

Review of Quality of Marking in Exams in A Levels, GCSEs and Other Academic Qualifications

Findings from Survey of Examiners, May 2013



February 2014

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1. Executive summary

1.1 Introduction

In 2013, we started a programme of work to look into the quality of marking of external exams in general qualifications in England. As part of this work, in May to June 2013, we conducted an online survey of the examiners working for the seven exam boards providing general qualifications,¹ and we received 10,204 responses from examiners.

In June 2013, we published our initial research on quality of marking, which outlined some headline findings from our examiner survey and identified areas for further exploration. This report provides a summary of findings from the examiner survey and forms part of the evidence base supporting our final report on quality of marking.

1.2 Who are examiners?

Examiners have considerable subject expertise. Ninety-two per cent of examiners have a degree (undergraduate or postgraduate) or doctorate in the main subject they examine.

More than 99 per cent of the respondents to the examiner survey were current or former teachers, many with senior roles. Thirty-five per cent were, or had been, a head of department, 4 per cent were or had been a head of year, and 7 per cent were or had been a head teacher or deputy/assistant head.

Most of the respondents worked or had worked in comprehensive schools and academies/free schools (54 per cent), and 15 per cent in independent schools.

1.3 Why do teachers become examiners?

Teachers' reasons for becoming examiners appear to be twofold: to earn additional income (mentioned by 81 per cent of respondents), and to develop their professional expertise (mentioned by 77 per cent). Only 9 per cent of the respondents said encouragement from their employer had motivated them to become an examiner, although this figure was higher among those respondents with less than one year of examining experience (13 per cent).

¹ AQA, the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), Cambridge International Examinations (CIE), the International Baccalaureate (IB), OCR, Pearson Edexcel, and WJEC.

Eighty-three per cent of the respondents who were currently working as a teacher or lecturer told us they felt their school/institution provided them with enough support to carry out marking duties. Teachers at independent and state selective schools were more likely to feel supported (87 per cent) than teachers at comprehensive schools (81 per cent) or academies/free schools (79 per cent). Difficulty in securing time off or away from their school was the issue most frequently cited by respondents.

1.4 How experienced are examiners?

The examiners who participated in our survey had a high level of examining experience. Forty-eight per cent had more than ten years' experience as an examiner, and only 13 per cent had been examining for less than three years. This did vary by qualification, but even the qualification with the least experienced examiners (the GCSE) had highly experienced examiners: 41 per cent had been examining for ten or more years and only 18 per cent had no more than three years of examining experience.

1.5 What do examiners think about the examining process?

The examiners in this survey sample told us they took their marking responsibilities seriously. They said the most challenging aspect of the examining process was "knowing that my marking is important to the future lives of students", and they found this more challenging than fitting examining in around other work commitments or meeting marking deadlines.

Overall, examiners' experiences of marking seem to be very positive: more than 85 per cent of the respondents gave a positive response (strongly agree or agree) to all but two of the questions. For example, 88 per cent of examiners agreed they received sufficient training to allow them to mark at a high standard, and 94 per cent agreed they could access support if they encountered a problem during marking. The two questions that received a lower proportion of positive responses both related to the usefulness of feedback given during and after the marking process.

Ninety-six per cent of the respondents agreed with the statement "I am confident in my ability to mark accurately and reliably." In contrast, a lower proportion of examiners (85 per cent) agreed that "External examinations are marked accurately and reliably in my exam board." Findings from focus groups suggest that this may reflect examiners having limited knowledge of the quality checks that exam boards carry out.

By subject examined, examiners in psychology and sociology tended to give a higher proportion of negative responses than other examiners. Across the exam boards, CCEA and WJEC examiners gave the highest proportions of positive responses.

However, the survey sample was comparatively small (458 CCEA examiners and 475 WJEC examiners), so these findings should be interpreted with caution.

1.6 Senior examiners' perspectives on the marking process

We asked a number of questions specific to senior examiners' experiences of the examining process. These questions were answered very positively, with the proportion of positive responses ranging from 87 to 98 per cent. Senior examiners told us they felt confident about designing mark schemes and question papers (92 per cent agreed), leading standardisation meetings (93 per cent agreed), training other examiners (94 per cent agreed) and monitoring the work of other examiners (98 per cent agreed).

1.7 Examiners' perspectives on mark schemes

Examiners responded positively to our questions about mark schemes, although this section of the survey received the lowest proportion of positive responses. The statement receiving the lowest proportion of positive responses was "In my experience, mark schemes are clear and unambiguous": 72 per cent of examiners agreed and 12 per cent disagreed with this statement. Examiners of more objective subjects tended to give more positive responses to the statements about mark schemes than examiners of more subjective subjects.

1.8 Examiners' perspectives on the marking process: qualitative responses

The main themes that emerged from the examiners' free text responses were:

1. The main challenge of marking was completing it in the time available, particularly for examiners combining examining with a full-time teaching role.
2. Examiners were dissatisfied with the move many exam boards are making from face-to-face standardisation to online standardisation.
3. Many examiners thought mark schemes needed to be clearer and more detailed, although some believed that mark schemes were too prescriptive.

Many examiners also made positive comments about how much they enjoyed examining, valued the importance of their work and noticed the benefits it had upon their teaching.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

Our 2012 survey of public perceptions of qualifications, *Perceptions of A levels, GCSEs and other qualifications*,² identified that a minority of teachers do not have confidence in the marking of A level exams (18 per cent) or GCSE exams (26 per cent). With this in mind, in 2012, we committed to carry out a “programme of work looking into the quality of marking in general qualifications in England” as part of our *Corporate Plan 2012 – 2015*.³ The aims of this programme of work are to:

- improve public understanding of how marking works and its limitations;
- identify where current arrangements work well (and where they don’t);
- identify and recommend improvements where they might be necessary.

To meet these aims, we gathered evidence against five themes: the marking process, the people involved, marking metrics, constraints on quality of marking, and stakeholder perceptions and expectations of marking.

The aim of the examiner survey was to build a profile of who examiners are and what they think about the marking of general qualifications.

In June 2013, we published our initial research on quality of marking, which set out how marking works today and identified areas for further exploration. We said we would publish a final report detailing the results of our further work and providing final recommendations. This summary of the findings from our survey of examiners forms part of the evidence base supporting our final report.

2.2 Survey methodology

As part of our review into the quality of marking of A levels, GCSEs and other academic qualifications (referred to collectively as general qualifications), we conducted a survey of examiners. The survey was sent out electronically in May to June 2013. We asked exam boards to email a survey hyperlink to all of their examiners marking external exam scripts for general qualifications. The survey was

² www.ofqual.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/2012-03-13-ofqual-perceptions-of-a-levels-gcses-wave-10.pdf

³ www.ofqual.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/2012-05-15-corporate-plan.pdf

only open to those who reported they had worked as an examiner⁴ of external exams in general qualifications for an exam board within the last two years.

Full data tables have been published alongside this report.⁵

2.3 How representative is our survey sample?

The seven exam boards providing general qualifications tell us they currently have around 51,000 examiners working for them. However, this figure double counts a number of examiners who work for more than one exam board. Twenty-two per cent of the examiners that responded to our survey told us they currently worked for two or more exam boards. On this basis, we estimate that the total number of examiners working across these seven exam boards is approximately 34,000.

We received 10,204 responses from examiners to our survey, which accounts for around a third of the 34,000 examiners currently working for the seven exam boards providing general qualifications. This represents an extremely high response rate. Given this, we believe that the results of this survey are highly likely to be representative of the wider examiner population.

The high proportion of examiners who work for more than one exam board could potentially distort any comparisons we make across exam boards and qualifications. Therefore, the analyses in this report that compare results across exam boards only include examiners who examine for only one exam board (7,966) and the analyses that compare results across qualification types only include examiners who examine only one qualification type (7,974). All other analyses include responses from **all** respondents who have worked as an examiner in the last two years.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma is delivered by the IB exam board. It is the only general qualification delivered by the IB. Therefore, in this report the findings for the IB exam board are the same as the findings for the IB Diploma qualification. Therefore, we use IB to refer to both the exam board and the qualification.

Many examiners mark more than one subject and, therefore, it has not been possible to make statistical comparisons across the different subjects that are examined.

⁴ For brevity, we will refer to examiners and markers of external exams for general qualifications as examiners throughout this report.

⁵ www.ofqual.gov.uk/documents/quality-of-marking-survey-of-examiners-data-tables

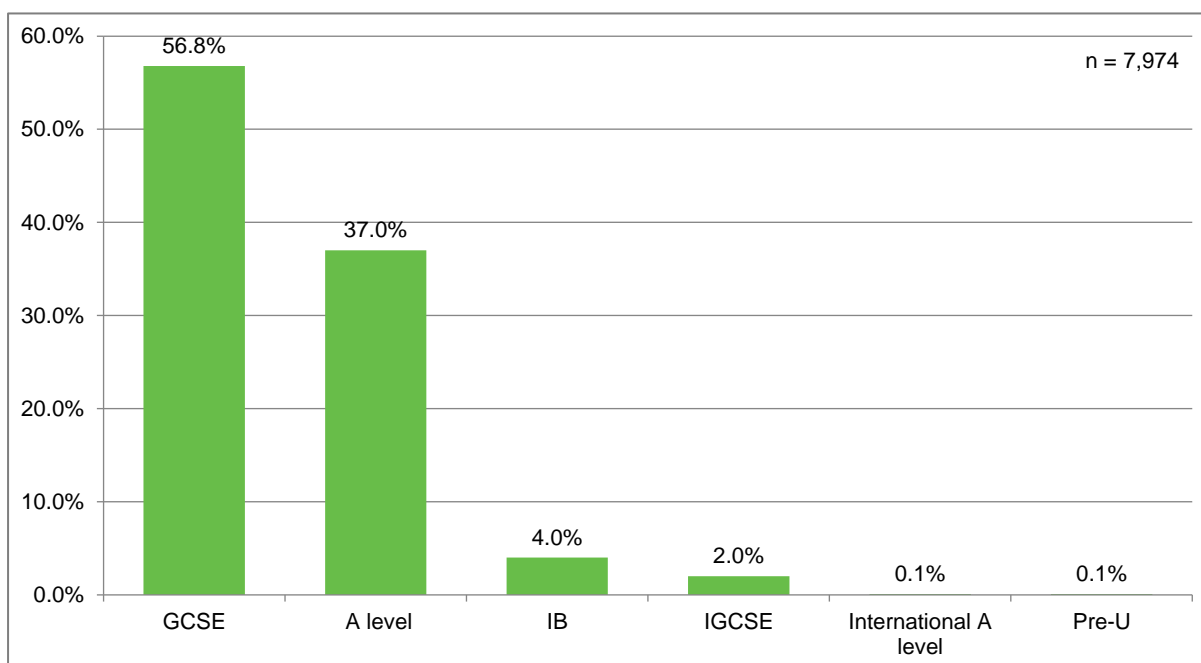
With the exception of the findings at subject level, all findings in this report have been tested for statistical significance and found to be statistically significant, unless stated otherwise.

2.4 Profile of the examiners responding to our survey

Most examiners who responded to our survey (78 per cent) only examined one qualification, but many (22 per cent) examined two or more qualifications.

Unsurprisingly, given the market share of these qualifications in England, the majority of examiners (91 per cent) told us they examined GCSE and/or A level qualifications. Only 9 per cent of the respondents told us they examined neither GCSE nor A level qualifications (figure 1).

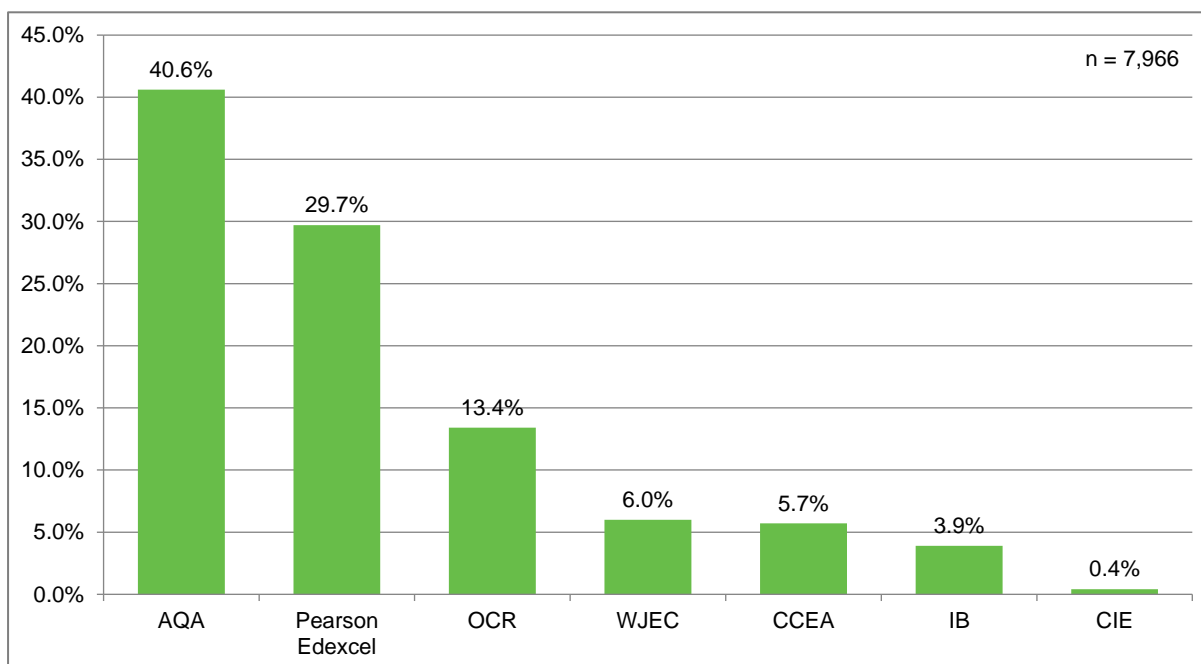
Figure 1: “Which of the following qualifications do you examine?” (question 2)



Note: Only includes examiners who examine only one qualification type.

The volume of responses we received from examiners working for each exam board was also broadly representative of each exam board's market share, as measured by the total number of examiners reported to us by each exam board. Forty-one per cent of examiners who responded to the survey were currently working for AQA, and 30 per cent working for Pearson Edexcel (figure 2).

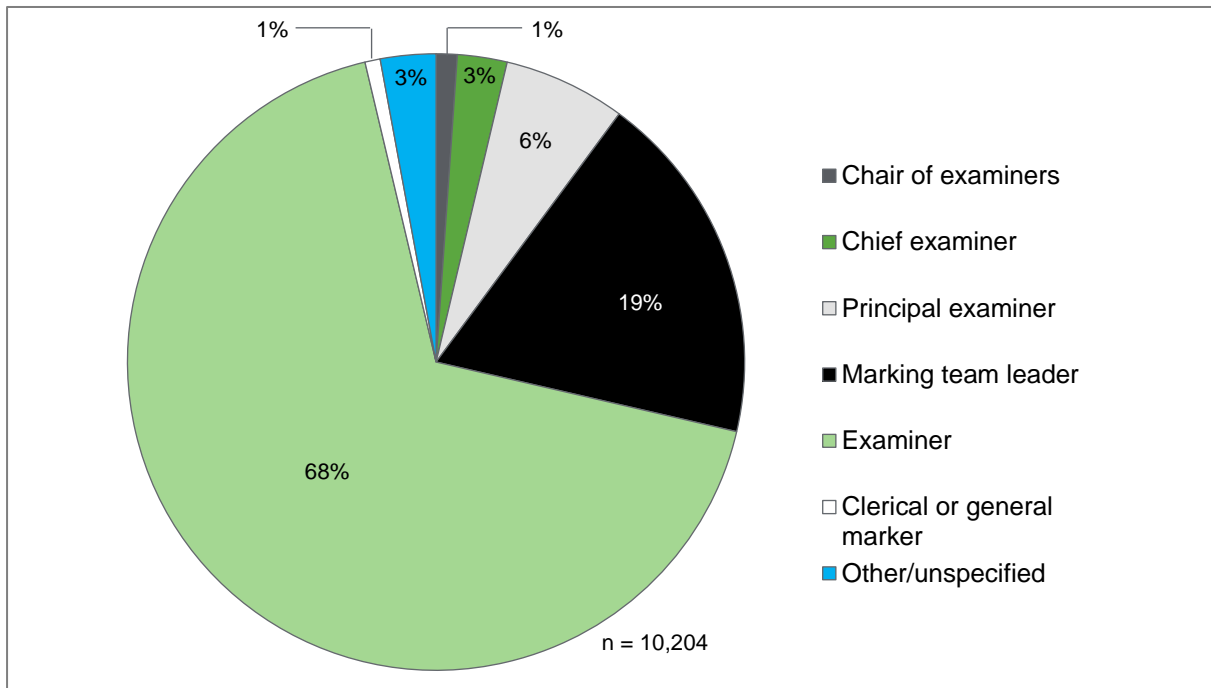
Figure 2: “Which exam board(s) do you currently examine for?” (question 4)



Note: Only includes examiners who work for only one exam board.

The seniority of examiners responding to the survey also broadly reflects the overall profile of examiners as reported to us by the exam boards (see figure 3). Twenty-nine per cent told us they worked in some kind of managerial or supervisory capacity, ranging from chairs of examiners to marking team leaders. The majority of survey respondents (68 per cent) were examiners, also described as expert markers or assistant examiners by some exam boards. Less than 1 per cent of respondents were clerical or general markers; markers who are not required to have any subject-specific expertise.

Figure 3: “What is the most senior position that you currently hold at your exam board?” (question 8)



3. Who are examiners?

3.1 Educational background

Fifty-four per cent of the examiners we surveyed said they held an undergraduate degree in the main subject they examined, and a further 38 per cent had completed a postgraduate degree or doctorate in their main subject. We believe that respondents may have interpreted this survey question differently, with some respondents including their Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) as a postgraduate qualification in their main subject, and others not including their PGCE and instead reporting their highest qualification in their main subject as an undergraduate degree. Some respondents may also have reported their highest qualification overall, or their highest qualification in a subject with some relevance to the subject they examined. For example, 33 per cent of examiners in general studies said they held an undergraduate degree or higher in this subject. Therefore, the number of examiners with qualifications in the subject they examine shown here is likely to overestimate the true total.

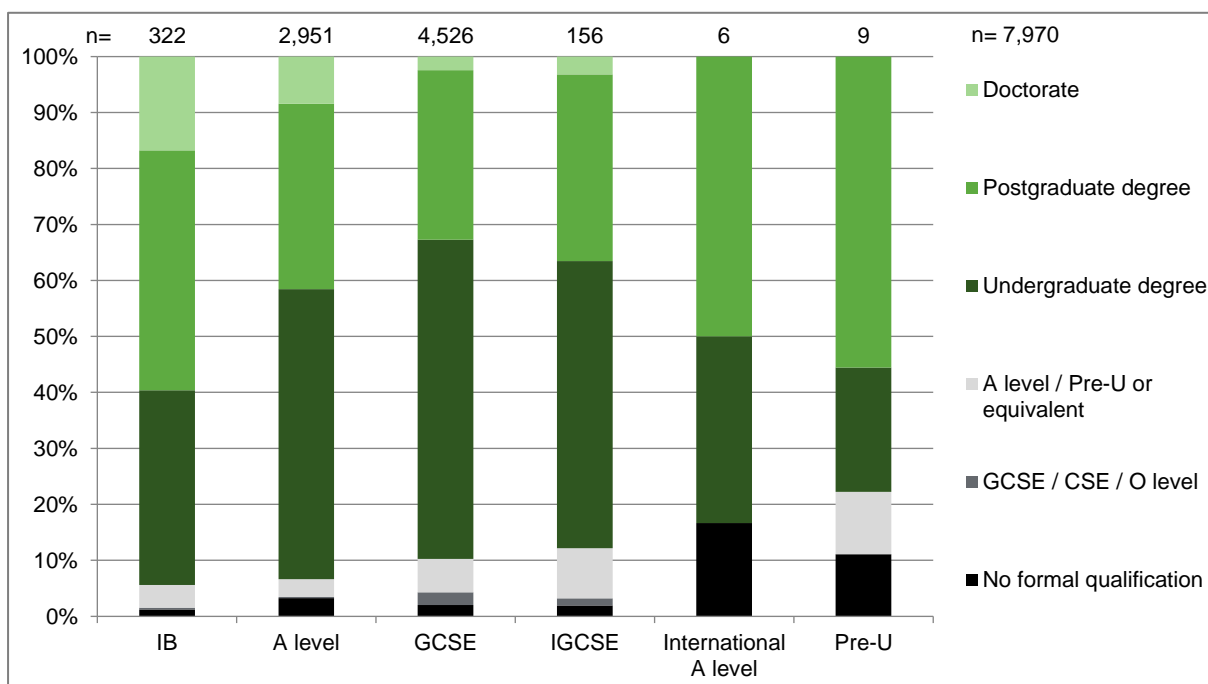
Examiners in general studies were the group least likely to hold an undergraduate degree or higher in the subject they examined, followed by examiners of theory of knowledge (50 per cent), extended projects (67 per cent), and media and film studies (71 per cent). The examiners most likely to hold an undergraduate degree or higher in the subject they examined were examiners of art and design (98 per cent), classical subjects (98 per cent), history (97 per cent), and economics, music and psychology (all 96 per cent). Examiners of other popular subjects were also very likely to hold at least an undergraduate degree in the subject they examined, including English literature and language (95 per cent), geography (95 per cent), science (95 per cent) and maths (89 per cent).

