

**Background Information for: Perceptions of AS/A levels,  
GCSEs and Applied General qualifications in England  
– Wave 17**

An Ofqual commissioned report

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**YouGov**

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## Introduction

### Background

This document accompanies the findings of wave 17 (2018 to 2019) of the Perceptions Survey and should be read alongside the Perceptions of AS/A levels, GCSEs and Applied General qualifications in England – [Wave 17 report](#). This project was commissioned by Ofqual and managed by YouGov. The design template for charts used in the report was provided by Ofqual.

### Context

Ofqual regulates general and vocational qualifications in England. Ofqual collects and utilises insight on perceptions of qualifications and the qualifications system from the range of stakeholders that work with and use them.

Ofqual has continued (the survey was originally commissioned by the QCA in 2003) to annually assess teachers', parents', students', the general public's, employers' and higher education institutions (HEIs)' perceptions of the A level examination system and, since wave 4 (2005), perceptions of the GCSE system. This large-scale survey is unique in providing a wide overview of perceptions of general and other qualifications from the users of these qualifications.

The first part of the survey focussed on eight measures of confidence in the GCSE system and eight measures of confidence in the AS/A level system. These measures, selected through data analysis by Ofqual<sup>1</sup>, have all been asked in a directly comparable way in waves 13, 14, 15 and 16, and the current wave, of the Perceptions Survey, allowing for comparisons of up to five years to be made. Since wave 16, the survey was expanded to collect data on the same seven measures for Applied General qualifications as well. The data from these measures have been analysed collectively to form a composite measure of confidence in the GCSE, AS/A levels and Applied General qualifications that can be tracked in future waves.

The second part of the survey asked a series of questions on different topics that covered questions on the 9 to 1 GCSE grading scale, the review of marking, moderation and appeals system, special consideration, reasonable adjustments and malpractice for GCSEs and AS/A levels, and appeals against results for Applied General qualifications. In future waves, this part of the survey, as well as the seven measures of confidence for Applied General qualifications, may change to reflect topical issues at the time of data collection. As such, the qualifications other than GCSEs and AS/A levels reported on this wave may not be the same as those covered in previous waves of the Perceptions Survey.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for more details of this analysis

## Geographical coverage

Ofqual regulates general and vocational qualifications in England. The focus of this project was to gain the perceptions of head teachers<sup>2</sup>, teachers, young people, parents, employers, HEIs and the general public in England. Samples of these groups were drawn from England.

## Related statistics and publications

A number of other statistical releases and publications relate to this one:

- [Statistics on key stage 4 results](#), including GCSEs published by the Department for Education
- [Statistics on the attainment of people aged 16 to 19 years](#), including exam results and performance tables published by the Department for Education

## User feedback

Ofqual welcomes your comments or suggestions on this version of the Perceptions Survey and how to improve future versions. Please write to Ofqual at [statistics@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:statistics@ofqual.gov.uk).

## Project objectives

The objectives of the project were to investigate head teachers<sup>2</sup>, teachers', students', parents', the general public's, employers' and HEIs':

- overall perceptions and confidence in GCSE, AS/A level and Applied General qualifications taken by young people; and
- perceptions of a number of topical aspects of the qualifications system for GCSEs and AS/A levels, and for Applied General qualifications.

## Methods and data limitations

### Overview of method

Wave 17 of the Perceptions Survey was carried out by YouGov, on behalf of Ofqual. The survey was conducted online using YouGov's proprietary survey system. This mirrors the approach adopted in wave 13 (2014), wave 14 (2015), wave 15 (2016) and wave 16 (2017) of the Perceptions Survey.

The fieldwork was conducted between 29 October and 28 November 2018. The fieldwork for wave 17 has been conducted over a comparable time period to wave 15 and wave 16.

### Sampling

The sampling of participants was designed with a view to achieving respondent samples that were representative of the wider population. Fuller details of this sampling procedure and its effectiveness are provided in Appendix A.

The final achieved sample for each of the target groups was as follows:

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<sup>2</sup> The head teachers sample consists of head teachers and deputy head teachers.

