Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

Report on vocational learning provision at key stage 4

January 2006

Content

Background

The Green Paper, *14–19: Extending opportunities, raising standards* (Department for Education and Skills, 2002),[1] set out proposals to further increase curriculum flexibility, enable students to learn at an appropriate pace, and pursue individually focused programmes to help them fulfil their potential. The proposals aimed to create space within the key stage 4 curriculum by making changes to statutory requirements. A key element of this new, broader and more flexible curriculum was to be vocational provision.

GCSEs in vocational subjects were introduced in September 2002 to:

- promote vocational learning
- help prepare learners for employment, further education or training
- give all learners the opportunity to gain a broad understanding of work in a particular vocational area, such as art and design or engineering
- provide access to a different type of teaching, learning and assessment experience
- engage learners with something practical and give them a chance to learn by doing
- enable mixing and matching of a variety of types of courses.

The GCSEs replaced the Part One GNVQ in seven subjects; applied science made the eighth qualification in the suite.

In response to the Green Paper, the Increased Flexibility for 14- to 16-Year-Olds Programme (IFP) was introduced in 2002. It aimed to enable many more students to take vocational qualifications (including the new GCSEs) and to learn in college, with a training provider or with an employer.

In 2004, for the first time, Secondary School Achievement and Attainment tables included all qualifications approved for use pre-16. All of the qualifications were allocated points under a new scoring system. QCA's annual 14–19 Curriculum Monitoring programme (see below) revealed that this has removed the disincentive to use a wider range of qualifications, and that in some cases it may be a significant driver to do so. This project provides a baseline measurement of, and judgement on, vocational provision at key stage 4.

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[1] Department for Education and Skills*, 14–19: Extending opportunities, raising standards. Consultation document* (Cm. 5342). The Stationary Office, London, 2002.

The project

This project sits within the policy context outlined above. Initially restricted to an evaluation of the new GCSEs in vocational subjects, its scope was expanded to include a wider investigation into the provision of all vocational qualifications offered to students at key stage 4.

The investigation aimed to:

- identify the different types of vocational provision available to students at key stage 4
- discover how and with what level of success vocational qualifications were being used at key stage 4
- explore the impact of the withdrawal of GNVQs, investigate how well prepared centres were for the withdrawal, and establish what alternative provision they were offering or intended to offer
- evaluate the success of the introduction of GCSEs in vocational subjects.

The information used in this report was gathered between February and April 2005.

It is supplemented by later findings from QCA's 2004/5 14–19 Curriculum Monitoring programme. While this programme is wider in scope and less detailed in areas of enquiry, it confirms the findings of this investigation in terms of the rationale for and nature of the increase in the vocational offer.

Data sources

It is our understanding that this is the only piece of research that attempts to look at the broad picture of vocational provision at key stage 4. It has necessitated use of a number of different data sources to ensure a comprehensive investigation and evaluation and the combination of large-scale quantitative data from the whole school population with quantitative and qualitative data from schools themselves. It benefited from the fact that 2004 was the first year during which all vocational results were collected as part of the performance measures. This encompassed entry level, levels 1 and 2 and qualifications of all types—general, vocational, occupational and key skills qualifications.

The sources include:

Centre visits

Twenty-nine selected schools were visited. The sample was taken from a list of 1,000 schools identified by the DfES as offering a significant vocational curriculum in terms of the number of students involved and/or the number of vocational courses offered. Structured interviews took place with the senior management team, subject teachers and key stage 4 students.

Questionnaires

- A questionnaire investigating vocational provision (IVP) was sent to 200 schools in addition to those visited. These 200 schools were considered to have the most extensive vocational provision available nationally, judged by the proportion of students gaining vocational qualifications or the number of different vocational qualifications they offered.
- Monitoring curriculum and assessment (MCA) questionnaires are issued annually by QCA. Questions on vocational provision were included and sent to a random and representative sample of 1,000 secondary schools in England. Three hundred and three responses were received.

Subject groups

Eight focus groups were held across England, one for each GCSE in a vocational subject. The structure of the meetings allowed teachers to express their views and observations on the qualification in their subject.

Qualifications data

The main sources of information about qualifications are:

- the National Information System for Vocational Qualifications (NISVQ), a database that relies on information provided by awarding bodies and offers nearly complete coverage of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and an indicative picture of Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQs) and occupational qualifications
- DfES Achievement and Attainment Tables data
- DfES Statistical First Releases, statistical tables published on the DfES website along with national qualifications data.

A detailed methodology of each of the sources can be found at Annex 3. All data used relates to those students who were aged 15 on 31 August 2003 (ie 16 at end of 2004 academic year).

QCA Monitoring Programme

QCA undertakes an annual 14–19 monitoring programme to find out how and why the curriculum is developing. In 2004/5 the main development was an increase in vocational provision at key stage 4, including but not limited to the introduction of GCSEs in vocational subjects and there is some cross-reference with that finding in this report.

Wider use of vocational qualifications has been stimulated by policy, backed by initiatives such as IFP and Pathfinders, changes to performance measures and the demise of GNVQ and development of its successors. Nine of 10 schools included at least one vocational subject in their year 10 curriculum. In nearly 15 per cent of schools, all year 10 students were required to take at least one vocational course.

Evidence for these findings was derived from:

- Questionnaires to providers
  - 14–16 schools' survey with 431 responses
  - 11–19 schools' survey with 426 responses

- Seminars and meetings with representatives from 47 case study schools and visits to 10 of these, interviewing senior management, teaching staff and students
  - Conferences with representatives from most LEAs and LSCs
  - Focus groups with practitioners from special schools; sixth form and further education (FE) colleges; and training providers

- The GNVQ successor project and information gathered from nine Pathfinder centres as they choose and introduce new vocational qualifications.

Summary and policy implications

National picture

The national picture of provision of vocational qualifications is varied, particularly in relation to centre type. While 23.9 per cent of the student cohort achieved at least one vocational qualification, 40 per cent of all schools had no students achieving vocational qualifications. Nearly three-quarters of Community Technology Colleges (CTC) students achieve at least one vocational qualification, as do one-third in academies and one-quarter in state schools but only 3.5 per cent in independent schools and 3 per cent in selective schools.

GCSEs in vocational subjects, or 'vGCSEs', accounted for 54 per cent of vocational qualifications achieved at key stage 4. GNVQs, which are in the process of being withdrawn, accounted for just below 33 per cent. All the other vocational awards, including NVQs, accounted for about 15 per cent, or 24,500 of the 164,070 vocational qualifications achieved. This can be compared with nearly 5 million GCSEs achieved by this cohort of students. It is notable that, of the total vocational qualifications achieved, over 45 per cent were ICT-based.

Most schools surveyed expected to increase the number of vocational qualifications offered to their students, and the withdrawal of GNVQs was leading them to explore a wider range of vocational qualifications.

Schools offer vocational qualifications at key stage 4 because they have specialist status, staff with appropriate expertise and enthusiasm and in some cases because specific funding is available. Schools also expect vocational qualifications to raise achievement, motivate students and encourage progression to level 3 qualifications.

Teachers believe that vocational qualifications are most important for students in the lower- or middle-attainment quartiles and least significant to those in the upper-attainment quartiles. Visits and focus groups confirm that in many schools vocational qualifications are targeted at lower- and middle-attainment groups. Despite this, the average GCSE score for students with vocational qualifications is 36.4 points while, for those without, the average is 36.3 points. If vGCSEs and GNVQs are discounted from the qualifications achieved, most vocational achievement is at level 1, confirming the use of the other vocational qualifications for students in the lower-attaining quartiles.

GCSEs in vocational subjects (vGCSEs)

Reactions to the introduction of vGCSEs have been mixed. Questionnaire respondents were generally positive about their experience, while teachers in the schools visited and those attending the focus groups were generally less satisfied. It is likely that this difference arises from the different approaches undertaken. As visits provide opportunity to discuss issues in detail, they may produce more evidence of problems.

Teachers of students in the lower-attainment quartile were more critical of the qualifications than those who taught more able students, as were teachers with previous experience of GNVQs who frequently described the new GCSEs as 'less vocational' than GNVQs.

There was general consensus that vGCSEs were most appropriate for more able students who can cope with the volume of written coursework and can research, explain, analyse and evaluate. The emphasis on written work was particularly problematic in more practical subjects such as applied art and design, applied ICT, manufacturing and engineering.

Yet, more able students were less likely to choose vGCSEs either because their size restricted the number of other subjects that could be studied and/or they were timetabled against more 'academic' subjects such as humanities or modern foreign languages. In some cases these students were discouraged from the choice.

There were many criticisms of the size, structure, content and assessment of vGCSEs. They were described by a number of teachers as boring, repetitive and inflexible. Some teachers did not believe that the qualifications were 'worth' two GCSEs.

Although many schools successfully introduced these qualifications, others found them difficult to implement and did not get the results they expected and/or had achieved with GNVQs. This was sometimes because of decisions made within the school, such as the wrong choice of target group, allocating insufficient time, use of non-specialist staff, inadequate training/support for staff and insufficient support from senior management. External factors also played a part. All schools found it difficult to make the necessary links with the workplace. A lack of resources, including the late arrival of textbooks and exemplar work, also caused problems. Some teachers complained of unclear and inconsistent guidance on assessment from the awarding bodies. Such incidences have likely been reduced with the passage of time.

Policy implications

Coherence of vocational provision

1. It is clear that beyond the 'families' of vGCSEs and GNVQs there is no coherence in the provision of vocational education. Achievement in over 550 different awards is reported just by the NISVQ, which admits to incomplete records. Most of these are taken only by a handful of students in the national cohort. It is likely that many of these awards will not be recognised by employers, and may not be helpful in terms of progression. There are also concerns about expertise in teaching and support for such a wide range of vocational qualifications, particularly for those offered to very small numbers.

The specialised diploma, likely to lead to a reduction in the range of available awards, should be helpful in streamlining the national offer and encouraging a more coherent approach. The Framework for Achievement is also designed to support a more coherent range of provision.

In the meantime, rationalisation of the number and range of qualifications approved under Section 96, based around an agreed planning framework for qualifications designed for use with 14- to ***19-year-olds, would help to move towards more coherent provision.***

Features promoting success

2. Teachers believe that students will be motivated by content that seems relevant to their current and future lives, and will achieve more through the teaching and learning styles and methods of assessment deployed in vocational learning. Other features believed to promote success are a unitised structure with clear and shared assessment criteria and a progressive framework of qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3.

These features could apply to all qualifications, not just vocational qualifications. Any redevelopment of GCSEs should explore the extent to which these features could contribute to a new generation of GCSE qualifications.

Piloting qualifications

3. Problems with the structure, size, content, assessment and grading of vGCSEs might have been resolved had there been a longer period of development or piloting. A pilot also might have generated better quality and timelier exemplar material and given awarding bodies and others time to develop coherent and authoritative guidance and support for teachers before first teaching began.

All new qualifications should be piloted and evaluated before they are introduced nationally.

Supporting schools in use of vocational qualifications

4. Government policy on broadening the curriculum at key stage 4 and the withdrawal of GNVQs are leading schools to investigate a wide range of vocational qualifications. Many schools had no experience in delivering vocational qualifications, others had experience only with GNVQs and some had experience only with GNVQ in ICT. The evidence

indicates that a significant number of schools were not able to implement vGCSEs successfully, particularly for the first cohort, and that schools with GNVQ experience were not always better placed to do so. Although most schools made a member of the senior management team responsible for the vocational curriculum, this did not always result in effective monitoring, support and guidance for staff delivering the new qualifications.

There is a continuing and urgent need to provide coherent guidance and support for schools on how to select and introduce appropriate vocational qualifications and to provide them with the management tools to monitor and develop their provision and staff.

There remains a question about the extent to which all schools should be expected to offer vocational qualifications, and to have the necessary expertise and resources required to offer them successfully.

Support for the introduction of new qualifications

5. All schools believed that the key to the successful introduction of vocational qualifications is having a team of committed, experienced and enthusiastic teachers. Many staff delivering vGCSEs did not have sufficient training either in assessment or in the vocational area, although the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) and the awarding bodies ran a large programme of training events. There are barriers to staff attending training or taking part in the teacher placement scheme. Often, teachers are only able to attend awarding body training, which is appropriately focused on assessment. There are few opportunities for them to attend training in different teaching and learning strategies or develop their knowledge of the sector. Not all schools have appropriate internal continuing professional development programmes to supplement external training or as an alternative to it. Such programmes are particularly important where qualifications have a large component of internal assessment, as is the case with most vocational qualifications.

   A large number of resources and guidance documents were produced to support the introduction of vGCSEs. Nonetheless, staff claim to have been confused by the number and variety of resources or not to have seen them.

   Further research should be carried out to identify the most effective methods of supporting staff so that they can effectively respond to curriculum and qualification

change. This is particularly urgent in view of the planned introduction of specialised diplomas and changes to both GCE and GCSE.

Making vocational qualifications available to all

6. In some cases, the manner in which schools introduced vocational qualifications to their curriculum has not ensured success from students of all levels of ability. Where vocational qualifications are available to higher-attainers, the offer tends to be restricted to vGCSEs. At the same time, a number of factors inhibit these students from choosing these qualifications, ranging from parent and teacher attitudes to the way choices are structured.

   It is also true that the introduction of the vGCSEs has in some cases done little to help lower- and middle-attaining students become more successful with these qualifications than with others. Some of the factors relate to the design of the qualification and its assessment. Others are more centre-based, including provision of adequate time, an appropriate vocational context, motivating teaching experienced as somewhat different from that in general subjects and support for students who need it in coming to terms with assessment requirements.

   If vocational provision is intended to be a universal option, there needs to be careful consideration of the issues involved as well as curriculum planning to ensure that vocational options are genuinely available to all. It should not be assumed that students can succeed in these qualifications without support, any more than they could when taking other qualifications. Teachers need to be encouraged to explore the available training and resources.

   The development of specialised diplomas provides an opportunity to give parity to a broader range of skills than are currently recognized in vGCSEs, thus providing a more distinct offer.

Links with industry

7. Virtually all schools regard establishing links with industry as a major challenge when introducing vocational qualifications. The demand for high-quality vocational links will continue to grow as more schools take up vocational qualifications and will not diminish when specialised diplomas are introduced.

There should be more coherent and better-publicised national and regional strategies to support schools in making these links. In many cases individual teachers have to make the necessary contacts, in addition to their existing responsibilities.

Further work related to this project

8. Some of the problems experienced in introducing and delivering vGCSEs are likely to be alleviated as teachers and schools become more familiar with their content and assessment requirements.

   Further research carried out on the results of the second cohort of students will help to clarify the extent to which problems are being resolved as the qualifications become more familiar. A more detailed subject-specific review of any titles still causing concern can then follow.

Availability of high-quality data

9. It has been difficult to obtain high-quality, comparable data across the different types of qualification. Although it is available for GCSE achievement (including vGCSEs), the same cannot be said for other types of award. National data relating to achievement in vocational awards has been aggregated to broad type and level for the purposes of performance table reporting, making it difficult to establish the subjects or individual awards taken.

   There is also inconsistency in describing the relative sizes of non-GCSE type awards. This makes it hard to bring together data that recognises the extent of vocational achievement.

   In order to look at details of qualification type, it was necessary to combine data from different sources (ie, DfES SFR data and NISVQ data). These were not completely compatible and do not provide a coherent picture.

   The current system does not allow for a detailed reading of the data about vocational provision, leading to findings that, because they are based on insufficiently secure data, cannot be expressed with total confidence.

Data gathering in relation to all qualifications approved under Section 96 for delivery pre-16 needs to be to a comparable standard and in consistent forms.

Progression

10. Most of the schools visited in this study reported that over the years vocational courses have led to increased numbers of students progressing to vocational options post-16. Pre-16 vocational courses were believed to give students a clearer understanding of progression routes into vocational courses at level 3.

    This impression is confirmed by the evaluation of the Increased Flexibility Programme, which found that involvement in IFP appears to have been successful for many students in developing their social, employability and general skills and that 82 per cent of the students surveyed in spring 2004 intended to progress into further education or training after the end of Year 11.

    This finding, if confirmed by later developments, is encouraging in view of the numbers of students at key stage 4 now taking vocational courses. It is important that data continues to be collected so that the impact of later policy developments, such as specialised diplomas, can be measured.

Chapter 1: Vocational provision at key stage 4

Overview of national picture

Data used

The figures quoted relate to students aged 15 on 31 August 2003 and to results data from summer 2004. All of the data was provided by the DfES Analytical Services Team. Details of data can be seen at Annex 1.

There was a total of 643,600 students aged 15 at the start of the 2003/4 academic year and taking their GCSEs and other qualifications in 2004. Over 95 per cent of them achieved at least one GCSE (excluding vGCSEs). In comparison, 23.1 per cent of students achieved at least one vocational qualification (including vGCSEs).

On average, students achieved 7.8 GCSEs (excluding vGCSEs). Using the same calculation for vocational qualifications, they would have achieved an average of just under 0.3 vocational qualifications each (including vGCSEs).

At centre level, 40 per cent of all schools achieving one or more qualification points have no students achieving vocational qualifications, including GNVQs and vGCSEs.

The data indicates that the vocational qualifications are spread thinly across the population. The scarcity of candidate-level information about vocational qualifications makes it difficult to see whether qualifications achieved within a centre are a result of several candidates gaining a number of qualifications or many achieving one each. It is hoped that this kind of information will be more readily available in the future.

Vocational provision at key stage 4 is clearly skewed toward the vGCSE and GNVQ, which together account for about 85 per cent of all vocational achievement.

Centre type and vocational achievement

Across school types, there is wide variation in the proportion of qualification points achieved from vocational qualifications. About a quarter of total qualifications points come from vocational provision in academies and CTCs; the proportion is about 8 per cent in other kinds of state schools and about 0.3 per cent in independent schools.

At student level, the picture is somewhat different. Nearly three-quarters of CTC students achieve at least one vocational qualification, a third in academies and a quarter in state schools. In independent schools the proportion is only about 3.5 per cent.

Selection and vocational achievement

It also makes a difference whether a centre is selective. In non-selective centres, the proportion of vocational points achieved as a percentage of all qualification points is about 8 per cent, whereas in selective centres it is less than half a percent.

At the student level, more than a quarter of students in non-selective schools achieve at least one vocational qualification, while less than 3 per cent do so in selective schools.

These findings appear to confirm on a national level our observations from fieldwork with schools: vocational provision is targeted at lower-ability groups of students.

Other factors and vocational achievement

Gender

An analysis of national achievement data shows little difference between females and males in terms of the amount of their vocational achievement.

Rural/Urban status

Analysis of achievement by rural/urban status shows a difference of about 23 per cent between the average number of vocational qualifications achieved by rural and urban students, if vGCSEs are excluded. This drops to around 15 per cent if they are included. Urban students achieve proportionately more vocational qualifications than rural students, but it is not possible to say whether this is because urban students have greater access to vocational qualifications or because of their characteristics.

Ethnicity

There is a substantial amount of ‘missing’ data in this area, likely due to the lack of data from independent schools. For groups that are listed, the average number of vocational qualifications gained per 100 students is highest for Pakistani/Bangladeshi students (36.5) and lowest for mixed ethnicity students (25.1).

Analysis of average key stage 3 and GCSE points score[2]

There was little difference between average key stage 3 point scores for those students with vocational qualifications (33.7) and those without (34.2). Similarly, their GCSE average point scores were similar: 36.4 points for those with vocational qualifications and 36.3 for those without.

The similarity in point scores between the two groups is interesting, given the difference in vocational achievement between selective and non-selective schools and the information from our fieldwork indicating that vocational awards were seen as appropriate for lower-attaining students. It was not possible to analyse these results excluding students achieving vGCSEs; such an analysis may have made a considerable difference.

Range of vocational provision

DfES Performance Tables data shows the total number of vocational qualifications achieved as 164,070. Of this total, vGCSE awards account for 88,574 (54 per cent) and GNVQs account for 51,110 (31.1 per cent)—a combined total of 139,684 awards or 85.1 per cent of all vocational qualifications. Of the 24,386 awards remaining, 11,110 (45.6 per cent) are key skills. Of the remaining 13,276 vocational awards, 1,753 (13.2 per cent) are NVQs and 10,889 (82 per cent) are Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQs).

The DfES data does not allow for a detailed view at title level, but the NISVQ data (which tends to under-represent provision) enable analysis of individual qualifications. The 139,684 vGCSE and GNVQ that make up the vast majority of vocational qualifications are divided between 32 different qualifications at the individual subject level. The remaining 15 per cent, or 24,386 awards, are divided among more than 550 different qualifications. There is, obviously, far lower take-up of these awards, with many qualifications being achieved by only a handful of candidates nationally.

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[2] Please note that for all figures above **[throughout report or this section only?],** students aged 15 with no GCSE or equivalent attainment were removed from the calculations. This was done in order to make the 'with vocational qualifications' and 'without vocational qualifications' groups more comparable. Only students with valid key stage 3 results were included in the above figures (this is likely to affect independent schools' representation in particular). Average point scores are calculated by adding together total points (key stage 3 or GCSE) and dividing by the number of subjects/qualifications.