Six per cent of examiners had qualifications below degree level in their subject and just 2 per cent had no formal qualification in their main subject. Most of these examiners marked newer subjects such as ICT/computing (the main subject examined by 16 per cent of respondents who said they had no formal qualification in their main subject), business studies (8 per cent), media studies (8 per cent) and citizenship (7 per cent). Others examined subjects that drew on a range of disciplines, such as general studies (9 per cent). Others marked modern foreign languages and may include native speakers of those languages. These individuals had more experience of examining than other examiners: 48 per cent had at least ten years of examining experience, compared with 37 per cent of all the examiners we surveyed.

Examiners at the IB held higher qualifications in their main subject, compared with the other exam boards. Ninety-four per cent of the IB examiners who responded told us they held a qualification at undergraduate level or above in their main subject.

At qualification level (see figure 4), examiners of the IB and A level qualifications were most likely to hold a postgraduate degree or doctorate in the main subject they examined. Examiners of GCSEs were the least likely to hold a postgraduate degree or doctorate in their main subject.

Figure 4: “And what is the highest qualification that you have gained in your main subject?” (question 11)



Note: Only includes examiners who examine only one qualification type. Excludes four examiners who did not answer this question.

Examiner seniority appears to have only a small effect on the level of qualification examiners hold in the main subject they examine, with around 90 per cent of the examiners we surveyed, across all levels of seniority, holding a qualification at undergraduate level or above in the main subject they examined. However, there is a strong positive correlation between examiner seniority and the percentage of examiners with a doctorate in their main subject: the proportion of examiners holding a doctorate increases with greater examiner seniority. In the survey, chairs of examiners and chief examiners formed the highest percentage of examiners holding a doctorate in their main subject: 14 per cent for both groups, compared with 5 per cent of examiners.

The subjects in which examiners were most likely to hold a postgraduate degree or higher were art and design (62 per cent had a postgraduate degree or doctorate),

music (58 per cent) and classical subjects (56 per cent). With the exception of general studies examiners (12 per cent had a postgraduate degree or doctorate), maths examiners were the group least likely to hold a postgraduate degree or doctorate in their subject (24 per cent), followed by examiners of science, economics, geography, and design and technology (all 34 per cent). Across the other major subjects, 42 per cent of examiners of English literature and English language and 40 per cent of history examiners said they held a postgraduate degree or doctorate in their subject.

3.2 Teaching background

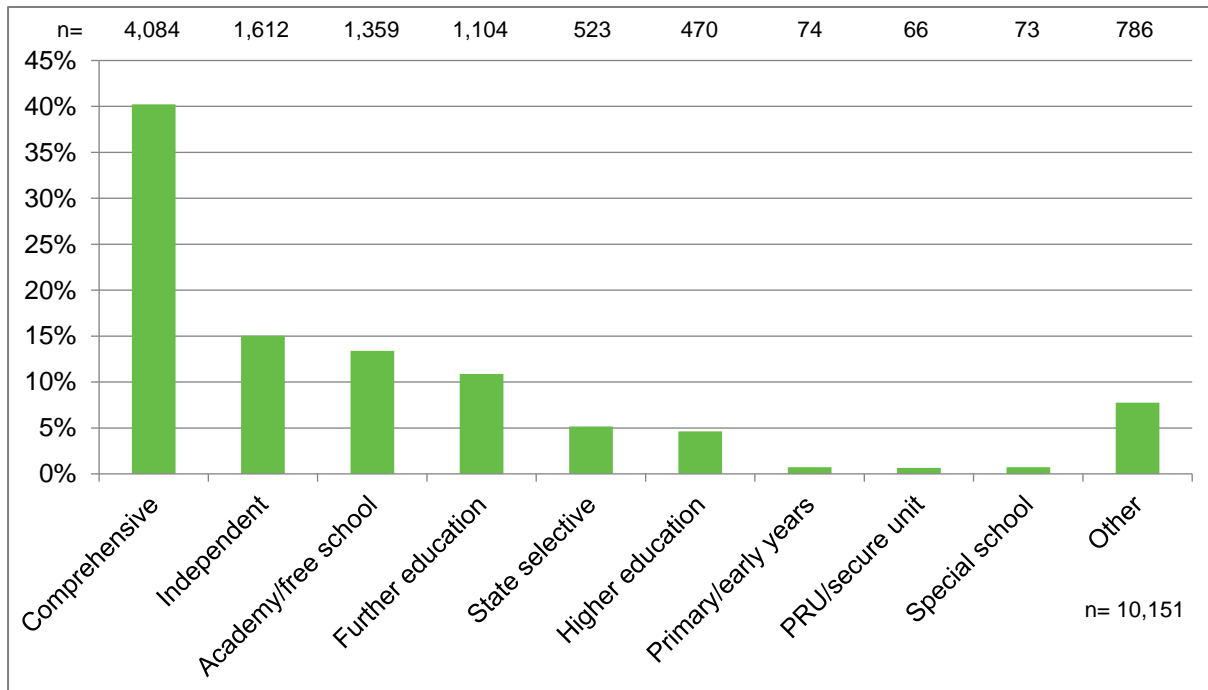
More than 99 per cent of the examiners who responded to the survey were teachers or lecturers (62 per cent) or had previous teaching or lecturing experience (38 per cent). Forty-six per cent were senior teachers. Thirty-five per cent were, or had been, a head of department, and 4 per cent were or had been, a head of year. Seven per cent were, or had been, a head teacher or a deputy or assistant head teacher.

Based upon the survey responses, examiners of the Pre-U and the IB were the most likely to be lecturers. Nineteen per cent of IB examiners and 44 per cent of Pre-U examiners were lecturers, compared with only 6 per cent of GCSE examiners and 14 per cent of A level examiners. Among examiners working or who used to work in schools, A level examiners were the most likely to hold senior leadership positions. Forty-seven per cent of A level examiners working or who used to work in schools said their most recent teaching position was a senior role (head of year, head of department, deputy/assistant head or head teacher), compared with the rest of respondents (44 per cent). On the other hand, IB examiners were less likely to hold a senior position (39 per cent compared with an average of 45 per cent).

Across exam boards, Pearson Edexcel had a higher proportion of teachers and supply teachers (44 per cent compared with 38 per cent across the other exam boards) but a lower proportion of teachers in senior positions (42 per cent compared with an average of 47 per cent), and WJEC had a lower proportion of teachers and supply teachers (30 per cent compared with 40 per cent across the other exam boards) but a higher proportion of teachers in senior positions (54 per cent compared with an average of 45 per cent).

Figure 5 shows the types of education institutions where the examiners we surveyed worked (or had worked, if they were retired). Most of the examiners who responded to our survey worked or had worked in comprehensive schools and academies or free schools (54 per cent).

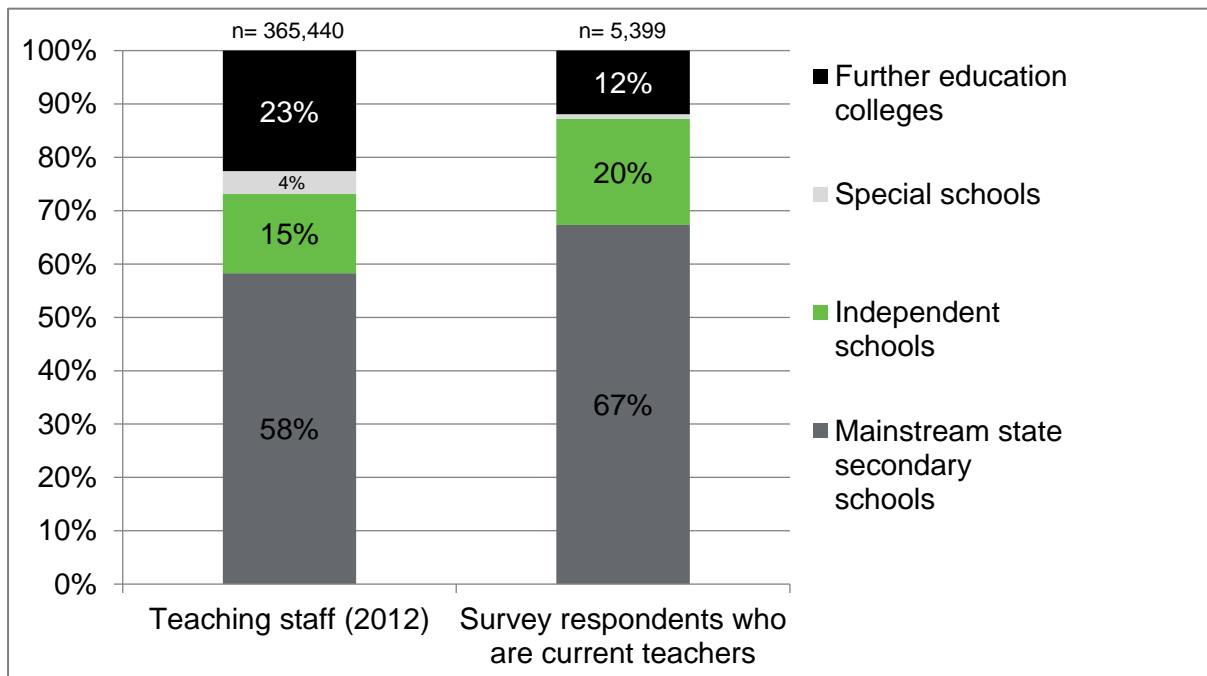
Figure 5: “What type of centre do you work in? (Please describe your most recent institution if you are no longer teaching or lecturing)” (question 16)



Note: Excludes survey respondents who did not answer this question or said they had never worked as a teacher or lecturer (53). PRU = pupil referral unit.

Figure 6 compares the profile of teachers working in the main types of secondary education institutions in 2012 to the profile of the examiners who responded to our survey and reported they were current teachers.

Figure 6: Place of work of teachers employed in secondary education institutions compared with place of work of examiners who completed our survey



Sources: Department for Education School Workforce SFR15, Independent School Census, and Learning and Skills Improvement Service Staff Individualised Record. Survey respondents only include current teachers and lecturers and exclude teachers and lecturers working in primary/early years, higher education and other types of centres.

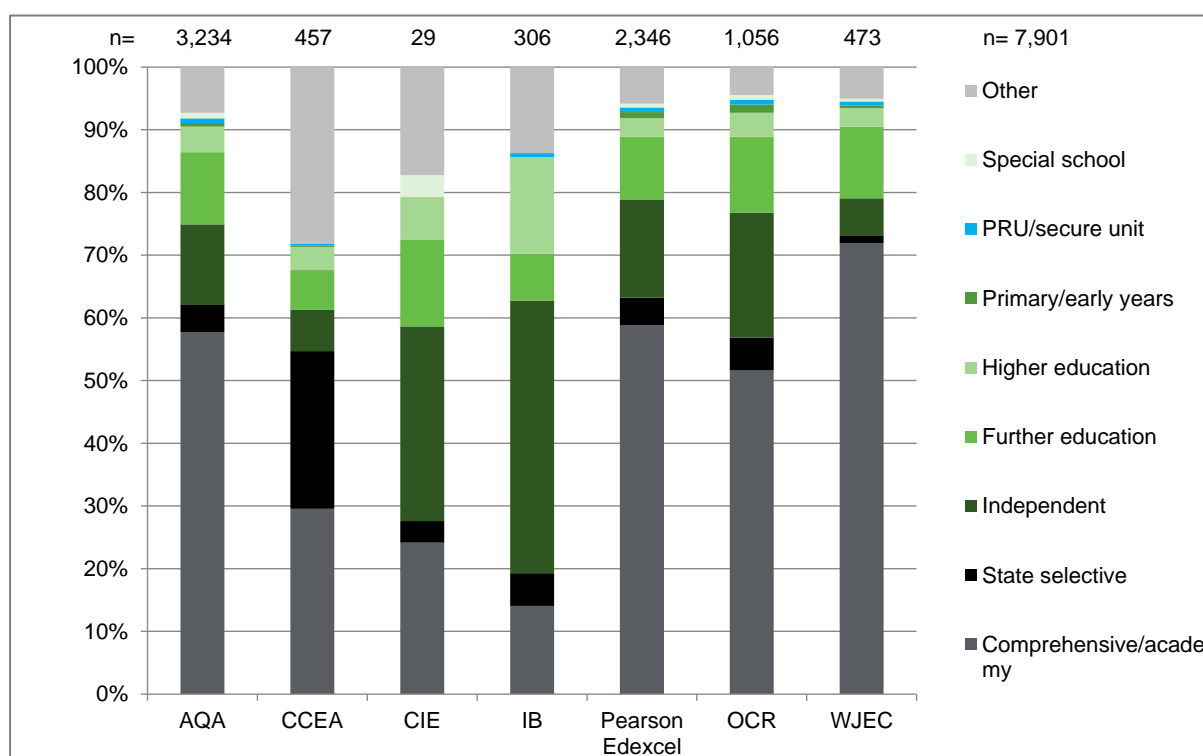
If the profile of the examiners who completed our survey is representative of the profile of all examiners (and we have no reason to think it is not), the data in figure 6 suggests that teachers in mainstream state schools are over-represented in the examiner workforce: these teachers make up 58 per cent of secondary education teachers, but represent 67 per cent of the secondary education teachers who responded to our survey. Teachers in independent schools are also over-represented, although to a lesser extent. These teachers make up 15 per cent of teachers in secondary education, but represent 20 per cent of the secondary education teachers who responded to our survey. The other two groups of secondary education teachers (special schools and further education colleges) appear to be under-represented in the examiner workforce.

A levels and IGCSEs are the most frequently examined qualifications for examiners working in state selective and independent schools, whereas GCSEs are the most popular qualification for examiners working in comprehensive schools and academies and free schools.

From the survey, the types of centres examiners work in or used to work in vary by exam board (see figure 7):

- WJEC had the highest percentage of examiners working in comprehensive schools or academies and free schools (72 per cent compared with 53 per cent across the other exam boards). Only 14 per cent of IB examiners worked in comprehensive schools or academies and free schools, compared with an average of 56 per cent across the other exam boards.
- AQA, CIE and WJEC had lower proportions of examiners working in selective state schools compared with the other exam boards. In contrast, a high proportion of CCEA examiners worked in selective state schools: 25 per cent compared with 4 per cent of examiners across the other exam boards. This reflects the high proportion of selective state schools in Northern Ireland.

Figure 7: “What type of centre do you work in?” (by exam board) (question 16)



Note: Only includes examiners who work for only one exam board. Excludes examiners working for exam boards other than the seven main exam boards (21) and examiners who have never worked as teachers or lecturers (44). PRU = pupil referral unit.

3.3 Employment status

Across all the examiners we surveyed, 28 per cent told us, with the exception of their examining work, they were retired. Our survey did not ask examiners for their age and, therefore, we cannot draw any definitive conclusions about the age profile of

current examiners. However, the proportion of our survey respondents who were retired, combined with the low proportion of respondents who had less than six years' teaching experience (less than 7 per cent),⁶ suggests that the examiner population is skewed towards an older demographic.

When compared by qualification examined, there is no statistical difference in the proportion of examiners who are retired.

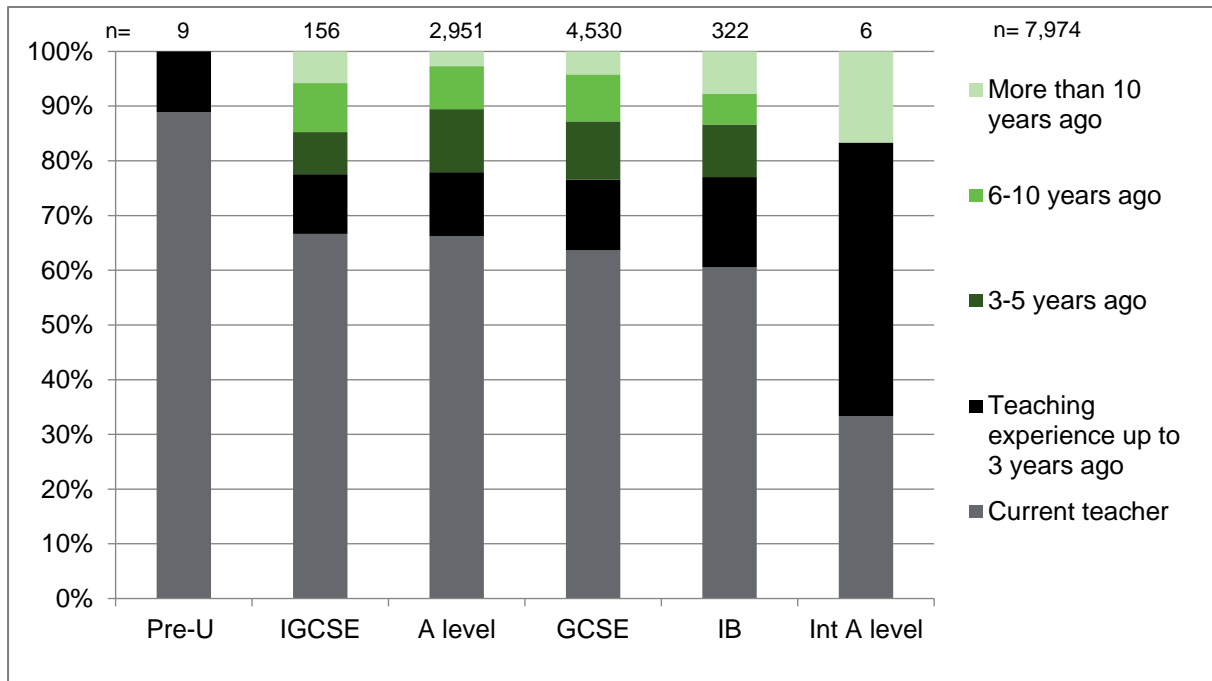
Sixty-one per cent of the survey respondents told us they were current teachers. Based upon the proportion of respondents who said they were retired (28 per cent), that means approximately 10 per cent of survey respondents were former teachers currently working in a different profession.

Across the examiners who were no longer teaching, 14 per cent had stopped teaching less than one year ago. Fifty-one per cent had teaching experience from between one and five years ago, 23 per cent had teaching experience from six to ten years ago, and 12 per cent had teaching experience from ten or more years ago.

When compared by qualification examined (see figure 8), Pre-U and IGCSE examiners were the groups most likely to be current teachers, but the survey sample size is very small and, therefore, these findings are not statistically significant. Examiners of A levels were the next most likely to be current teachers: 66 per cent were current teachers, compared with the other qualifications where 63 per cent of examiners were current teachers (statistically significant).

⁶ See the section on teaching experience, later in this report, for further detail.