- 395 head teachers (including deputy head teachers<sup>3</sup>)
- 782 teachers of GCSE, A level and other academic<sup>4</sup> and vocational qualifications<sup>5</sup> offered to people aged 14 to 19 years (referred to throughout this report as teachers)
- 254 young people, defined as those aged 14 to 19 years who are studying/have studied/will study AS/A levels and/or GCSEs and/or an academic qualification defined as functional skills, Level 1/2 certificates (eg Pearson Level 1/2 BTECs and OCR Cambridge National Certificates), Level 3 tech levels (eg Pearson Level 3 BTECs and OCR Cambridge Technical Certificates) or applied general qualifications
- 260 parents/carers of students who are taking or who have just taken AS/A levels, GCSEs and/or other academic qualifications described above
- 298 academic professionals<sup>6</sup> who had knowledge about the process of offering applicants a place on an undergraduate course at their institution (referred to throughout this report as HEIs)
- 262 senior/middle managers who worked for an organisation that has recruited young people (aged 16 to 25 years) in the past 12 months (referred to throughout this report as employers)
- 1,005 members of the public

The final achieved samples were structured to be representative of the relevant target populations. We therefore conclude that, based upon the sampling procedures, the samples delivered for head teachers, teachers, the general public, parents, students, HEIs and employers were of high quality. While the sampling approach has aimed to identify groups of participants that are representative, given that a survey of this kind captures the views only of those involved, throughout this report, perceptions attributed to stakeholder groups (for example, teachers, parents etc.) are inferred from those who took part in the survey.

## **Survey design**

The wave 17 survey was designed in conjunction with the YouGov project team. The survey covered themes explored in previous waves of the survey, namely, perceptions of qualifications and awareness of changes to the qualification system.

The design of the wave 17 survey was very similar to wave 16. A copy of all of the questions included in this wave of the Perceptions Survey is available in Appendix B.

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<sup>3</sup> Collectively referred to throughout the report as head teachers.

<sup>4</sup> Ofqual defines academic qualifications as qualifications that are assessed by formal examinations and moderated coursework.

<sup>5</sup> Ofqual defines vocational qualifications as qualifications that are taught in schools and colleges that prepare students for a particular type of job.

<sup>6</sup> This sample consisted of academics and a small number of admissions staff. Please see Appendix A for a description of the sample profile.

## **Composite confidence measure**

The first section of the report presents a composite confidence measure, which was developed as a means of quantifying overall confidence in GCSE, AS/A level and Applied General qualifications, and comparing any changes over time.

## **Method**

The composite confidence measure was calculated based on eight criteria: understanding, trust, maintenance of standards, preparation for further study, preparation for work, skill development, accuracy in marking, and value for money. The first seven criteria were also measured in waves 14, 15 and 16, while ‘value for money’ was measured for the first time in wave 17. This addition of an eighth variable did not have a statistically significant impact on the measure of composite confidence.

These criteria were presented to respondents as eight separate statements within a scale-based question, which ranged from strong agreement to strong disagreement. These questions were asked separately for GCSE, AS/A level and Applied General qualifications. Based on respondents’ selection, responses were assigned a score between 1 and 5 for each of the seven criteria. ‘Don’t know’ responses were excluded from the calculation. The scoring system is detailed below.

- Strongly agree = 5
- Agree = 4
- Neither agree nor disagree = 3
- Disagree = 2
- Strongly disagree = 1

Next, an average of the individual scores for the eight criteria was calculated for each respondent, which represents the overall confidence measure. This was done separately for GCSE and AS/A level and Applied General qualifications.

Finally, an average of the overall scores for all respondents was calculated to produce one confidence measure per stakeholder, for each of GCSE, AS/A level and Applied General qualifications. An average of these stakeholder confidence measures was produced to give an overall confidence measure. This method has been applied to the data since wave 13 and allows the comparison of confidence levels over time. The current survey compares overall confidence levels over the four most recent waves of the Perceptions Survey.

## **Guidance on analysis**

The survey was undertaken with seven different sample groups. These data have been combined into one ‘All’ group referred to as ‘stakeholders’ in the text of this report. Data for each sample group have been combined and weighted so that each group represents an equal proportion within the ‘stakeholder’ group.