Level of vocational provision

The overwhelming majority of vocational qualifications achieved were at level 2 (88.7 per cent), not surprising given that vGCSE formed such a large percentage. If vGCSE and GNVQ achievements are removed, the figures change dramatically, with 64.4 per cent of achievement at level 1. This means that vocational qualifications other than the two main types are taken mainly by lower-attaining students.

Lines of learning

The data given below is only indicative of possible patterns.[3]

For the purpose of this evaluation, we have categorised qualifications according to the 14 lines of learning proposed as areas for specialist diploma development: health and social care; public services; land based environment; engineering; manufacturing; construction and the built environment; information and communication technology (ICT); retail; hospitality and catering; hair and beauty; sport and leisure; travel and tourism; creative and media and business administration and finance. For the purpose of this evaluation, we have included a category of 'cross sector' for any qualification not specific to one sector, such as numeracy or GCSE double science. There is also an 'unknown' category. We included all qualification types, both general and vocational.

Of the 14 lines of learning, the most certificates were awarded in creative and media (466,005 awards). This number is heavily weighted towards GCSEs (including vGCSEs) and GNVQs, which make up over 465,000 of the awarded certificates. Once these have been removed from the totals, only 267 other certificates were awarded.

Manufacturing followed creative and media with the most certificates awarded, with a total of 257,847. This figure is also heavily weighted by GCSEs and GNVQs, with only 34 other certificates awarded.

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[3] The NISVQ (National Information System for Vocational Qualifications) is the only database that permits analysis of qualification data in terms of subject spread. Data from performance tables or Statistical First Release (SFR) does not provide detail beyond level of qualification. For that reason, the following analysis is based on data from the NISQV and refers to students aged 15 on 31 August 2003. The NISVQ relies on data collected from awarding bodies that award vocational qualifications. It is not compulsory and as a result the data in some qualification areas is not comprehensive. NISVQ offers robust data for NVQs. Data on VRQs is collected from only 23 of the more than 80 awarding bodies that award VRQs. This gives only a rough indicator of possible patterns. Similarly, data collected for entry level qualifications is only to be taken as indicative. Data about other vocational qualifications (which fall outside of the National Qualifications Framework) is collected from the four largest vocational awarding bodies but, again, is only indicative. Similarly, although data on key and basic skills is collected by NISVQ, the numbers of key skills reported are so much lower than those given in the DfES SFR on awards of key skill qualifications 2003/4 that they, too, have had to be removed from the analysis (the SFR figures could not be used within this project because the data is given for 14- and 15-year-olds, rather than 15-year-olds alone). Data on single subjects was also removed as it was incomplete and unreliable.

The least popular line of learning in terms of the numbers of certificates awarded was retail, in which 87 certificates were awarded. This was followed by public services, in which 53 certificates were awarded.

When we remove all GCSE and GNVQ certificates and look at just the total numbers of entry, NVQ, VRQ and other vocational qualifications, the most popular line of learning was information and communication technology, in which 6,444 certificates were awarded. This is followed by business administration and finance, in which 2,298 certificates were awarded.

The line of learning with the most NVQs awarded was hair and beauty, in which 1,167 awards were issued across nine different NVQ titles. Engineering followed, with 505 awards across 10 different NVQs.

Looking at the number of certificate titles in each line of learning, it is clear that NVQs, other VQs and VRQs have a much larger number of different course titles across all lines of learning than do GCSEs and GNVQs (see table below). However, for VRQs, NVQs and other VQs, the mean number of certificates awarded per course title is significantly lower than the mean numbers awarded to GNVQs and GCSEs. The mean number of awards for NVQs, VRQs and other VQs barely reaches 50, compared to the hundreds and thousands of GNVQs and GCSEs.

Qualification type	Total titles offered	Total awards	Mean number of awards per title
NVQ	105	2694	25.7
Other VQs	195	6743	34.6
VRQ	162	6739	41.6
GCSE	46	4,623,067	100,501.5
GNVQ	25	48,333	1,933.3

Reasons why schools have introduced vocational qualifications

Many of the schools visited had a long track record of offering vocational qualifications. The main reasons why schools introduced vocational qualifications were to raise achievement and motivate students. They believed that students were more likely to succeed with the methods of learning and assessment offered by vocational qualifications.

One school described its students as ‘turned off’ before they introduced vocational options. One school introduced GCSE in engineering as a result of a student survey. Another school developed its curriculum in response to the needs of the local economy. Some schools were

responding to the socioeconomic background of their students. Other drivers were the availability of national funding, encouragement from the LEA and participation in a 14–19 Pathfinder.

Changes to the statutory requirements in 2004 also had some influence. The introduction of statutory work-related learning influenced a small number of schools. Changes to the status of modern foreign languages and design and technology made it easier to introduce vocational qualifications.

Although heads and deputies referred to DfES, QCA guidance and websites, they were very much influenced by the advice of other heads. Local colleges also were identified as an important source of advice.

Most of the schools visited expected to increase and strengthen their vocational provision in the future and a small number were considering having NVQs on site, possibly through skills centres.

Curriculum models and target group

Many of the schools visited had introduced vocational qualifications through the use of pathways within the key stage 4 curriculum. The number of pathways varied, but invariably more vocational options were offered in the pathways available to students in the middle- and lower-attaining groups. In some schools no vocational options were included in the pathway offered to the more able; in others only vGCSEs were offered. NVQs and more work-based qualifications were usually offered only to the lower-attaining groups or the disengaged (this supports the statistical findings discussed above).

Where curriculum pathways were not used, vocational options were usually, in theory, available to all students. In reality, choices were guided by teachers and based on ability, prior achievement and interest. Middle- and lower-attaining groups were thereby more likely to be directed to vocational options. Higher-attaining students were less likely to take vocational options because of their size, because they were timetabled against ‘more academic’ subjects and because of teacher and parental attitudes.

Eighty-six percent of respondents to the IVP questionnaire at key stage 4 said that this type of provision in their school had increased over the previous two years.

In terms of collaboration between schools and/or colleges, of the 106 respondents to the IVP questionnaire, the vast majority offering vGCSEs did so without any collaboration or partnership with other schools or colleges. Where schools did offer the subjects in collaboration, it was most likely to be with an FE college. The 14–19 monitoring programme confirms this finding.

The subject most likely to be offered in collaboration with a partner was engineering (49.4 per cent), followed by health and social care (19.6 per cent). Science and ICT subjects were the least likely to be offered in collaboration with other schools or colleges.

Among schools offering NVQs, collaboration was more frequent, with more than 62 per cent being offered in partnership with other providers. The 80 schools reporting that they offered 'other vocational qualifications' offered a total of 220 qualifications, of which 25 per cent were offered in collaboration with other schools or colleges.

Among schools visited, those that collaborated with other schools or colleges said that such partnerships enabled them to offer a broader range of qualifications to their students and share resources. These qualifications (as reflected in the questionnaire findings) were usually NVQs or other vocational qualifications. None of the schools visited offered vGCSEs in collaboration with partners. The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) evaluation of IFP had similar findings: schools found benefits from collaboration when delivering NVQs and GNVQs, but not when delivering the vGCSE.

The IVP questionnaire asked schools about their links with employers. Education Business Link Organisations (EBLOs) and other agencies such as Connexions are involved with the majority of schools, helping to facilitate work experience for the majority of students. Their role in facilitating other employer/school links varies considerably between schools and areas. On the whole, respondents to the IVP questionnaire were somewhat dissatisfied with the level of support they received from outside organisations for arranging vocational links. Considering the results by subject, the majority of teachers of business, health and social care, leisure and tourism and manufacturing were satisfied with the level of support they received. The greatest degree of dissatisfaction was found among teachers of science; 73.3 per cent of these respondents said they were dissatisfied.

Respondents were asked which organisations helped to support the activities they offered as part of each qualification, such as industry days, visitors-into-schools days and enterprise days. Overall, respondents reported most support for the vGCSEs and least for other

vocational qualifications. Respondents said they got the most support from colleges, but LEAs and EBLOs provided the most support across all qualification types.

Among the schools visited there was a range of experience in relation to employer engagement. Employers were usually referred to in the context of work experience/placements, and some schools had positive relationships with local industry and businesses. Sometimes this was associated with a work-related learning (WRL) coordinator or a similar figure who was responsible for managing school/employer relationships. Other schools felt that they did not have good relationships with employers. A number of respondents raised concerns about overburdening employers and 'employer fatigue'. Because of differences in local industries, some schools had good employer links for one subject but poor links for another. Where links were poor, respondents commented on the limiting effect on the subject's capacity to be truly 'vocational'.

Management of vocational provision

Around 20 per cent of schools in both surveys said they had a written policy on vocational provision and around 90 per cent said they had included vocational qualifications in their school development plan.

The majority of schools said they had a senior management team member with accountability (88 per cent of respondents to the IVP questionnaire) and/or a designated coordinator for vocational provision at key stage 4 (54 per cent of respondents to the vocational provision questionnaire and 63 per cent of respondents to the MCA questionnaire).

Links with industry

All schools recognized the need for links with industry to support vocational learning. Among students taking a vGCSE, the most common activity was visiting industries. The most common activity among those taking NVQs was extended work experience. The most common activity overall, as well as for students taking 'other' vocational qualifications, was bringing industry representatives into school.

Schools reported that on the whole they received the most support in establishing vocational links for vGCSEs from local education authorities (LEAs) and EBLOs. The most support for NVQs and other vocational qualifications came from colleges.

Progression

Just over half of schools reported improved progression onto post-16 vocational courses by students taking 'other vocational qualifications', one-third reported an increase in those progressing from NVQs and 34 per cent reported an increase from vGCSEs.

Among schools that had a history of offering vocational options, most reported that the vocational courses had, over the years, led to an increase in the number of students progressing to vocational options post-16. Respondents maintained that pre-16 vocational courses gave students insight into the progression routes into vocational courses at level 3.

Many schools highlighted relevant, clear progression routes as an important factor affecting progression and a number were further developing their post-16 options to offer more direct progression from pre-16 options. Where schools did not have a sixth form, it was clear that a positive relationship with the local FE college and other colleges was of great importance in providing relevant progression routes.

Factors contributing to successful implementation

Staffing

All schools said that committed and enthusiastic staff who believed that vocational qualifications were of equal status with 'more academic' qualifications was key to success. A number mentioned the need to overcome negative staff attitudes through strong leadership and a clear vision of the role and importance of vocational qualifications.

Many schools emphasised the importance of investing in staff, and a few had strong internal staff development programmes. One school had made use of the teacher placement scheme. In contrast, in another school, teachers were not allowed to take part in the teacher placement scheme because the school leadership believed that teachers should spend all of their time in the classroom. A few schools had specifically recruited staff with industry experience.

Training for teachers delivering NVQs was identified as a particular need. This raises a question about the circumstances in which NVQs offered in schools, rather than in partnership with other providers, can be successful.

Management

Senior managers at all the schools visited expressed a strong commitment to vocational education, and in most schools a member of the senior management team was responsible

for the vocational curriculum. In more experienced schools, responsibility for vocational provision was shared between a senior manager and a vocational coordinator, who oversaw provision across departments and mentored and supported staff delivering vocational qualifications. In other schools, heads of department were given responsibility for vocational provision.

A small number of experienced schools had developed highly structured ways of monitoring and evaluating the success of their provision.

> The vocational curriculum has been evaluated through take up, results, staff and parental feedback, guidance interviews and raising achievement initiatives. The results are analysed and then used to adapt the ever-changing curriculum to meet the needs of the students.
>
> Success is evaluated by take up, results, annual satisfaction surveys and rolling sampling. Feedback from mentors, college and work experience providers and parent governors is also evaluated. There is regular feedback from subject teachers through the line management system, with vocational learning being a regular senior management team agenda item.

Student and parent guidance

Most schools stressed the need for a structured and thorough programme of guidance.

> Students are guided in year 9 towards the most suitable pathway through a long process combining both objective and subjective data analysis. Senior management and teaching staff interview students and parents to identify the pathway that will lead to the greatest success for the student.

Some schools spent a great deal of time winning over parents when vocational options were first introduced. One school, which used taster days, induction days and parents' evenings to introduce the options available, reported that such events had led parents to become more involved with their children's study.

Timetabling

A few schools developed common timetables with partner schools and colleges to allow students to take advantage of vocational options at other centres. Schools felt that the use of separate pathways helped to minimise timetabling difficulties. One centre organised the curriculum so that all options were taught on the same two days. This created the blocks of time needed and enabled students to go to college without missing core subjects. In a small number of schools, however, students had to miss core subjects to take courses at college.

Industry links

Nearly all schools found it difficult to establish effective links with industries, yet very few had taken a whole-school approach to managing this. A small number had appointed a teacher in charge of vocational links across the school; one gave subject teachers administrative support to liaise with business. Support from LEAs and EBLOs appeared to be variable in quantity and quality.

Resources and funding

Many schools criticised the lack of additional funding to support the introduction of vocational courses. The uncertainty over the future of IFP funding restricted schools' ability to plan and develop their curricula.

Chapter 2: GCSEs in vocational subjects (vGCSEs)

Context

At least 86 per cent of respondent schools to both questionnaires offered at least one vGCSE at key stage 4. The subject most frequently offered was leisure and tourism, while the least common was manufacturing.

While the majority of respondents to the IVP questionnaire offered vGCSEs on site and to all students, the number of students taking one or more vGCSEs ranged from one to a whole year group of 360 students. Other monitoring has indicated that around 15 per cent of schools have a compulsory vocational column in their curriculum.

Of the 29 schools visited, 90 per cent offered vGCSEs. The most common was health and social care, offered by 73 per cent of the schools, and the least common were applied science and applied art and design, each offered by 23 per cent of schools.

Reasons for introducing vGCSEs

The most common reasons given for offering vGCSEs were staff expertise, the school's specialist status and student demand.

However, the most common reason given by teachers in the schools visited was to replace previously offered GNVQs or (in a minority of schools) GCSEs. Only one of the schools visited said that student demand had resulted in a vGCSE offer.

Raising achievement was an important factor behind the introduction of vGCSEs in some schools.

> The new course has been brought in … to raise achievement at the bottom end of the ability spectrum.

These vGCSEs were seen as being 'more practical and appropriate' for a number of students, and vocational options within the school curriculum were seen as an important way to support students with different learning styles and thus to improve student achievement.

A small number of respondents said that changes to the national curriculum had resulted in a much more flexible curriculum. The additional time available had allowed the schools to

introduce vocational options. Only one school visited said they had introduced a vGCSE as a result of participation in the IFP.

Teachers believed that vGCSEs were an important way to broaden the curriculum, introducing new qualification subjects, a vocational option and greater choice. A small number of schools talked about the importance of supporting students' progression as a factor that influenced their decision to introduce vGCSEs. One school introduced engineering to support the progression of able students to related courses post-16. Another introduced leisure and tourism to provide progression into post-16 GNVQ and VCE courses.

Target group

The majority of schools responding to the IVP questionnaire offered vGCSEs to all students, with the exception of applied science, which was more likely to be offered to selected groups. However, respondents regarded vGCSEs as most appropriate for the middle-ability quartiles and least appropriate for the upper quartile. They did, however, consider vGCSE to be the most appropriate of the vocational qualifications for students in the upper-attainment quartile.

The majority of schools visited stressed that vGCSEs were not seen as being suitable solely for students at the lower-ability end of the cohort. In most of these schools the qualifications were offered as an option to all and were seen as being able to affect the whole cohort, an important distinction from the GNVQs they replaced.

Teachers at the focus groups provided another perspective. Many felt that students not expected to achieve GCSEs grades A*–C in other subjects were being directed to vGCSEs. The expectation from senior management was that they would be more likely to achieve C grades because of the vocational nature of these courses. Despite this expectation, many centres did not allocate double GCSE time or try to support learners by reducing class size or providing additional learning support.

More able students were less likely to choose vGCSE subjects because their size limited the number of other subjects that could be studied, and because they were often timetabled against more 'academic' subjects such as humanities or languages.

Time allocation

The most common time allocation per vGCSE subject (in response to the IVP questionnaire) was 10 hours a fortnight, or 20 per cent of the time available in a 25-hour week, the norm for

most schools. Twice the usual time allocation for other GCSEs, this allocation follows recommendations. However, the average amount of time allocated each fortnight was between seven and eight and one-half hours. The range of time allocated was as low as two hours a fortnight (for ICT, engineering and leisure and tourism) and as high as 14 hours a fortnight (for art and design, health and social care and manufacturing).

The most common allocation to vGCSEs among the schools visited was equivalent to a double award GCSE of around five to six hours a week. Some of the schools felt that the vGCSEs ideally required a time allocation of one and one-half GCSEs. Respondents said that allocation equivalent to two GCSEs was too much and that students can become bored. One school expressed the desire to offer vGCSE as both a single and double option, so that it would appeal to the whole cohort. The school believed that more able students would be able to complete the course in a single GCSE time allocation.

In the focus groups, many teachers said that vGCSEs were not timetabled as two GCSEs, placing pressure on staff and students and limiting opportunities for activities, visitors or visits.

A number of schools named timetabling issues as one of the major challenges of implementing vGCSEs. Respondents highlighted the limitations that timetabling placed on their ability to arrange visits out of school. Timetabling in some schools, for example in hourly slots, did not allow for sufficient blocks of time; taking students on visits would cause them to miss other classes.

Staff training

Respondents to the IVP questionnaire were asked how satisfied they were with the training and support they received for vGCSEs. Although there were differences among subjects, at least 60 per cent of the teachers were satisfied or very satisfied with the time they had to prepare for the launch of the qualification, their access to training, the guidance from the awarding bodies on delivery and assessment and the exemplar materials and assessment. The exception was engineering, for which only 54 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the guidance on assessment.

The main training for teachers in the schools visited was that provided by the awarding bodies. However, teachers reported that the usefulness and quality of awarding body training courses varied significantly and also criticised the timing of some of the training on assessment.

> The inability to provide a training opportunity on assessment prior to March 2003 has created a lack of confidence regarding marking.

Respondents viewed training in assessment and moderation, run by awarding body moderators or examiners as opposed to awarding body officers, as the most useful form of external training. Visits to centres by awarding body examiners or moderators to provide advice on delivery and assessment issues were also generally well regarded.

A number of teachers had attended subject network meetings, which are organised on a regional basis. Such meetings were often viewed as the most useful form of training. Few teachers reported that they had attended LSDA training events.

Where staff had attended training, they were expected to 'cascade' what they had learnt to other staff in their centre. It was rare for more than one member of a department to attend external training events. Teachers said that a main benefit of attending training was the opportunity it presented to network with other colleagues.

Many of the teachers from the 29 schools visited had received little or no training. Although some teachers had previous experience delivering GNVQs (particularly teachers of health and social care), a number did not have any background in the vocational area they were teaching. Only a small number of staff reported that they had the opportunity to take part in work placements to develop their vocational expertise. A similar picture emerged from the focus groups.

Barriers to attending external training events included disruption to teaching time, distance and travelling time and cost of supply cover. IFP funding had been used in a few centres to fund staff attendance at external training events.

A small number of centres had put a great deal of effort into in-house training, mentoring and support, which in some cases was considered to be more effective than external training events.

> Training that is offered externally can be confusing and contradictory … leaving [staff] feeling confused and bewildered**.**

A few teachers were themselves awarding body examiners or moderators, and they felt that this gave them valuable insights into what was expected for the new courses.

Resources

The main resource teachers used to support the delivery of vGCSE was guidance provided by the awarding bodies. Although a small number of teachers complained that they had limited access to the Internet, many identified awarding body websites and other subject-specific websites as useful resources. Few staff delivering the courses used QCA or LSDA websites and support materials. Exemplar work, showing the standard of work expected by the awarding bodies, was felt to be the most useful form of guidance.

Although the majority of teachers replying to the questionnaire were satisfied with the exemplar work provided by the awarding bodies, teachers in the schools visited were critical of the first pieces of exemplar work because they were based on GNVQ work rather than the new specifications and because they arrived late. Truly representative exemplar work could only become available after units had been assessed for the first time, meaning that work had to be revisited.

A number of teachers expressed concern about the availability of suitable and appropriate resources to support teaching and learning in vGCSEs.

> Availability of resources such as text books varied from subject to subject but there was a real lack of resources which encouraged a practical approach to learning.

There were mixed feelings about the usefulness of text books. A number of teachers identified books they found useful; others said that existing teaching materials lacked vocational context and quality, affecting their ability to develop new and relevant teaching resources for the classroom.

Some teachers believed that text books were of limited value:

> In business the focus is on teaching from real life businesses through speakers, work placements, business awareness days and young enterprise.

Teachers felt that resources such as those developed by organisations or businesses such as Kew Gardens or the Royal Horticultural Society were more useful.

The number and variety of sources of information and guidance were felt by some teachers to be unhelpful. Some teachers reported that sources of information were contradictory and hence confusing, and suggested that a reduced number of better-quality resources would be more useful.

General concern over the availability of appropriate resources was compounded by the lack of funding. Increasing numbers of students taking the courses were also impacting on the availability of resources.

Vocational context

Overall, respondents felt that the specifications provided sufficient opportunities for teachers and students to make links with the workplace, although some teachers felt that more flexible assessment requirements and criteria would enable centres to respond to local circumstances.