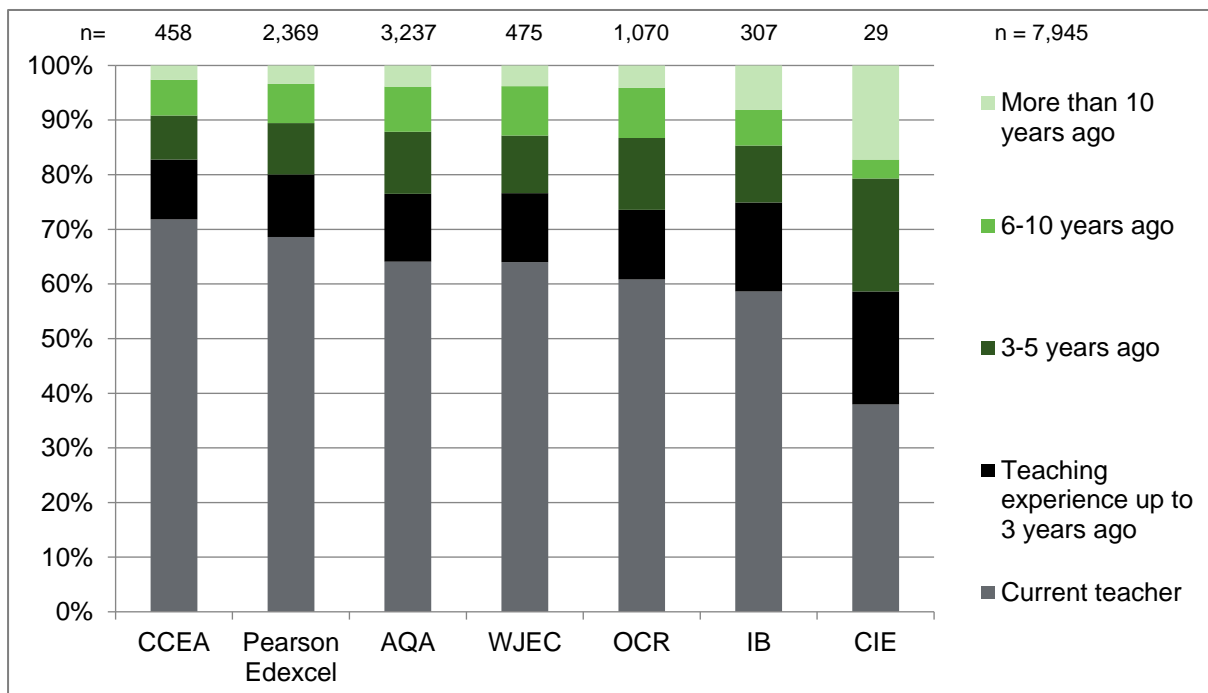
Figure 8: “How recent is your teaching or lecturing experience?” (by qualification examined) (question 13)



Note: Responses are split by qualification examined. Only includes examiners who examine only one qualification type.

When considered by exam board (see figure 9), AQA, OCR and WJEC had a higher proportion of examiners who were retired, compared with the other exam boards. Pearson Edexcel had a lower proportion of retired examiners compared with the other exam boards: 21 per cent of Pearson Edexcel’s examiners were retired, compared with 27 per cent of examiners across the other exam boards.

Figure 9: “How recent is your teaching or lecturing experience?” (by exam board) (question 13)



Note: Responses are split by exam board. Only includes examiners who work for only one exam board. Excludes examiners working for exam boards other than the seven main exam boards (21).

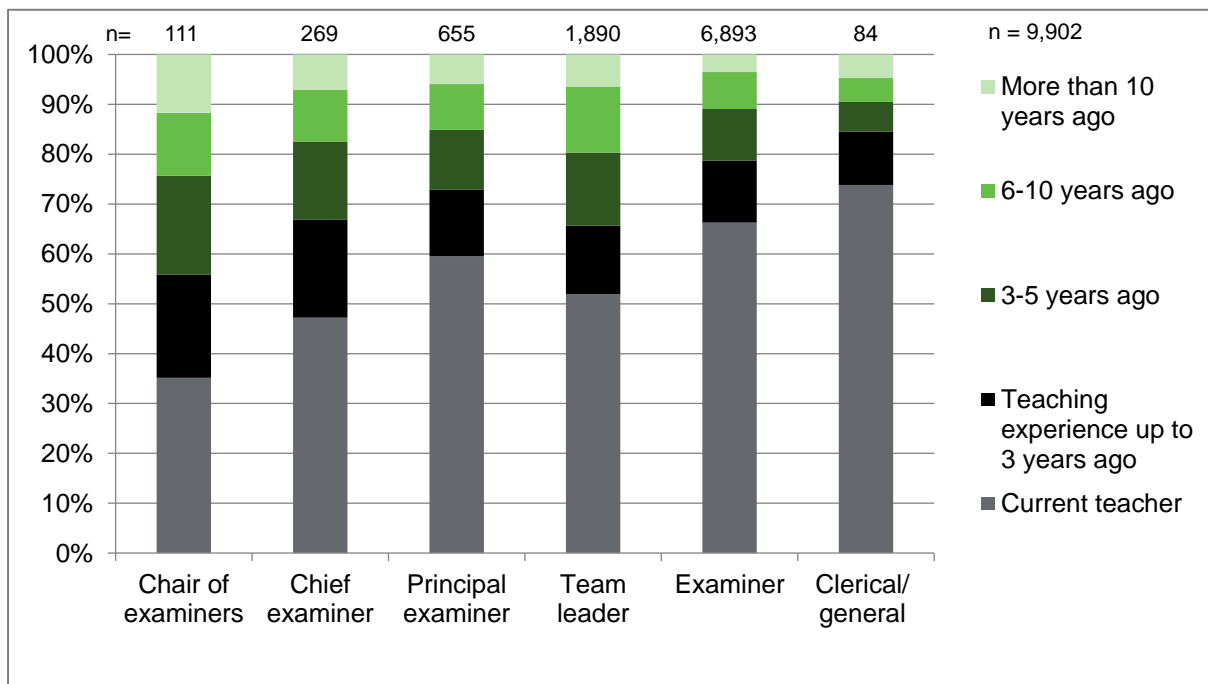
Figure 9 shows that the IB and CIE had a higher proportion of examiners with teaching experience from more than ten years ago. Eight per cent of IB examiners had teaching experience from more than ten years ago compared with 4 per cent of examiners from the other exam boards. Seventeen per cent of CIE examiners had teaching experience from more than ten years ago compared with 4 per cent of examiners from the other exam boards.

Three exam boards had higher proportions of examiners who were current teachers or had teaching experience from less than one year ago, compared with the other exam boards. Seventy-seven per cent of CCEA examiners (not statistically significant), 73 per cent of Pearson Edexcel examiners (statistically significant) and 69 per cent of AQA examiners (statistically significant) were current teachers or had teaching experience from less than one year ago. CIE had a lower proportion of examiners who were current teachers or had teaching experience from less than one year ago (45 per cent). Even though CIE has a small sample, these results are statistically significant.

The more senior examiners were more likely to be retired than the less senior examiners (33 per cent of senior examiners compared with 27 per cent of other examiners).

Figure 10 shows it was also the case that a relatively high proportion of the senior examiners we surveyed did not have recent teaching experience: 44 per cent of chairs of examiners and 33 per cent of chief examiners had teaching experience from three or more years ago. However, a relatively high proportion of senior examiners were still teaching: 35 per cent of chairs of examiners (statistically significant), 47 per cent of chief examiners (statistically significant) and 59 per cent of principal examiners (not statistically significant) told us they were currently teaching.

Figure 10: “How recent is your teaching or lecturing experience?” (by examiner seniority) (question 13)

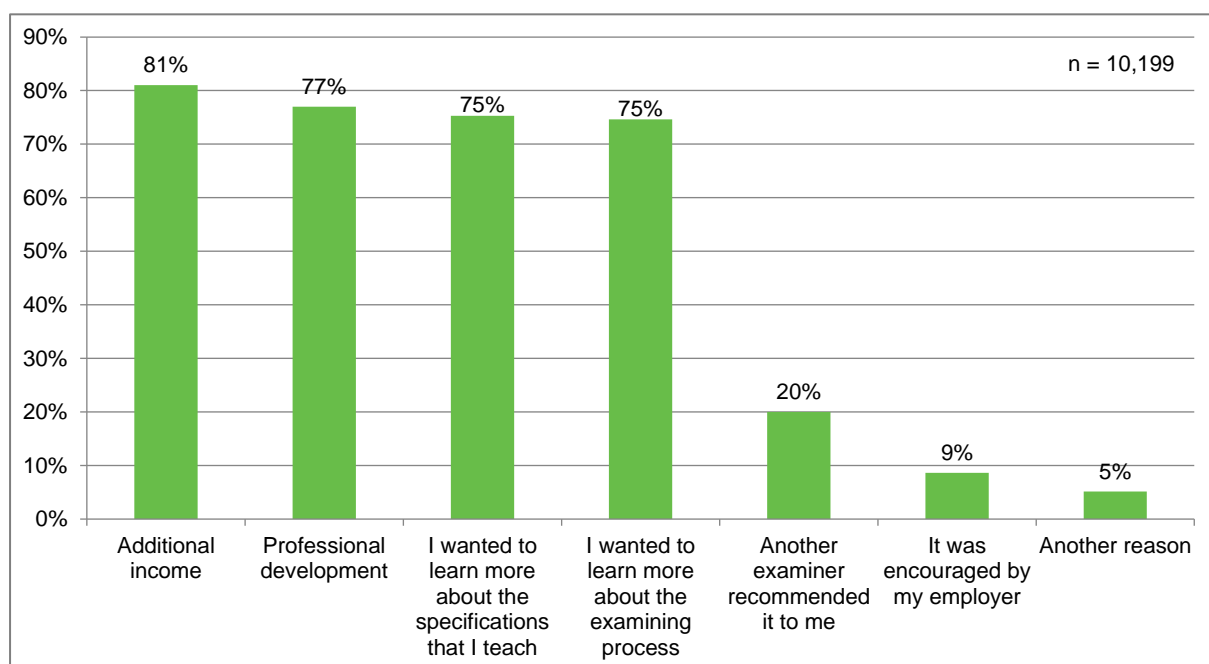


Note: Responses are split by examiner seniority. Excludes examiners who answered “other” in response to question 8, “What is the most senior position that you currently hold at your exam board?”, or did not answer this question (302).

4. Why do teachers become examiners?

The opportunity to earn additional income was the respondents' most frequently cited reason for becoming an examiner (see figure 11): 81 per cent of respondents selected this response. However, this response was selected only slightly more frequently than the three next most common responses. Only 9 per cent of respondents said they became an examiner because it was encouraged by their employer. This contrasts with the 90 per cent of head teachers in our 2013 survey of teachers who told us they encouraged their staff to examine.

Figure 11: "Why did you want to become an examiner?" (question 20)



Note: Examiners could select more than one response, which means it was not possible to test whether these findings are statistically significant. Five examiners did not answer this question.

Less experienced examiners were slightly more likely to be motivated by additional income and less likely to be motivated by wanting to learn more about the specifications they taught and the examining process than more experienced examiners. Examiners with less than one year of examining experience were also the most likely group to cite encouragement from their employer as one of their motivations (13 per cent compared with 9 per cent of examiners overall).

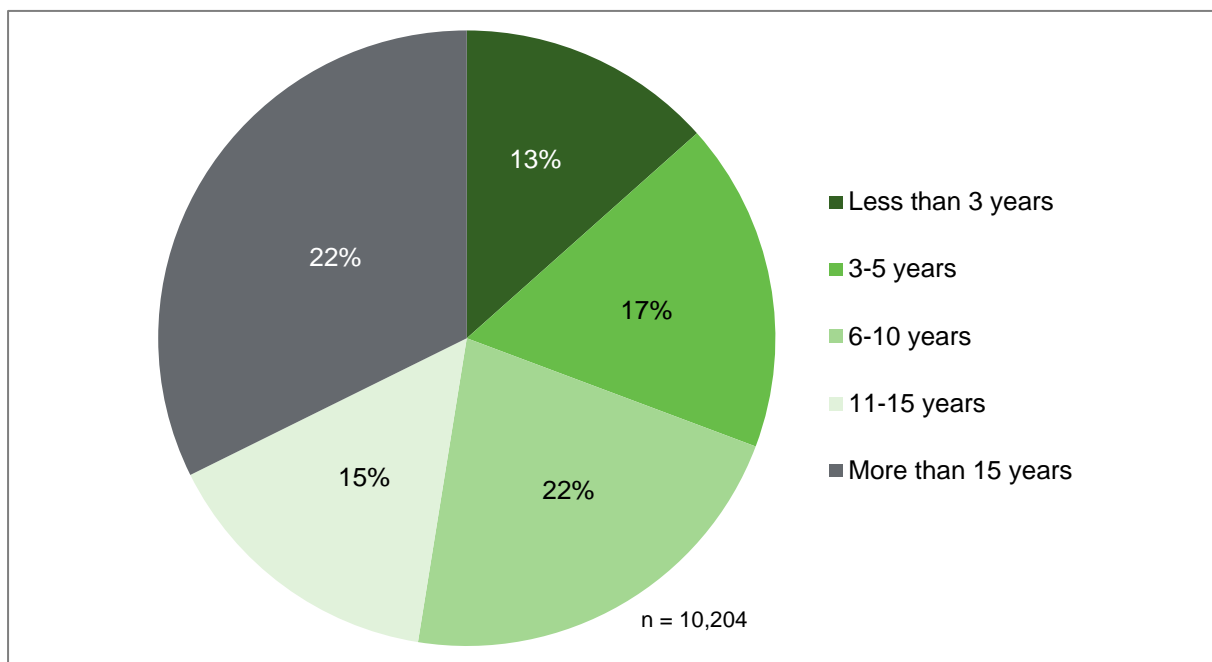
Although the opportunity to earn additional income was the respondents' most frequently cited reason for becoming an examiner, this finding was not supported by examiners' free text comments at the end of our survey (see p55). Here, examiners spontaneously referred to their pride in making a contribution, growing their skills and finding their role personally rewarding. None of the examiners' comments stated that pay was their prime motivating factor for continuing to examine.

5. How experienced are examiners?

5.1 Examining experience

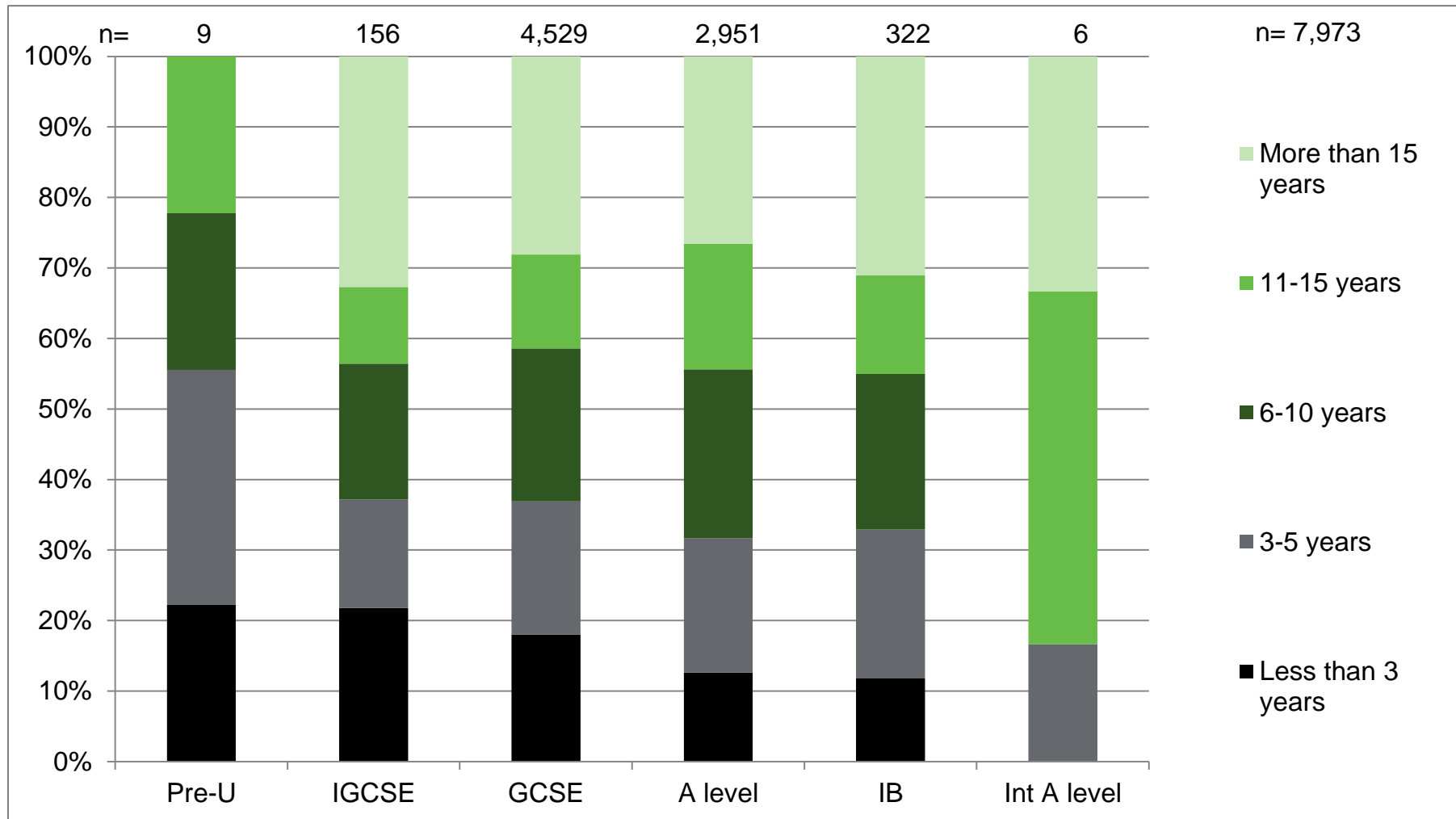
Most of the examiners who participated in the survey had a high level of examining experience (see figure 12). Forty-eight per cent said they had more than 10 years' examining experience and only 13 per cent had been examining for less than three years.

Figure 12: "How many years of examining experience do you have in total?" (question 6)



Comparing across the different qualifications (see figure 13), Pre-U and IGCSE examiners were the least experienced groups of examiners, but these findings are not statistically significant. GCSE examiners were the next least experienced group (statistically significant) but, nonetheless, they reported a high level of experience: 41 per cent had been examining for more than 10 years and 18 per cent had less than three years of examining experience.

Figure 13: “How many years of examining experience do you have in total?” (by qualification examined) (question 6)

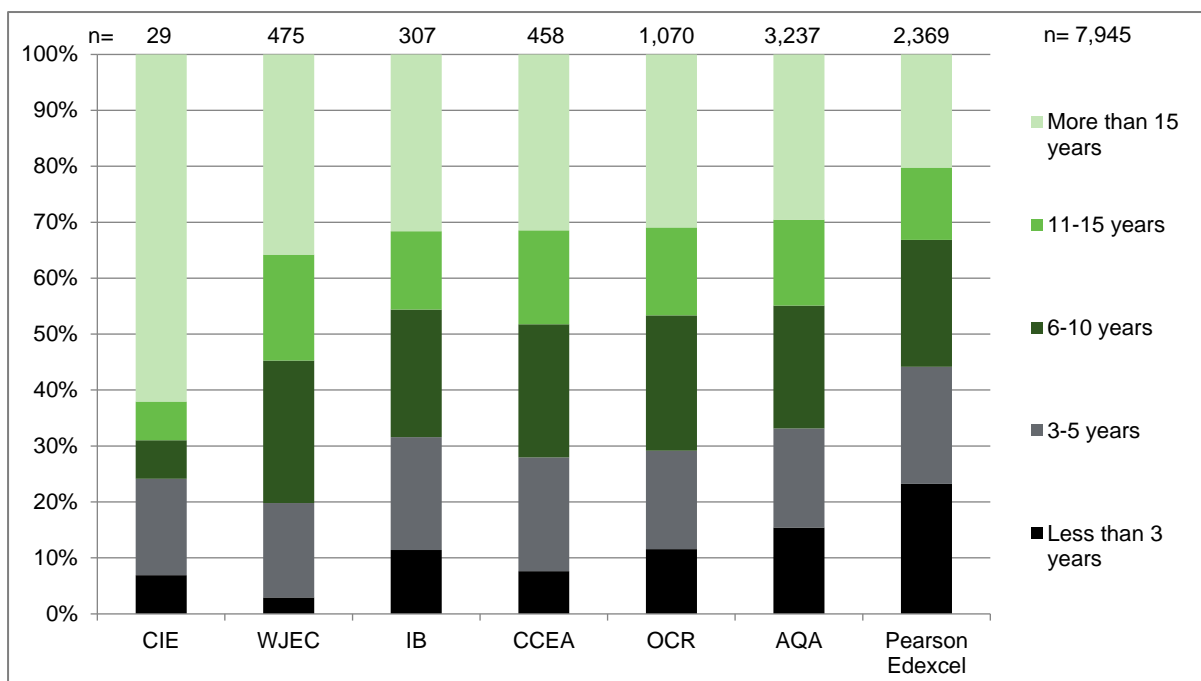


Note: Only includes examiners who examine only one qualification type. Excludes one examiner who did not answer this question.