Throughout this report, percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. Due to rounding, percentages may not always add up to 100%. The report summarises the data for each question

using charts and tables. The intention of this report is to summarise the main themes in the data and not produce a full replication of the entire data collected.

Reported differences are based on statistical significance testing as tested at the 95% confidence level. Whenever a difference between two groups is reported, this refers to a statistically significant difference.

For the charts reporting proportions of 'Agree' and 'Disagree' responses, 'Don't know' responses are not included in the figure. As such, proportions may not add up to 100%.

## **Section-specific background information**

### **Section 1: Composite confidence measure**

Measures of Stakeholder confidence were calculated separately for GCSEs, AS/A Levels and Applied General qualifications. All stakeholders were asked to report their levels of agreement with eight statements for GCSE, AS/A level, and Applied General qualifications relating to: understanding, trust, maintenance of standards, preparation for further study, preparation for work, skill development, accuracy in marking, and value for money. The composite confidence measure was calculated based on stakeholders' levels of agreement with the eight statements.

### **Section 2: Perceptions of GCSEs**

All stakeholders were asked to report their levels of agreement with the eight statements used in the composite confidence measure with regards to GCSE qualifications.

### **Section 3: Perceptions of AS/A levels**

All stakeholders were asked to report their levels of agreement with the eight statements used in the composite confidence measure with regards to AS/A level qualifications.

### **Section 4: Perceptions of Applied General qualifications**

All stakeholders were asked to report their levels of agreement with the eight statements used in the composite confidence measure with regards to Applied General qualifications.

### **Section 5: GCSE 9 to 1 grading scale**

[A new grading system was introduced](#) for reformed GCSEs. This was used in 2017 for English language, English literature and maths, and for additional subjects in 2018, 2019 and 2020, in line with them being examined for the first time. Since wave 14, including in the current wave, stakeholders were asked about their awareness and knowledge of this new grading system.

### **Section 6: The review of marking and moderation, and appeals against GCSE and AS/A level results**

A range of post-results services are currently available to schools and colleges who have concerns about the marks awarded to their students. These services include a clerical check, a review of marking/moderation, and access to marked scripts for some qualifications. If a centre or private candidate is not happy with the outcomes of the review of marking or moderation, they can submit

an appeal for these results. Collectively these services are called Reviews of Marking and Moderation, and Appeals (ROMMA).

## **Section 7: Special consideration, reasonable adjustments and malpractice for GCSE and AS/A level qualifications**

[Special consideration](#) is an adjustment to the way in which an examination or assessment is taken, or a post-exam adjustment to a student's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the exam/assessment.

Awarding organisations have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled<sup>7</sup> students taking their qualifications and are made in cases where a student who is disabled would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with someone who is not disabled in an assessment. An example of this would be providing a Braille paper.

Any breach of the regulations that might undermine the integrity of an exam constitutes [malpractice](#).

Those head teachers and teachers who teach GCSEs or AS/A levels were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with statements about special consideration, reasonable adjustments and malpractice for GCSEs and AS/A levels.

## **Section 8: Appeals against results for Applied General qualifications**

Like for GCSE and AS/A level qualifications, if a centre or private candidate is not happy about the results of a review of marking or moderation for Applied General qualifications they can submit an appeal for these results.

## **Section 9: Malpractice for Applied General qualifications**

Like for GCSE and AS/A level qualifications, any breach of the regulations that might undermine the integrity of an exam constitutes [malpractice](#). Those head teachers and teachers who teach Applied General qualifications were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with statements about malpractice for Applied General qualifications.

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<sup>7</sup> Being disabled under the Equality Act 2010 is defined as having a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on the ability to do normal daily activities.



## Glossary

**Applied General qualifications:** Applied General' is a term used to describe a range of level 3 qualifications that meet DfE requirements for performance tables. These include, but are not restricted to, Pearson BTEC Level 3 Applied qualifications and OCR Cambridge Level 3 Applied Certificates.