Teachers in focus groups questioned the relevance of some of the content of the units. In particular, they felt that some content was beyond the life experience of the students and therefore not accessible to them, even though it was vocationally relevant.

Most schools tried to establish links with the workplace to set the teaching and assessment of the qualifications in a vocational context. The most frequently mentioned activities were visits to the workplace or having industry representatives visit schools. Respondents to the IVP questionnaire were generally less positive about their experience of developing the vocational context than they were about aspects of the qualification.

Teachers in the schools visited and in the focus groups identified a number of barriers to establishing vocational links. Principal among these was the time needed to make links with the sector, provide appropriate materials for research and case studies and arrange visits/placements. Respondents also identified the cost of visits and occasionally of visitors as another problem, since these costs fell to departmental funds or requests for parental contributions, which were not always forthcoming. The large number of students on some programmes made it particularly difficult to organise visits and find suitable work placements.

In some cases effective links could not be established because of the geographical location of the school or because of increased demand as more schools take up vocational courses and approach employers. Complying with health and safety requirements was time consuming

and discouraged some staff from taking students out of school. It was also thought that employers were less willing to become involved with 14- to 16-year-olds, largely because of health and safety issues.

Additional funding to support the establishment of vocational links was made available to some departments, and a few centres provided additional administrative support for teaching staff. Although some schools were supported by Education Business Partnerships/EBLOs or Connexions, others did not appear to have any support from other agencies when trying to make links with the workplace.

Several teachers felt that there was a need for smaller class sizes for vocational subjects, particularly for the more practical subjects, to encourage different teaching and learning strategies and make visits and links with the sector more manageable.

Lack of vocational experience was also an issue for some staff, who felt frustrated that they were not able to access training in the vocational area. One respondent said that the assessment requirements of the qualifications were difficult to interpret due to lack of knowledge of the industry.

Content and assessment of the qualifications

The majority (over 70 per cent) of respondents to the IVP questionnaire were satisfied or very satisfied with the size, structure, content and assessment of the qualifications. Respondents offering health and social care and leisure and tourism had the most positive overall experience of delivery and assessment.

Respondents offering manufacturing were least satisfied with the size of the qualification (45 per cent were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied). Those offering art and design or applied science were least satisfied with the amount of coursework and the manageability of this for staff (35 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively, were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied). Those offering applied business, applied ICT or engineering were least satisfied with the amount of coursework and the manageability of this for students.

Although some of the teachers in the centres visited were positive about the vGCSEs, more were critical of the structure, content and assessment of the new specifications and the impact these had on teaching and learning. In some schools, even where students' results had met expectations, teachers felt that the specifications were too 'academic'. A number of teachers were looking to replace vGCSEs with more 'dynamic' qualifications.

There were a few criticisms of the external assessments, but more of the internally assessed units. A frequent criticism from teachers in the schools visited was that the specifications, and in particular their assessment, were less vocational than GNVQs. Students were being given the opportunity to find out what it was like to work in the sector, but were not being given the opportunity to develop skills relevant to it. There was too much emphasis on written outcomes and the use of technical language. Students have to refer to specific words and phrases to gain marks, and teachers believed that this requirement to use technical language was a barrier to those with low literacy levels.

Many teachers in the focus groups believed that the level of literacy required for the vGCSEs was inappropriate for students who were not expected to achieve higher grades. Students taking VGSCEs are expected to apply knowledge and understanding, use technical language, explain decisions and analyse and evaluate. For students with low levels of literacy these requirements are difficult to achieve and can be discouraging, particularly in subjects such as applied art and design, engineering, manufacturing and applied ICT. In such subjects, teachers argued that understanding, decision making or analysis could be inferred from finished plans, designs and products without supporting written evidence.

Focus group respondents regarded some of the assessment requirements as both unrealistic and restrictive, deemed the internally assessed units too long and repetitive and thought that there was insufficient emphasis on practical skills. A number of teachers believed that the amount of coursework required to meet assessment requirements was too great and created unrealistic demands. They did not think the coursework was sufficiently practical and felt that it was geared too much towards the top end of the ability range. As a result of this, respondents said coursework had a limiting effect on the course and on teaching:

> The amount of coursework was the greatest challenge when delivering the course (business) and was seen as unrelenting, limiting the scope of the course. The expectations of the portfolio were unrealistic…

Although the balance between coursework and external assessment was generally felt to be appropriate, many teachers in the schools visited would have preferred a structure with more, but smaller, units. Many in the focus groups also criticised the unit size, mentioning that students could become bored with the length of the assignments and discouraged if they were unsuccessful in one unit because it was such a large proportion of the course. The lack of optional units in some subjects also was criticised.

In the school visits, the content of the applied business and applied ICT specifications was frequently criticised as being repetitive and boring. Manufacturing was criticised because of the apparent mismatch between the specifications, which seemed to offer a practical approach, and the assessment, which demanded that everything be written down. The lack of international travel and tourism was criticised in the leisure and tourism specifications.

In the focus groups, the following concerns about the specifications were raised:

- Applied art and design: the small extent to which assessment of the units can be integrated; the amount of annotation expected; the balance between breadth/quantity and quality of work; the lack of clarity of assessment requirements
- Applied business: lack of breadth within the qualification; the assessment requirement to investigate all aspects of a limited number of organisations, rather than examining different aspects in different businesses
- Applied ICT: the emphasis on ICT and its role in society; repetition in the assessment requirements; lack of practical skills
- Applied science: the number of experiments required for assessment
- Engineering: lack of clarity of assessment requirements; emphasis on written evidence; lack of practical skills
- Health and social care: relevance and accessibility of unit 1
- Leisure and tourism: manageability and appropriateness of unit 3
- Manufacturing: the extent to which units 1 and 2 can be integrated; overlap between units 1 and 2; the extent to which the units accurately reflect industry practice; breadth required for externally assessed unit 3; lack of clarity in assessment requirements; emphasis on written evidence.

Some teachers in the focus groups criticised the inflexible design of the qualification. They pointed to the lack of separate certification of level 1 and level 2 achievements and the failure to recognise partial achievement (students cannot achieve a short course or single GCSE if they do not complete the qualification).

A number of teachers in the centres visited and in the focus groups expressed a preference for GNVQ grading, with the awards of pass, merit and distinction at levels 1 and 2. Although initially some teachers had welcomed the move to GCSE with the single grading scale, they had found many students were more motivated by a pass, merit or distinction grade at level 1 than by low GCSE grades.

Many teachers also disliked the move away from grading criteria to marking criteria with grade boundaries determined by awarding bodies' awarding committees. Some teachers did not understand how to interpret the mark bands and did not appreciate that grade boundaries were not predetermined. In one case awarding body guidance encouraged this misunderstanding. Many teachers felt that if grade boundaries were predetermined they would be more motivating for students, who could clearly see what they had to do to achieve the grade.

Although respondents to the questionnaires were generally satisfied with the guidance provided by the awarding bodies on assessment, there was a general view from teachers in the focus groups and in the schools visited that the awarding bodies had not communicated assessment requirements clearly or consistently. Teachers found the vGCSEs more difficult to assess than the GNVQs due to lack of information and guidance on assessment. When further guidance had become available, the remedial work some students and teachers had to do to meet assessment requirements was demoralising.

Few teachers in the schools visited reported using a different range of teaching and learning strategies to deliver vGCSEs than they had used with more traditional GCSEs. Although a small number used imaginative practical activities and group exercises to deliver the content of the specifications, others said that they felt obliged to revert to traditional teaching techniques for vGCSEs to ensure that students had covered the necessary information. Interviews with students, however, suggested that students felt that they were taught differently and took part in different activities in their vGCSEs and were developing different skills. Like their teachers, students were concerned about the amount of coursework required and the skills they needed to produce portfolios.

Results

Most schools/teachers reported that the results their students achieved were either as expected or below the expected grade. However, respondents to the IVP questionnaire reported a large percentage of students achieving below their predicted grades in applied ICT and manufacturing. The subjects that appeared to achieve most grades in line with predictions were in applied business and applied ICT. (This question was not included in the MCA questionnaire.)

A number of schools were disappointed with the results achieved; one school reported that it would drop ICT as a result of such disappointing results. In some schools students had

achieved Intermediate GNVQ (often in ICT) when they had not achieved level 2 in other subjects. This was not replicated when GNVQs were replaced with vGCSEs. On the other hand, in a smaller number of schools students on the whole achieved much better results than they had in the past and than they were expected to.

Schools' experience with moderation also varied. Some schools visited said they had a negative experience of moderation. A number of teachers had sent work to the awarding body and received no feedback. Where feedback was provided, it was not of a high quality and in some cases was received too late. Some schools found the moderation process demoralising and did not think that the awarding bodies had provided the support needed for them to improve. However, other schools expressed a positive experience of moderation and had found the awarding bodies to be supportive and constructive.

Progression

Approximately 33 per cent of schools responding to the IVP questionnaire reported an increase in progression onto vocational courses post-16. Slightly more schools said that vGCSEs had no impact on progression or did not know what the impact was.
Many of the schools visited said that it was too soon to judge the impact of vGCSEs on progression post-16 and a number of centres had not yet completed their first cohort of vGCSEs. Centres that were disappointed with their results for vGCSEs said that they were unlikely to increase participation and progression post-16.

It was felt to be too early to judge the impact of vGCSEs on progression to VCE post-16, although some centres expected there to be an increase. Some centres were looking to extend the range of titles offered post-16 as a result of the broader curriculum at key stage 4. Interviews with students showed that, while some planned further study and career paths in the vocational sector studied for their GCSE, others were not intending to continue study post-16 or planning a career in the sector. Responses differed somewhat by subject studied. For example, students appeared less likely to continue with applied ICT or applied science, presumably because they were a compulsory part of the curriculum at key stage 4. Students were more likely to continue with health and social care post-16, which they had specifically chosen as an option at key stage 4.

Meeting expectations

Teachers in the schools visited had varied experiences with vGCSEs. Schools/teachers expressed satisfaction with one subject and not with another; where one school was unhappy

with a subject, another school felt that the same subject had met its expectations. A number of schools, although they said that a course met their expectations, were not entirely satisfied. Many had concerns with the qualifications, similar to those discussed above.

A number of schools expressed concern that the vGCSEs were not suitable replacements for GNVQs because they did not suit the same type of learner and generally were suited to students of a higher ability level than those who had previously taken GNVQs. Teachers had expected the courses to be more like the GNVQs they replaced. Schools were concerned that the courses were too academic and too similar to traditional GCSEs, and that the practical and vocational content found in GNVQs had been lost in these new qualifications. Schools did not feel that the courses were suitable for the whole ability range and raised issues regarding the amount of written coursework, the level of the language required and the complex content, all of which were seen as being too advanced for lower-ability students.

Similar concerns were raised by many teachers at the focus groups.

Yet, a number of schools visited did feel that the course had met, and in a couple of cases, exceeded their expectations. These schools expressed satisfaction with the improved achievement they saw in their students. Some teachers at the focus groups also were satisfied with vGCSEs.

Fifty per cent of respondents to the MCA questionnaire and 38 per cent of respondents to the IVP questionnaire said that they planned to increase the number of vGCSEs they offer. Forty-three per cent of respondents to the MCA questionnaire and 35 per cent of respondents to the IVP questionnaire said that the number they offered would remain the same. Around 9 per cent of respondents from both samples said that they would decrease the number of vGCSEs offered.

Chapter 3: GNVQ withdrawal, NVQs and other vocational qualifications

Students at key stage 4 take a wide range of vocational qualifications. However, the number of students taking them is very small.

The schools contributing to this study were generally positive about the vocational qualifications. They said that vocational qualifications had lead to improvement in students' behaviour, achievement, confidence and satisfaction and had a positive impact on retention rates and progression to post-16 courses.

The current national pattern of vocational provision appears to be that, apart from vGCSEs and GNVQs, a large number of qualifications is taken by a very small number of students. The lack of robust matched candidate data in this area means that it is difficult to identify whether there are a small number of centres with reasonable numbers of students, or fewer students in more centres. It will be interesting to see whether and how the embedding of vGCSEs within the curriculum affects the numbers of other vocational qualifications awarded.

Both the IVP and MCA surveys asked about schools' future intentions in terms of vocational provision, and the overall picture indicates a potential increase across all types of award. ICT is the most popular vocational qualification and is the sector that has most qualifications (other than GCSEs) awarded. Business and creative and media are the next most popular sectors, but are both some way behind (in terms of the numbers of qualifications awarded). Annex 2 includes a complete analysis of GNVQs, NVQs and other vocational qualifications.

GNVQ withdrawal

Most schools regretted the withdrawal of GNVQs, though a number of teachers commented that GNVQs, particularly GNVQ in ICT, were out of date. In a number of centres, staff had offered Intermediate GNVQ to students across the ability range and some were successful in it, although they did not achieve level 2 in other subjects. Schools were considering separate level 1 and 2 provision.

Some schools had decided to retain GNVQs as long as possible, and in a few cases had reverted to GNVQs from vGCSEs. Most senior managers felt that their schools were well

prepared for the withdrawal of GNVQ and expected a smooth transition to the new qualifications.

A number of schools were reviewing their entire key stage 4 curriculum. Schools were looking at a range of different qualifications to replace GNVQ, such as BTEC First Diplomas, BTEC Introductory Awards, OCR Nationals and OCN qualifications. Most of the schools visited were offering vGCSEs, but many did not consider them an appropriate replacement for GNVQs. vGCSEs were frequently described as too academic and insufficiently vocational (see Chapter 2). One centre said that vGCSEs were a replacement for other GCSEs, not for GNVQs.

When choosing a replacement qualification, teachers were looking for a qualification that was the same size as GNVQ, had a similar unit structure and range of assessment methods, was not too prescriptive and was part of a framework at levels 1, 2 and 3.

One school was looking to replace GNVQs with BTEC awards rather than vGCSEs because of their flexible size (1–4 GCSEs), the lack of external exams and their more interesting and work-related context.

One school, however, complained of the 'onerous BTEC approval process' and another was worried about their ability to meet the requirement for work placements in BTEC qualifications.

NVQs

Reasons for introducing NVQs

Seventy percent of respondents to the MCA questionnaire introduced NVQs because of their schools' specialist status.

Many of the 29 schools visited introduced NVQs as part of an individualised approach to learning that enabled lower-ability students to achieve and gain qualifications. NVQ pathways usually were developed for students with behavioural problems, who were disengaged or at risk of exclusion. Schools saw NVQs as a component of a curriculum pathway that could succeed in engaging and capturing the imagination of disaffected students. Respondents to the IVP questionnaire saw NVQs as being most highly significant to students in the lower-attainment quartile and least significant to those in the upper quartile.

A number of schools also said that they introduced NVQs to enlarge the range of courses on offer to their students.

Around a third of schools responding to the questionnaires offered at least one NVQ; the most common subjects offered were hairdressing and catering.

The majority of schools said the NVQs they offered were taught off site, most commonly in collaboration with an FE college.

Forty-eight per cent of MCA respondents and 38 per cent of IVP respondents said their school would be increasing the number of NVQs offered over the next year.

Other vocational qualifications

Reasons for introducing other vocational qualifications

Seventy-three per cent of respondents to the MCA questionnaire introduced other vocational qualifications because of their schools' specialist status.

Many of the schools visited introduced other vocational qualifications because of the withdrawal of GNVQs.

As with NVQs, schools said they had introduced other vocational qualifications (initially GNVQs and more recently BTECs and OCR nationals) to offer a more individual and appropriate curriculum and improve student achievement and performance table ratings. Schools believed that the other vocational qualifications were a good way of engaging disaffected students (although it was not uncommon for whole cohorts of students to be taking a GNVQ in ICT) and increasing motivation levels.

Teachers responding to the IVP questionnaire reported that other vocational qualifications were most significant to students in the lower-attainment quartile and least significant to students in the upper quartile.

Seventy-six per cent of respondents to the IVP questionnaire said that they offered at least one 'other' vocational qualification to their key stage 4 students (compared to 40 per cent of respondents to the MCA questionnaire). Among schools offering 'other' vocational subjects, the most common was ICT.

Around 60 per cent of schools said they would be increasing the number of ‘other’ qualifications offered.

Around 60 per cent of respondents to both questionnaires reported that the ‘other’ qualifications they offered were taught on site.

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

Report on vocational learning provision at key stage 4

Annex 1: Analysis of DfES performance tables data, 2004

January 2006

Annex 1: Analysis of DfES performance tables data, 2004

The following figures are based on data provided by the DfES Data Services Group: D3 and relate to the 2003/4 results. They describe the cohort of students who were 15 on 31 August 2003.

Analysis by centre type

Table 1: Percentage of students in schools that are taking vocational qualifications.
This table describes, for each centre type, the proportion of vocational points achieved as a percentage of all of their qualification points. To provide context, it also shows the number of centres and that number as a percentage of all centres.

Centre type	Number of centres	% of all centres	Total qualification points	Total vocational points	Vocational points as a % of total qualification points
Academy	11	0.2	461326	108728	23.6
CTC	14	0.3	1221019	294782	24.1
Independent	879	17.1	18909757	64890	0.3
Pupil referral unit	194	3.8	163380	4409	2.7
Special school	939	18.3	595992	13962	2.3
State secondary	3088	60.1	197273011	15097104	7.7
Missing	16	0.3	19570	258	1.3
All centres	**5141**	**100.1**	**218644055**	**15584133**	**7.1**

As shown in Table 1, academies and CTCs achieve a far higher proportion of their total qualification points from vocational qualifications than any other centre type. Together, they account for just 0.5 per cent of all centres. The next-highest proportion of vocational qualification points (7.7 per cent) is in state secondary schools, which represent 60.1 per cent of all centres. Independent schools show the lowest percentage of vocational points as a proportion of total qualification points (0.3 per cent). These schools account for 17.1 per cent of all centres.

Table 2: Percentage of total students aged 15 at start of school year (31 August 2003) with vocational qualifications:

Centre type	Number of Students aged 15	Number of Students with Voc quals	% of students with voc quals
Academy	1812	659	36.4
CTC	2439	1718	70.4
Independent	43898	1475	3.4
Pupil referral unit	4686	140	3.0
Special school	10863	375	3.5
State secondary	575745	148585	25.8

Missing	110	4	3.6
Total	**639568**	**152956**	**23.9**

Table 2 shows information at student level, by centre type, indicating the numbers of students within each centre type who hold vocational qualifications. CTCs have by far the highest proportion of students with vocational qualifications (70.4 per cent), indicating that such schools have a policy of encouraging, or requiring, vocational achievement. Academies have over a third of students achieving vocational qualifications and state secondary schools have 25.8 per cent.

Analysis by approach to selection

Table 3: Vocational provision by selective status

Selective status	Number of centres	% Centres	Total qualification points	Total voc points	Vocational points as % of total points
Non-selective	3293	64.1	190340894	15493937	8.1
Selective	699	13.6	27524219	71568	0.3
Not applicable	1146	22.3	778942	18629	2.4
Missing	3	0.1	-	-	-
	5141	**100.1**			

Table 3 shows that the total vocational points as a percentage of all points are much higher in non-selective centres (8.1 per cent) than the selective centres (0.3 per cent).

Table 4: Percentage of total students aged 15 at start of school year (31 August 2003) with vocational qualifications:

Selective status	Number of Students aged 15	Number of Students with Voc quals	% of students with voc quals
Non-selective	565287	150789	26.7
Selective	58607	1648	2.8
Not applicable	15659	519	3.3
Total	**639568**	**152956**	**23.9**

Table 4 reinforces the information in table 3, showing that over a quarter of students in non-selective centres gain vocational qualifications, compared with less than 3 per cent of students in selective centres.

Analysis by gender

Gender	Total pop	% total	Total voc quals	% voc quals	Total voc quals excl vGCSe	% total excl vGCSE	Av N of voc quals per 100 studs	Av N of voc quals excl vGCSE per 100 studs
Female	313950	49.2	85432	52.1	38639	51.2	27.2	12.3
Male	323645	50.8	78638	47.9	36857	48.8	24.3	11.4
All	637595	100	164070	100	75496	100	25.7	11.8

Table 5 shows number of vocational qualifications achieved by gender, and also has a split of the total population by gender. Since some students will have gained more vocational qualifications than others, the table shows proportions rather than number of vocational qualifications per student. Females constitute 49.2 per cent of the cohort population and gain 52.1 per cent of the vocational qualifications. Conversely, males constitute 50.8 per cent of the cohort population and gain 47.9 per cent of the vocational qualifications. When vGCSEs are excluded, females achieve 51.2 per cent of qualifications and males achieve 48.8 per cent. The average number of vocational qualifications gained per 100 students is 27.2 for females and 24.3 for males. When vGCSEs are removed, the average amount is reduced by more than half, to 12.3 for females and 11.4 for males.