By exam board worked for (see figure 14), examiners working for CIE had the most examining experience by a fairly large margin: 69 per cent had more than ten years of experience. The exam board with the next most experienced examiners was WJEC, where 54 per cent of examiners had more than ten years of examining experience.

Pearson Edexcel had the highest proportion of new examiners with less than three years' examining experience (23 per cent, statistically significant), followed by AQA (15 per cent, not statistically significant) and OCR (12 per cent, statistically significant).

Figure 14: “How many years of examining experience do you have in total?” (by exam board worked for) (question 6)

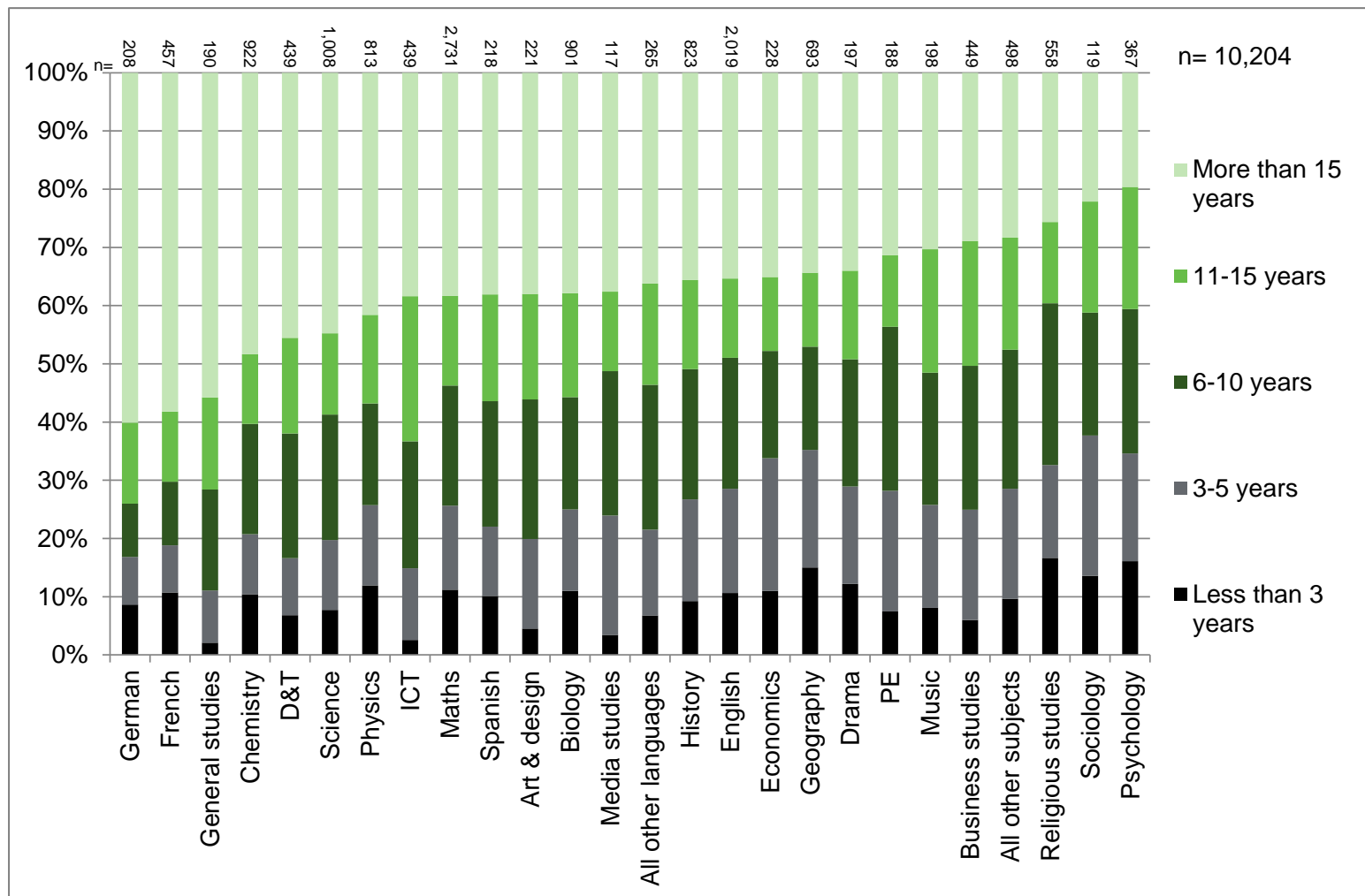


Note: Only includes examiners who work for only one exam board. Excludes examiners working for exam boards other than the seven main exam boards (21).

The exam boards with less experienced examiners were to some extent the same exam boards that had a high proportion of examiners who were current teachers or had very recent teaching experience (see pp18-21 on the recency of examiners' teaching experience). For example, CIE had the lowest proportion of examiners who were current teachers (72 per cent) and the highest proportion of examiners with ten or more years of examining experience (69 per cent). Pearson Edexcel had the second highest proportion of examiners who were current teachers (68 per cent) and the lowest proportion of examiners with ten or more years of examining experience (33 per cent).

Across the different subjects examined (see figure 15), German and French had the most experienced examiners. Seventy-four per cent of examiners in German and 70 per cent of examiners in French had at least 10 years of examining experience. This proportion was much lower (though still high) for examiners of Spanish (56 per cent), perhaps reflecting the increasing popularity of Spanish as a general qualification subject in the last 5 to 10 years. General studies also had a very high proportion of very experienced examiners: 72 per cent had 10 or more years of examining experience.

Figure 15: “How many years of examining experience do you have in total?” (by different subjects examined) (question 6)



Note: By subject, aggregated across qualifications, excluding any subjects with fewer than 100 responses. Includes multiple responses from examiners marking multiple qualifications and across multiple exam boards (15,256 responses provided).

Figure 15 shows, with some exceptions, there was a general pattern that the more objective subjects, such as science, maths and ICT, tended to have more experienced examiners, and examiners of the more subjective disciplines tended to have below-average experience levels. Anecdotally, we know from some exam boards that the more subjective subjects often have the highest rates of examiner attrition.

Although sociology, psychology and religious studies had the least experienced examiners overall, most of these examiners could not be described as inexperienced: 83 per cent of religious studies examiners, 84 per cent of psychology examiners and 86 per cent of sociology examiners had at least three years of examining experience.

Across the other subjects, there are some spikes in the proportion of examiners with a certain length of experience. For example, geography had a relatively high proportion of examiners with one year of examining experience (8 per cent).

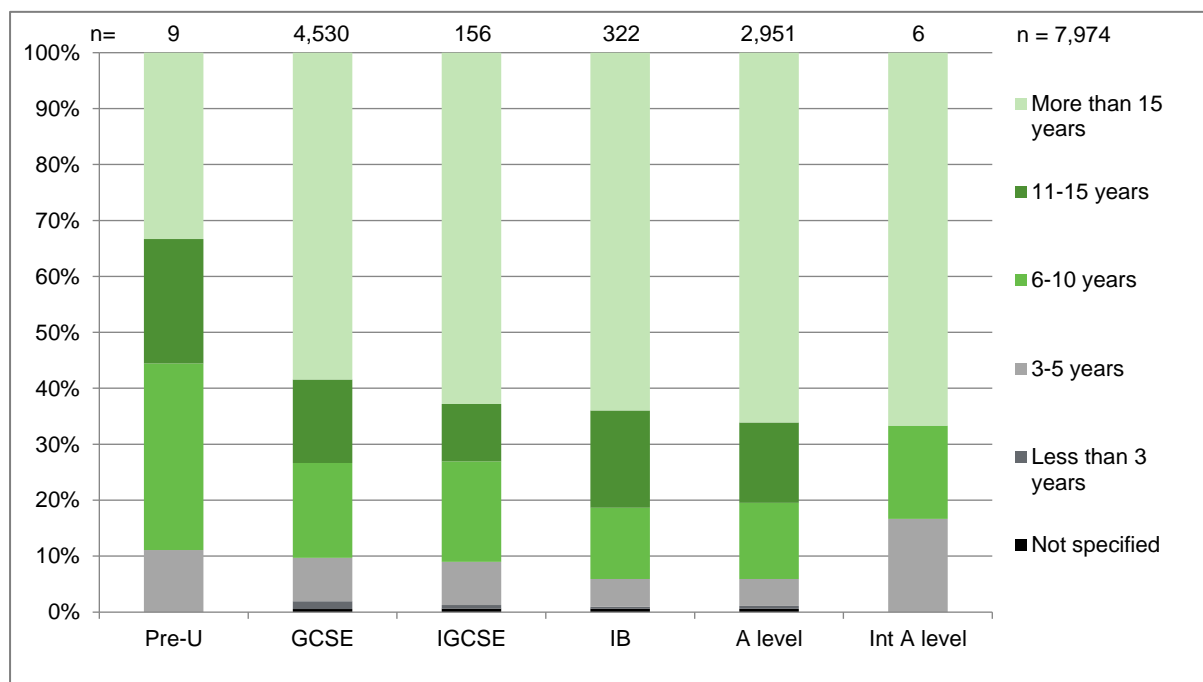
5.2 Teaching experience

The survey respondents also reported very high levels of teaching experience: 78 per cent had more than 10 years of teaching experience. Less than 7 per cent had less than six years' teaching experience and less than 1 per cent had less than three years' teaching experience.

Across different qualifications (see figure 16), examiners of A levels were the most experienced group (excluding International A level examiners, where the findings are not statistically significant). Sixty-six per cent of A level examiners had been teaching for more than 15 years.

Pre-U examiners were the least experienced group, but the findings were not statistically significant. GCSE examiners were the next least experienced group but, nonetheless, reported a high level of experience: 58 per cent had been teaching for more than 15 years and only 1 per cent had been teaching for less than three years. IGCSE examiners had very similar levels of experience to GCSE examiners: 63% had been teaching for more than 15 years and fewer than 1 per cent had been teaching for less than three years. However, the findings for IGCSE examiners were not statistically significantly different from other qualifications.

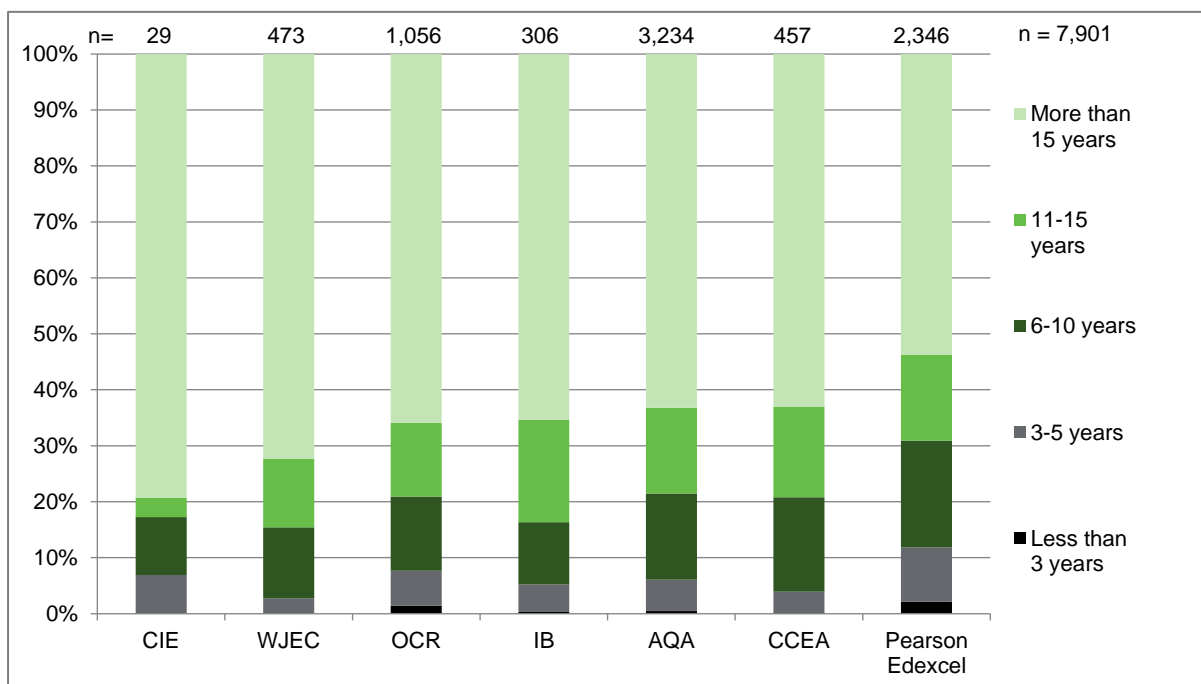
Figure 16: “How many years of teaching or lecturing experience do you have?” (by the different qualifications) (question 14)



Note: Only includes examiners who examine only one qualification type.

The pattern of teaching experience by exam board (see figure 17) was similar to that for examining experience, although the differences between exam boards were smaller. CIE had examiners with the most teaching experience, with 79 per cent reporting they had more than 15 years’ teaching experience. WJEC followed with 72 per cent of examiners having more than 15 years’ teaching experience. Across the other exam boards, the proportion of respondents with more than 15 years’ teaching experience varied from 65 per cent (the IB and OCR) to 53 per cent (Pearson Edexcel).

Figure 17: “How many years of teaching or lecturing experience do you have?” (by exam board worked for) (question 14)



Note: Only includes examiners who work for only one exam board. Excludes examiners working for exam boards other than the seven main exam boards (21) and examiners who have never worked as teachers or lecturers (44).

The overall pattern of examiners’ teaching experience across the different subjects examined was broadly similar to that of their examining experience.

5.3 Exam boards’ retention of examiners

The majority of examiners stay with their exam board for a substantial length of time. Seventy-five per cent of examiners with 15 or more years of examining experience told us they had been with their current exam board for at least 15 years.

6. Marking practices

6.1 How exams are marked

Across the respondents to our survey:

- 65 per cent had experience of both paper-based marking and on-screen marking;
- 15 per cent only had experience of on-screen marking;
- 20 per cent only had experience of paper-based marking.

Fifty-six per cent of examiners told us they were currently carrying out their marking predominantly on-screen, and a further 10 per cent said they completed roughly equal amounts of paper-based and on-screen marking.

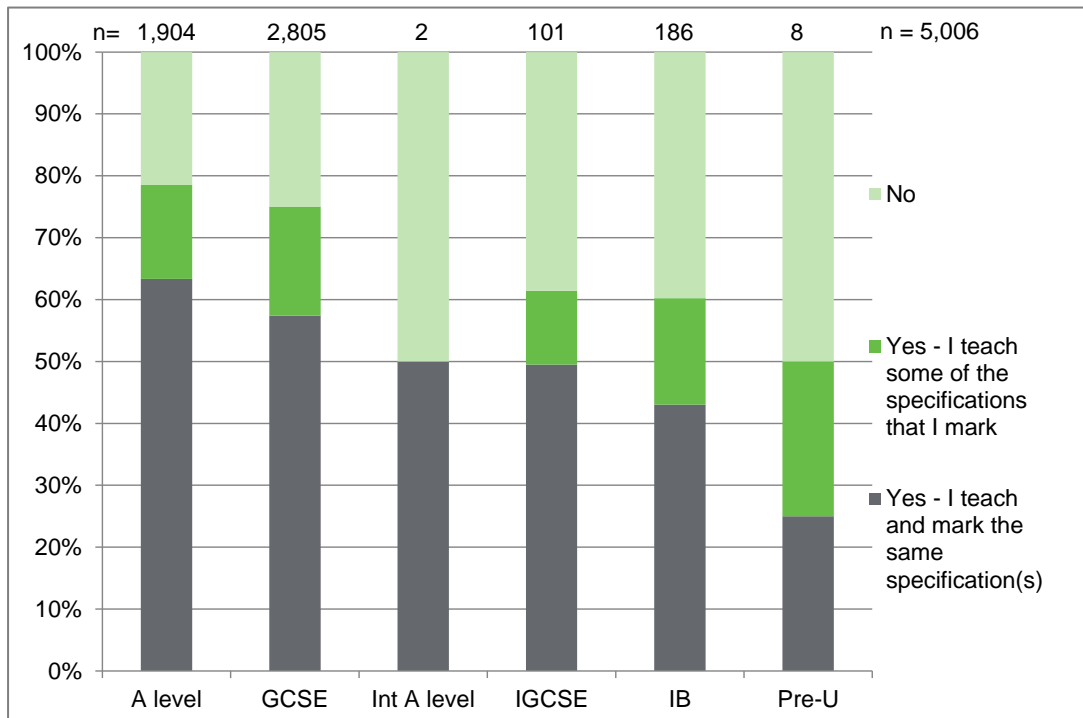
Forty-six per cent of our survey respondents had experience of item-level marking (where student scripts are split into individual questions or groups of related questions to be marked; the examiner cannot see the rest of the student script).

6.2 Teaching and marking the same qualification

Fifty-six per cent of the examiners we surveyed reported they taught and marked the same exam specifications, and a further 20 per cent said they taught some of the exam specifications that they marked. Twenty-four per cent told us they did not teach the exam specifications that they marked.

Figure 18 illustrates that examiners who marked A levels were much more likely to have taught and marked the same specifications: 63 per cent of A level examiners who were current teachers and answered this question said they taught and marked the same specifications, compared with an average of 56 per cent across examiners of qualifications other than A levels (and who were current teachers).

Figure 18: “Do you teach or lecture for the same exam board specifications that you examine?” (question 18)



Note: Only includes examiners who examine only one qualification type. Excludes examiners who are not current teachers (2,871) and those who answered “not applicable” to this question (97).

6.3 When and where examiners do their marking

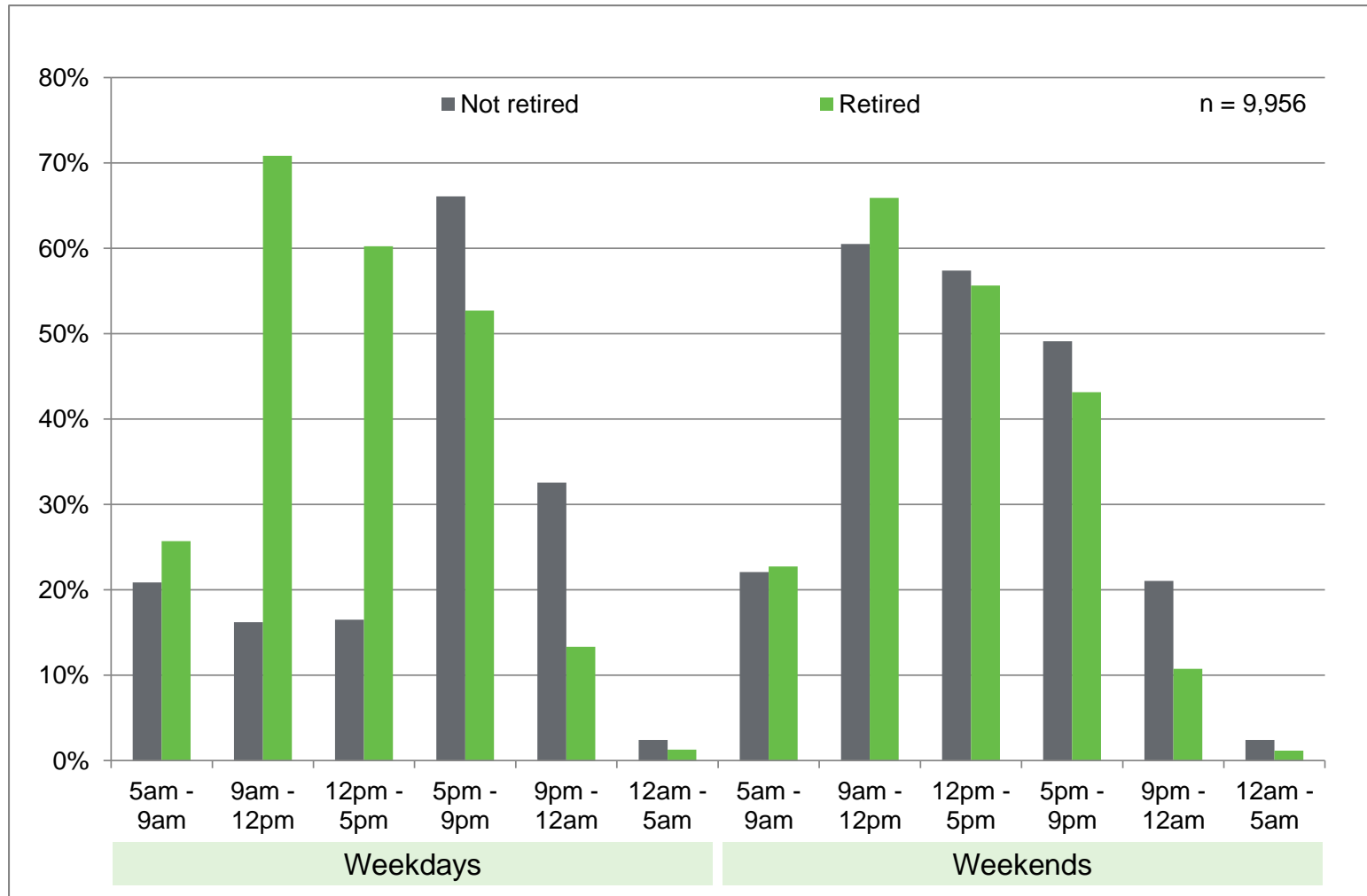
Figure 19 shows the times and days of the week when examiners reported they carried out their marking. The most common time for examiners who were not retired to carry out their examining work was between 5pm and 8pm on a weekday: 66 per cent said they examined during this time. A substantial minority of non-retired examiners (33 per cent) carried out some examining during the conventional working day (9am to 5pm). The most popular time for retired examiners to examine was weekday mornings: 71 per cent of retired examiners examined at this time.