**Base size:** The number of respondents answering the question.

**Effective base:** When sampling is undertaken, it creates a 'design effect' that can impact upon the reliability of the information collected. The effective base size is the base size that is left when removing this effect. It is used for significance testing.

**General (academic) qualifications** – Ofqual defines academic qualifications as qualifications that are assessed by formal examinations and moderated coursework. These include GCSE and AS/A level qualifications.

**Grading:** The process of grouping students into overall performance categories. A levels are graded A\* (highest grade) to E and AS are graded A (highest grade) to E. Reformed GCSEs In England are graded 9 to 1 with 9 being the highest grade For more information on this new grading system, see the [Ofqual website](#).

**Marking:** The process of giving a student appropriate credit for their responses according to the requirements set out in a mark scheme.

**Sample frame:** The way that the sample population is structured before recruiting a sample for the survey is drawn.

**Statistically significant:** If a result is termed statistically significant, it is unlikely to have occurred at random. The process of determining whether a result is statistically significant is known as significance testing.

**Vocational and technical qualifications:** This term encompasses qualifications that are not 'general'. These normally have a more vocational focus, and can include qualifications designed to support the development of practical skills in English, maths and ICT (functional skills qualifications) as well as technical, professional or occupational qualifications.

**Weighting:** The process of making some respondents in a survey more or less important than others to accurately reflect their position in the population being surveyed.

## Appendix A – Technical report

Appendix A outlines the composition of the achieved sampling and additional information on the methods used in wave 17.

### Head teachers and teachers sample

#### Sample coverage

The sample was designed to be a representative sample of head teachers/deputy head teachers and teachers of AS/A levels, GCSEs and other academic and vocational qualifications in secondary schools and colleges across England. This provided coverage across the following types of establishment:

- Local authority maintained schools
- Academy and Free schools
- Independent schools
- FE colleges and sixth form centres

To make sure that the survey represented establishments teaching qualifications for people aged 14 to 19 years, only certain types of schools/colleges were eligible for the survey. Eligible types of schools and colleges matched the definitions used in previous years of the survey, that is, secondary and middle-deemed-secondary schools, academies teaching key stage 4/post-16, independent schools teaching key stage 4/post-16, and post-16 institutions.

#### Sample frame

The samples of head teachers and teachers were drawn from two sources.

##### 1. Education Company Education list

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

This was used as a database to select contacts in schools to be surveyed. As data is held on school characteristics, this allowed us to develop a sample that was representative of school size, type and region. Sample targets were set and the total sample was structured to meet the proportions relevant to the school population in England. The database contained named contacts with generic school email addresses that allowed the survey to be targeted at specific subject teachers in the specified schools.

##### 2. YouGov Panel

The survey was also conducted using teachers and head teachers registered to the YouGov panel, who have consented to participate in surveys with YouGov. A quota sampling approach was used on to the sample drawn from the YouGov panel to ensure broad representativeness by school type, size and region.

## **Sample selection**

The sample was selected to ensure the representativeness of the results in line with the school and teacher population in England. The sample frame was based upon [official government statistics on the school and teacher population](#). The sample frame was stratified by the following variables:

- School type (maintained, academy, special school / PRU, independent)
- English region

To maintain consistency with the sampling approach used since wave 13 of the Perceptions survey two samples were drawn that differed in characteristics between the head teacher sample and the teacher sample. Whilst drawing a sample of schools was appropriate for the head teacher survey, it was decided that in order to examine the views of a representative sample of teachers in England, this would require selecting multiple teachers working at the larger establishments. This meant that the sampling design for the teacher survey took account of the number of teachers working in each school/establishment.

Using the Education List database, a stratified random sample of school contacts was drawn in line with the above parameters. The sample drawn was compared with the DfE school population statistics to ensure they were broadly in line. In total a sample of 8,000 school contacts that matched the sample criteria was drawn at random from the Education List database.

The head teacher sample was drawn at random from the list of eligible schools. As previously outlined the teacher sample was drawn to take into account the numbers of teachers at different types of establishment and multiple teacher contacts were included for schools of a larger size.

Alongside the sample drawn from the Education List database a random sample of 4,000 head teachers and teachers from the YouGov panel was contacted to take part in the survey. These respondents were contacted at random to take part and sampled to be proportionate to the school population and the teacher population.