Analysis by rural/urban status

Rural/urban	Total pop	% total	Total voc quals	% voc quals	Total voc quals excl vGCSE	% total excl vGCSE	Av N of voc quals per 100 students	Av N of voc quals excl vGCSE per 100 students
Rural	88459	13.9%	19720	12%	8355	11.1%	22.3	9.4
Urban	549131	86.1%	144350	88%	67141	88.9%	26.3	12.2
All	637595	100	164070	100	75496	100	25.7	11.8

Table 6 shows the number of vocational qualifications achieved by rural/urban split, and also has a split of the total population by rural/urban location. Clearly, some students will have gained more vocational qualifications than others, so the table shows proportions, rather than number of vocational qualifications per student. Rural students constitute 13.9 per cent of the cohort population, and gain 12 per cent of the vocational qualifications. Urban students constitute 86.1 per cent of the cohort population, and gain 88 per cent of the vocational qualifications. When vGCSEs are removed, 11.1 per cent of vocational qualifications are earned by rural students and 88.9 per cent by urban students. Urban students are punching above their weight in terms of getting a higher percentage of the vocational qualifications than their percentage of their cohort but not by a large margin (although the margin increases when vGCSEs are removed). The average number of vocational qualifications gained per 100 students is 22.3 for rural students

and 26.3 for urban students. When vGSCEs are removed, this changes to just 9.4 for rural students and 12.2 for urban students.

Analysis by ethnicity

Ethnic group	Total population	% total	Total voc quals	Total voc excl vGCSE	% voc quals	%voc excl vGCSE	Average N of voc quals per 100 students	Average N of voc quals excl vGCSE per 100 students
White	494406	77.5	134535	61082	82.0	80.9	27.2	12.4
Mixed	11447	1.8	2875	1414	1.8	1.9	25.1	12.4
Indian	13973	2.2	4773	2169	2.9	2.9	34.2	15.5
Pakistani/ Bangladeshi	18895	3.0	6891	3186	4.2	4.2	36.5	16.9
Black Caribbean	8799	1.4	2450	1153	1.5	1.5	27.8	13.1
Black African	8058	1.3	2366	1038	1.4	1.4	29.4	12.9
Chinese	2079	0.3	529	270	0.3	0.4	25.4	13.0
Other	10000	1.6	2560	1253	1.6	1.7	25.6	12.5
Missing	46643	7.3	1709	1590	1.0	2.1	3.7	3.4
Unclassified	23295	3.7	5382	2341	3.3	3.1	23.1	10.0
Total	**637595**	**100.1**	**164070**	**75496**	**100**	**100.1**	**25.7**	**11.8**

The category of 'missing' is striking, representing 1.0 per cent of vocational qualifications and 7.3 per cent of the population. The most likely explanation is that ethnicity data comes from the Pupil Level Annual School Census, which is not a requirement for independent schools. Such schools are therefore most likely to be classified as missing. This is broadly in line with what we would expect, since the centre type split shows independent schools averaging very low vocational points.

Excluding the missing category, the average number of vocational qualifications gained per 100 students is highest for Pakistani/Bangladeshi students (36.5) and lowest for mixed ethnicity students (25.1). When vGSCEs are discounted all average numbers fall by at least half, except in the missing category.

Analysis of average key stage 3 and GCSE points score

For all figures below, students aged 15 without any GCSE and equivalent attainment were removed from the calculations in order to make the 'with vocational qualifications' and 'without vocational qualifications' groups more comparable. Since all students with vocational qualifications by definition had some attainment, it is most useful to compare these students to students without approved vocational qualifications but with some GCSE and equivalent attainment.

The vocational point scores include both vGCSEs and GNVQs. We have requested information from the DfES showing the above analyses of average student point score excluding points gained through vGCSEs and GNVQs, but they are unable to provide this information in the immediate future because of workload.

Of all vocational points achieved in 2003/4 (n=7,007,296.5), vGCSEs accounted for 42.4 per cent (2,969,360), GNVQs accounted for 52.1 per cent (3,647,646) and 'other' vocational qualifications accounted for 5.6 per cent (390,290.5).

All figures are based on students in institutions included in the 2004 Achievement and Attainment Tables.

Average key stage 3 points

Table 8: Average key stage 3 points for students with and without vocational qualifications

	N	Ave key stage 3 pts
With Vocational Qualifications	148791	33.7
Without Vocational Qualifications	417054	34.2

Please note: Only students with valid key stage 3 results were included in the above figures; not all independent schools do key stage 3 tests and therefore will not be included.

Table 8 shows those without vocational qualifications have slightly higher average key stage 3 points than those with vocational qualifications.

Average points per GCSE (including GCSE short courses)

Table 9: Average qualification points per GCSE, for students with and without vocational qualifications

	N	Ave. Pts per GCSE
With Vocational Qualifications	152954	36.4
Without Vocational Qualifications	460565	36.3

There were a small number of students with vocational qualifications that did not have any GCSE attainment. These were included in these figures with average points per GCSE of zero.

Table 9 shows that students without vocational qualifications have slightly higher average points per GCSE than those with vocational qualifications. Those with vocational qualifications may have done fewer GCSEs, or may have done a vocational qualification in one of their strongest areas. Both factors may have dampened GCSE average point score.

Average points per GCSE and equivalent

Table 10: Average qualification points per GCSE and equivalent, for students with and without vocational qualifications

	N	Ave. pts per GCSE & equivalent
With Vocational Qualifications	152954	36.1
Without Vocational Qualifications	460565	35.9

Table 10 shows those without vocational qualifications have slightly lower average points per GCSE and equivalent than those with vocational qualifications, which may support the position described above.

Summary

Data

The data in points 1–9 are drawn from: GCSE and Equivalent Results and Associated Value Added Measures for Young People in England 2003/04 (Revised) – SFR01/2005 - DfES January 2005

1. Pupil cohort = Total number of students on roll aged 15 at the start of the 2003/04 academic year, (i.e. 31 August 2003):
   643,600
2. Total number of student cohort attempting at least 1 GCSE (excluding vGCSE):
   616,900
3. Percentage of student cohort attempting at least 1 GCSE (excluding vGCSE):
   95.9%
4. Total number of GCSEs (excluding vGCSE) achieved by student cohort:
   4,999,400
5. Average number of GCSEs (excluding vGCSE) achieved per student:
   7.8
6. Total number of vGCSEs achieved by student cohort:
   96,000
7. Total of vGCSEs achieved as a percentage of total GCSEs (excluding vGCSEs):
   1.9%
8. Total number of GNVQs achieved by student cohort
   48,340
9. Total of GNVQs achieved as a percentage of total GCSEs (excluding vGCSE):
   1%

The data in the points in the below were released to QCA by the DfES Data Services Group in January 2005. This data provides more detail about the different types of vocational qualifications. However, the cohort number on which the figures are based is slightly different, and therefore so are subsequent numbers of qualifications.

10. Numbers of students aged 15:
    639,553
11. Numbers of these students achieving vocational qualifications (including GNVQ and vGCSE):
    152,956
12. Percentage of these students achieving vocational qualifications (including GNVQ and vGCSE):
    23.9%
13. Numbers of these vocational qualifications achieved (including GNVQ and vGCSE):
    164,070
14. Number of vGCSE achieved:
    88,574 (54% of vocational qualifications)
15. Number of GNVQ achieved:
    51,110 (31.2% of vocational qualifications)
16. Number of 'other' vocational qualifications achieved:
    24,386 (14.9%)
17. Percentage of all schools achieving one or more qualification points with no students achieving vocational qualifications (including GNVQ and vGCSE):
    40%

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Annex 2: Qualifications data

January 2006

Annex 2: Qualifications data

Based on 2003/4 Academic year data from NISVQ

Please note 'other' VQs includes Entry level, OQ, Other VQ, KS, SS and VRQs

1. Health & Social Care

Total certificates awarded	***82916***
Total GCSE certificates (incl. vGCSEs)	***80782***
Total GNVQ certificates	***1719***

Total certificates minus GCSEs and GNVQs	***415***				
Total NVQ certificates	***5***	Number of NVQs offered	***5***	Mean certificates per NVQ	***1***
				Max	***1***
				Min	***1***
Total other VQ certificates	***410***	Number of other VQs offered	***20***	Mean certificates per other VQ	***20.5***
				Max	***204***
				Min	***1***

2. Public Services

Total certificates awarded	***152***
Total GCSE certificates (incl. vGCSEs)	***0***
Total GNVQ certificates	***0***

Total certificates minus GCSEs and GNVQs	***152***				
Total NVQ certificates	***3***	Number of NVQs offered	***1***	Mean certificates per NVQ	***3***
				Max	***3***
				Min	***3***
Total other VQ certificates	***149***	Number of other VQs offered	***4***	Mean certificates per other VQ	***37.3***
				Max	***129***
				Min	***1***

3. Land Based and Environment

Total certificates awarded	***603***
Total GCSE certificates (incl. vGCSEs)	***0***
Total GNVQ certificates	***57***

Total certificates minus GCSEs and GNVQs	***546***				
Total NVQ certificates	***226***	Number of NVQs offered	***10***	Mean certificates per NVQ	***22.6***
				Max	***66***
				Min	***1***
Total other VQ certificates	***320***	Number of other VQs offered	***22***	Mean certificates per other VQ	***14.5***
				Max	***121***
				Min	***1***

4. Engineering

Total certificates awarded	***79060***
Total GCSE certificates (incl. vGCSEs)	***77548***
Total GNVQ certificates	***191***

Total certificates minus GCSEs and GNVQs	***1321***				
Total NVQ certificates	***510***	Number of NVQs offered	***12***	Mean certificates per NVQ	***42.5***
				Max	***282***
				Min	***1***
Total other VQ certificates	***811***	Number of other VQs offered	***34***	Mean certificates per other VQ	***23.9***
				Max	***156***
				Min	***1***

5. Manufacturing

Total certificates awarded	***257974***
Total GCSE certificates (incl. vGCSEs)	***257711***
Total GNVQ certificates	***202***

Total certificates minus GCSEs and GNVQs	***61***				
Total NVQ certificates	***12***	Number of NVQs offered	***3***	Mean certificates per NVQ	***4***
				Max	***10***
				Min	***1***
Total other VQ certificates	***49***	Number of other VQs offered	***6***	Mean certificates per other VQ	***8.2***
				Max	***23***
				Min	***1***

6. Construction and the built environment

Total certificates awarded	***1631***
Total GCSE certificates (incl. vGCSEs)	***0***
Total GNVQ certificates	***199***

Total certificates minus GCSEs and GNVQs	***1432***				
Total NVQ certificates	***4***	Number of NVQs offered	***2***	Mean certificates per NVQ	***2***
				Max	***3***
				Min	***1***
Total other VQ certificates	***1428***	Number of other VQs offered	***32***	Mean certificates per other VQ	***44.6***
				Max	***960***
				Min	***1***

7. Information and Communication Technology

Total certificates awarded	***174800***
Total GCSE certificates (incl. vGCSEs)	***132083***
Total GNVQ certificates	***35555***

Total certificates minus GCSEs and GNVQs	***7162***				
Total NVQ certificates	***27***	Number of NVQs offered	***7***	Mean certificates per NVQ	***3.9***
				Max	***9***
				Min	***1***
Total other VQ certificates	***7135***	Number of other VQs offered	***47***	Mean certificates per other VQ	***151.8***
				Max	***2526***
				Min	***1***

8. Retail

Total certificates awarded	***117***
Total GCSE certificates (incl. vGCSEs)	***0***
Total GNVQ certificates	***0***

Total certificates minus GCSEs and GNVQs	***117***				
Total NVQ certificates	***47***	Number of NVQs offered	***9***	Mean certificates per NVQ	***5.2***
				Max	***19***
				Min	***1***
Total other VQ certificates	***70***	Number of other VQs offered	***6***	Mean certificates per other VQ	***11.7***
				Max	***54***
				Min	***1***

9. Hospitality and Catering

Total certificates awarded	***880***
Total GCSE certificates (incl. vGCSEs)	***0***
Total GNVQ certificates	***0***

Total certificates minus GCSEs and GNVQs	***880***				
Total NVQ certificates	***488***	Number of NVQs offered	***18***	Mean certificates per NVQ	***27.1***
				Max	***157***
				Min	***1***
Total other VQ certificates	***392***	Number of other VQs offered	***18***	Mean certificates per other VQ	***21.8***
				Max	***137***
				Min	***1***

10. Hair and Beauty

Total certificates awarded	***1435***
Total GCSE certificates (incl. vGCSEs)	***0***
Total GNVQ certificates	***0***

Total certificates minus GCSEs and GNVQs	***1435***				
Total NVQ certificates	***1167***	Number of NVQs offered	***9***	Mean certificates per NVQ	***129.7***
				Max	***605***
				Min	***1***
Total other VQ certificates	***268***	Number of other VQs offered	***25***	Mean certificates per other VQ	***10.7***
				Max	***89***
				Min	***1***

11. Sport and Leisure

Total certificates awarded	***14154***
Total GCSE certificates (incl. vGCSEs)	***12800***
Total GNVQ certificates	***1065***

Total certificates minus GCSEs and GNVQs	***289***				
Total NVQ certificates	***58***	Number of NVQs offered	***8***	Mean certificates per NVQ	***7.3***
				Max	***28***
				Min	***1***
Total other VQ certificates	***231***	Number of other VQs offered	***10***	Mean certificates per other VQ	***23.1***
				Max	***104***
				Min	***1***

12. Travel and Tourism

Total certificates awarded	***10975***
Total GCSE certificates (incl. vGCSEs)	***10820***
Total GNVQ certificates	***0***

Total certificates minus GCSEs and GNVQs	***155***				
Total NVQ certificates	***2***	Number of NVQs offered	***2***	Mean certificates per NVQ	***1***
				Max	***1***
				Min	***1***
Total other VQ certificates	***153***	Number of other VQs offered	***11***	Mean certificates per other VQ	***13.9***
				Max	***99***
				Min	***1***

13. Creative and Media

Total certificates awarded	***484468***
Total GCSE certificates (incl. vGCSEs)	***482071***
Total GNVQ certificates	***2267***

Total certificates minus GCSEs and GNVQs	***130***				
Total NVQ certificates	***1***	Number of NVQs offered	***1***	Mean certificates per NVQ	***1***
				Max	***1***
				Min	***1***
Total other VQ certificates	***149***	Number of other VQs offered	***40***	Mean certificates per other VQ	***3.7***
				Max	***66***
				Min	***1***

14. Business Administration and Finance

Total certificates awarded	***99677***
Total GCSE certificates (incl. vGCSEs)	***96673***
Total GNVQ certificates	***1935***

Total certificates minus GCSEs and GNVQs	***1069***				
Total NVQ certificates	***141***	Number of NVQs offered	***17***	Mean certificates per NVQ	***8.3***
				Max	***80***
				Min	***1***
Total other VQ certificates	***928***	Number of other VQs offered	***41***	Mean certificates per other VQ	***22.6***
				Max	***142***
				Min	***1***

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Annex 3: Methodologies and school samples

January 2006

Annex 3: Methodologies and school samples

The questionnaires

Data was gathered from two questionnaires: the Monitoring Curriculum and Assessment (MCA) annual questionnaire, sent out to a stratified sample of 1,000 secondary schools in England as part of a suite of subject questionnaires, and a bespoke investigating vocational provision (IVP) questionnaire sent to a sample of 200 schools that were selected because they had the highest national participation in vocational provision either:

a) because of the proportion of students gaining vocational qualifications, or
b) because of the number of different vocational qualifications they offered.

It is important to note that, although the sample of schools used for the MCA questionnaire was more representative than the sample used for the IVP questionnaire, it is subject to a self-selecting bias in terms of completion. Schools are not required to complete and return the MCA questionnaire. Schools that did return it were more likely to be involved in offering vocational qualifications, simply because of the content of the questionnaire.

The MCA analysis is based on responses from 303 schools (a response rate of 30 per cent) and the IVP questionnaire analysis is based on returns of 106 questionnaires (a 53 per cent response rate).

For the full and detailed analysis for both questionnaires, please see Annexes 2 and 3.

The schools

The schools in our samples had similar percentages of IFP schools (in the MCA 52 per cent and in the IVP 57 per cent). Fifty-eight per cent of MCA respondents said their school had a sixth form, slightly above the national figure of 41 per cent (SCU, 2002), and 42 per cent of schools from the IVP survey said they had a sixth form. The percentage of schools in our samples with a specialism was significantly higher than the national figure (75 per cent of sample schools versus a national figure of 41 per cent).

Centre Visits

From February to April 2005 consultants visited 29 state secondary schools across England on behalf of the QCA and the investigation into vocational provision at key stage 4.

The school sample was taken from a list supplied by the DfES of 1,000 schools that had been identified as offering a significant vocational curriculum, either in terms of the number of students involved or in terms of the number of vocational courses offered.

We contacted the head teachers of the top 50 schools explaining the project and why their school had been selected and asked if they would allow QCA consultants to visit for part of a day. Twenty-nine of these schools agreed and visits were arranged.

Ahead of the visit the school was sent a short questionnaire that included questions about the school and the qualifications it offered. It was also sent a full list of the questions that were going to be asked during the interviews.

At each school, consultants held structured discussions with the head /deputy head of curriculum, teachers who had subject responsibility for the delivery of GCSEs in vocational subjects, teachers who had responsibility for the delivery of other vocational subjects and two groups of students: those studying a GCSE in a vocational subject or subjects and those studying 'other' vocational qualification(s).

It is important to note that the schools in this sample were hand-selected because of their level of vocational provision. We would therefore expect levels of participation and the number of qualifications offered to be higher than in the school population as a whole. This is not a representative sample and it is important that the reader keeps this in mind when reading through the following analysis.

The schools

Forty-eight per cent of the schools said they were IFP schools (the national figure stands at 66 per cent).

In terms of regional distribution, we included at least one school in each of the Government Office Regions in England.

Government Office Region	n	%
London	***3***	***10%***
East of England	***2***	***7%***
Yorkshire and the Humber	***5***	***17%***
South East	***5***	***17%***
South West	***4***	***14%***
East Midlands	***3***	***10%***
West Midlands	***3***	***10%***
North East	***3***	***10%***

North West	***1***	***3%***

School size

The respondent schools were made up of:

Small schools (less than or equal to 128 students in year 10)	***17%***
Medium schools (greater than 128, less that 186 students in year 10)	***28%***
Large schools (greater than or equal to 186 students in year 10)	***52%***

59 per cent of the schools were 11–16 schools

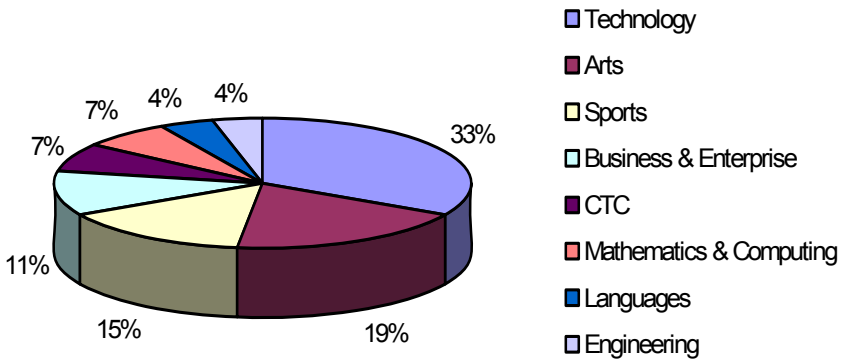
38 per cent were 11–18 schools and

one school (3 per cent) was an 8–16 school

School specialism

Ninety-three per cent of the schools we visited already had or had applied for specialist status. The most common specialism of the schools in the sample was technology (33 per cent). None of the schools in the sample had specialisms in humanities, music or science and two of the schools said they had no specialism.

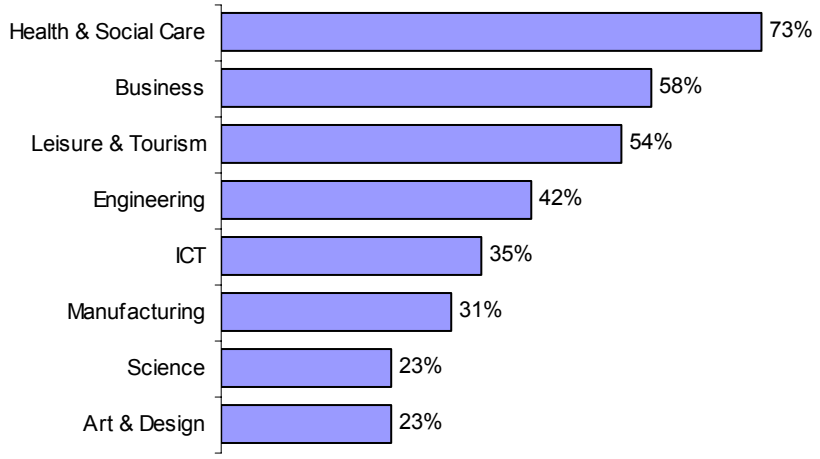
Nationally 41 per cent of secondary schools have a specialism (based on figures from the SST website and SCU, 2002 data). Like the schools in our sample, the most common national specialism is technology (33 per cent).



Vocational provision

Vocational provision	**% of schools**
Offer GCSEs in vocational subjects	***90***
Offer NVQs	***5***
Offer 'other' vocational subjects	***97***

The most commonly offered GCSE in a vocational subject was health and social care, offered to key stage 4 students by 73 per cent of the schools. The least commonly offered subjects were science and art and design (each offered by 23 per cent of the schools).