Across both retired and non-retired examiners, figure 19 shows that the time when examiners were least likely to be examining was very late at night: only 3.5 per cent of non-retired examiners and 0.7 per cent of retired examiners said they carried out examining between midnight and 5am.

Examiners who are retired tend to spend more hours per day examining than non-retired examiners. Seventy-one per cent of the retired examiners we surveyed reported they spent five or more hours per day marking, compared with 36 per cent of non-retired examiners. Across both groups, the proportion of examiners who

reported they spent more than 10 hours examining per day was very small: 2 per cent.

Figure 19: “What day of the week and time of the day do you carry out your examining work?” (question 24)



Note: Respondents could select multiple responses. Excludes respondents who preferred not to say whether they were retired (248).

We also asked examiners where they did most of their examining work. Ninety-seven per cent said they did most of their examining at home, and 2 per cent examined at the awarding organisation's office or another workplace. Only 0.6 per cent of respondents (61 examiners) said they carried out their marking while they were travelling. This is in breach of their agreements with the exam boards, as all examiners are contractually obliged to carry out their marking in private.

7. What do examiners think about the examining process?

7.1 Support received from employers when carrying out marking duties

Eighty-three per cent of the survey respondents who were currently working as a teacher or lecturer told us they felt their school or institution provided them with enough support to carry out marking duties.

Teachers at independent and state selective schools were more likely to feel their school provided them with enough support than teachers at comprehensive schools and academies/free schools (87 per cent at independent and state selective schools compared with 81 per cent at comprehensive schools and 79 per cent at academies and free schools).

Across the different examining roles, team leaders and principal examiners were more likely to say they felt they got the support they needed compared with other examiners. Eighty-nine per cent of team leaders and 88 per cent of principal examiners said that their school or institution provided them with enough support to carry out marking duties. Compared with the other respondents, examiners were the least likely to feel they received sufficient support from their school or institution (81 per cent).

Examiners with less than three years' experience were less likely to agree that their school provided them with enough support (79 per cent) than examiners with three or more years' experience (84 per cent). Similarly, 77 per cent of examiners with less than six years of teaching experience agreed they received enough support from their school compared with 83 per cent of those with at least six years' teaching experience.

Across all comparisons of examiners' perceptions of the marking process, it should be noted that the examiners who found examining a positive experience were likely to be the most experienced, as they had continued examining. Those examiners who did not enjoy examining were likely to have stopped after a short time. Therefore, there will always be a greater proportion of positive views expressed by long-serving examiners than by less experienced examiners.

7.1.1 Qualitative responses: why some examiners felt their employers were unsupportive of their examining duties

We asked examiners who said they had not received enough support from their centre to provide us with further details. All these examiners (1,077) provided a comment, although many answers were very brief.

Difficulty in securing time off or away from their centres was the issue most frequently cited by survey respondents (mentioned in 25 per cent of comments). Examiners' expectations around what constitutes reasonable time off varied: some expected only to take time off where the exam board paid for cover (that is to attend standardisation meetings and training), whereas others mentioned they would have appreciated time off from teaching to carry out their marking.

Examiners believed that the payments (teacher release vouchers) made by exam boards to centres made little difference to their school's attitude to releasing them for meetings, and some indicated that the money paid was not sufficient to fund cover.

“My head teacher is loath to release me for training meetings that occur during the school day even though a teacher release fee is paid to the school.”

Marking team leader, maths, independent school

Examiners also said they did not receive any help or support from their centres (mentioned in 24 per cent of comments). However, many examiners did not expect any support from their centres: both the examiner and his or her centre saw examining as completely separate from the examiner's teaching role.

“I don't get any support and I don't expect any. It is after all another paid job so why should my school 'support' it?”

Examiner, science, selective state school

Other examiners said they did not receive support but they would have liked more support or had found issues getting support. The kinds of support examiners mentioned they would have liked tended to relate to being able to mark during lunch hours, in free periods and after school.

Around 8 per cent of examiners mentioned they wanted permission to mark on their centres' premises and within school hours (in their lunch hour, spare periods and after school). The reasons given for not marking on their centres' premises included being prohibited by the school or exam board (examiners must not mark in a public place and a school would be defined as a public place, unless the examiner had his or her own office) and not being able to access the exam board's on-screen marking system via the centres' computers.

“There is an element of hostility and suspicion of examiners using school hours to examine.”

Examiner, politics, academy or free school

“... If found marking in school I would face disciplinary action...”

Examiner, English, comprehensive school

In a very small number of cases, examiners described a more concerning level of conflict with their centres. Some centres resisted their staff examining, including actively discouraging or preventing teachers from examining. For example, one centre had put a stop to teachers’ progression to senior examining posts and another centre had discouraged one respondent from even talking about examining during school hours.

In 22 per cent of comments, examiners said they struggled to manage and balance the two roles of teaching and examining. Reasons for this conflict ranged from examiners not feeling supported and/or finding their centres inflexible, through to centres making a conscious decision to discourage and even penalise staff for marking.

“The school is quite hostile towards staff who do external marking and will pile on extra duties during marking periods...”

Marking team leader, English, academy or free school

“I have suffered disciplinary action for attending marking meetings.”

Senior examiner, maths, independent school

In 6 per cent of responses, examiners said they thought their centres did not appreciate or value the skills and knowledge they had gained from their examining work. Some examiners also felt their centres were inconsistent in their support, for example:

“The school want my expertise but begrudge time out of the classroom to attend preparation/standardising meetings. However, whenever Ofsted appear I'm always used as an example of 'our experienced' staff who mark and attain high standards.”

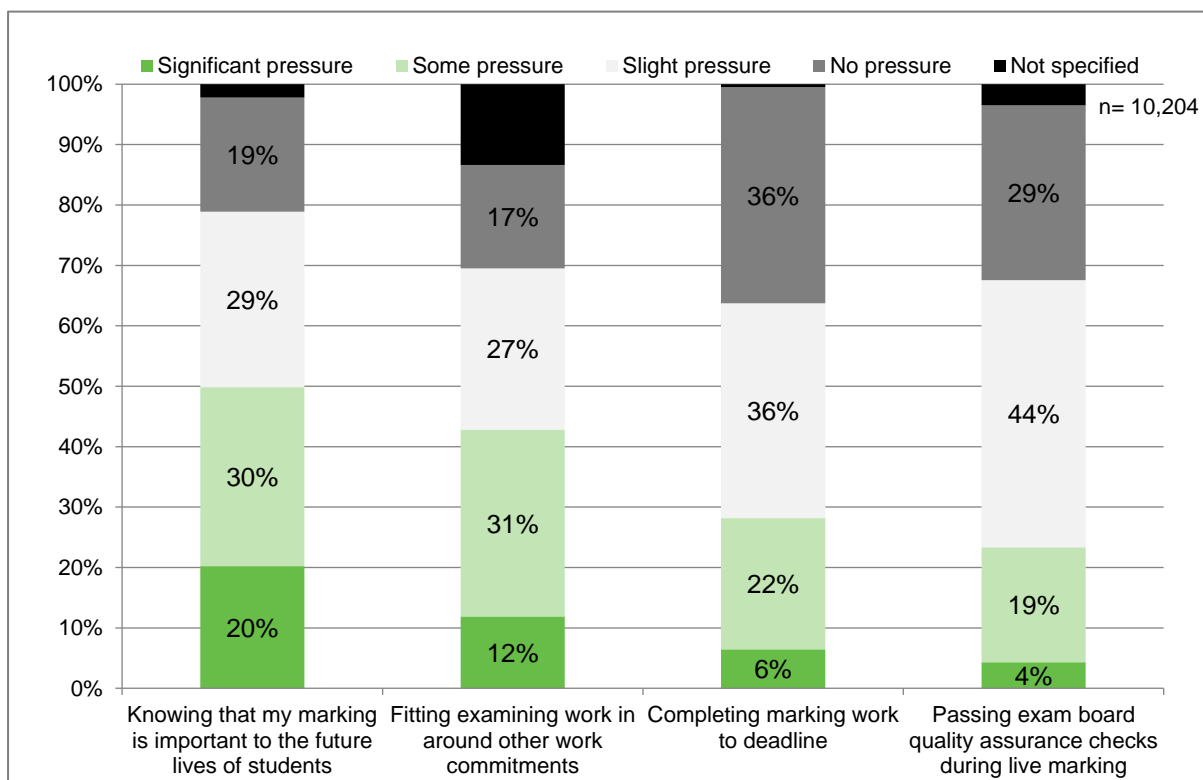
Marking team leader, English, comprehensive school

7.2 The challenge of various aspects of examining

We asked examiners to tell us how challenging they found a number of aspects of the examining process. Examiners said the most challenging aspect was “knowing that my marking is important to the future lives of students”. Twenty per cent of respondents found this a significant pressure, and a further 59 per cent found it placed them under some or slight pressure. This may suggest that examiners understand the importance of their work to students’ future prospects, and, therefore, take their responsibilities to these students very seriously.

Completing marking to deadline and passing quality assurance checks were not seen as significant challenges: only 6 per cent of examiners found completing marking to deadline a significant pressure and 4 per cent found passing quality assurance checks a significant pressure (see figure 20).

Figure 20: “How much of a challenge do you find the following aspects of examining?” (question 27)



Examiners with greater levels of examining experience found it less challenging to fit examining work in around other work commitments than examiners with fewer years of examining experience. For example, 22 per cent of examiners with one year of examining experience felt significant pressure to fit in their examining work, compared with a lower proportion of examiners with more than 15 years’ experience (5 per cent).

It is possible this pattern is driven in part by examiners with more years of examining experience being more likely to be retired from teaching and, therefore, no longer needing to juggle examining with teaching commitments. Comparison of the responses given by retired examiners and examiners who were not retired supports this view. For example, 51 per cent of retired examiners felt under no pressure to complete marking work to deadline, compared with a much lower proportion (30 per cent) of non-retired examiners.

It could also be the case that more experienced examiners have had a longer period of time than less experienced examiners to learn how to successfully juggle examining with their other professional and personal commitments.

A level examiners were more likely than examiners of other qualifications to find it challenging to fit examining in around other commitments and complete marking to deadline. Fifteen per cent of A level examiners said they felt under significant pressure to fit examining in around their other commitments, compared with 12 per cent of examiners of other qualifications. This is likely to be connected to A level examiners being less likely to be retired.

7.3 Current experience of marking – overall perceptions

Overall, the examiners' experiences of examining appeared to be very positive: across a number of questions about their experiences of the marking process, more than 85 per cent of survey respondents gave a positive response (strongly agree or agree) to all but two of the questions. These questions both related to receiving feedback on marking.

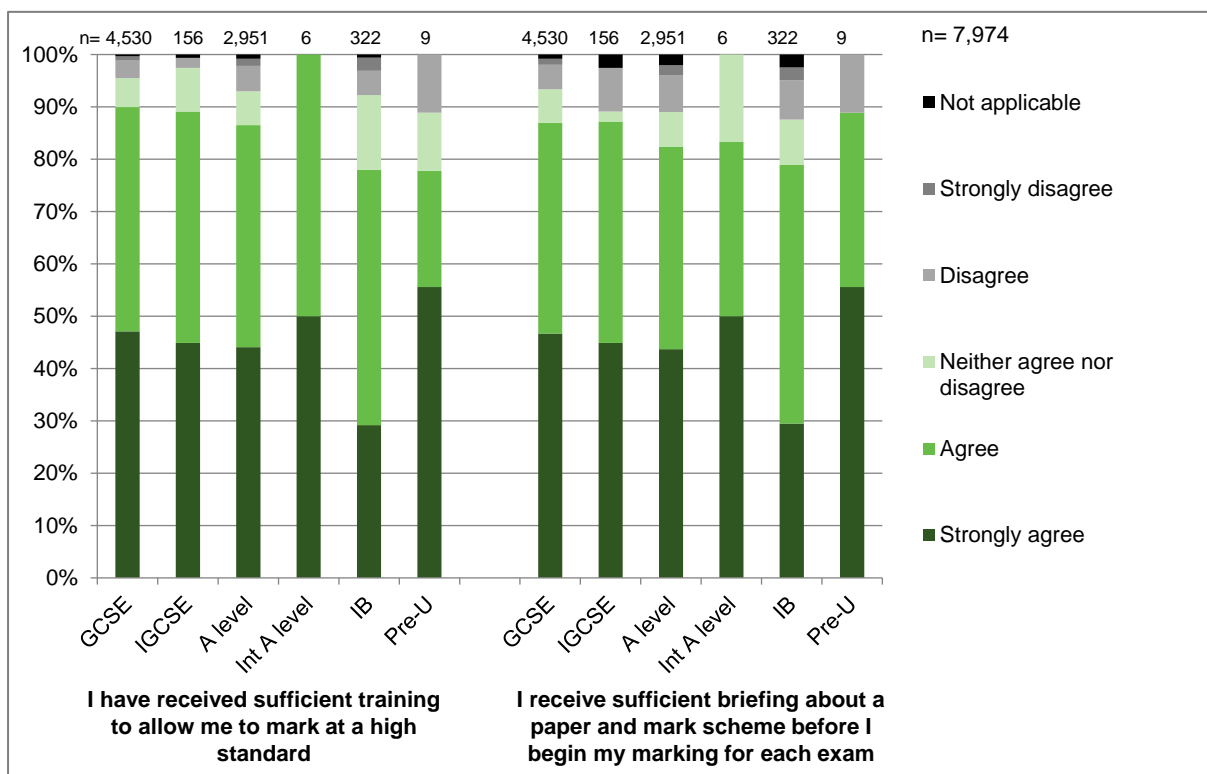
7.3.1 Current experience of marking – training and standardisation

These questions asked examiners about their experiences of the standardisation process. In standardisation, examiners are briefed on the paper they will be marking and trained in how to apply the paper's mark scheme consistently.

Eighty-eight per cent of examiners agreed with the statement "I have received sufficient training to allow me to mark at a high standard" and 85 per cent agreed with the statement "I receive sufficient briefing about a paper and mark scheme before I begin my marking for each exam".

Across the different qualifications (see figure 21), examiners of the IB answered these questions less positively than other groups of examiners: 78 per cent agreed with the statement "I have received sufficient training to allow me to mark at a high standard" compared with an average of 89 per cent of examiners across the other exam boards, and 79 per cent also agreed with the statement "I receive sufficient briefing about a paper and mark scheme before I begin my marking for each exam", compared with an average of 85 per cent of examiners across the other qualifications. Across the other qualifications, the responses were broadly similar.

Figure 21: “Thinking about your current experience of marking, how much do you agree with the following statements?” (question 28)



Note: Only includes examiners who examine only one qualification type.

Examiners at CCEA and WJEC gave a particularly high rate of positive responses to the two statements about training and standardisation: 97 per cent of CCEA examiners and 96 per cent of WJEC examiners agreed with “I have received sufficient training to allow me to mark at a high standard”. Ninety-seven per cent of CCEA examiners and 95 per cent of WJEC examiners agreed with “I receive sufficient briefing about a paper and mark scheme before I begin my marking for each exam”.

Principal examiners and marking team leaders were more likely than other groups of examiners to agree that they had received sufficient training. Ninety-one per cent of principal examiners and 94 per cent of team leaders agreed with this statement. Marking team leaders were the most likely to agree that they received sufficient briefing (93 per cent agreed compared with 83 per cent across the other groups of examiners).

The proportion of examiners agreeing with these statements increased with level of examining experience. For example, 76 per cent of examiners with less than one year of examining experience agreed they had received sufficient training, compared with 91 per cent of those with 15 or more years of examining experience. Seventy-eight per cent of examiners with less than one year of examining experience agreed

they received sufficient briefing before they began marking, compared with 86 per cent of those with 15 or more years of examining experience.

There was no material difference in responses between examiners who had experience of item-level marking or whole script marking, or those who marked on-screen rather than on paper.

Across the different subjects (excluding subjects with a very low number of responses), examiners in PE, German, music, maths and French gave the highest proportion of positive responses to both statements. Across these subjects, 92 to 95 per cent of examiners answered positively the statement about training, and 91 to 94 per cent answered positively the statement about briefing.

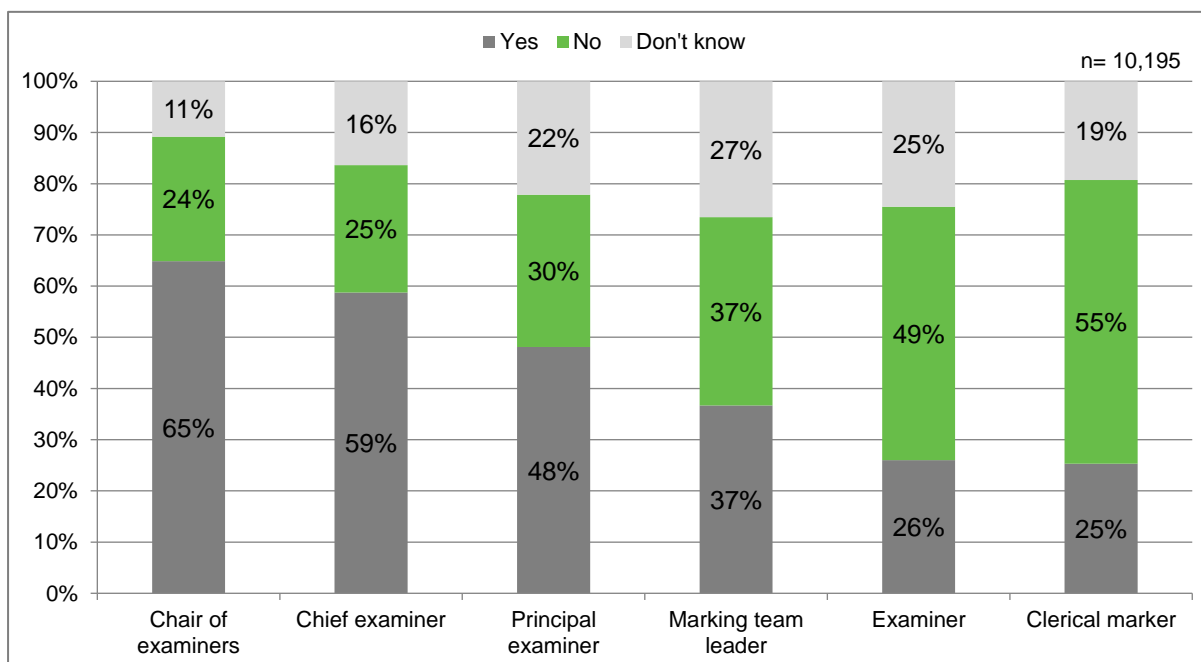
The lowest proportion of positive responses came from sociology examiners (73 per cent agreed they had received sufficient training and 70 per cent agreed they received sufficient briefing), followed by examiners in psychology (79 per cent/72 per cent) and geography (84 per cent/82 per cent).

Across the other major subjects, 85 per cent of English examiners felt they had received sufficient training and the same proportion agreed they received sufficient briefing. History examiners were even more positive: 89 per cent agreed with both statements. In the various science subjects, between 88 and 92 per cent of examiners felt they had received sufficient training, and between 85 and 89 per cent agreed they received sufficient briefing.

In a separate question, we asked examiners whether they felt any aspects of initial examiner training could be improved (excluding the standardisation process). Thirty-one per cent of respondents thought improvements could be made, 45 per cent did not think initial training could be improved, and 24 per cent said they did not know.