## **Achieved sample size and weighting**

The unweighted achieved sample size and breakdown of the samples by key characteristics is shown in Table 1. Alongside this the weighted base and weight factors applied are also shown.

The unweighted base shows the number of completed surveys and the weighted base the adjustments that have been made to correct for any sample bias. The largest weight factor demonstrates where the weighting has had a greater impact due to the unweighted based being lower than what would be expected in a representative sample.

**Table 1: Achieved sample size by role and school type**

	Unweighted base	Weighted base	Smallest weight factor	Largest weight factor
<b>Teachers - School type</b>				
Local Authority maintained school	126	149	0.9	2.5
Academy	369	344	0.6	1.7
Independent school	111	137	1.0	2.6
FE college/ sixth form	155	141	0.6	1.7
Other	21	12	0.4	1.0
<b>Head teachers - School type</b>				
Local Authority maintained school	78	67	0.6	1.5
Academy	202	174	0.5	1.4
Independent school	80	99	0.9	2.3
FE college/ sixth form	26	36	0.9	1.9
Other	9	20	1.7	2.8

## **Public, parents and young people’s samples**

### **Sample coverage**

The public, parents and young people samples were drawn from the YouGov online panel of over 800,000 adults who have consented to participate in surveys with YouGov.

Three distinct samples were drawn. These were:

1. A nationally representative survey sample of adults aged 16 years or over in England - this was sampled to be representative of the adult population in England using YouGov’s English weighting profile of age interlocked with gender, region and social-economical classification.
2. A survey sample of young people aged 14 to 19 years who were just about to take, were currently taking or had recently taken AS/A levels and/or GCSEs and/or an academic qualification defined as functional skills, Level 1/2 certificates, Level 3 tech levels or Applied General qualifications - this was sampled to be representative of England by gender, age within the age range and region using England representative statistics.
3. A survey sample of parents/carers of young people who met the ‘student’ criteria defined above - this was sampled to be representative of parents by gender, social-economical classification and English region.

### **Sample frame**

The samples of members of the public, parents’ and young people were drawn from the YouGov panel. Over the last nineteen years, YouGov has carefully recruited a panel of over 800,000 UK adults to take part in our surveys.

### **Sample selection**

The samples were selected to ensure the representativeness of the results in line with the actual population of each sample group in England.

For nationally representative samples, YouGov draws a sub-sample of the panel that is representative in terms of age and gender combined, social class and region, and invites this sub-sample to complete a survey.

YouGov has a proprietary, automated sampling system that invites respondents based on their profile information and how that aligns with targets for surveys that are currently active. Respondents are automatically, randomly selected based on survey availability and how that matches their profile information.

### **Achieved sample size and weighting**

The achieved sample size and breakdown of the public, parents and young people samples by key characteristics and associated weighting factors is shown in Tables 2, 3 and 4.

The unweighted base shows the number of completed surveys and the weighted base the adjustments that have been made to correct for any sample bias. The largest weight factor

demonstrates where the weighting has had a greater impact due to the unweighted base being lower than what would be expected in a representative sample.

**Table 2: Summary of achieved public sample and weighting scheme**

	Public sample		Public sample	
	Unweighted base	Weighted base	Smallest weight factor	Largest weight factor
<b>Region</b>				
North East	49	50	1.0	1.1
North West	131	131	0.9	1.0
Yorkshire and the Humber	102	100	0.9	1.0
East Midlands	89	90	1.0	1.1
West Midlands	111	111	0.9	1.0
East of England	111	111	0.9	1.0
London	152	151	0.9	1.0
South East	159	161	0.9	1.1
South West	101	100	0.9	1.1
<b>Age and gender</b>				
Male 16-24	70	70	1.0	1.0
Male 25-39	115	121	1.0	1.1
Male 40-54	128	131	1.0	1.1
Male 55+	168	161	0.9	1.0
Female 16-24	75	70	0.9	1.0
Female 25-39	126	131	1.0	1.1
Female 40-54	133	131	1.0	1.0
Female 55+	190	191	1.0	1.0
<b>Social-economical classification</b>				
ABC1	541	543	0.9	1.1
C2DE	464	462	0.9	1.1