Focus Groups

We originally intended to hold subject-specific focus groups at QCA drawn from teachers delivering GCSEs in vocational subjects to identify any subject-specific issues not identified elsewhere in the investigation.

Two meetings were held at QCA in March 2005, one for engineering and one for science, but not enough teachers were available to attend the other planned meetings. An alternative approach was therefore used for the other subjects. We contacted LEA and LSDA networks to identify scheduled meetings that QCA could attend. QCA attended meetings in Coventry, Stafford, Rotherham, Worcester, Wolverhampton and Portsmouth from May to July 2005.

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Annex 4: Monitoring Curriculum and Assessment Questionnaire Analysis

January 2006

Annex 4: Monitoring Curriculum and Assessment Questionnaire Analysis

Methodology

Timeframe

The 2004/5 MCA Work-related learning, Careers Education and Guidance and Vocational Qualifications questionnaire was sent to schools in England in late February 2004. The cut-off date for the return of questionnaires was mid-April.

Purpose of questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire was threefold: to gather data on the management and provision of Careers Education and Guidance in schools at key stages 3, 4 and post-16; to gather data on the current structure, provision and management of work-related learning across key stages 3, 4 and post-16 but primarily at key stage 4; and to gather data on the type and range of vocational qualifications taking place in schools. The analysis in this paper covers only the latter of these areas, for analysis of Careers Education and Guidance and work-related learning please see the relevant research on the 14-19 learning website .

The questionnaire

The questionnaire was part of a suite of subject questionnaires sent to just over 1,000 secondary schools; the suite included all of the core and foundation subjects plus religious education, PSHE and business studies. The questionnaires were sent as a set to head teachers or, if the school requested, separately to individual subject heads.

The school sample

It is important to note that the sample of schools used for this questionnaire is a lot more representative than the sample used for the IVP questionnaire, for which schools were selected from a list provided by the DfES of the top 1,000 schools in terms of the number of students involved in vocational qualifications or the number of vocational qualifications offered.
Schools were not forced to complete and return the questionnaire. Therefore, the schools that did return the questionnaire were a self-selected sample and were likely to offer vocational qualifications. If the questionnaire was not relevant to a school's provision, it is not likely that they would have completed it.

This analysis is based on 303 responses (a response rate of 30 per cent).

Headline findings

Management and coordination of vocational qualifications

- Sixty-three per cent of respondents said their school had a designated coordinator for vocational qualifications and 30 per cent said that their school had no current plans for such a position.
- Twenty-two per cent of respondents said their school had a written policy on vocational qualifications in place, 42 per cent said they would have one in place by 2006/7, while over one-third said their school had no current plans to have such a policy.
- Eighty-eight per cent of respondents said their school had vocational qualifications in the school development plan.

Qualifications offered

- Eighty-eight per cent of respondents said their school offered at least one vocational qualification to their key stage 4 students.

GCSEs in vocational subjects

- Eighty-eight per cent of respondents said their school offered at least one of the GCSEs in vocational subjects.
- The most common subject offered was leisure and tourism (offered by 54 per cent of the schools that offered the qualifications).
- The least common subject offered was manufacturing (offered by 14 per cent of the schools that offered vGCSEs).
- The most common reason for offering GCSEs in vocational subjects was staff expertise (70 per cent of respondents gave this as a reason) followed by the school's specialist status (63 per cent of respondents gave this as a reason).
- Fifty per cent of respondents said in the next year their school would be increasing the number of GCSEs in vocational subjects offered and 8 per cent said their school would be decreasing the number offered.

NVQs

- Thirty-one per cent of respondents said their school offered at least one NVQ to their key stage 4 students.
- The most common subject offered was hairdressing (46 per cent of schools said they offered NVQs in this subject), followed by catering (listed by 32 per cent of schools).

- Sixty-six per cent of respondents said the NVQs they offered were full NVQs as opposed to NVQ units.
- Ninety-one per cent of the NVQs offered were taught off site.
- Eighty-four per cent of NVQs were offered in collaboration with an FE college.
- The most common reason given as to why schools offered NVQs was the school's specialist status (70 per cent of respondents gave this as a reason). The next most common reason was availability of funding, given by 40 per cent of respondents.
- Forty-eight per cent of respondents said in the next year their school would be increasing the number of NVQs offered and 5 per cent of respondents said the number of qualifications offered would decrease.

'Other' vocational qualifications

- Forty per cent of respondents said their school offered at least one 'other' vocational qualification to their key stage 4 students.
- The most common subject offered was ICT (33 per cent of qualifications) and the most common type of qualification was a BTEC (27 per cent of qualifications).
- The majority of respondents (61 per cent) said the 'other' vocational qualifications were offered on site.
- Sixty-six per cent of the 'other' vocational qualifications were offered in partnership with an FE college.
- The most common reason respondents gave as to why their school offered the 'other' vocational qualifications was the school's specialist status (73 per cent).
- Sixty-four per cent of respondents said that in the next year their school would be increasing the number of 'other' vocational subjects they offered their key stage 4 students and 2 per cent said their school would be decreasing the number offered.

Activities and support for students' vocational learning

- It is important to keep in mind the fact that the activities we asked about were in addition to work experience. Around 95 per cent of the key stage 4 cohort will have at least one week's block work experience by the time they finish year 11.
- Among students doing NVQs, the most common activity was taking part in extended work experience.
- Students taking other vocational qualifications were most likely to take part when visitors come to the school.
- Among students taking a GCSE in a vocational subject, the most common activity was taking part in visits to industry.
- The most common activity listed as part of the key stage 4 programme for the majority of students was having visitors to schools.

- In terms of support from outside organisations for vocational learning, schools reported that the most help for GCSEs in vocational subjects and other vocational subjects came from EBLOs. Respondents listed other colleges as providing the most support for NVQs.

Attitudes towards vocational qualifications

- Respondents believed that vocational qualifications were most significant to students in the lower-attainment quartiles and least significant to students in the upper-attainment quartile.
- The majority of respondents said that teacher and parent attitudes towards vocational qualifications were very positive or generally positive.

The schools

- Fifty-two per cent of the respondent schools were Increased Flexibility Schools.
- Fifty-eight per cent of the respondent schools had a sixth form.
- In terms of specialist status, 74 per cent of respondents reported that their school already had a specialist status granted and an additional 16 per cent had applied for specialist status. Ten per cent had no specialist status.

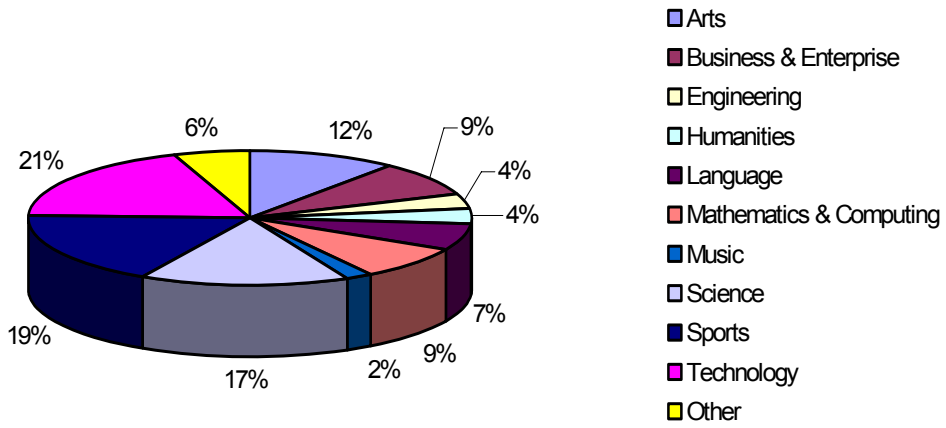


Figure 1. School's specialisms

J1. Does your school offer any vocational qualifications?

Eighty-eight per cent of respondents said their schools offered vocational qualifications to their key stage 4 students (these included the GCSEs in vocational subjects, NVQs and 'other' vocational qualifications).

J2. Does your school currently have a designated coordinator for vocational qualifications?

The majority of schools said they had a designated vocational qualifications coordinator. Just under one-third of respondents said that their school had no current plans to have one.

Coordinator for vocational qualifications	%
Yes	***63***
No, but will have for 2005/6	***6***
No, but will have for 2006/7	***1***
No current plans to have one	***30***

J3. What other responsibilities does the coordinator of vocational qualifications hold?

The most common other responsibilities held by the vocational qualification coordinators were that of subject head (51 per cent of respondents said this was at least one of the additional responsibilities held by the vocational coordinator in their school), followed by a senior management team member (35 per cent) and work experience coordinator (20 per cent).

J4. Does your school have a written policy for vocational qualifications in place?

Only 22 per cent of respondents said their school had a written policy in place. An additional 42 per cent said they would have one in place by 2006/7 if not by 2005/6.

Over one-third of respondents said their school had no plans to have a written policy on vocational qualifications.

J5. Are vocational qualifications in the school development plan?

The vast majority (88 per cent) of respondents said their schools had vocational qualifications in the school development plan.

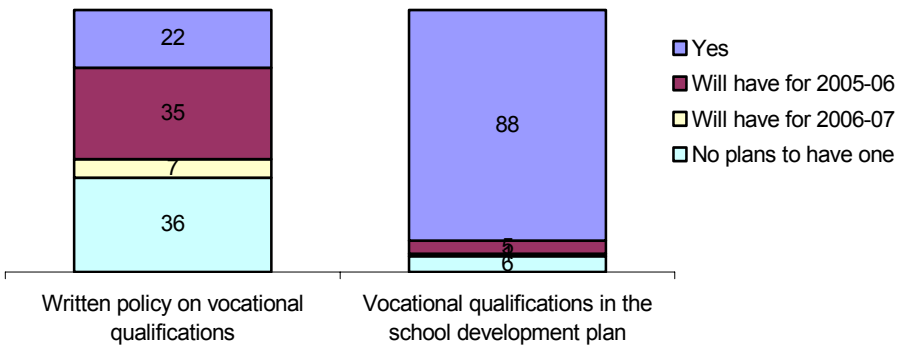


Figure 2. The percentage of schools with written policies on vocational qualifications and those with vocational qualifications in their development plan

Qualifications Offered

K1. Which GCSEs in vocational subjects does your school offer to key stage 4 students?

Eighty-eight per cent of schools said they offered the GCSEs in vocational subjects.

The most common subject offered was leisure and tourism (offered by 56 per cent of schools that offered GCSEs in vocational subjects), followed by health and social care (offered by 54 per cent of schools). The least common subject offered by schools was manufacturing.

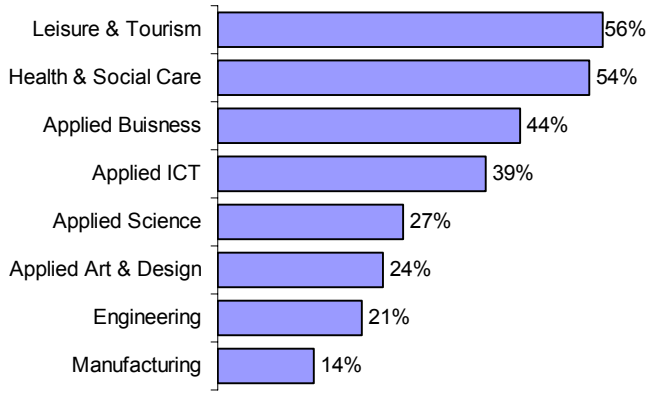


Figure 3. % Respondents offering the various GCSEs in vocational subjects

Numbers of Year 10 and 11 students taking GCSEs in vocational subjects

Subject	*No. of respondents*		*Mean no. taking vGCSE*		*Range of student numbers taking vGCSEs*			
	Y10	Y11	Y10	Y11	Min Y10	Min Y11	Max Y10	Max Y11
Applied Art & Design	***30***	***22***	***20***	***20***	***5***	***8***	***30***	***69***
Applied Business	***59***	***51***	***28***	***27***	***6***	***2***	***120***	***90***
Applied science	***36***	***33***	***43***	***37***	***14***	***15***	***100***	***100***
Applied ICT	***54***	***46***	***50***	***49***	***10***	***10***	***185***	***182***
Engineering	***32***	***25***	***24***	***21***	***1***	***1***	***110***	***66***
Health & Social Care	***74***	***65***	***28***	***24***	***1***	***1***	***105***	***103***
Leisure & Tourism	***73***	***68***	***21***	***20***	***4***	***1***	***50***	***89***
manufacturing	***16***	***14***	***31***	***23***	***9***	***10***	***118***	***60***

In terms of the numbers of students taking the qualifications, the highest average number of students taking a subject was in applied ICT.

Applied ICT, applied science and manufacturing all had larger minimum numbers of students than any of the other subjects offered by school

K2. Why do you offer the GCSEs in vocational subjects you selected?

The most common reason for offering a GCSE in vocational subject, given by 70 per cent of respondents, was staff expertise; this was followed by the school's specialist status.

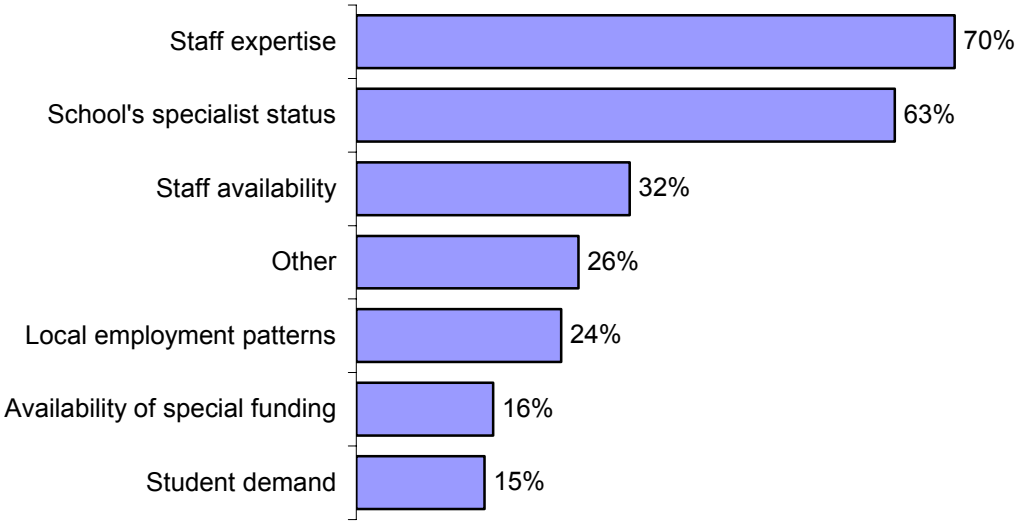


Figure 4. Respondents' reasons for offering GCSEs in vocational subjects

K3. In the next year does your school plan to increase or decrease the number of GCSEs in vocational subjects you offer?

Fifty per cent of respondents said they were going to increase the number of GCSEs in vocational subjects their school offered, while 8 per cent of schools planned to decrease the number offered.

Offer more/less vGCSEs?	%
Increase	***50***
Decrease	***8***
Stay the same	***34***
Don't know	***8***

NVQs

K4. Which NVQs does your school offer to key stage 4 students?

Thirty-one per cent of respondents said they offered at least one NVQ to their key stage 4 students.

The most common NVQ subjects schools offered their students were hairdressing, catering and construction.

The table below is a list of subjects in which respondents said they offered NVQs. This list is based on what respondents think their school offers. It is important to keep in mind the difficulty in getting respondents to report any non-mainstream provisions. This is a list of subjects that school have reported; these are not necessarily the precise subjects the school offers.

Subject	% schools offering
Hairdressing	***46***
Catering	***32***
Construction	***30***
Motor vehicle studies	***28***
Engineering	***18***
Health & beauty	***15***
Child care	***13***
Beauty care	***8***
Sports & recreation	***6***
Business administration	***4***
Hospitality	***1***
Leisure & tourism	***1***
Other	***68***
Unspecified	***3***

Figure 5. % of respondents and NVQ subject areas offered in schools

The average number of students taking an NVQ was eight in year 10 and seven in year 11. However, the range of numbers of students taking NVQs was from a single student to a maximum of 136 year 10 students in one school.

Sixty-six per cent of respondents said that the courses they offered were full NVQs (as opposed to NVQ units) and the majority of respondents (91 per cent) said that these qualifications were offered off site.

K5. If any of the NVQs are offered in partnership/collaboration, please tell us who the partners are.

The majority of NVQs (84 per cent) were offered in collaboration with an FE college.

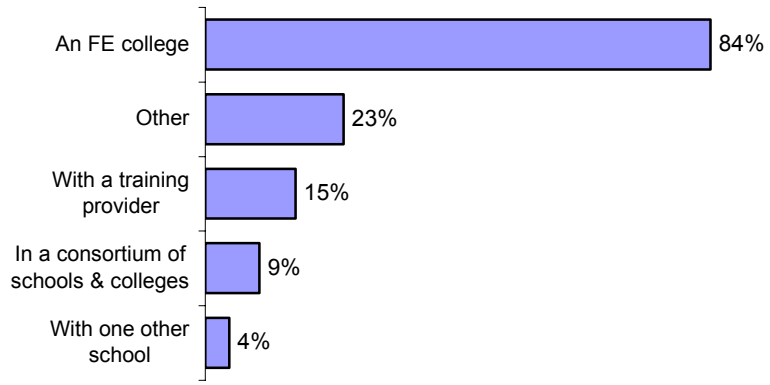


Figure 6. Collaboration when offering NVQs

K6. Why do you offer these NVQs?

The most common reasons given by respondents as to why their school offered NVQs were the school's specialist status and the availability of special funding.

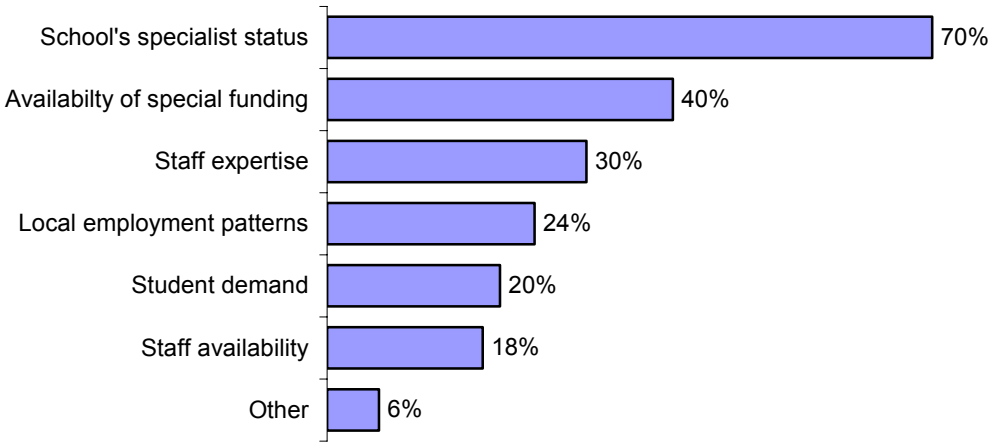


Figure 7. Reasons why schools offer NVQs

K7. In the next year does your school plan to increase or decrease the number of NVQ titles offered to your key stage 4 students?

Forty-eight per cent of respondents said that in the next year their school would be increasing the number of NVQs offered to their key stage 4 students, 37 per cent expected the number of NVQs offered to stay the same and 5 per cent said the number would decrease.

K8. Which other vocational qualifications does your school offer to key stage 4 students?

Forty per cent of respondents said their school offered at least one 'other' vocational qualification to their key stage 4 students.

The table below is a list of the subject areas in which respondents said they offered 'other' vocational qualifications. Please be aware that this is based on the responses of respondents and what they think their school offers. It is important to keep in mind the difficulty in trying to get respondents to accurately report any non-mainstream provision. This is a list of subjects that school have reported; these are not necessarily the precise subjects the school offers.

Subject area	%
ICT	***33***
Sport	***17***
Performing arts	***16***
Child care	***15***
Construction	***14***
Business	***11***
Skills for working life	***11***
Motor vehicle studies	***11***
Health & social care	***10***
Preparation for working life	***6***
Hairdressing	***6***
Career planning	***5***
Travel & tourism	***4***
Junior Sports Leader Award	***3***
Work related learning	***1***
Other	***61***
Unspecified	***8***

Figure 8. % of respondents and 'other' vocational qualification area offered

The most common type of 'other' vocational qualification offered by schools was BTECs, followed by GNVQs.

Qualification type	% of schools offering
BTEC	***27***
GNVQ	***23***
ASDAN	***8***
CACHE	***4***
Entry Level	***4***
Unspecified	***23***
Other	***11***

Figure 9. Qualification type offered and % of schools

The average number of students taking 'other' vocational qualifications in year 10 is 26 students; the average number of students in year 11 is 28. The range of numbers of students taking other vocational subjects goes from a minimum of one to a maximum of 234 year 10 students and 210 year 11 students. The most common student group size in year 10 is 15 and in year 11 is 10 students.

The majority of respondents (61 per cent) reported that 'other' vocational qualifications were offered on site, 36 per cent said they were offered off site and 3 per cent reported they were offered both on and off site.

K9. If any of the 'other' vocational qualifications are offered in partnership/ collaboration, please tell us who the partners are.