The more senior examiners were more likely to think initial training could be improved (see figure 22). Sixty-five per cent of chairs of examiners, 59 per cent of chief examiners and 48 per cent of principal examiners thought improvements could be made, compared with only 26 per cent of examiners. Clerical examiners were the most likely to disagree that initial training could be improved: this is likely to reflect the more straightforward marking these examiners undertake.

Figure 22: “Do you feel that there are any aspects of the initial examiner training which could be improved?” (question 31)



Note: Excludes nine respondents who did not answer this question.

The least experienced examiners were more likely to believe that initial training could be improved: 40 per cent of examiners with less than one year of examining experience thought improvements could be made. However, examiners with very high levels of examining experience also thought initial training could be improved: 36 per cent of respondents with 15 or more years of experience said they thought initial training could be improved.

Across the different exam boards, examiners at CCEA and WJEC were the least likely to think improvements could be made: only 16 per cent of CCEA examiners and 20 per cent of WJEC examiners thought training could be improved. This is likely to reflect CCEA and WJEC using face-to-face standardisation for the majority of papers. Even though our question explicitly excluded standardisation, the free text responses to this question indicated that many examiners had standardisation in mind when they answered the questions.

Examiners at the IB were the most likely to believe that initial training could be improved: 43 per cent of IB examiners said improvements could be made. Thirty-four per cent of AQA examiners said initial training could be improved, compared with 27 per cent of examiners across the other exam boards. Twenty-six per cent of examiners at Pearson Edexcel said improvements could be made, compared with 31 per cent of examiners across the other exam boards.

We asked the examiners who said initial training for examiners could be improved to tell us how. Around 3,000 examiners provided us with a comment.

Around 25 per cent of comments referenced a general need for a greater quantity and/or quality of training, for example comments such as “we could have more” and “two days rather than one”. This lack of specific comment may suggest that these examiners were relatively satisfied with initial examiner training and only had minor niggles they would like to see resolved.

Approximately 20 per cent of comments expressed a preference for face-to-face training rather than training delivered remotely (online). However, the descriptions of the training in many of these comments suggest that many examiners were referring to online and face-to-face standardisation, even though they used the term training rather than standardisation.

Some examiners felt examining was an isolating experience, and online and remote training and support only compounded this sense of isolation. Others felt online training gave them less confidence than face-to-face training. The ability to verbalise and discuss the questions, and ask questions, was encouraging and made them more confident in their ability to apply the mark schemes effectively.

Twelve per cent of comments referenced training for new examiners. Responses were broad-ranging, but the overall message was there should be more training for examiners, it should be face-to-face and it should be compulsory. Respondents also said new examiners should have more support and be more closely monitored, and there should be more guidance material available for them.

“... it is clear that new examiners are underprepared and need a great deal of help and monitoring in the initial stages of live marking.”

Marking team leader, maths

Marking team leaders were particularly likely to comment about new examiner training. Team leaders made up 15 per cent of the respondents who said initial training could be improved, but accounted for 36 per cent of the respondents who mentioned new examiner training.

The provision of clearer guidance and examples, including pre-marked scripts, was mentioned by 190 examiners. There was a wide range of suggestions. One common suggestion, mentioned by several respondents, was it would be useful to have more information for subjective subjects and guidance to help them mark high-ability and atypical responses.

“More specific evidence of marked script examples that fit all the grade levels.”

Examiner, English

Although we asked examiners to exclude their experiences of standardisation from their comments, a third of responses included comments about standardisation.

“Online standardisation is an absolute nightmare. Meeting other examiners and team leaders is essential and does not happen anymore. It is not possible to 'catch' a standard over the internet as it was in a meeting.”

Examiner, English

“Face to face standardisation is far superior to online standardisation as you can get a real feel for the exam.”

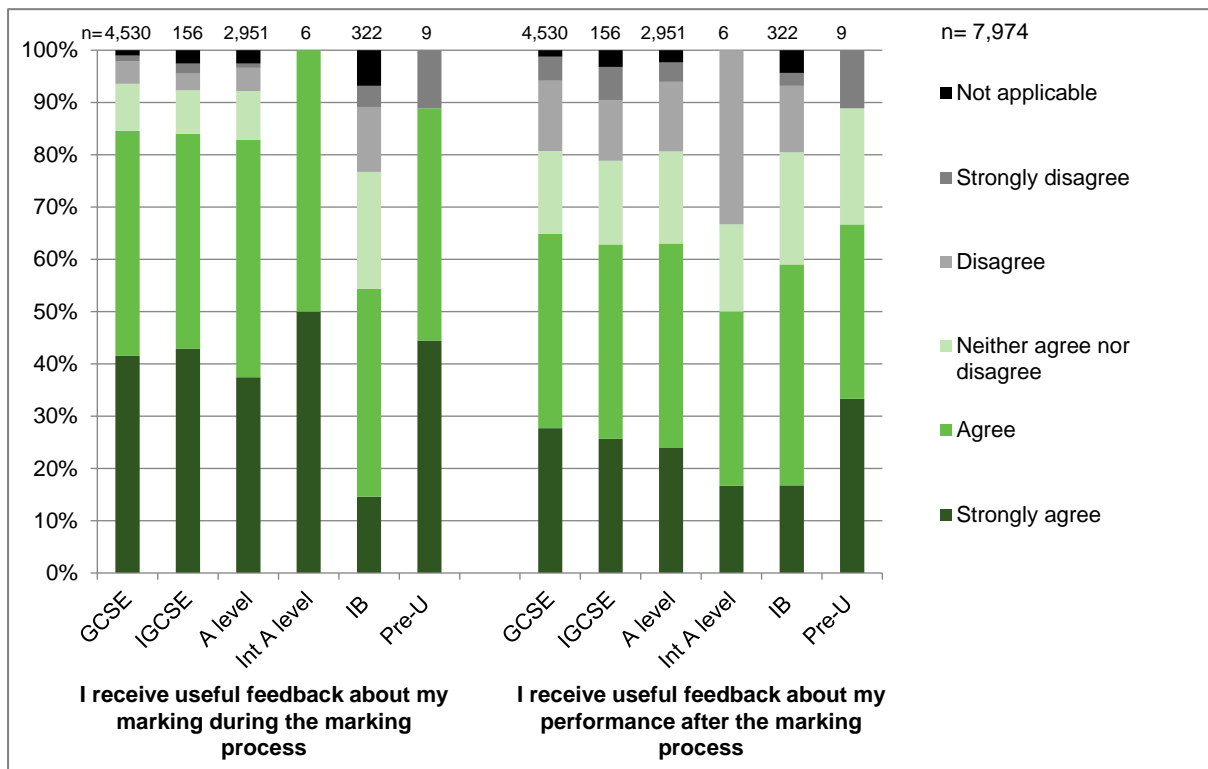
Examiner, science

7.3.2 Current experience of marking – receiving feedback

The questions about marking feedback received the lowest proportion of positive responses. Eighty-three per cent of respondents agreed they received useful feedback about their marking during the marking process, and 63 per cent agreed they received useful feedback after the marking process had ended.

Examiners of the IB qualification gave the lowest proportion of positive responses to the question about feedback during the marking process (54 per cent).

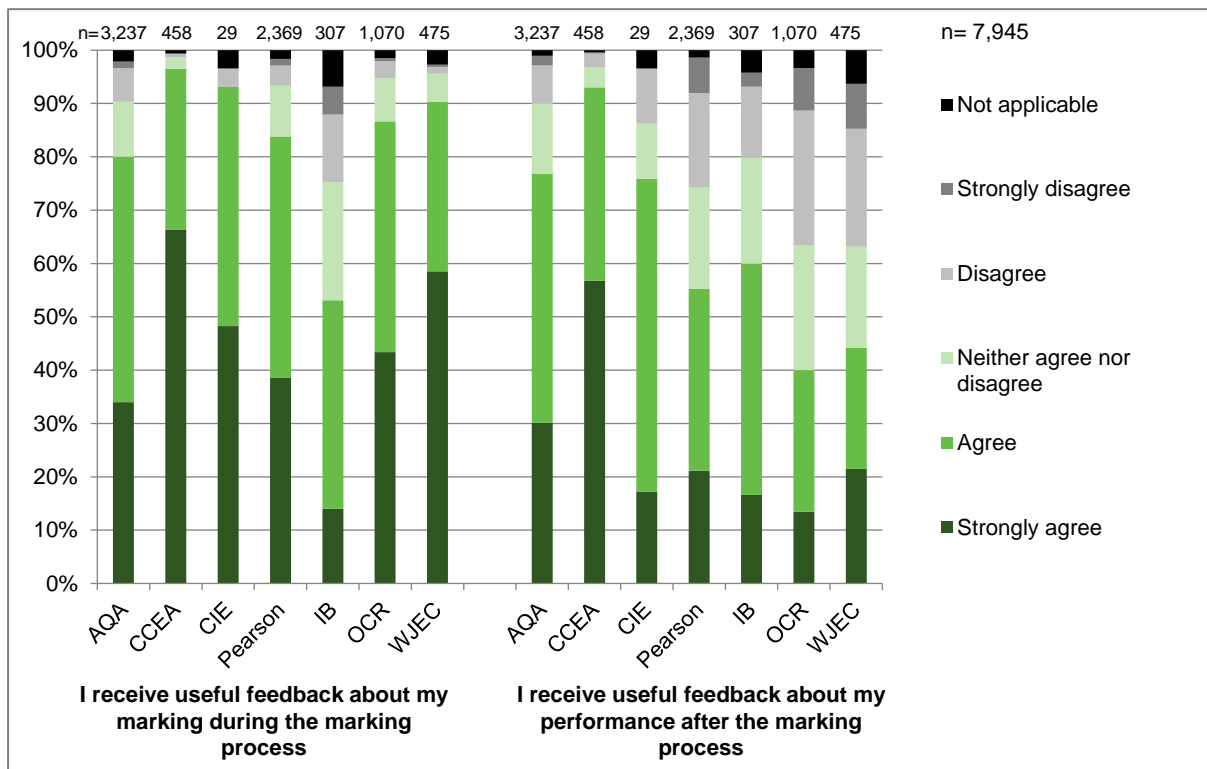
Figure 23: How much do you agree with the following statements? (Q28)



Note: Only includes examiners who examine only one qualification type.

Comparing responses to these two statements by exam board (see figure 24), CCEA examiners gave the highest proportion of positive responses: 97 per cent agreed they received useful feedback during marking and 93 per cent agreed they received useful feedback after the marking process. The lowest proportion of positive responses to the statement about feedback during the marking process was given by IB examiners (53 per cent) and the lowest proportion of positive responses to the statement about feedback after the marking process was given by OCR examiners (40 per cent), even though 87 per cent felt they received useful feedback during the marking process.

Figure 24: How much do you agree with the following statements? (Q28)



Note: Only includes examiners who work for only one exam board. Excludes examiners working for exam boards other than the seven main exam boards (21).

Less experienced examiners were less likely, compared with examiners with more experience, to feel they received enough useful feedback after the end of the marking process. Fifty-one per cent of examiners with less than one year of experience answered this statement positively, and the proportion of positive responses increased with greater levels of experience, up to 70 per cent for examiners with 15 or more years of examining experience. This suggests that examiners would appreciate more detailed feedback, particularly in their first year of examining, but also in their first three years of examining.

There was no difference in responses to the statement about feedback during marking from examiners who marked predominantly on-screen and examiners who marked predominantly paper scripts. However, there were differing responses to the statement about feedback after the marking process: 59 per cent of examiners who marked on-screen agreed with this statement, compared with 60 per cent of examiners who marked paper scripts and 64 per cent of examiners who marked both on-screen and paper scripts.

The examiners who gave the highest proportion of positive responses to the statement about feedback during marking were examiners in physics (90 per cent), German (90 per cent) and maths (88 per cent). This is in contrast to examiners of

general studies (76 per cent), psychology (76 per cent) and sociology (77 per cent). Across the other major subjects, in the science subjects between 85 and 90 per cent of examiners agreed they received useful feedback during marking, compared with 85 per cent of geography examiners, 83 per cent of history examiners and 79 per cent of English examiners.

The examiners giving the highest proportion of positive responses to the statement about feedback after the marking process were examiners of German (79 per cent), media studies (73 per cent) and PE (72 per cent). The examiners who gave the lowest proportion of positive responses to this statement were examiners of classical subjects (54 per cent), politics (55 per cent), and biology and psychology (both 57 per cent). Across some other major subjects, 67 per cent of English examiners, 64 per cent of maths examiners, 62 per cent of geography examiners and 60 per cent of history examiners agreed they received useful feedback after the marking process.

7.3.3 Current experience of marking – support during marking

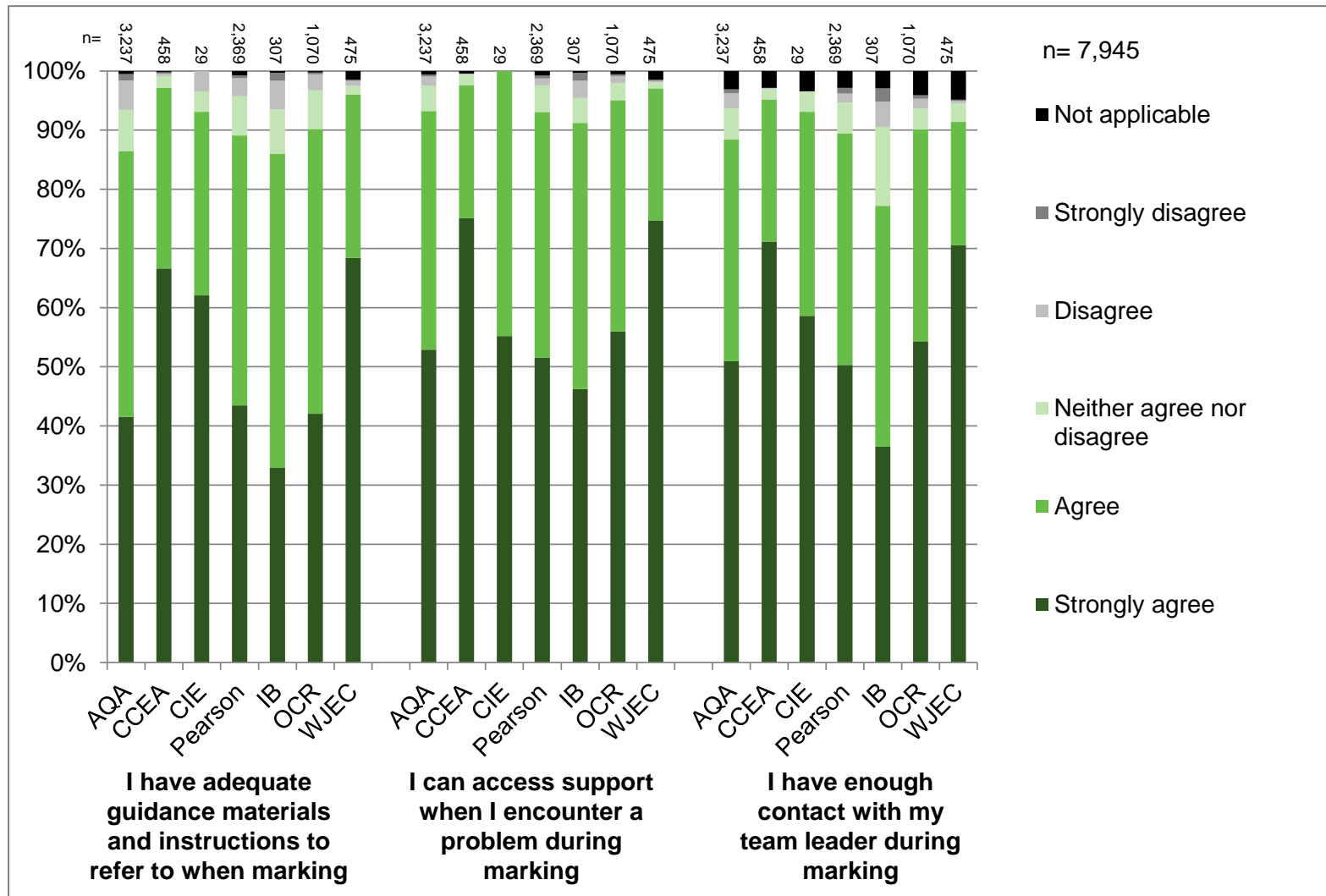
Eighty-nine per cent of examiners agreed they had “adequate guidance materials and instructions to refer to when marking” and 94 per cent agreed they could “access support when I encounter a problem during marking”. Eighty-nine per cent of examiners agreed they had “enough contact with my team leader during marking”.

These responses did not vary by qualification, with two exceptions:

- The IB, where only 77 per cent of examiners agreed they had enough contact with their team leaders. This is likely to be linked to IB examiners living in a number of countries, which means examiners and their team leaders may not live in the same time zone.
- The International A level, where a higher proportion of examiners agreed they could access support if they encountered a problem (100 per cent) compared with examiners of other qualifications. This reflects a very small survey sample size of only six examiners of International A levels.

Across the different exam boards (see figure 25), CCEA and WJEC examiners gave the most consistently positive responses (never lower than 95 per cent) across all three questions. IB examiners gave the lowest proportion of positive responses. Across the four other exam boards, the proportion of positive responses was broadly similar.

Figure 25: “How much do you agree with the following statements?” (question 28)



Note: Only includes examiners who work for only one exam board. Excludes examiners working for exam boards other than the main seven (21).

Across all three questions about guidance and support, examiners with less than one year of examining experience gave the lowest proportion of positive responses (this group was a relatively small survey sample of 142 respondents). Only 79 per cent of examiners with less than one year of experience felt they had adequate guidance materials. The proportion of positive responses to this statement increased with the examiners' experience, although the proportion plateaued at around 3 to 5 years of examining experience (89 per cent positive responses).

Across the different subjects examined, the spread of the proportion of positive responses to some statements was very small. For example, the proportion of positive responses to "I can access support when I encounter a problem during marking" ranged from 90 per cent agreement (sociology) to 98 per cent agreement (media studies). Positive responses to "I have enough contact with my team leader" ranged from 85 per cent (sociology) to 98 per cent (German).

There was a broader range of responses to the statement "I have adequate guidance materials and instructions". German examiners gave the highest proportion of positive responses (97 per cent) followed by examiners of French and art and design (both 95 per cent). At the other end of the scale, psychology examiners gave the lowest proportion of positive responses (76 per cent), followed by sociology (81 per cent), design and technology and geography (both 85 per cent).

7.3.4 Current experience of marking – examiner confidence

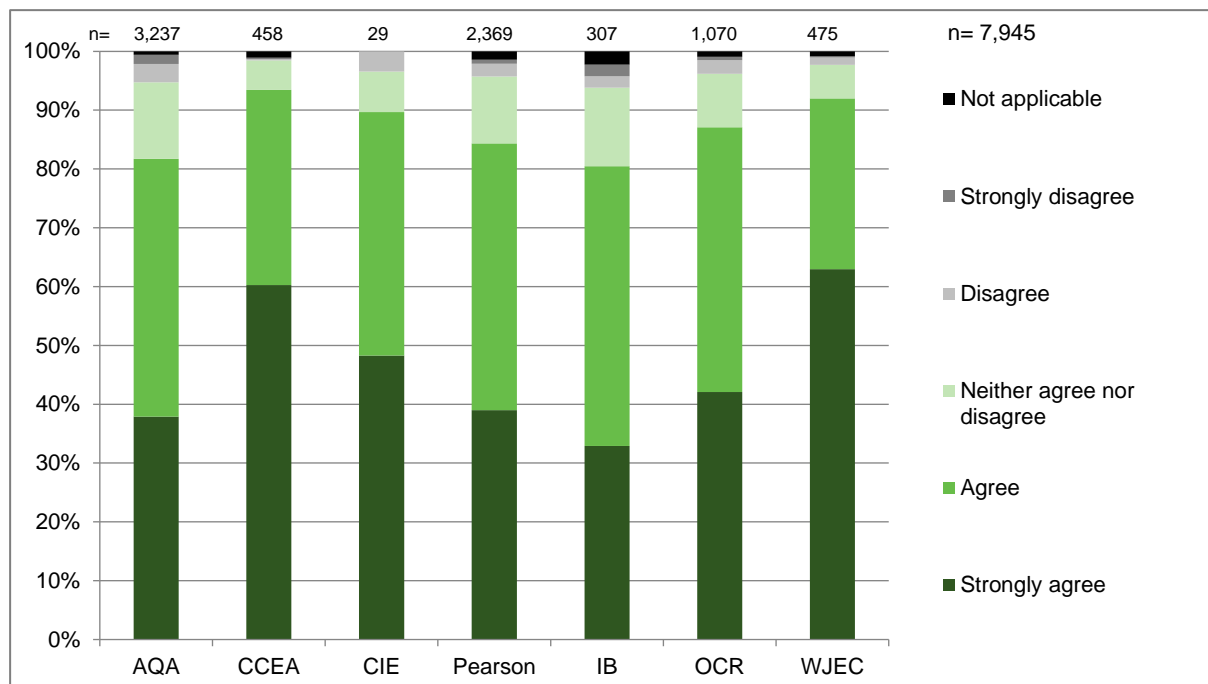
The statement "I am confident in my ability to mark accurately and reliably" received the highest proportion of positive responses (96 per cent) given to any of the questions we asked all the examiners. The two statements that received a higher proportion of positive responses, which we only asked senior examiners to respond to, were: "I am confident monitoring the work of other examiners" and "I am confident giving support and feedback to other examiners", both of which received 98 per cent positive responses.