**Table 3: Summary of achieved parents sample weighting scheme**

	Parents sample		Parents sample	
	Unweighted base	Weighted base	Smallest weight factor	Largest weight factor
<b>Region</b>				
North East	11	13	1.2	1.2
North West	35	34	0.9	1.0
Yorkshire and the Humber	25	26	1.0	1.1
East Midlands	24	23	1.0	1.0
West Midlands	31	29	0.9	0.9
East of England	29	29	1.0	1.0
London	38	39	1.0	1.0
South East	42	42	1.0	1.0
South West	25	26	1.0	1.1
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	129	127	0.9	1.2
Female	131	133	0.9	1.2
<b>Social-economical classification</b>				
ABC1	140	140	0.9	1.2
C2DE	120	120	0.9	1.2

**Table 4: Summary of achieved young people sample and weighting scheme**

	Young people sample		Young people sample	
	Unweighted base	Weighted base	Smallest weight factor	Largest weight factor
<b>Region</b>				
North East	12	13	1.0	1.1
North West	32	33	0.9	1.1
Yorkshire and the Humber	23	25	1.0	1.2
East Midlands	20	23	1.1	1.2
West Midlands	29	28	0.9	1.0
East of England	29	28	0.9	1.0
London	38	38	0.9	1.1
South East	45	41	0.8	0.9
South West	26	25	0.9	1.0
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	126	127	0.8	1.2
Female	128	127	0.8	1.2
<b>Age</b>				
Aged 14 to 15 years	81	85	0.9	1.2
Aged 16 to 17 years	91	85	0.8	1.1
Aged 18 to 19 years	82	85	0.9	1.2

## Employer sample

### Sample coverage

The employer sample was designed to be representative of the English business population by organisation size and sector. The sample definition ensured that only those in middle management and above roles, with the ability to answer on behalf of their organisation were eligible to take the survey. A further criterion was added to ensure that each employer had recruited a young person aged 16 to 24 years in the last 12 months.

### Sample frame

The employer sample was drawn from the YouGov business panel which contains over 9,000 senior decision makers and 8,000 employees with decision making responsibility for HR / personnel within their organisation.



## Sample selection

The sample was selected to ensure the representativeness of the results in line with the business population in England using the following criteria drawn from the Office of National Statistics Business Population Statistics.

Employer size – proportionate number of employers in the 2 to 9, 10 to 49, 50 to 99, 100 to 249 and 250+ employee size band brackets; this was calculated using the percentage on employment that each size band represents rather than the number of enterprises within each

Sector – broad sector coverage was ensured across the private, public and third/voluntary sectors

## Achieved sample size and weighting

The achieved sample size and breakdown of the employer sample by key characteristics and associated weighting factors are shown in Table 5 below.

The unweighted base shows the number of completed surveys and the weighted base the adjustments that have been made to correct for any sample bias. The largest weight factor demonstrates where the weighting has had a greater impact due to the unweighted base being lower than what would be expected in a representative sample.

**Table 5: Summary of achieved employer sample and weighting scheme**

	Employer sample		Employer sample	
	Unweighted base	Weighted base	Smallest weight factor	Largest weight factor
<b>Size</b>				
2-9 employees	22	38	1.7	1.8
10-49 employees	48	38	0.8	0.9
50-99 employees	18	18	1.0	1.1
100-249 employees	22	18	0.8	0.9
250+ employees	152	149	1.0	1.1
<b>Sector</b>				
Private sector	199	196	0.8	1.7
Public sector	45	47	0.9	1.1
Third/voluntary sector	18	18	0.8	1.8

## HEI sample

### Sample coverage

The HEI sample was designed to be representative of the English university population by university type. The type of university was drawn from official Higher Education Statistics Authority statistics and universities who responded to the survey were grouped into the following categories:

- Russell group
- Other old
- Post 1992/new
- Other HEI

The sample definition ensured that only those in academic roles with responsibility for and knowledge of the admissions process were eligible to complete the survey.

