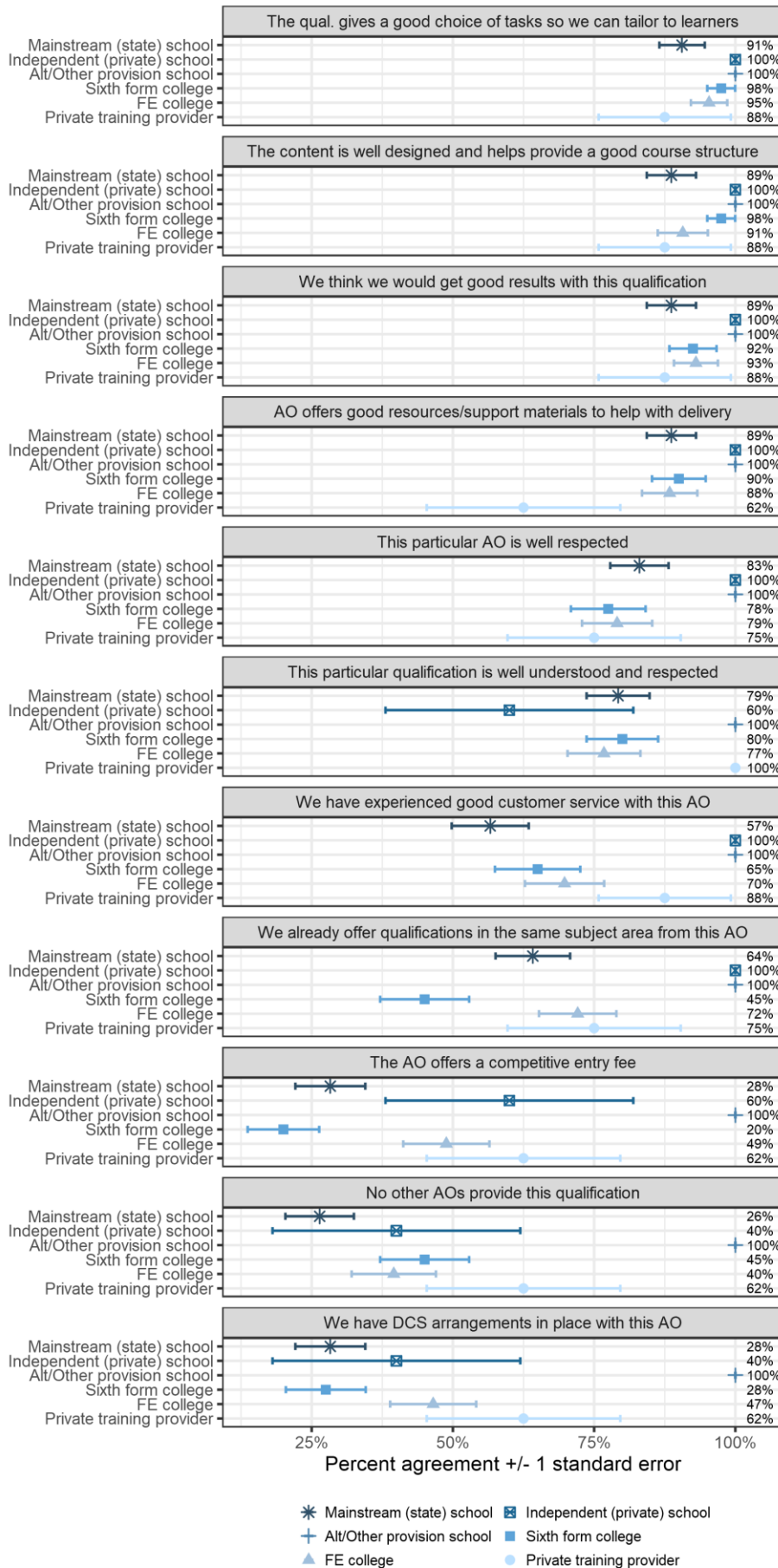# E.3 - Choice of awarding organisation for new or proposed qualifications
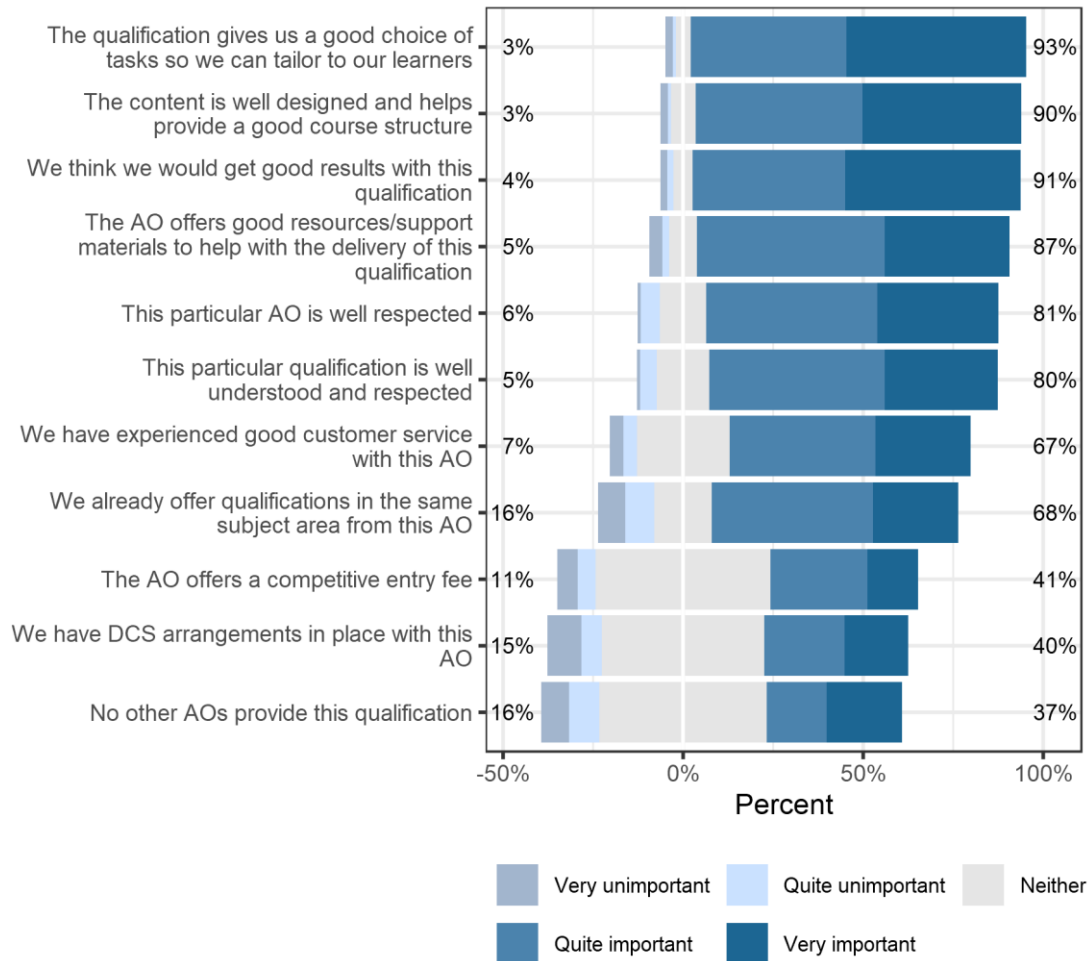
Figure E3: Overall importance of factors that might influence the choice of awarding organisation as provider of new and proposed vocational and technical qualifications. Factors are rank ordered based on the overall level of agreement (highest proportion at the top). Responses were on a 5-point Likert scale (Very important - Very unimportant). Percentages at the sides of the plot represent the percentage of respondents in weighted sample who considered a factor quite unimportant or very unimportant; left-hand side) and the percentage who thought quite important or very important. The neutral category (neither important nor unimportant) is split evenly either side of 0%.

Figure E4: Importance of factors that might influence the choice of awarding organisation as provider of new and proposed vocational and technical qualifications broken down by centre type. Percent of respondents (+/- 1 standard error) who agreed that the factors listed were important in choice (responses collapsed to a 3-point scale [Important - unimportant]). Drivers are rank ordered based on the overall level of agreement (highest proportion at the top). Percentages at the right of the plot represent total agreement (percentage of respondents in weighted sample who considered factor important or very important).