Eighty-six per cent of examiners agreed that "external exams are marked accurately and reliably in my exam board". This suggests that, while examiners are highly confident about both their own and their exam board's ability to mark exams accurately and reliably, they have a higher level of confidence in their own ability. This may reflect examiners having limited knowledge of the quality checks that exam boards carry out, a hypothesis supported by findings from our focus groups.

Responses to the statement "I am confident in my ability to mark accurately and reliably" did not vary notably by exam board, but the responses to "external exams are marked accurately and reliably in my exam board" did vary by exam board (see figure 26). CCEA examiners gave the highest proportion of positive responses (93 per cent), closely followed by WJEC examiners (92 per cent). IB examiners gave the

lowest proportion of positive responses (81 per cent), followed closely by AQA examiners (82 per cent).

Figure 26: How much do you agree with the following statements? (question 28) Responses to the statement “External exams are marked accurately and reliably in my exam board.”



Note: Only includes examiners who work for only one exam board. Excludes examiners working for exam boards other than the seven main exam boards (21).

More experienced examiners were more likely to give positive responses to both statements. The proportion of positive responses rose on a sliding scale along with the examiners' years of experience.

The proportion of examiners who agreed they were confident in their ability to mark accurately and reliably had a relatively narrow spread by subject, mostly ranging from 99 to 94 per cent. The main outliers were sociology (89 per cent agreed) and psychology (90 per cent), both subjects that scored a relatively low proportion of positive responses across the other questions. The subjects with examiners giving the highest proportion of positive responses were PE, and art and design (both 99 per cent), design and technology, German, chemistry, maths, and science (all 98 per cent).

Across the statement about examiners' confidence in their exam board's ability to mark exams accurately and reliably, there was a broader spread of responses. The highest proportion of positive responses came from examiners of science (93 per cent), chemistry (91 per cent), and religious studies and PE (both 90 per cent). The lowest proportion of positive responses (excluding subjects with a very low volume of

responses) came from examiners of psychology (70 per cent), sociology (75 per cent), economics (76 per cent) and drama, English, business studies and media studies (all 83 per cent).

7.4 Examiners' perspectives on the main challenges of marking

We asked the survey respondents to tell us what they saw as their main challenges in reliably marking exams in the subjects they examined. Around 9,000 examiners (88 per cent of the survey respondents) provided a comment. Although there was a broad range of comments made, some key themes emerged.

Time available for marking (mentioned in 16 per cent of comments)

The issue most frequently mentioned by examiners was time, specifically the amount of marking that examiners needed to complete within the marking timescale. From those respondents who elaborated further, this issue either arose from the timescales and the volume of scripts set by the exam board or the pressures of trying to juggle examining with a day job.

“Time pressures - too many scripts to mark in a short period of time. Exam boards have serious problems with admin which often knock 4 or 5 days off a timescale.”

Examiner, modern foreign languages

“Trying to fit in marking around full time work as a teacher and head of department especially when marking in January series of exams.”

Examiner, health and social care

The distribution across the exam boards of the examiners who mentioned time pressures was representative of the survey as a whole.

Standardisation (mentioned in 14 per cent of comments)

In common with the feedback given in response to our question about initial examiner training, many of these responses were objections to the replacement of face-to-face standardisation with online standardisation. Other responses made a clearer link between face-to-face standardisation and the examiner's ability to mark accurately:

“Loss of the old standardisation meetings where examiners could dissect each question thoroughly and begin the marking with more confidence.”

Examiner, psychology

“Not having sufficient ‘feel’ for a mark scheme because all one sees is a final electronic version – with a standardisation meeting the mark scheme discussion occupied significant time and effort.”

Examiner, science

Mark schemes (mentioned in 11 per cent of comments)

The respondents’ points about mark schemes tended to fall into two categories. The first related to issues with the mark scheme itself, such as it being too vague or too prescriptive. The responses here were quite inconsistent and reflect the differences in mark schemes between different papers and different subjects. The second point related to the examiner’s ability to understand and correctly apply the mark scheme.

Consistency and accuracy of marking (mentioned in 11 per cent of comments)

The respondents’ points tended to be generic comments that made a general reference to the consistency and accuracy of marking. Some examiners compared their experiences with different exam boards. There was no clear pattern of responses here.

Maintaining high standards (mentioned in 6 per cent of comments)

Many of these responses were quite general, but the answers by a number of examiners suggested that they were highly motivated to perform well as examiners, and they strived for high standards. Others referred to the difficulty in maintaining consistency over time.

“Individually imposed standards; I get very cross with myself when I miss things.”

Examiner, science

“Ensuring that my marking is consistently of the same high standard, throughout the marking period.”

Marking team leader, history

Other references made up less than 5 per cent of the total number of responses. Nonetheless, the challenges of marking more subjective subjects came up relatively frequently: there were 245 references to the challenges of making judgments when marking subjective subjects, and 243 references to the need for training to help examiners make subjective judgments in their marking.

7.5 Examiners' views on how the quality of marking could be improved

We asked examiners to tell us how they thought the quality of marking of external exams in their exam boards could be improved. Around 80 per cent of respondents, 8,290 examiners provided us with a comment. Many of the same themes emerged from this question as from the question about what they saw as their main challenges in reliably marking exams in the subjects they examined (see section above). The most common themes were as follows:

Standardisation (mentioned in 17 per cent of comments)

These comments echoed examiners' responses to other questions, stating a preference for face-to-face standardisation meetings over online standardisation. The reasons given for this preference varied. One examiner noted it was time consuming for him to print out the documents he needed for online standardisation, and another said online standardisation was "daunting for all examiners, especially those who are older". Most comments made more general observations that face-to-face standardisation was more effective and resulted in more consistent marking than online standardisation.

The exam boards that use online standardisation (AQA, the IB, OCR and Pearson Edexcel) understandably received more negative criticism about their approach to standardisation than CCEA, CIE and WJEC, which use face-to-face standardisation for almost all of their papers. Where examiners compared the different exam boards' approaches to standardisation, they expressed many different points of view. With the exception of the view that face-to-face standardisation is preferable to online standardisation, there was no consensus about which exam board had the best approach to standardisation.

Time and deadlines (mentioned in 12 per cent of comments)

The need for more time to meet deadlines was mentioned consistently by examiners across all the exam boards.

"A little more time would be helpful. Since online marking appeared everything has to be done in just over two weeks for 450 scripts."

Examiner, science

Some examiners suggested that they wanted to be able to take some time off from their teaching duties (during term time) to have more time for marking.

Training (mentioned in 7 per cent of comments)

Most of these comments were relatively short (for example, “more training”). A number of comments returned to the theme of standardisation and the preference for face-to-face standardisation meetings rather than online standardisation.

“Return to involving examiners in a one day moderation/training day. It is the face to face discussion of the topic with other professionals that brings a clear group understanding. This cannot be emulated by conference calling or by 100 phone calls or emails from even the best team leader.”

Examiner, science

Mark schemes (mentioned in 6 per cent of comments)

Many examiners who commented on mark schemes said the mark schemes needed to be less ambiguous, contain more detail and be more explicit. However, there were also comments that took the opposite view.

“I sometimes feel the marking schemes are more detailed and complex than is actually needed.”

Marking team leader, history

“I think the process is very thorough and believe that mark schemes are as good as they can reasonably be.”

Marking team leader, science

Feedback from exam boards (mentioned in 5 per cent of comments)

The references to feedback included requests for more feedback from exam boards at the beginning of the marking process, during the marking process and when marking had ended.

“Quicker feedback of initial marked papers.”

Examiner, history

“To ensure team leaders give continuous feedback throughout the marking process.”

Examiner, maths

“Feedback at the end: we presume we have done well since we are invited to mark the next year.”

Marking team leader, religious studies

7.6 Other comments made by examiners

In our final survey question, we asked our respondents whether they had any further comments about their experiences of examining or about the examining process in general. Some 7,122 respondents provided us with comments. As may be expected with a less specific question, the responses were wide ranging, achieving a wide spread of themes. The most common theme was standardisation (mentioned in 12 per cent of comments). Examiners reiterated their dislike of online standardisation and preference for face-to-face standardisation. Some drew a clear distinction between online standardisation (which they disliked) and on-screen marking (which they liked), for example:

“After initial concerns about online marking, I am a complete convert BUT...I feel the standardisation meeting, face to face and not online, is crucial.”

Examiner, maths

“Online marking works well. Online standardisation doesn’t.”

Examiner, maths

In contrast, other respondents were opposed to both online standardisation and on-screen marking.

The second most common theme was the time available for examining (mentioned in 8 per cent of responses to this question), and included comments about the difficulties examiners had in being released from their centres to attend training and standardisation sessions.

“Attitudes in schools (well, mine at least) seem to have changed with head teachers increasingly reluctant to allow staff to take time off even when the school is reimbursed. As most marking is done online this is less of an issue, but it does mean staff cannot become senior examiners as this necessitates time off to do pre standardisation work.”

Examiner, sociology

There were also a number of positive comments (made in 7 per cent of responses) from examiners about how much they enjoyed examining, valued the importance of their work and noticed the benefits it had upon their teaching.

“I enjoy the challenge very much. A great privilege to contribute.”

Examiner, religious studies

“Different sort of challenge to teaching, but my experiences in examining have made me a better teacher.”

Marking team leader, science

Our teachers’ survey found that teachers perceive pay to be a key improvement required to the system, but the spontaneous responses to the question of pay in our examiners’ survey suggest that this is not necessarily the case. While income is a factor in an examiner’s decision to start marking, examiners’ comments about what motivated them to continue examining related more to their pride in making a contribution, growing their skills and finding their role personally rewarding. Although some examiners commented they would appreciate better pay (from 3 per cent of survey respondents), the comments suggested that they viewed their pay as an expression of the value placed upon their role, rather than as their prime motivating factor for examining.

Another difference between the teachers’ survey and the examiners’ survey is that teachers thought there was an issue around the recruitment of good examiners. Although a handful of examiners did express concerns about recruitment and said minimum requirements (for example, minimum teaching experience) should be higher, most felt these issues were matters to be addressed through training, and recruitment was not a theme of responses to this question.

7.7 Senior examiners’ perspectives on the marking process

We asked a number of questions specific to the experiences of examiners with a supervisory role in the examining process. Across all the questions, the proportion of positive responses was very high, ranging from 87 to 98 per cent. The consistently high proportion of positive responses meant there was relatively little variation in responses across the different qualifications and/or exam boards.

We received a very small number of responses from senior examiners who only examined Pre-U qualifications (3) or International A levels (2), and also from examiners working only for CIE and no other exam boards (8). Therefore, we have excluded these responses from the analysis.

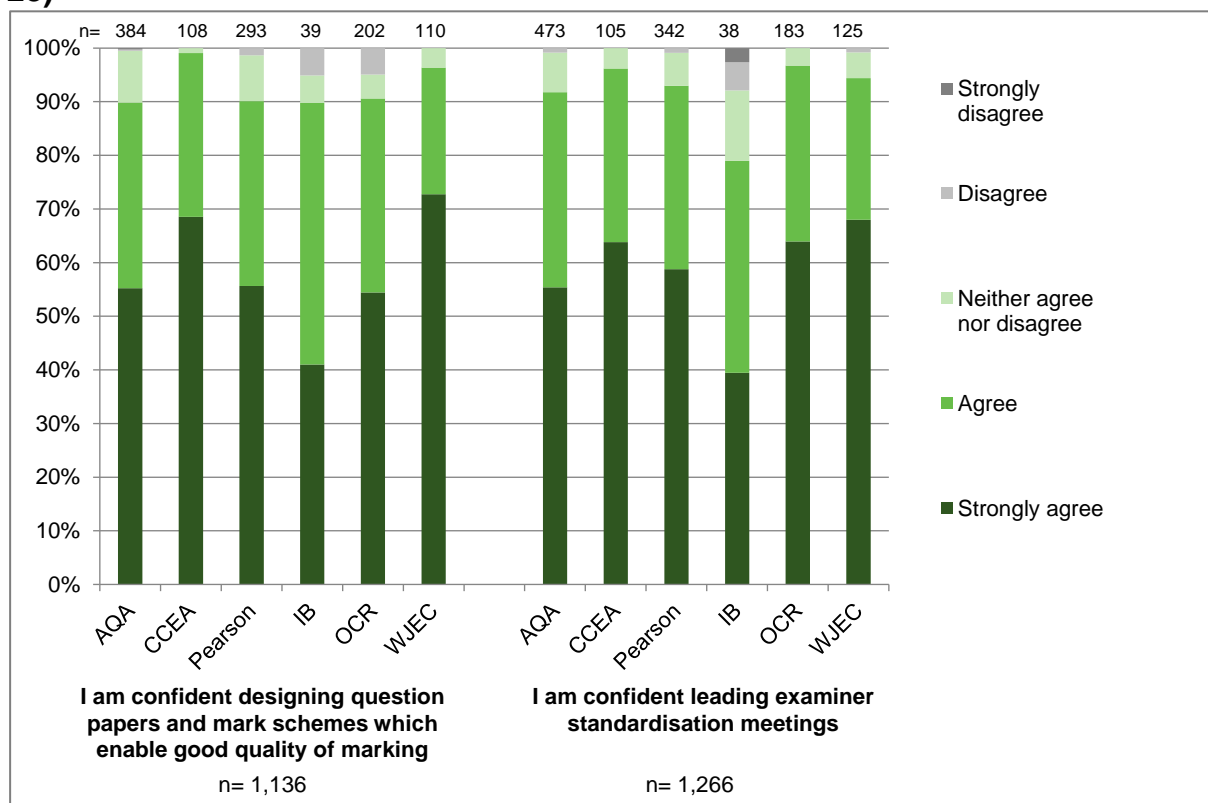
7.7.1 Developing mark schemes and question papers

Ninety-two per cent of senior examiners agreed they were confident “designing mark schemes and question papers which enable good quality of marking”, and 93 per cent agreed they were confident about “leading examiner standardisation meetings”.

There were no notable variations in responses across qualifications with the exception of IB examiners, who were less likely to agree they felt confident about leading examiner standardisation meetings (77 per cent).

Across the exam boards (see figure 27), CCEA senior examiners were the most likely to agree they felt confident about designing mark schemes and question papers (99 per cent), and OCR senior examiners were the most likely to agree they were confident about leading standardisation meetings (97 per cent). IB senior examiners were the least likely to agree they felt confident about leading standardisation meetings (79 per cent).

Figure 27: “How much do you agree with the following statements?” (question 28)



Note: Only includes senior examiners who work for only one exam board. The number of “not applicable” responses was relatively high for these statements (779 in response to the statement about designing mark schemes and question papers, and 638 in response to the statement about leading standardisation meetings). Therefore, “not applicable” responses have been excluded.

None of the senior examiners who answered the survey had less than three years of examining experience. Senior examiners with more examining experience were more confident in their ability to design mark schemes and question papers, and to lead examiner standardisation meetings than less experienced senior examiners.

7.7.2 Training and monitoring examiners

Ninety-four per cent of senior examiners agreed they were “confident training other examiners” and 98 per cent were “confident monitoring the work of other examiners”. This did not vary notably by qualification.

Ninety-three per cent of senior examiners agreed they were “clear when I need to stop an examiner from marking”. There was some variation across qualifications in the responses to this statement. Examiners of IGCSEs gave the highest proportion of positive responses (94 per cent, not statistically significant) and IB examiners gave the lowest proportion of positive responses (86 per cent, statistically significant).

There was little variation in the proportion of positive responses given by senior examiners from each of the different exam boards. The statement in this section with the greatest level of variation was “I am confident training other examiners”, where WJEC and OCR senior examiners gave the highest proportion of positive responses (97 per cent and 96 per cent respectively, but findings are not statistically significant for either WJEC or OCR). IB examiners gave the lowest proportion of positive responses (87 per cent). Across the two statements “I am confident monitoring the work of other examiners” and “I am clear when I need to stop an examiner from marking”, the proportion of positive responses was almost identical across all exam boards but the response was statistically lower for the IB. Almost 93 per cent of senior examiners agreed they were confident monitoring the work of other examiners and 87 per cent of senior examiners agreed they were clear about when they needed to stop an examiner from marking.

Chief examiners were more confident about training and monitoring examiners than principal examiners, and principal examiners more confident than team leaders, but the differences were very small:

- Ninety-seven per cent of chief examiners, 96 per cent of principal examiners and 93 per cent of team leaders agreed they were confident training other examiners.
- Ninety-nine per cent of chief examiners, 98 per cent of principal examiners and 97 per cent of team leaders agreed they were confident monitoring the work of other examiners.
- Ninety-six per cent of chief examiners, 95 per cent of principal examiners and 92 per cent of team leaders agreed they were clear about when to stop an examiner from marking.

7.7.3 Supporting and supervising examiners

Ninety-eight per cent of senior examiners agreed they felt “confident giving support and feedback to other examiners”. The proportion of positive responses varied very little by qualification.

Eighty-eight per cent of senior examiners agreed they had received “sufficient training to help me meet the requirements of my supervisory role”. The main outlier for this statement was the IB qualification, where 75 per cent of senior examiners agreed they had received sufficient training, which was significantly lower than the average of 89 per cent for senior examiners of other qualifications.

The proportion of senior examiners agreeing they “have had sufficient training to help me meet the requirements of my supervisory role” increased with greater levels of

experience. Seventy-nine per cent of senior examiners with 3 to 5 years' examining experience agreed with this statement, 86 per cent of those with 6 to 10 and 11 to 15 years' experience, and 90 per cent of those with more than 15 years' experience.

7.7.4 Senior examiners' perspectives: by subject

A number of subjects have been excluded from this analysis, as the low volume of responses we received meant the sample size for senior examiners of these subjects was too small for robust analysis. Eighteen subjects were included in this analysis.

Senior examiners in ICT gave the highest proportion of positive responses. They ranked third or above for the proportion of positive responses given to all statements except for "I have had sufficient training to help me meet the requirements of my supervisory role", where they gave one of the lowest proportions of positive responses (sixteenth out of 18 subjects). Senior examiners in design and technology also gave a high proportion of positive responses, with the exception of agreeing with statements about their confidence in leading standardisation meetings and training other examiners, where they gave some of the lowest proportions of positive responses across all the subjects.

Senior examiners in French gave a consistently low proportion of positive responses relative to senior examiners in other subjects (though still a high proportion in absolute terms). They gave the lowest proportion of positive responses to statements about monitoring the work of other examiners, knowing when to stop an examiner from marking, and leading standardisation meetings. This contrasts with the responses given to the statements put to all examiners, where the proportion of positive responses given by French examiners was higher than the overall average.

Senior examiners in English gave the lowest proportion of positive responses to the statement "I am confident designing question papers and mark schemes" (84 per cent agreed, which is still a high level of agreement), and ranked sixteenth in the proportion of positive responses given to the statement "I am confident leading standardisation meetings" (91 per cent agreed).