The majority of respondents (91 per cent) said that they offered the 'other' vocational qualifications in partnership/collaboration. The most common partner with which to offer 'other' vocational qualifications with was an FE college.

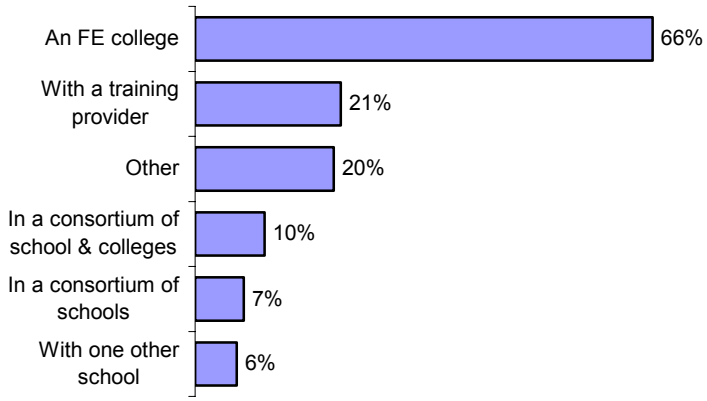


Figure 10. Collaboration when offering 'other' vocational qualifications

K10. Why do you offer these qualifications?

The most common reasons given by respondents as to why their school offers other vocational subjects are because of the school's specialist status and staff expertise.

Figure 11. Reasons why schools offer 'other' vocational qualifications

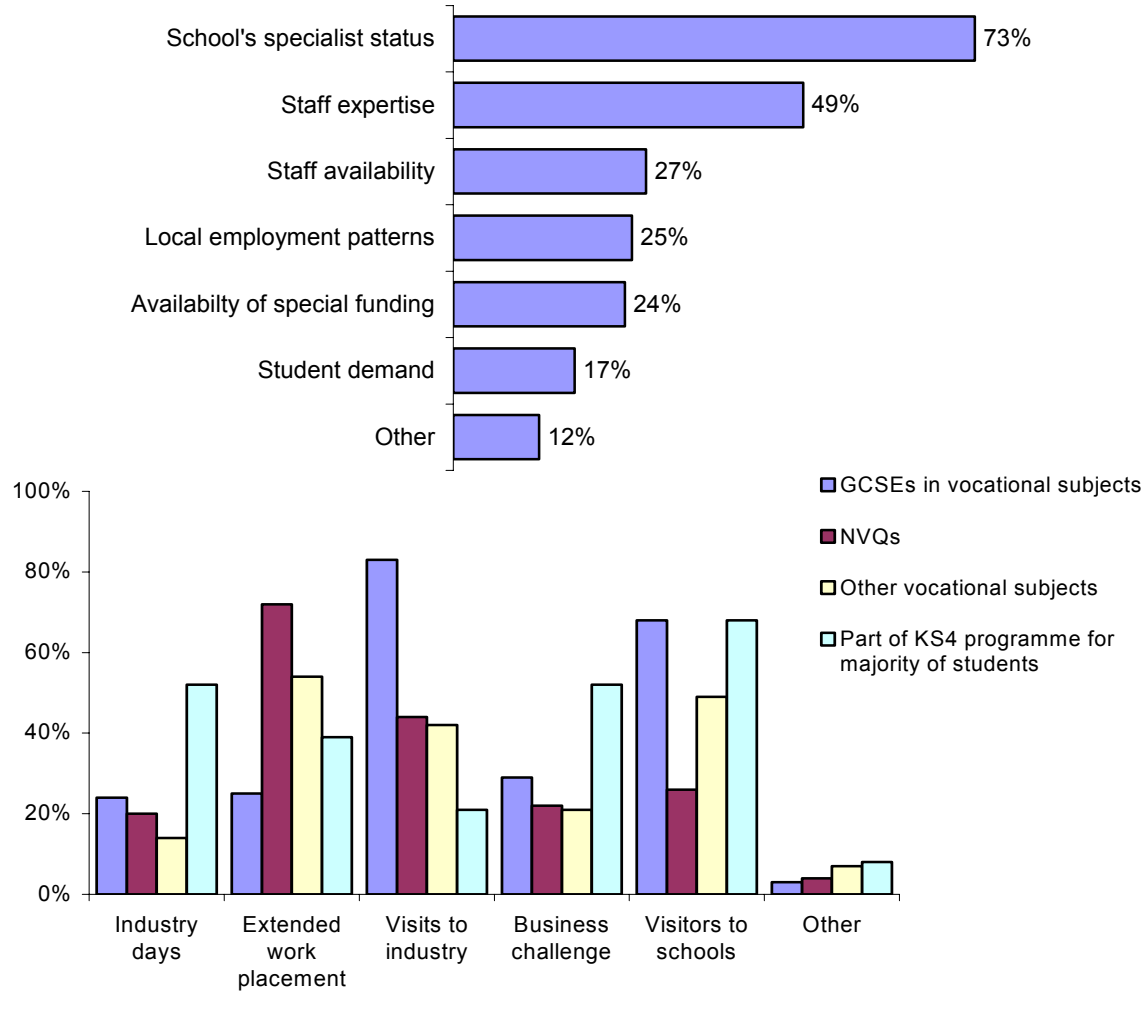


Figure 12. Activities supporting vocational learning

K11. In the next year does your school plan to increase or decrease the number of other vocational qualifications offered to your key stage 4 students?

Sixty-four per cent of respondents said their school would be increasing the numbers of other vocational qualifications they offered to their key stage 4 students, 24 per cent said the number they offered would stay the same and 2 per cent said the number would decrease.

Activities supporting students' vocational learning

L1. What activities do your key stage 4 students take part in to enrich the vocational aspect of their qualifications?

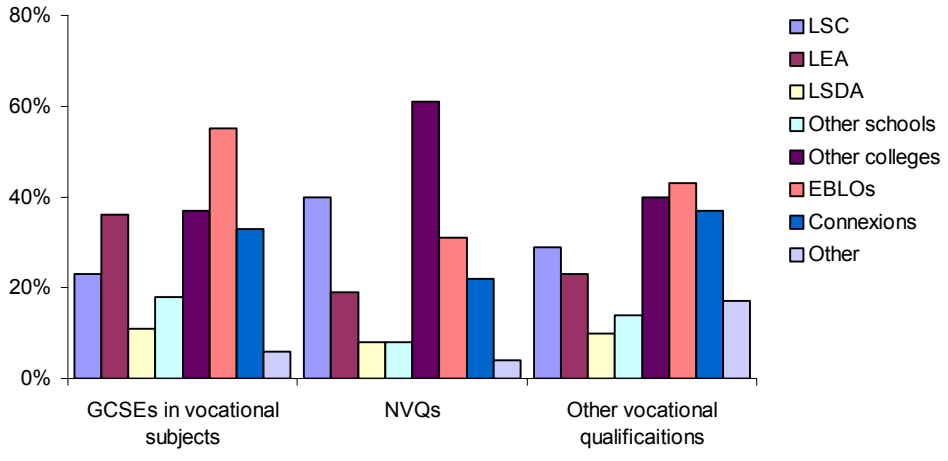
It is important to keep in mind that the activities we asked about are in addition to work experience. About 95 per cent of key stage 4 students will take part in at least one week's block work experience by the time they finish year 11.

The most common activities that students doing GCSEs in vocational subjects take part in are visits to industry and having visitors into schools. Students taking NVQs are most likely to take part in extended work experience and visits to industry and students doing 'other' vocational qualifications are most likely to take part in extended work experience or have visitors to schools. The most common activities that the majority of students do as part of their key stage 4 programme are industry days and having visitors into schools.

L2. Which outside organisations are helping support the activities you offer?

Respondents listed EBLOs as offering the most support for the activities they offer the key stage 4 students taking GCSEs in vocational subjects. Most respondents named other colleges as offering support for NVQs. For 'other' vocational qualifications, most respondents named EBLOs followed by other colleges.

Figure 13. Organisations supporting qualifications and activities

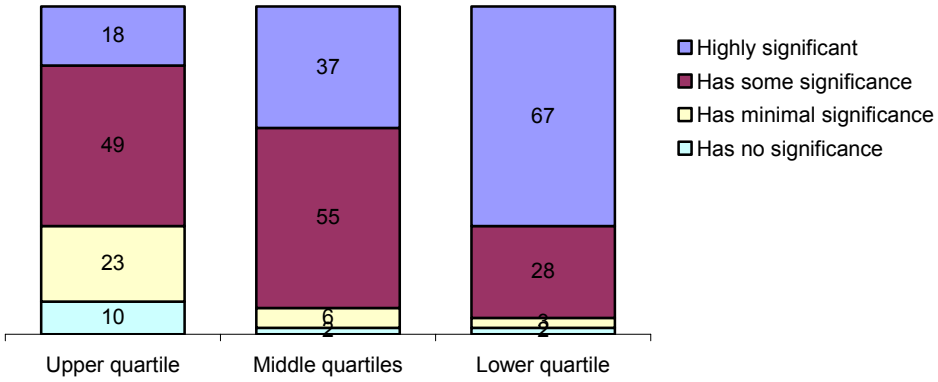


Attitudes towards qualifications

M1. In your view how significant are vocational qualifications in helping students of different abilities achieve their life goals?

Respondents believed that vocational qualifications were the most highly significant for students in the lower-attainment quartile and least significant for students in the upper-attainment quartile.

Figure 14. Significance of vocational qualifications on different ability students



The majority of respondents said that teacher and parent attitudes towards vocational qualifications were very positive or generally positive.

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

Report on vocational learning provision at key stage 4

Annex 5: Investigation into vocational learning at key stage 4 questionnaire analysis

January 2006

Annex 5: Investigation into vocational learning at key stage 4 questionnaire analysis

Methodology

Schools

It is important to note that the schools that took part in this vocational provision at key stage 4 questionnaire were not a representative sample of secondary schools in England. The sample comes from a list provided by the DfES of the top 1,000 secondary schools in England in terms of significant vocational curriculum at key stage 4, determined by the number of students involved or number of vocational qualifications offered. The sample is therefore heavily weighted towards schools that do offer vocational qualifications and it is important that this is kept in mind when reading the following analysis and drawing any conclusions from it.

The questionnaires were sent to the school's head teacher with a covering letter explaining why their school had been chosen to participate and the purpose of the investigation into vocational provision at key stage 4. We expected the head teacher to pass the questionnaire onto the person responsible for the vocational curriculum at key stage 4.

Timetable

The first wave of 100 questionnaires was sent on 17 February 2005, with a return date of 18 March. In an attempt to increase the response rate, respondents were told that if they returned their questionnaire before the deadline they would receive a £10 'Thank you' voucher.

The second wave of 100 questionnaires was sent out to schools on 18 April, with a return date of 18 May. These schools were not offered the incentive voucher, as the reason for this sample was to increase our base of returns.

This analysis is based on returns of 106 questionnaires (53 per cent response rate).

Headline Findings

Management and coordination of vocational qualifications

- Eighty-eight per cent of schools said they had a senior management team member with accountability for vocational provision at key stage 4 in place.

- Fifty-four per cent of schools said they had a designated coordinator (other than the senior manager) for vocational provision at key stage 4.
- Only 17 per cent of respondents said their schools had a written policy on vocational qualifications.
- Ninety-one per cent of schools said they had included vocational qualifications in their school development plan.
- Eighty-six per cent of schools said that over the last two years vocational provision at key stage 4 had increased in their school.

GCSEs in vocational subjects

- Eighty-six per cent of schools said they offered at least one of the GCSEs in vocational subjects. The most common subjects offered to key stage 4 students were health and social care and leisure and tourism (offered by 48 per cent of schools). The least common was manufacturing (offered by 10 per cent of the schools).
- The majority of schools offered the GCSEs in vocational subjects on site and to all students. Yet, the range of numbers of students taking GCSEs in vocational subjects went from one to a group of 360 students. Applied ICT was the subject that attracted the largest average numbers of students.
- The most common amount of time allocated to teaching a subject was 10 hours a fortnight, but the average amount of time allocated each fortnight was between seven and eight and one-half hours. The range of time that schools allocated to GCSEs in vocational subjects was as low as two hours a fortnight for ICT, engineering and leisure and tourism and as high as 14 hours a fortnight for art and design, health and social care and manufacturing.
- Respondents thought that GCSEs in vocational subjects were most significant to the middle quartiles and least significant for the upper quartile. Teachers did however consider them to be the most significant ‘vocational’ qualification for students in the upper-attainment quartile.
- A large percentage of students got below their predicted grades in applied ICT and manufacturing. For all other GCSEs in vocational subjects, the majority of schools reported that their students achieved the grades predicted. The subjects that appeared to achieve grades that were most in line with predictions were applied business and applied ICT.

NVQs

- Thirty-six per cent of schools said they offered NVQs to key stage 4 students.
- The majority of NVQs (81 per cent) were offered off site and most commonly delivered in collaboration with an FE college (39 per cent of NVQs).
- Schools reported small numbers of students taking NVQs, which were offered to selected groups of students in terms of their ability.

- NVQs were considered most highly significant to students in the lower-attainment quartile and least significant to those in the upper quartile.

Other vocational qualifications

- Seventy-six per cent of schools said they offered vocational qualifications other than GCSEs in vocational subjects and NVQs at key stage 4 (this is a very high figure and we must remind ourselves of the heavily weighted school sample).
- The majority (65 per cent) of the qualifications were offered on site and in no collaboration with other schools, colleges or training providers.
- The number of students reported to be taking other vocational qualifications ranged from one to a full year group of 271, although this was highly dependent on the subject.
- Teachers reported that they felt that other vocational qualifications were most significant to students in the lower-attainment quartile and least significant to students in the upper quartile.

Activities and support for vocational qualifications

- It is important to keep in mind that the activities we asked about were in addition to work experience. Around 95 per cent of the key stage 4 cohort will have at least one week's block work experience by the time they finish year 11.
- Among students doing NVQs, the most common activity was taking part in an extended work placement.
- Among students taking GCSEs in vocational subjects, the range of activities on offer to them was much greater than that on offer to students taking other vocational qualifications or NVQs.
- The most common activity for students taking GCSEs in vocational subjects was visits to industry.
- The most common activity listed as being part of the key stage 4 programme for all students and for students taking 'other' vocational qualifications was having visitors to schools.
- In terms of support from outside organisations, schools reported that on the whole they received the most support for GCSEs in vocational subjects from LEAs and EBLOs. School said the most support for NVQs and other vocational qualifications came from other colleges.

Attitudes towards vocational qualifications

- The vast majority of schools said that teacher and parent attitudes towards vocational qualifications were very positive or generally positive.

The schools

- 57 per cent of respondent schools were IFP schools
- 52 per cent of schools were 11–16
- 42 per cent were 11–18
- 6 per cent described themselves as other (an 11–16 in a collaborative post-16 partnership, an 11–19, a 12–18, a 13–18 and a 14–19 school)

The table below shows the averages (highlighted in grey), the maximum and the minimum number of students in a year group.

	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Number responding	***95***	***96***	***39***	***39***
Mean number of students in year	***190***	***183***	***107***	***78***
Minimum number of students in year	***8***	***7***	***21***	***7***
Maximum number of students in year	***397***	***373***	***300***	***280***

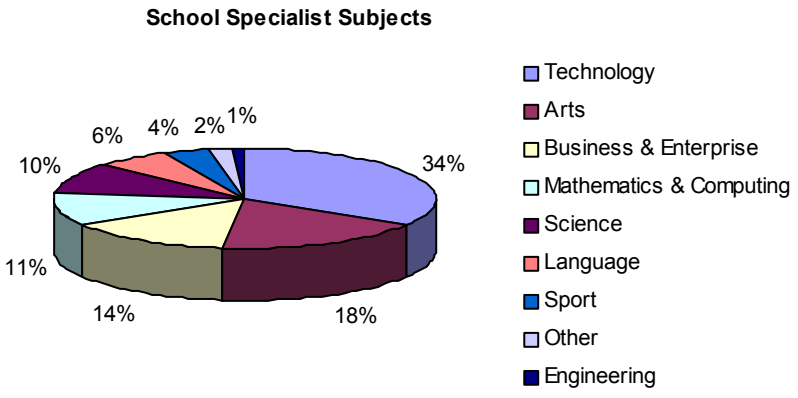
The sample of respondent schools was made up of

School size	%
Small (less than or equal to 128 students in Y10)	***15%***
Medium (greater than 128, less than 186 students in Y10)	***27%***
Large (greater than or equal to 186 students in Y10)	***47%***

School Specialism

Seventy-five per cent of the schools had already been granted a specialist status, 9 per cent said they had applied for specialist status and 16 per cent had no specialist status and had not applied for one.

Among schools that had applied for or been granted specialist status, the most common specialism was technology (30 schools reported that this was their specialism) and the least common was engineering (only one school named it as their specialism).



Management and coordination of vocational provision at key stage 4

Eighty-eight per cent of schools that responded had a senior management team member in place with accountability for vocational qualifications at key stage 4; a further 2 percent said they would have one in place for 2005/6.

Fifty-four per cent of respondent schools had a designated coordinator (other than a senior manager) for vocational qualifications and an additional 3 per cent said they would have one in place for 2005/6. Forty-three per cent of respondents said they had no plans to have one. Among schools that did have designated coordinators, only 17 per cent said that these coordinators had no other responsibilities. The most common other responsibilities held by the coordinators were that of subject head (16 per cent) and work experience coordinator (13 per cent).

Only 17 per cent of the respondent schools had a written policy on vocational qualifications. Forty per cent had no current plans to write one, but 43 per cent of the schools said they would have one in place by 2006/7.

The majority of schools (91 per cent) had vocational qualifications in the school's development plan and 86 per cent said that their vocational provision at key stage 4 has increased over the last two years.

Vocational Provision

Vocational Courses that do not lead to a qualification

Twenty-eight per cent of schools said they offered their key stage 4 students at least one vocational course that did not lead to a qualification. (See Appendix 1 for the list of courses given by schools.)

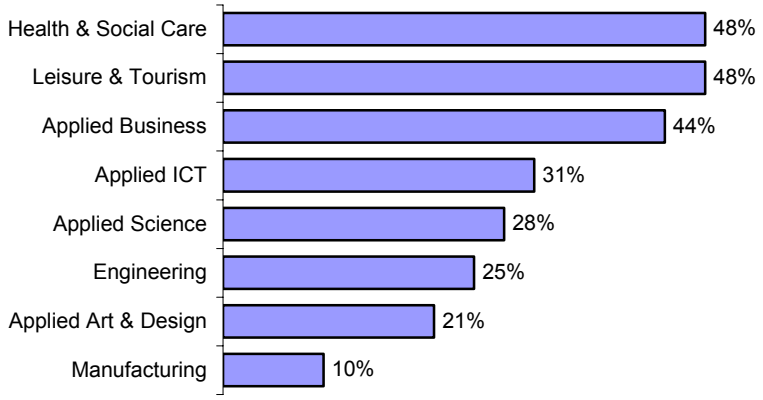
Where these courses are offered, the majority of schools offer them to selected groups of students in terms of students' ability or learning style or because students selected them as an option choice.

When asked why they chose to offer courses that do not lead to qualifications, schools generally agreed that such courses were of benefit to students with behavioural, motivational or attendance issues, those at risk of exclusion and those who would not succeed with regular qualifications.

GCSEs in vocational subjects

Eighty-six per cent of the respondent schools said they offered at least one of the GCSEs in vocational subjects. The most widely offered subjects were health and social care and leisure and tourism (both offered by 48 per cent of the schools), followed by applied business, offered in 44 per cent of the schools. The least common subject offered by the respondent schools was manufacturing, which was offered by just 10 per cent of schools.

Percentage of respondent schools offering GCSEs in vocational subjects



Among respondents, the majority of schools (over 86 per cent for each subject) offered the GCSE in vocational subjects on site. The subject most likely to be offered off site was engineering (35 per cent offered it off site).

In terms of the numbers of students taking part in the GCSEs in vocational subjects, the lowest average number of key stage 4 students taking a subject was in applied art and design. The highest average number of key stage 4 students taking a subject was in applied ICT.

Subject	Number of students					
	Mean Y10	Mean Y11	Min Y10	Min Y11	Max Y10	Max Y11
Applied ICT	***116***	***125***	***22***	***20***	***360***	***360***
Applied science	***58***	***56***	***16***	***18***	***136***	***120***
Applied Business	***38***	***40***	***15***	***12***	***206***	***220***
Health & Social Care	***30***	***28***	***1***	***1***	***75***	***60***
Engineering	***25***	***30***	***1***	***15***	***120***	***110***
Leisure & Tourism	***23***	***21***	***1***	***4***	***75***	***68***
Manufacturing	***19***	***27***	***4***	***10***	***44***	***75***
Applied Art & Design	***19***	***17***	***2***	***2***	***45***	***56***

The majority of GCSEs in vocational subjects were offered with no collaboration with other schools, FE colleges or training providers. Where schools did offer qualifications in collaboration with partners it was most likely to be with an FE college.

Collaboration was reported most by schools that offered engineering. Forty-six per cent of respondents who said they collaborated in offering vGCSEs said they offered engineering in collaboration with an FE college, other schools or with a consortium of schools and colleges. This collaboration took place both on and off site.