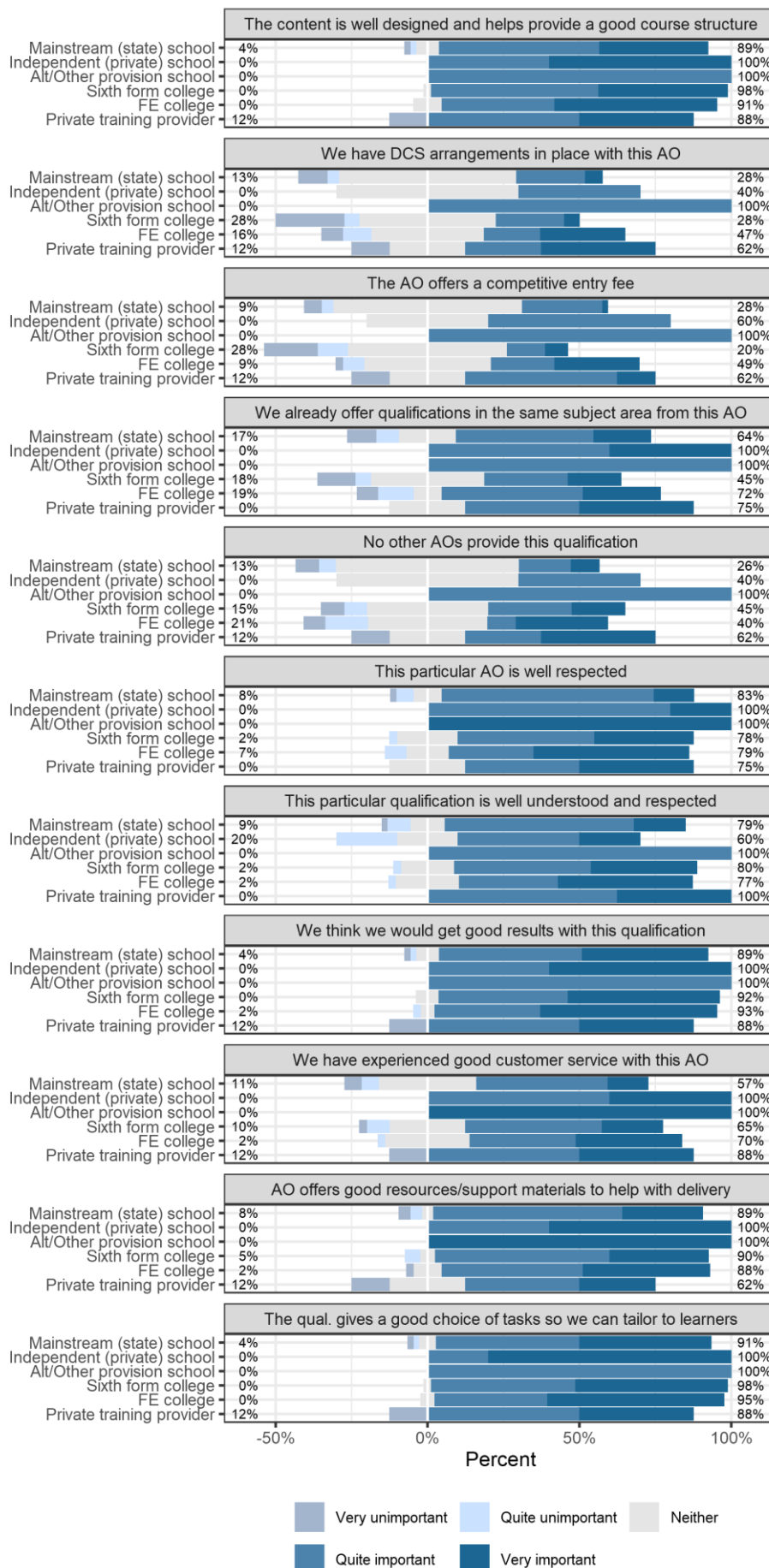
Figure E5: Factors affecting choice of awarding organisation (AO) to provide a new qualification by centre type. Responses were on a 5-point Likert scale (Very important - very unimportant). Percentages at the sides of the plot combine respondents in weighted sample who selected unimportant or very unimportant (left-hand side) or important or very important (right-hand side). The neutral category (neither important nor unimportant) is split evenly either side of 0%.