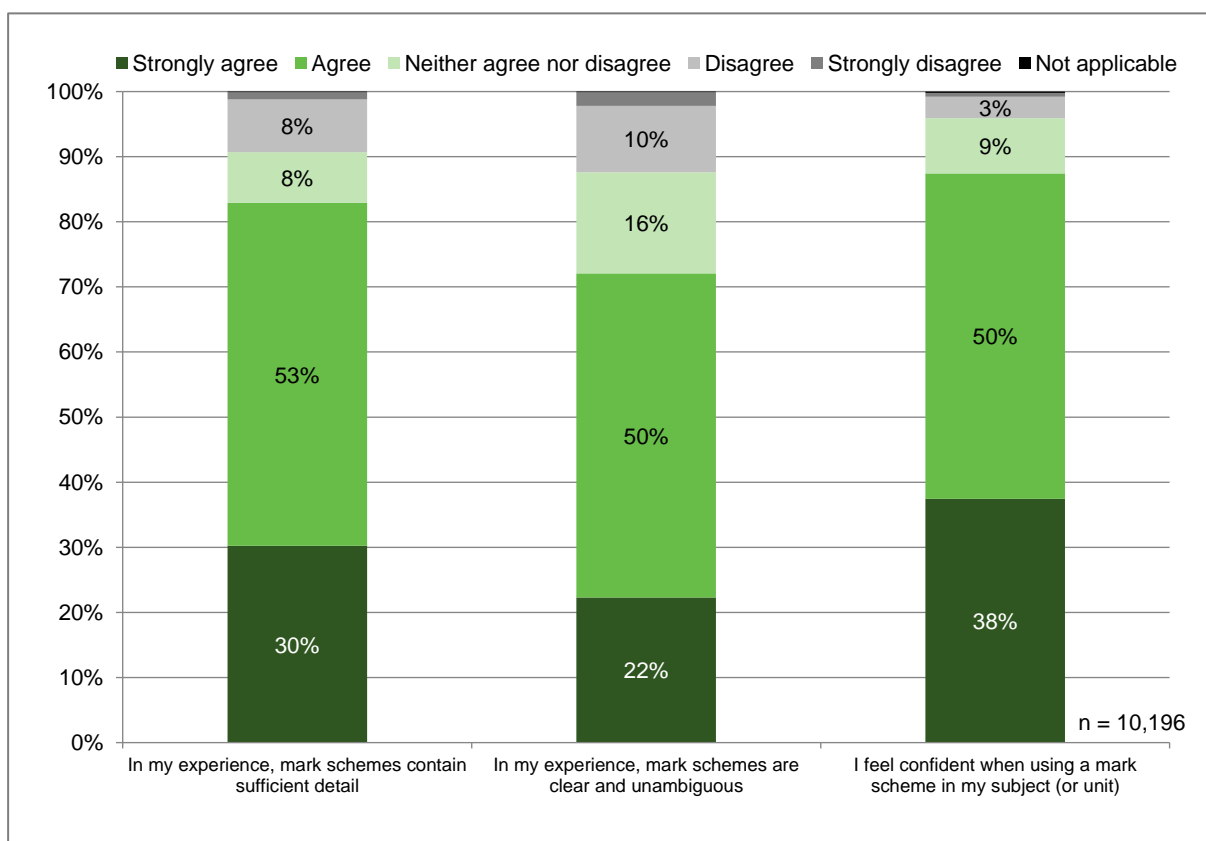
Senior examiners in maths answered all the statements fairly positively, ranking between sixth and tenth across all the questions asked. The lowest ranking for senior examiners in maths was the proportion of positive responses to the statement "I am confident monitoring the work of other examiners" (ranked tenth, 98 per cent agreed).

Across the science subjects, senior examiners in biology gave the lowest proportion of positive responses. Eighty-eight per cent of senior examiners in biology agreed they felt confident about designing question papers and mark schemes, which ranked them seventeenth out of 18 subjects.

7.8 Examiners' perspectives on mark schemes

We asked examiners to respond to three statements about mark schemes (see figure 28).

Figure 28: “How much do you agree with the following statements?” (question 29)



Note: Excludes eight respondents who did not answer this question.

Although the responses to these statements included a high proportion of positive responses, in comparison to the other sets of questions we asked in the survey these statements received some of the lowest proportions of positive responses.

In comparison to the other two statements, the statement “In my experience, mark schemes are clear and unambiguous” received a relatively high proportion of “neither agree nor disagree” responses (16 per cent) and “disagree/strongly disagree” responses (12 per cent). Examiners of the IB qualification were less likely to agree with this statement (64 per cent) than examiners of other qualifications (71 per cent).

Similarly, in response to the statement “I feel confident when using a mark scheme in my subject”, IB examiners were less likely to agree (82 per cent) than examiners of other qualifications (87 per cent).

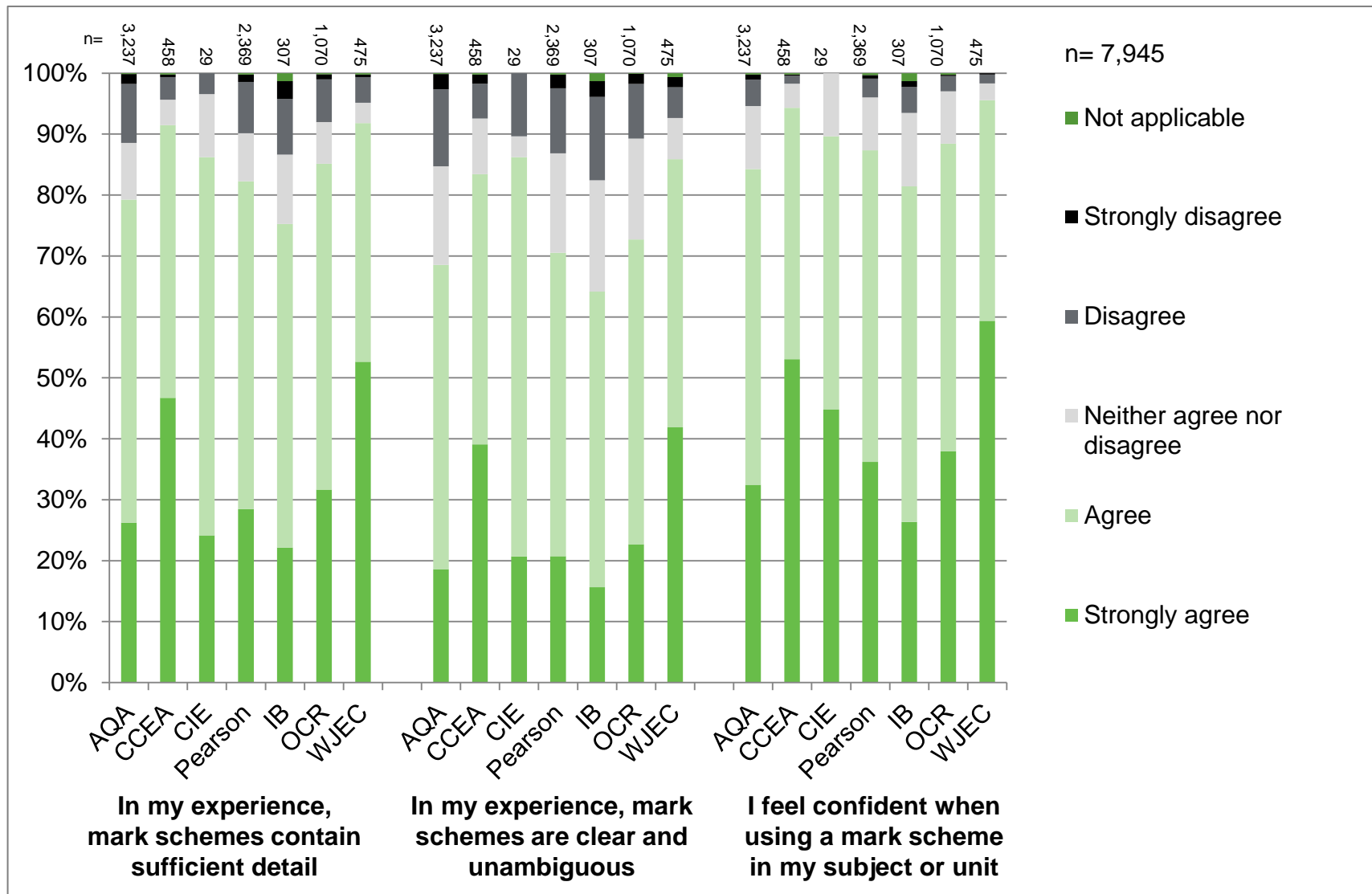
Comparing the responses by exam board worked for (see figure 29), examiners working for the IB were less likely to agree that “I feel confident when using a mark scheme in my subject” (82 per cent) than examiners working for other exam boards (87 per cent).

Figure 29 also shows responses to the statement “In my experience, mark schemes contain sufficient detail.” Examiners from CCEA and WJEC gave the highest proportion of positive responses to this statement (92 per cent) compared with the other examiners. The exam boards with the lowest proportions of positive responses to this statement, compared with the other examiners, were the IB (76 per cent) and AQA (79 per cent).

In response to the statement “In my experience, mark schemes are clear and unambiguous”, CCEA and WJEC examiners gave higher proportions of positive responses (84 per cent and 86 per cent, respectively). AQA and IB examiners again gave the lowest proportions of positive responses (69 per cent and 65 per cent, respectively).

The general pattern of responses was repeated in answers to the final statement “I feel confident when using a mark scheme in my subject (or unit)”. CCEA and WJEC examiners gave the highest proportions of positive responses (95 per cent and 96 per cent, respectively) and AQA and IB examiners the lowest proportions (84 per cent and 83 per cent, respectively).

Figure 29: “How much do you agree with the following statements?” (question 29)



Note: Only includes examiners who work for only one exam board. Excludes examiners working for exam boards other than the main seven (21).

Examiners with less than one year of examining experience were much more likely than average to give a negative response to the statements about mark schemes. This is particularly the case with the statement “In my experience, mark schemes are clear and unambiguous”, where 32 per cent of examiners with less than one year’s experience and 23 per cent of examiners with one year of experience disagreed with this statement.

7.8.1 Examiners’ perspectives on mark schemes: by subject examined

Maths examiners were the group most likely to agree mark schemes contained sufficient detail: 90 per cent agreed, compared with an overall average of 83 per cent. Maths examiners were followed by examiners in PE, chemistry, art and design, and languages other than French, German and Spanish: across all these subjects 88 per cent of examiners agreed that mark schemes contained sufficient detail. At the other end of the scale, only 60 per cent of examiners in psychology agreed with this statement, followed by 66 per cent of sociology examiners and 71 per cent of drama examiners. This is not necessarily surprising given the subjective nature of examining these subjects. Geography examiners were also relatively unlikely to agree with this statement (75 per cent). Across the other major subjects, the level of agreement was broadly similar to the overall average. In science subjects, 82 per cent of biology examiners, 85 per cent of physics examiners and 85 per cent of science examiners agreed that mark schemes contained sufficient detail. Eighty-three per cent of English examiners and 82 per cent of history examiners also agreed with this statement.

In response to the statement “In my experience, mark schemes are clear and unambiguous”, maths examiners were again the most likely to agree (83 per cent), followed by examiners in chemistry (78 per cent), languages other than French, German and Spanish (78 per cent), French (77 per cent) and general studies (77 per cent). The examiners least likely to agree with this statement were those examining sociology (54 per cent) and psychology (56 per cent). There was a high level of agreement with this statement across the science subjects: chemistry (78 per cent), physics (76 per cent), science (72 per cent) and biology (71 per cent). Across the other major subjects, 69 per cent of English examiners agreed with this statement, compared with 71 per cent of history examiners and 64 per cent of geography examiners.

Examiners of art and design were the most likely to agree they felt confident when using a mark scheme in their subject (95 per cent), followed by examiners in maths (93 per cent), chemistry (92 per cent) and French, music and physics (all 91 per cent). The level of agreement was high across the other two science subjects: science (90 per cent) and biology (88 per cent). Across the other major subjects, there was also a high level of agreement: history (87 per cent), English (85 per cent) and geography (84 per cent). The subjects where examiners felt least confident

about using a mark scheme were sociology (76 per cent) and psychology (72 per cent).

Appendix: survey questions

1. Have you worked as an examiner or marker of external examinations for an exam board in the last 2 years?
2. Which of the following qualifications do you examine?
 - a. GCE A levels
 - b. International A level
 - c. International Baccalaureate Diploma
 - d. Pre-U Diploma
 - e. GCSEs
 - f. IGCSEs
 - g. None of the above
3. Aside from the above, are there any other qualifications or assessments that you examine?
 - a. Functional skills
 - b. Diploma Principal Learning
 - c. ESOL
 - d. NVQ language qualifications
 - e. Other academic qualifications
 - f. Other vocational qualifications
 - g. National Curriculum assessments
 - h. Do not examine anything else

Please state the qualification or key stage.
4. Which exam board(s) do you currently examine for?
 - a. AQA
 - b. CCEA
 - c. CIE (Cambridge International Examinations)
 - d. IBO (International Baccalaureate Organisation)
 - e. Pearson Edexcel
 - f. OCR
 - g. WJEC
 - h. Other – please specify

5. Excluding those mentioned above, which existing exam board(s) have you ever examined for?
 - a. AQA
 - b. CCEA
 - c. CIE (Cambridge International Examinations)
 - d. IBO (International Baccalaureate Organisation)
 - e. Pearson Edexcel
 - f. OCR
 - g. WJEC
 - h. I haven't worked for any of the above in the past
6. How many years of examining experience do you have in total?
 - a. Less than a year
 - b. 1 year
 - c. 2 years
 - d. 3 to 5 years
 - e. 6 to 10 years
 - f. 10+ years
 - g. 15+ years
7. And how long have you worked as an examiner for your current exam board?
 - a. Less than a year
 - b. 1 year
 - c. 2 years
 - d. 3 to 5 years
 - e. 6 to 10 years
 - f. 10+ years
 - g. 15+ years
8. What is the most senior position that you currently hold at your exam board?
 - a. Chair of examiners
 - b. Chief examiner
 - c. Principal examiner
 - d. Marking team leader

- e. Examiner
 - f. Clerical or general marker
 - g. Other – please specify
9. Please indicate which of the following groups of subjects you examine.
- a. English
 - b. Mathematics
 - c. Science
 - d. Languages other than English, MFL and classical languages
 - e. Other (including social sciences and arts)
10. What do you consider to be your 'main' subject as an examiner? This is the subject that you examine that you feel you have the most expertise or experience in.
11. And what is the highest qualification that you have gained in your main subject?
- a. No formal qualification
 - b. GCSE/CSE/O level or equivalent
 - c. A level/Pre-U or equivalent
 - d. Undergraduate degree
 - e. Postgraduate degree
 - f. Doctorate
12. Have you ever worked as a teacher or lecturer?
- a. Yes I am currently a teacher
 - b. Yes I have teaching experience but am not currently teaching
 - c. No
13. How recent is your teaching or lecturing experience?
- a. Less than a year
 - b. 1 to 2 years
 - c. 3 to 5 years
 - d. 6 to 10 years
 - e. More than 10 years
14. How many years of teaching or lecturing experience do you have?
- a. Less than a year

- b. 1 year
- c. 2 years
- d. 3 to 5 years
- e. 6 to 10 years
- f. 10+ years
- g. 15+ years

15. Please describe your current or most recent teaching or lecturing role.

- a. Head teacher
- b. Assistant head teacher
- c. Deputy head teacher
- d. Head of department
- e. Head of year
- f. Teacher
- g. Supply teacher
- h. Lecturer/senior lecturer
- i. Other – please specify

16. What type of centre do you work in?

- a. Academy and/or free schools
- b. Comprehensive
- c. FE college
- d. Higher education
- e. Independent
- f. Primary or early years setting
- g. PRU/secure unit
- h. Special school
- i. State selective
- j. Other – please specify

17. Please indicate which of the following groups of subjects you teach (or used to teach).

- a. English
- b. Mathematics

- c. Science
 - d. Languages other than English, MFL and classical languages
 - e. Other (including social sciences and arts)
18. Do you teach or lecture for the same exam board specifications that you examine?
- a. Yes – I teach and mark the same specification(s)
 - b. Yes – I teach some of the specifications that I mark
 - c. No
19. Do you feel you receive enough support from your school or institution to carry out marking duties?
- a. Yes
 - b. No – please provide further details
20. Why did you want to become an examiner? (TICK ALL THAT APPLY.)
- a. I wanted to learn more about the specifications that I teach
 - b. I wanted to learn more about the examining process
 - c. Additional income
 - d. Professional development
 - e. It was encouraged by my employer
 - f. Another examiner recommended it to me
 - g. Other – please specify
21. Below is a list of some of the different aspects of the examining process. Please tell us which of the following you have carried out. (Please tick all that apply.)
- a. Online marking
 - b. Paper-based marking (traditional marking)
 - c. Item-level marking or marking 'clips' (when you are NOT able to see the rest of the student script)
 - d. Item-level marking or marking 'clips' (when you ARE able to see the rest of the student script)
 - e. Whole script marking
 - f. Design (or overseeing the design) of exam papers
 - g. Design (or overseeing the design) of mark schemes
 - h. Sampling and quality checking the marking of others

- i. Delivering training to examiners
 - j. Running standardisation meetings
 - k. Awarding of qualifications
 - l. Moderation of internally assessed units
22. And do you currently carry out your marking online or with hardcopies of scripts (traditional marking)?
- a. Predominantly in hardcopy
 - b. Predominantly online
 - c. Equally online and in hardcopy
23. When you are in the process of marking do you have a routine (i.e. reasonably predictable times and days when you mark)?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
24. What day of the week and time of the day do you carry out your examining work? (Please tick all that apply.)
- a. Early morning (5am to 9am): Weekday
 - b. Morning (9am to Midday): Weekday
 - c. Afternoon (Midday to 5pm): Weekday
 - d. Early evening (5pm to 9pm): Weekday
 - e. Night (9pm to Midnight): Weekday
 - f. Late night (Midnight to 5am): Weekday
 - g. Early morning (5am to 9am): Weekend
 - h. Morning (9am to Midday): Weekend
 - i. Afternoon (Midday to 5pm): Weekend
 - j. Early evening (5pm to 9pm): Weekend
 - k. Night (9pm to Midnight): Weekend
 - l. Late night (Midnight to 5am): Weekend
25. On average how many hours do you mark per day over the examining period?
- a. 1 to 2 hours
 - b. 3 to 4 hours
 - c. 5 to 6 hours
 - d. 7 to 8 hours

- e. 9 to 10 hours
- f. More than 10 hours

26. And where do you mainly carry out your examining work?

- a. Awarding organisation offices
- b. Home
- c. Other workplace
- d. Travelling
- e. Other – please describe where you do this

27. How much of a challenge do you find the following aspects of examining? (significant pressure, some pressure, slight pressure, no pressure, not applicable)

- a. Fitting examining work in around other work commitments
- b. Completing marking work to deadline
- c. Passing exam board quality assurance checks during live marking
- d. Knowing that my marking is important to the future lives of students

28. Thinking about your current experience of marking, how much do you agree with the following statements? (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable)

- a. I have received sufficient training to allow me to mark to a high standard
- b. I receive sufficient briefing about a paper and mark scheme before I begin my marking for each exam
- c. I receive useful feedback about my marking during the marking process
- d. I receive useful feedback about my performance after the marking process
- e. I have adequate guidance materials and instructions to refer to when marking
- f. I can access support when I encounter a problem during marking
- g. I have enough contact with my team leader during marking
- h. I am confident in my ability to mark accurately and reliably
- i. External examinations are marked accurately and reliably in my exam board

And as a senior examiner, how much do you agree with the following statements? (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable)

- j. I am confident designing question papers and mark schemes which enable good quality of marking
 - k. I am confident leading standardisation meetings
 - l. I am confident training other examiners
 - m. I am confident monitoring the work of other examiners
 - n. I am confident giving support and feedback to other examiners
 - o. I am clear when I need to stop an examiner from marking
 - p. I have had sufficient training to help me meet the requirements of my supervisory role
29. Next we would like to ask you about mark schemes. How much do you agree with the following statements? (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable)
- a. In my experience, mark schemes contain sufficient detail
 - b. In my experience, mark schemes are clear and unambiguous
 - c. I feel confident when using a mark scheme in my subject (or unit)
30. Could you please describe the training that you have received from your current exam board(s) since you have worked as an examiner?
31. Do you feel that there are any aspects of the initial examiner training which could be improved? (Please note we are not referring to the standardisation process.)
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
32. How do you believe that it could be improved?
33. What do you see as the main challenges that you face in reliably marking examinations in the subject(s) that you examine?
34. How might the quality of marking of external examinations in your exam board be improved? (Please consider all stages of the marking process as well as the personnel involved.)
35. Do you have any further comments at all about your experiences of examining or the examining process?
36. What part of the UK do you live in?
37. Aside from your examining work, are you currently retired?

38. If you would like us to email you a copy of your responses, please enter your email address.

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