Schools most commonly named staff expertise and student demand as reasons why they offered the specific GCSEs in vocational subjects.

Time allocated

Among all subjects, the most common amount of time allocated in a fortnight was 10 hours. The average amount of time allocated was less; for most subjects the average time allocated in a fortnight was between seven and one-quarter hours and eight and one-half hours.

The range of hours allocated per fortnight varies considerably, from two hours a fortnight reported by schools that offered applied ICT, engineering and leisure and tourism to a maximum of 20 hours allocated to engineering and 14 hours allocated to applied art and design and health and social care.

Subject	N	Approx hours and minutes				Std deviation
		Mode	Mean	Min	Max	
Applied art & design	*23*	***10***	***8.10***	***4.40***	***14***	***2.51***
Applied business	*43*	***10***	***7.30***	***3***	***13.30***	***2.48***
Applied science	*28*	***10***	***8.45***	***5***	***12***	***1.78***
Applied ICT	*31*	***10***	***7.30***	***3.30***	***13.30***	***2.55***
Engineering	*26*	***10***	***8.40***	***5***	***20***	***2.94***
Health & social care	*49*	***10***	***7.50***	***3.30***	***14***	***2.78***
Leisure & tourism	*46*	***10***	***7.20***	***3.30***	***13.30***	***2.58***
Manufacturing	*11*	***10***	***8.40***	***5***	***10***	***1.78***

N = number of respondents. Mode = most common amount of time allocated.

Mean = average amount of time allocated. Std. Deviation = distribution of times

Over the last year, 23 per cent of respondents said they had increased the amount of time allocated to GCSEs in vocational subjects.

While the majority of schools (79%) said the time allocation for vGCSEs would stay the same over the next two years, 10.5 per cent of respondents said they were going to increase the amount of time allocated and 10.5 per cent said they would decrease the time allocated.

Thirty-eight per cent of respondents said that in the next year (2005/6) they were going to increase the number of GCSEs in vocational subjects offered and 10 per cent of respondents said that their school was going to reduce the number.

The students

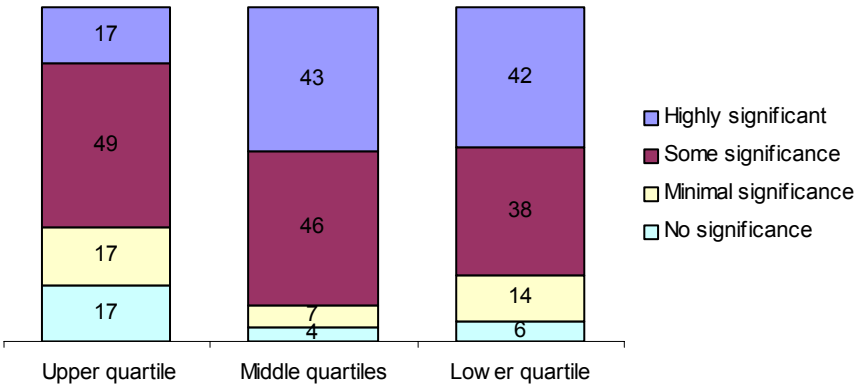
Among schools offering a GCSE in a vocational subject, the majority offered them to all students. Science was the only subject that was more likely to be offered to selected groups of students.

Where a subject was offered to selected groups of students, the majority of respondents said that students were selected in terms of their option choice. It was only where schools selected students for applied science that the majority of respondents said these students were selected in terms of their ability (although we are unable to comment on whether schools selected for higher- or lower-ability students).

We asked respondents to tell us how significant they thought the GCSEs in vocational subjects were for students in different ability quartiles.

Respondents thought that the GCSEs in vocational subjects were most significant for students in the middle-attainment quartiles and least significant for students in the upper-attainment quartile.

Significance of GCSEs in vocational subjects for different ability students



School's experience of GCSEs in vocational subjects

Training and support

We asked questionnaire respondents to tell us how satisfied they were with their experience of the following aspects of the training and support they received for the GCSEs in vocational subjects:

- The amount of time they had to prepare before the launch of the qualification
- The ease of accessing training on assessment of the qualification
- The ease of accessing training on the content of the qualification
- The guidance from awarding bodies on delivery
- The guidance from awarding bodies on assessment

- The exemplar materials available to help support assessment
- The example tests available to help with preparation for exams
- Their experience of moderation by awarding bodies.

See Appendix 2 of this analysis for tables detailing percentage of satisfied and dissatisfied respondents for each subject.

Applied art & design

The majority of the schools that offered the applied art and design GCSE were generally satisfied with the various aspects of training and support they had for the qualification. For most aspects, around two-thirds of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied, compared to one-third who said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Respondents were least satisfied with the exemplar materials and example tests they had received and most satisfied with their experience of moderation.

Applied business

Respondents from schools who offered applied business were generally positive about their experiences of training and support. For six of the aspects, over 72 per cent of respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied. Respondents were only slightly less satisfied with the exemplar materials (66 per cent were satisfied or very satisfied) and guidance on assessment (68 per cent were satisfied or very satisfied).

Applied science

At least two-thirds of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with each of the various aspects of training and support they received for applied science. Respondents were most satisfied with the ease of accessing training on the content of the qualification (86 per cent were satisfied or very satisfied) and by their experience of moderation.

Applied ICT

More than 69 per cent of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with each of the aspects of training and support they received for applied ICT. Respondents reported that they were most satisfied with the ease of accessing training on the content of the qualification.

Engineering

The majority of respondents who offered engineering were on the whole either satisfied or very satisfied with the training and support they received for the qualification. Most respondents were satisfied with the example tests (77 per cent were satisfied or very satisfied). However, 46 per cent were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the guidance they received from the awarding bodies on assessment.

Health and Social Care

Respondents were positive about the training and support they received for health and social care, with more than 69 per cent of respondents saying they were satisfied or very satisfied with each aspect. Most respondents were satisfied with their experience of moderation by awarding bodies (85 per cent were satisfied or very satisfied).

Leisure and Tourism

Of all of the GCSEs in vocational subjects, respondents were most positive about the training and support they received for leisure and tourism. More than 80 per cent of respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the majority of aspects. Respondents were most satisfied with their experience of moderation by awarding bodies.

Manufacturing

As with all other subjects, respondents' experiences of training and support were generally positive, with 91 per cent saying they were satisfied or very satisfied with the guidance they received from awarding bodies on assessment. The most respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their experience of moderation by awarding bodies.

Delivery and Assessment

We asked respondents to tell us how satisfied they were with their experience of the following aspects of delivery and assessment of the GCSEs in vocational subjects.

- The size of the qualification.
- The structure of the qualification.
- The amount of coursework and manageability for staff.
- The amount of coursework and manageability for students.
- The content of the qualification.

- The vocational relevance of the qualification.
- The level of demand of tests on students.

See Appendix 3 of this analysis for tables detailing percentage of satisfied and dissatisfied respondents for each subject.

The majority of respondents were positive about all aspects of delivery and assessment for each of the subjects, with over 70 per cent of respondents saying they were either satisfied or very satisfied with most of the above aspects.

Respondents whose schools offered health and social care and leisure and tourism had the most positive overall experiences of delivery and assessment.

Respondents who offered manufacturing were least satisfied with the size of the qualification (45 per cent said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied), respondents who offered art and design or applied science were least satisfied with the amount of coursework and the manageability of this for staff (35 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively, were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with this aspect) and respondents who offered applied business, applied ICT or engineering were least satisfied with the amount of coursework and the manageability of this for students.

Activities to develop vocational context

We asked respondents to tell us about the ease of arranging activities used to develop a vocational context in the vGCSEs they offered. Specifically, we asked them about:

- Time available for staff to arrange activities
- The ease of accessing employers
- The ease of engaging with employers
- The ease of obtaining information about employers/industry
- The ease of arranging work placements for students
- Support from outside organisations with arranging vocational links.

See Appendix 4 of this analysis for tables detailing percentage of satisfied and dissatisfied respondents for each subject.

Respondents were generally less positive about the experiences they had of the above aspects of developing the vocational context of a subject than they were about any of the other interview topics.

Time available

For each subject, a greater number of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of time they had available to arrange activities to develop the vocational context of the course than those who were dissatisfied. Respondents for applied art and design and applied science listed it as the most satisfactory aspect.

Ease of accessing and engaging with employers

The majority of respondents for each subject were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the ease of accessing and engaging with employers. This is not that surprising, given that people will always think that interacting and engaging with employers should be easier than it is.

Ease of obtaining information

The majority of respondents for applied business, applied ICT, engineering, health and social care and leisure and tourism were positive about the ease of obtaining information about employers/industry.

The ease of arranging work placements

Most respondents for each subject were more dissatisfied than satisfied with the ease of arranging work placements. However, it is uncertain how involved respondents were in arranging work placements, which are usually arranged by the student and a careers or Connexions adviser.

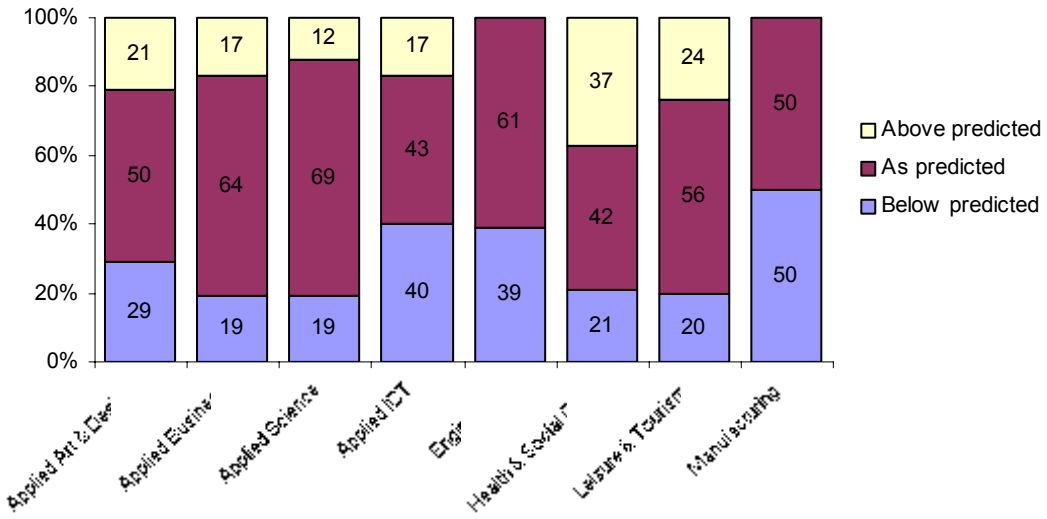
Support from outside organisations

Respondents would like more support from outside organisations. However, there were differences by subject in the responses. Respondents who offered applied business, health and social care, leisure and tourism and manufacturing were more satisfied than dissatisfied with the support they received from outside organisations. By comparison, respondents offering applied art and design, applied science, applied ICT and engineering were more likely to by dissatisfied with the support.

Awarded grades

We asked respondents to tell us whether the grades awarded to their students were generally in line with what had been predicted or if they were above or below the student's predicted grade. Students doing applied science or applied business were most likely to be awarded the grades predicted. Students taking health and social care were most likely to be awarded grades above

the ones predicted. Fifty per cent of respondents said that their manufacturing students received grades below what had been predicted, while 40 per cent of respondents reported below-predicted grades for their applied ICT students.

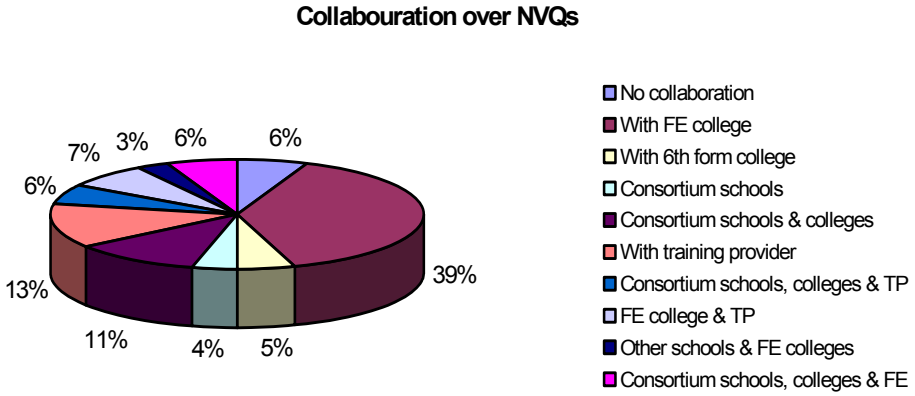


National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)

Among responding schools, 36 per cent said that they offered NVQs to their key stage 4 students. See Appendix 5 of this analysis for a full list of the NVQs that schools said they offered.

The vast majority (81 per cent) of the NVQs offered by schools were taught off site and most commonly delivered in partnership with an FE college (39 per cent of NVQs).

[Note misspelling of collaboration, in title of pie chart below]



Among schools offering NVQs, the number of students taking them is low, with the average number of students below 10 for each subject.

Respondents named ‘student demand’ as the most common reason to offer NVQs.

Fifty-four per cent of respondents who offered NVQs said they would be increasing the number they offered, 5 per cent said they would be decreasing the number of NVQs offered and 35 per cent said the number would stay the same.

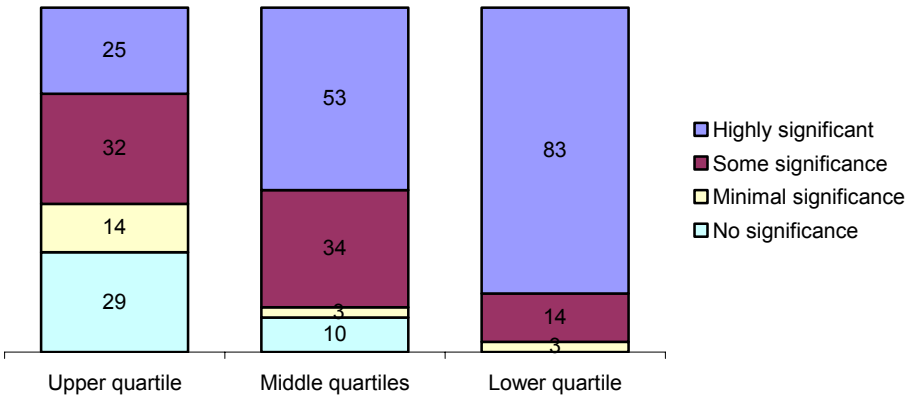
The students

Respondents stated that the majority of NVQs their school offered were available to selected groups of students. The majority of respondents said that these students were selected in terms of their ability (although option choice was only slightly less common).

In terms of significance of NVQs to students of different abilities, respondents reported that they saw them as having the most significance to students in the lower-attainment quartiles and having the least significance to students in the upper quartile.

Respondents overwhelmingly believed that NVQs were most highly significant for students in the lower-attainment quartiles, with 97 per cent of respondents saying they were either highly significant or had some significance. Fifty-three per cent of respondents believed that NVQs were highly significant to students in the middle quartiles (an additional 34 per cent said they felt they had some significance). Only 25 per cent of respondents said they felt NVQs were highly significant for students in the upper-attainment quartiles and 29 per cent said they had no significance to these students.

The significance of NVQs on different ability students



[typo in third bar, above]

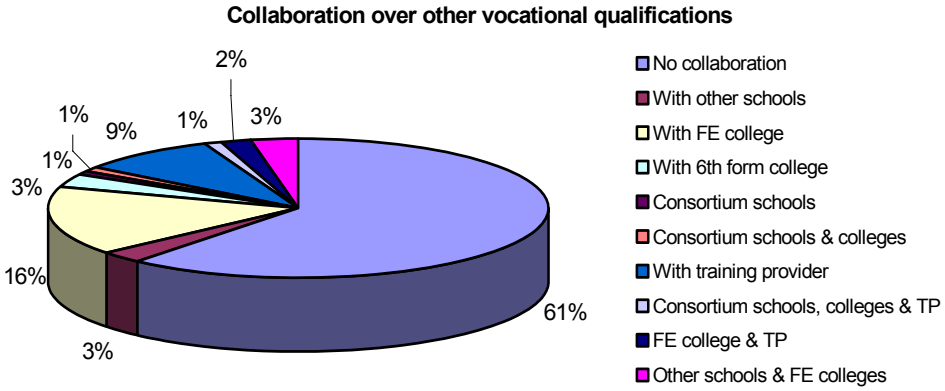
Other vocational qualifications

This section refers to vocational qualifications other than NVQs and GCSEs in vocational subjects; these qualifications include GNVQs and BTECs.

Seventy-six per cent of respondents said that their school offers other vocational qualifications to their key stage 4 students. The most common subject of other vocational subject offered was ICT and the most common listed qualification type was intermediate GNVQs. See Appendix 6 of this analysis for a full list of the subjects that respondents said their school offered.

If you remove the schools that offer only GNVQ in ICT, the figure of 76 per cent falls to 67 per cent of respondents.

Over 65 per cent of the qualifications offered were taught on site and the majority were offered without any collaboration with other schools, colleges or training providers.



The numbers of students taking the other vocational qualifications ranges from one to a full year group of 271. The number of students taking the qualification does seem to depend on the subject and qualification type; for example the numbers of students taking GNVQ ICT tends to be fairly high whereas the less common subjects, such as a foundation-level city and guilds horticulture course, which had only one enrolled student.

Respondents named student demand followed by staff expertise as the top reasons why the subjects were offered in their schools.

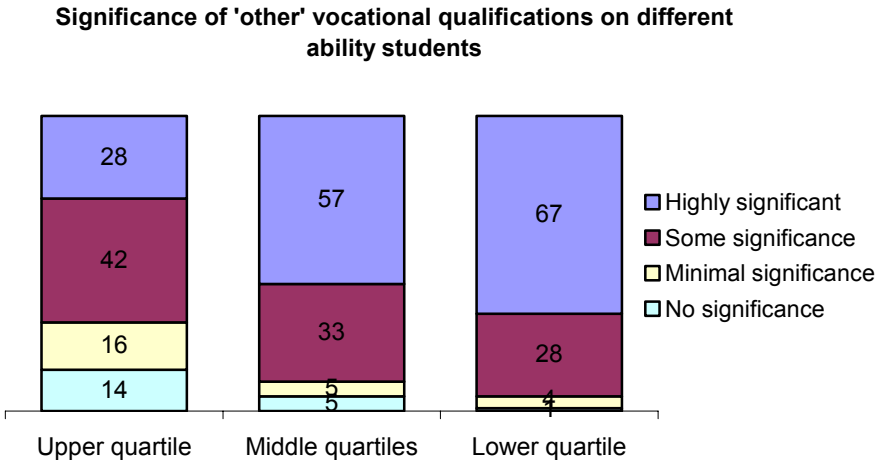
Fifty-nine per cent of respondents whose schools already offered 'other' vocational qualifications said that they would be increasing the number of qualifications they offered and 35 per cent said that the number they offered would stay the same.

The students

Among schools offering other vocational qualifications for their key stage 4 students, about two-thirds said they offered the qualifications to selected groups of students and approximately a third offered them to all students.

The respondents from the schools that offered the qualifications to selected groups of students said they were selected in terms of their learning style and ability.

In terms of the significance of other vocational qualifications for students of different abilities, respondents reported that they believed the qualifications were most significant to students in the lower-attainment quartile.



[should second bar be quartile, singular?]

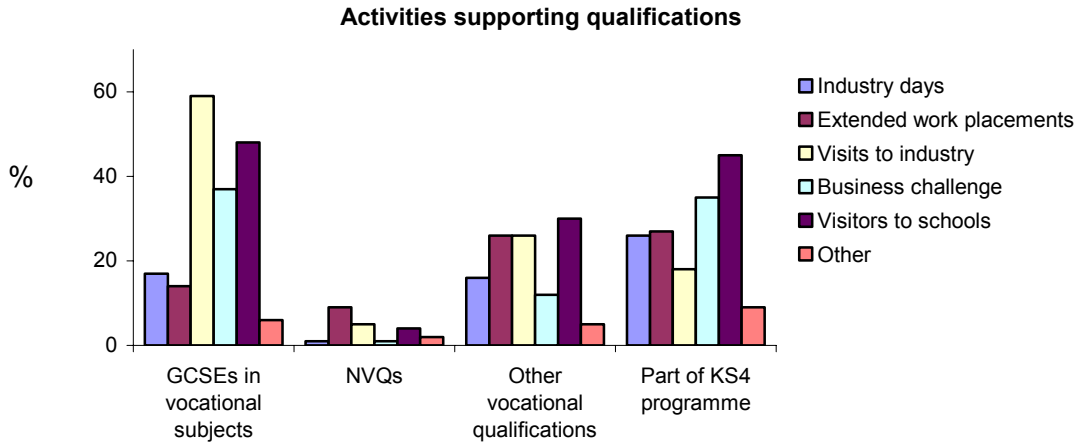
Activities and support for vocational learning

Activities supporting vocational learning

As mentioned in the headline findings, it is important to keep in mind the fact that the activities we asked about will be in addition to work experience. Around 95 per cent of key stage 4 students will take part in at least one week's block work experience by the time they finish year 11.