Appendix F - Retention of qualifications that are not commercially viable

Small sample sizes meant that it was difficult to compare centre types for the factors that prompted providers to retain qualifications despite these incurring a financial burden (Figure F1). FE colleges placed greater emphasis on meeting local employer needs is the main clear difference.
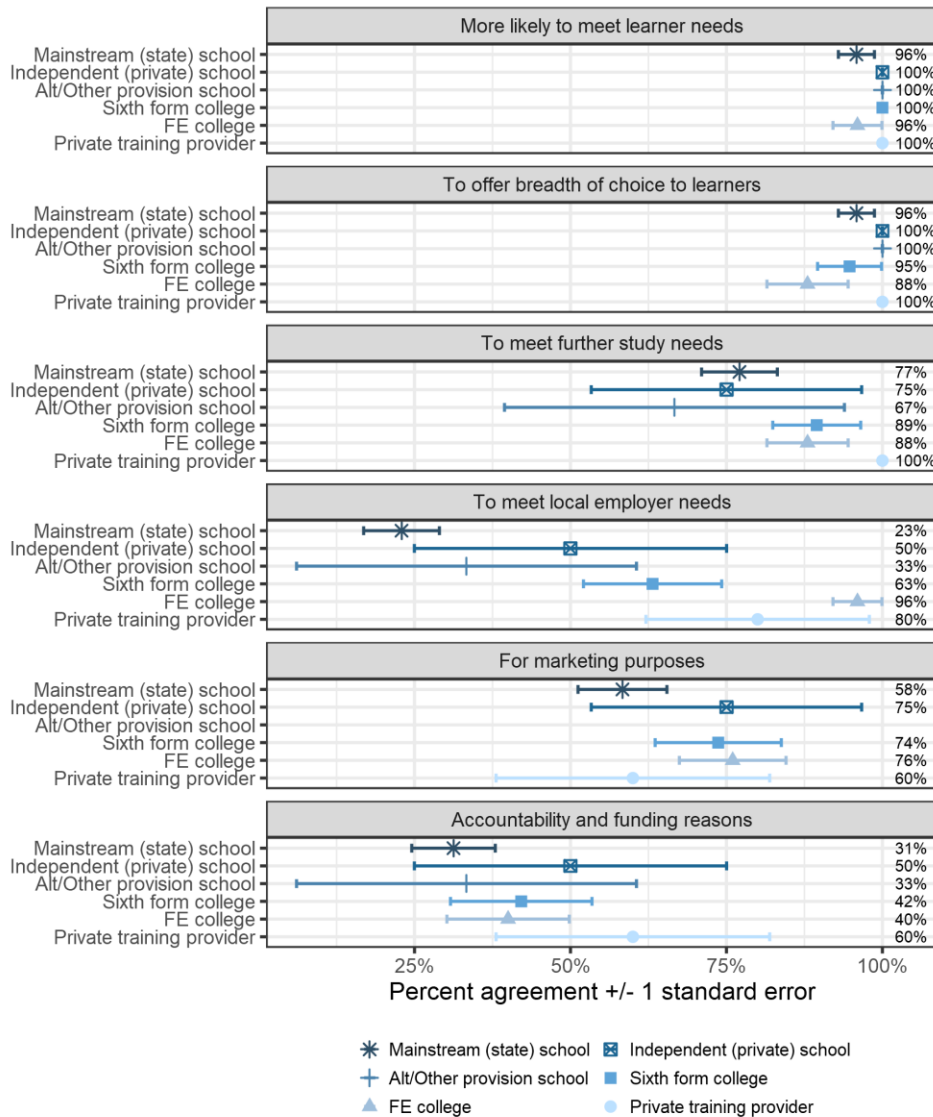

Figure F1: Effect of centre type on level of agreement with a set of potential reasons that qualifications that are not commercially viable continued to be offered. Percent of respondents (+/- 1 standard error) who agreed that the factors listed were important in choice (responses collapsed to a 3-point scale [Important - unimportant]). Drivers are rank ordered based on the overall level of agreement (highest proportion at the top). Percentages at the right of the plot represent total agreement (percentage of respondents in the weighted sample who considered the factor quite important or very important).