The most common activity among key stage 4 students is having visitors coming to schools (45 per cent of respondents said this took place at their school). Similarly, having visitors to school was the most common activity among students taking other vocational qualifications. A very small number of respondents said that their NVQ students took part in any of the activities; the most common activity was taking part in extended work placements, which was cited by 9 per cent of respondents.

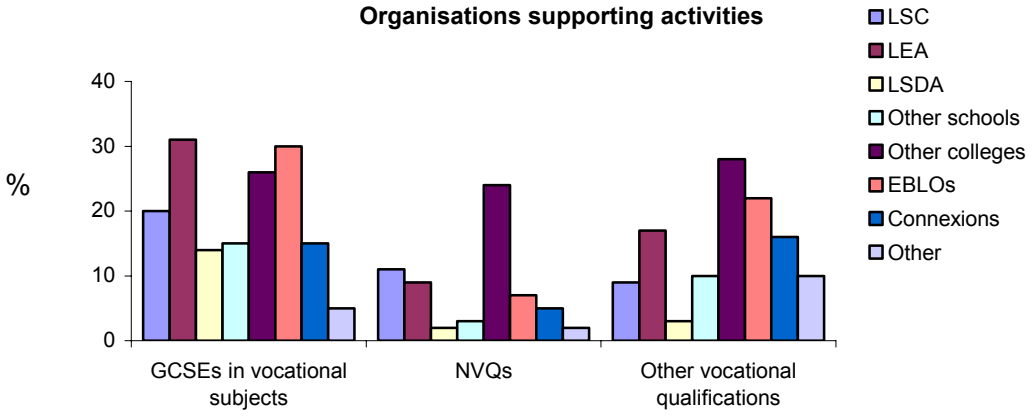
Students taking GCSEs in vocational subjects were most likely to take part in an activity; the most common activity cited by the respondents was visits to industry.



Organisations supporting activities

In terms of outside organisations helping to support the activities that schools offer as part of each qualification, respondents reported that the most support came from other colleges. Regarding the different qualification types, respondents said that the support they received from organisations for the GCSEs in vocational subjects was greater than the support they received for any of the other qualification types. This could be explained by the fact that the GCSEs in vocational subjects are still relatively new qualifications and will initially require greater support from outside organisations.

Respondents listed LEAs and EBLOs as offering the greatest amount of support for the activities offered to support GCSEs in vocational subjects. For the activities to support NVQs and other vocational qualifications, respondents in both cases said that the most support came from other colleges.

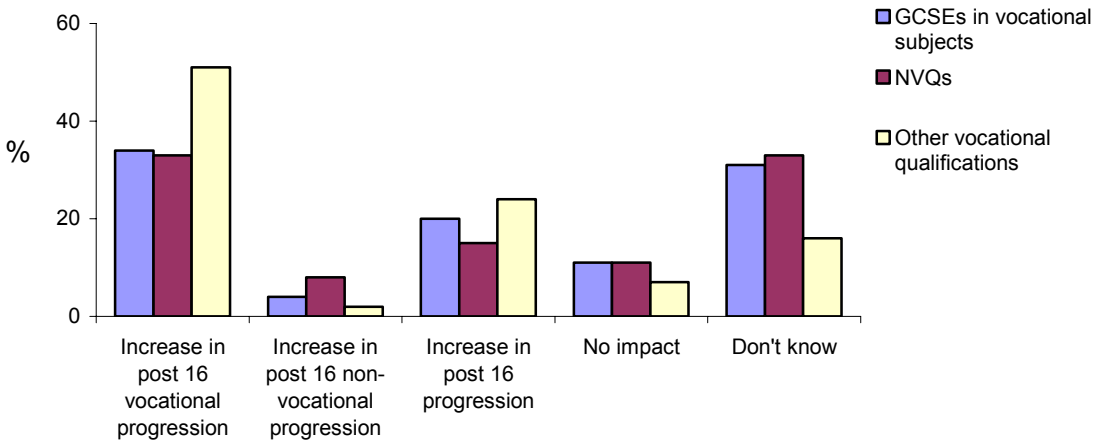


Progression routes

We asked respondents to tell us whether—after offering the vocational courses—they had seen an increase in the progression of students onto post-16 vocational courses or post-16 non-vocational courses.

Respondents said they witnessed the greatest increase in progression of these students onto post-16 vocational courses among students taking other vocational qualifications. Approximately 33 per cent of the schools that offered GCSEs in vocational subjects or NVQs also said they had seen an increase in progression onto post-16 vocational courses.

Impact of qualifications on post-16 progression



Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

Report on vocational learning provision at key stage 4

Appendices

January 2006

Content

Appendix 1: Vocational courses ran by schools that do not lead to a qualification

When reading this list it is important to keep in mind the difficulty there is in trying to get schools to accurately report any non-mainstream provision. This is a list of qualifications that schools have reported; these are not necessarily the precise qualifications the school offers.

0.5 day weekly placement
ASDAN
ASDAN youth award
Basic food
Beauty
Beauty therapy
C&G units - off site
Careers programme
Careers skills award
CISCO
College extension course
Consolidation/life skills
Construction
Duke of Edinburgh
Duke of Edinburgh
EBL programmes
Enterprise activities
Extended work experience
Fairbridge
Firebreak scheme
Fit for work
Further extended work experience
Hairdressing
IFP
IT
IT skills
Motor vehicle engineering
NVQ units - off site
Outdoor pursuits
Painting and decorating
Pathways (taster courses)
Primary school attachment
Princes trust
Range of vocational courses with local FE college
Sports qualification
Taster programme at local college
Team enterprise
Vocational tasters
Work experience
Work experience certificates
Work related learning
Work shadowing
Work-related training

WRL course
Youth programme

Appendix 2: Experience of GCSEs in vocational subjects

Training and support

Table showing percentage of respondents and satisfaction/dissatisfaction with experiences of training and support.

	Time to prepare		Assessment training		Content training		Guidance on delivery	
	sat	dissat	sat	dissat	sat	dissat	sat	dissat
Applied art & design	***63***	***37***	***63***	***37***	***68***	***32***	***63***	***37***
Applied business	***73***	***27***	***72***	***28***	***77***	***23***	***75***	***25***
Applied science	***72***	***28***	***72***	***28***	***86***	***14***	***79***	***21***
Applied ICT	***74***	***26***	***71***	***29***	***80***	***20***	***78***	***22***
Engineering	***65***	***35***	***63***	***37***	***58***	***42***	***63***	***37***
Health & social care	***74***	***26***	***71***	***29***	***76***	***24***	***78***	***22***
Leisure & tourism	***87***	***13***	***73***	***27***	***87***	***13***	***80***	***20***
Manufacturing	***64***	***36***	***73***	***27***	***73***	***27***	***82***	***18***

	Guidance on assessment		Exemplar materials		Example tests		Experience of moderation	
	sat	dissat	sat	dissat	sat	dissat	sat	dissat
Applied art & design	***63***	***27***	***50***	***50***	***53***	***47***	***71***	***29***
Applied business	***68***	***32***	***66***	***34***	***77***	***23***	***78***	***22***
Applied science	***69***	***31***	***68***	***32***	***74***	***26***	***82***	***18***
Applied ICT	***69***	***31***	***71***	***29***	***77***	***23***	***71***	***29***
Engineering	***54***	***46***	***57***	***43***	***77***	***23***	***67***	***33***
Health & social care	***75***	***25***	***69***	***31***	***80***	***20***	***85***	***15***
Leisure & tourism	***76***	***24***	***76***	***24***	***80***	***20***	***88***	***12***
Manufacturing	***91***	***9***	***64***	***36***	***73***	***27***	***63***	***37***

Appendix 3: Experience of GCSEs in vocational subjects

Delivery and Assessment

Table showing percentage of respondents and satisfaction/dissatisfaction with experiences of delivery and assessment.

	Size of qualification		Structure of qualification		Amount of coursework - staff		Amount of coursework - students	
	sat	dissat	sat	dissat	sat	dissat	sat	dissat
Applied art & design	***90***	***10***	***90***	***10***	***65***	***35***	***80***	***20***
Applied business	***88***	***12***	***91***	***9***	***73***	***27***	***71***	***29***
Applied science	***90***	***10***	***83***	***17***	***60***	***40***	***67***	***33***
Applied ICT	***75***	***25***	***70***	***30***	***70***	***30***	***66***	***34***
Engineering	***79***	***21***	***83***	***17***	***83***	***17***	***71***	***29***
Health & social care	***88***	***12***	***93***	***7***	***81***	***19***	***86***	***14***
Leisure & tourism	***96***	***4***	***89***	***11***	***85***	***15***	***89***	***11***
Manufacturing	***55***	***45***	***64***	***36***	***73***	***27***	***73***	***21***

	Content of qualification		Vocational relevance		Level of demand on students	
	sat	dissat	sat	dissat	sat	dissat
Applied art & design	***80***	***20***	***80***	***20***	***95***	***5***
Applied business	***74***	***26***	***78***	***22***	***93***	***7***
Applied science	***79***	***22***	***73***	***27***	***90***	***10***
Applied ICT	***68***	***32***	***79***	***21***	***85***	***15***
Engineering	***75***	***25***	***71***	***29***	***87***	***13***
Health & social care	***84***	***16***	***84***	***16***	***95***	***5***
Leisure & tourism	***91***	***9***	***83***	***17***	***91***	***9***
Manufacturing	***64***	***36***	***91***	***9***	***73***	***27***

Appendix 4: Experience of GCSEs in vocational subjects

Activities to develop vocational context

Table showing percentage of respondents and satisfaction/dissatisfaction with experiences.

	Time available		Ease accessing employers		Ease engaging employers	
	sat	dissat	sat	dissat	sat	dissat
Applied art & design	***56***	***44***	***16***	***84***	***26***	***74***
Applied business	***54***	***46***	***48***	***52***	***54***	***46***
Applied science	***61***	***39***	***38***	***62***	***35***	***65***
Applied ICT	***55***	***45***	***52***	***48***	***48***	***52***
Engineering	***59***	***41***	***41***	***59***	***46***	***54***
Health & social care	***53***	***47***	***39***	***61***	***33***	***67***
Leisure & tourism	***63***	***37***	***52***	***48***	***50***	***50***
Manufacturing	***55***	***45***	***36***	***64***	***36***	***64***

	Ease obtaining info		Ease arranging work-placements		Support from outside orgs	
	sat	dissat	sat	dissat	sat	dissat
Applied art & design	***53***	***47***	***35***	***65***	***37***	***63***
Applied business	***73***	***27***	***39***	***61***	***60***	***40***
Applied science	***59***	***41***	***29***	***71***	***24***	***76***
Applied ICT	***77***	***23***	***50***	***50***	***43***	***57***
Engineering	***68***	***32***	***40***	***60***	***46***	***54***
Health & social care	***60***	***40***	***42***	***58***	***51***	***49***
Leisure & tourism	***67***	***33***	***42***	***58***	***57***	***43***
Manufacturing	***55***	***45***	***36***	***64***	***55***	***45***

Appendix 5: List of NVQs offered by schools

When reading this list it is important to keep in mind the difficulty there is in trying to get schools to accurately report any non-mainstream provision. This is a list of qualifications that schools have reported; these are not necessarily the precise qualifications the school offers.

	Level 1	Level 2	No level stated	Awarding bodies
Adult care			1	
Animal care	2		1	
Art, design & media	1			OCR
Basic brickwork 6081			1	C&G
Beauty	2			
Beauty therapy	1		1	
Bricklaying			1	
Building craft occupations			1	
Building craft occupations		1		C&G
Building Crafts	1			C&G, CITB
Business admin	1			
Business administration		1		
CACHE	1			
Catering	11	2	3	AQA, C&G, HAB
Child care	1	2		
Childcare cache	1			
Construction	6		3	C&G, CITB, AQA
Construction (trowel)	1			
Construction (wood)	1			
Customer care			1	
Distribution and warehousing	1			
Early years care & education			1	C&G
Electrical installation			1	
Engineering		2		
Engineering	1			C&G
Entry level construction			1	
Equestrian			1	
Equestrian studies	1			
Food preparation	1			
Food preparation and catering			1	HAB
Food preparation and cookery	1			
Hair	1		1	
Hair & beauty	5	1		C&G
Hair dressing	9	1	6	AQA, C&G, OCR
Hairdressing and beauty	1			VTCT

	Level 1	Level 2	No level stated	Awarding bodies
Health & beauty	1			
Horticulture	2		1	
Hospitality & catering	1			
IT Engineering	1			
Joinery			1	
Land based certificate			1	
Leisure & tourism	Entry level			AQA
Logistics	1			
Manufacturing	2			C&G
Mechanical engineering	1			
Motor Vehicle	4		3	
Motor vehicle (fast fit technician)	1			
Motor vehicle ABC certificate	1			
Motor vehicle engineering			1	
Motor vehicle maintenance	1			
Motor vehicle progression award			1	
Motor vehicle studies			1	
Motor vehicles	1			C&G
Motor Vehicles	1			IMI
Motorcycle engineering			1	
Multi media			1	
MUM	1			
MVE 3901			1	C&G
Painting & decorating	2			
Performing arts	1		1	
Performing engineering operations	4			
Preparing and Serving food	1			
Retail			1	
Retail	1			
Small animal care			1	
Sport	1			
Sport & recreation	2		2	
Vehicle maintenance	1			
Visual image	1			
VTCT hairdressing			1	

Appendix 6: List of other vocational qualifications offered by schools

When reading this list it is important to keep in mind the difficulty there is in trying to get schools to accurately report any non-mainstream provision. This is a list of qualifications that schools have reported; these are not necessarily the precise qualifications that they offer.

	Level	Qual type	Awarding body	Number of schools offering
1st diploma in art & design	Level 2	BTEC	EDEXCEL	2
1st diploma in media	Level 2	BTEC	EDEXCEL	
1st performing Arts	Level 2	BTEC	EDEXCEL	
Agriculture	Level 1		C&G	
Animal care	Entry level			
Application of number	Key skills	ASDAN		
Applied science				
Art	Intermediate	GNVQ	AQA	
Art & design				
Art & design	Foundation	GNVQ		
Art & design	Intermediate	GNVQ	EDEXCEL	2
Art & design	Intermediate	GNVQ	AQA	
Art & design	Intermediate	GNVQ		3
Automotive studies			C&G	
Beauty/ therapy			C&G	
Bronze award		ASDAN		5
Business		GNVQ		
Business		GNVQ	OCR	
Business	Foundation	GNVQ		
Business	Intermediate	GNVQ		2
Business	Intermediate	GNVQ	AQA	2
Business	Intermediate	GNVQ	EDEXCEL	
Cert. In hospitality and catering skills	Level 1		ABC	
Certificate in administration			OCR	
Certificate in beauty			EDEXCEL	
Certificate in building craft	Foundation		C&G CITB	
Certificate in career planning	Level 1	ASDAN		
Certificate in community volunteering	Level 2	ASDAN		
Certificate in construction	Foundation		C&G	
Certificate in enterprise			OCR	
Certificate in hairdressing	Entry level			
Certificate in health and safety in the workplace	Foundation			
Certificate in motor vehicle maintenance	Entry level		C&G	
Certificate in motor vehicle studies	Entry level			
Certificate in motor care			ABC	
Certificate in skills for working life	Entry level	BTEC		
Certificate in small animal care			EDEXCEL	

	Level	Qual type	Awarding body	Number of schools offering
Certificate of personal effectiveness		ASDAN		
Certificate of personal effectiveness	Level 2	ASDAN		
Certificate of personal effectiveness		ASDAN		2
Certificate of skills for working life				
Child care		CACHE		3
Child care	Entry	CACHE		
Child care	Foundation	CACHE		
CLAIT				
Coaching awards		ASDAN		
Communication	Key skills	ASDAN		
Community	Level 1	ASDAN		
Construction				
Construction	Entry level			
Construction	Level 1		FCA	
Construction	Foundation		CITB	
Construction	Foundation	GNVQ		
Construction	Intermediate	GNVQ		
Construction	Intermediate	GNVQ	EDEXCEL	
Craft Award	Level 1		C&G	
Design	Level 2	BTEC		
Design	Level 2	BTEC	EDEXCEL	
DIDA				2
Diploma in sport	Level 2		OCR	
Duke of Edinburgh				
Duke of Edinburgh bronze				
Electrical installation			C&G	
Engineering				
Engineering	Level 1	GNVQ	EDEXCEL	
Engineering	Intermediate	GNVQ	EDEXCEL	
Equine	Level 1		C&G	
Fashion & textiles	Level 1		C&G	
Fashion & textiles	Level 2		C&G	
First certificate in construction		BTEC		
First diploma in construction		BTEC		
First diploma construction	Level 2	BTEC	EDEXCEL	2
First diploma in hospitality			EDEXCEL	
First diploma in media	Level 2	BTEC	EDEXCEL	
First diploma in music	Level 2	BTEC	EDEXCEL	
First diploma in performing arts	Level 2	BTEC	EDEXCEL	2
First diploma in sport			EDEXCEL	
First diploma in sport		BTEC		
First diploma media		BTEC		
First diploma media	Level 2	BTEC	EDEXCEL	2
First diploma performing arts		BTEC		
Food hygiene certificate				
Foundation award in construction				
Foundation for work		ASDAN		
GCSE in industrial technology / systems & control				

	Level	Qual type	Awarding body	Number of schools offering
Health & social care		GNVQ	OCR	
Health & social care	Foundation	GNVQ	EDEXCEL	
Health & social care	Intermediate	GNVQ		
Health & social care	Intermediate	GNVQ	EDEXCEL	3
Health & social care	Intermediate	GNVQ	AQA	3
Horticulture	Foundation		C&G	
Hospitality & catering	Foundation		ABC	
Hospitality & catering	Intermediate	GNVQ	AQA	
Hospitality & catering	Intermediate	GNVQ	EDEXCEL	2
ICT	Key skills	ASDAN		
ICT	Level 1	BTEC		2
ICT		GNVQ		5
ICT		GNVQ	EDEXCEL	4
ICT		GNVQ	OCR	2
ICT	Foundation	GNVQ		
ICT	Foundation	GNVQ	EDEXCEL	
ICT	Intermediate	GNVQ		10
ICT	Intermediate	GNVQ	AQA	
ICT	Intermediate	GNVQ	EDEXCEL	15
ICT	Level 3	GNVQ	EDEXCEL	
Information technology		GNVQ	EDEXCEL	
Introduction to business	Level 1	BTEC		
Introduction to H, T&T	Level 1	BTEC		
Introduction to ICT	Level 1	BTEC		
Introduction to sport & leisure		BTEC		
IT essentials (CISCO)				
Junior sports leader award				
LAMDA dramatic art				
Leisure & tourism	Entry level		OCR	
Leisure & tourism		GNVQ	OCR	
Leisure & tourism	Intermediate	GNVQ	OCR	
Leisure & tourism	Intermediate	GNVQ	AQA	3
Leisure & tourism	Intermediate	GNVQ	EDEXCEL	4
Life skills (cert of achievement)			WJEC	
Life skills	Level 1	ASDAN		
Life skills	Level 2	ASDAN		
Manufacturing	Intermediate	GNVQ	AQA	
Manufacturing	Intermediate	GNVQ	EDEXCEL	
Media				
Media	Intermediate	GNVQ	EDEXCEL	
Motor vehicle engineering		BTEC		
National diploma in life & work skills		BTEC		
National navigation award (bronze or silver)				
Office Schools	Entry level		OCR	
Performing arts		BTEC		
Performing arts	Level 2	BTEC		
Performing arts	Level 2	BTEC	EDEXCEL	2
Performing arts		GNVQ	OCR	

	Level	Qual type	Awarding body	Number of schools offering
Performing arts		GNVQ		
Performing arts	Intermediate	GNVQ		2
Performing arts	Intermediate	GNVQ	AQA	
Performing arts	Intermediate	GNVQ	EDEXCEL	3
Performing engineering operations (Level 1)	Level 1			
Performing engineering ops				
Plumbing			C&G	
Preparation for uniformed services				
Preparation for working life				
Progression award in sport				
Retail	Entry level		OCR	
Science		GNVQ		
Science		GNVQ	OCR	2
Science	Foundation	GNVQ		2
Science	Intermediate	GNVQ		3
Science	Intermediate	GNVQ	AQA	2
Science	Intermediate	GNVQ	OCR	4
Science national skills			AQA	
Silver award		ASDAN		4
Skill force	Entry/level 1	ASDAN		
Skills for working life	Entry level		EDEXCEL	
Sport		BTEC	EDEXCEL	
Sport	Level 2	BTEC		
Sport & recreation progression award			C&G	
Sports leadership			JSLR	
St John’s ambulance young life saver				
Travel	Level 1		NCFE	
Unit 2/3 in building craft			NPTC	
Unit Awards engineering			AQA	
Vehicle servicing 3901			C&G	
Wider key	Level 1			
Wider key skills		ASDAN		
Wider Key Skills	Level 1	ASDAN		
Work-related learning		ASDAN		
XL Prince's Trust				
Young apprenticeship in automotive skills				
Young enterprise				
Youth award		ASDAN		2
Youth award bronze/silver		ASDAN		