### Sample frame

The HEI sample was drawn from two sources:

- The YouGov education panel
- HEIs with contacts drawn from the Oscar Research data base of public sector contacts - Oscar Research are the UK Public Sector database specialists. They provide the largest, and most accurate, database of Government and Public Sector contacts and organisations in the UK

### Sample selection

The samples were selected to ensure the representativeness of the results in line with the university population in England by university type. No further restrictions were placed on the sample but throughout the fieldwork period responses were monitored by job role and subject specialism to ensure broad coverage across these factors.

### Achieved sample size and weighting

The achieved sample size and breakdown of the HEI sample by key characteristics and associated weighting factors is shown in Table 6 below.

The unweighted base shows the number of completed surveys and the weighted base the adjustments that have been made to correct for any sample bias. The largest weight factor demonstrates where the weighting has had a greater impact due to the unweighted base being lower than what would be expected in a representative sample.

**Table 6: Summary of achieved HEI sample and weighting scheme**

	HEI sample		HEI sample	
	Unweighted base	Weighted base	Smallest weight factor	Largest weight factor
<b>Size</b>				
Russell group	82	57	0.7	0.7
Other old	57	54	0.9	0.9
Post 1992/New	131	148	1.1	1.1
Other HEI	28	40	1.4	1.4

## Appendix B – Survey

### **Perceptions of A level qualifications**

*This first section asks about your perceptions of AS/A level qualifications.*

**1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

- 1.1. AS/A levels are well understood by people
- 1.2. AS/A levels are trusted qualifications
- 1.3. AS/A level standards are maintained year on year
- 1.4. AS/A levels are good preparation for further study
- 1.5. AS/A levels are good preparation for work
- 1.6. AS/A levels develop a broad range of skills for students
- 1.7. The marking of AS/A levels is accurate

*In 2018, schools and colleges paid the exam boards in the region of £45-£60 per student for each AS qualification, and £75-£110 per student for each A Level qualification (Source: Ofqual 2018).*

1.8. AS/A levels offer “value for money”

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree
- f. Don't know

### **Perceptions of GCSE qualifications**

*This section asks about your perceptions of GCSE qualifications.*

**2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

- 2.1 GCSEs are well understood by people
- 2.2 GCSEs are a trusted qualification
- 2.3 GCSE standards are maintained year on year
- 2.4 GCSEs are good preparation for further study
- 2.5 GCSEs are good preparation for work
- 2.6 GCSEs develop a broad range of skills for students
- 2.7 The marking of GCSEs is accurate

*In 2018, schools and colleges paid the exam boards in the region of £35-£40 per student for each GCSE qualification (Source: Ofqual 2018).*

2.8 GCSEs offer “value for money”

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree
- f. Don't know

### **The new 9-1 grading scale**

*This section asks about your awareness and understanding of the grading of GCSEs.*

**3. Are you aware of the 9 to 1 grading scale used in new GCSEs?**

- Yes
- No

**Base: all who are aware of the grading system**

**4. Based on your understanding of the 9 to 1 grading scale, what is the best grade that students can get?**

- 9
- 1
- Don't know

**Base: all who are aware of the grading system**

**5. Are you aware of the 9-9 to 1-1 grading scale for the new GCSE combined science (which is worth two GCSEs)?**

- Yes
- No

### **The review of marking, moderation and appeals**

**6. Are you aware that there is a reviews of marking and moderation, and appeals system for GCSE and AS/A level results?**

- Yes
- No

*The following questions are about the reviews of marking and moderation, and appeals system.*

*A range of post-results services are currently available to schools and colleges who have concerns about the marks awarded to their learners. These services include a clerical check, a review of marking and access to marked scripts for some qualifications.*

**Base: all who are aware of the appeals system**

**7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

- 7.1 The reviews of marking and moderation, and appeals system for GCSEs is fair
- 7.2 The reviews of marking and moderation, and appeals system for AS/A levels is fair

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree
- f. Don't know

*A number of changes have been made to the reviews of marking and moderation, and appeals system.*

**Base: all who are aware of the appeals system**

**8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?**

8.1 I have adequate information about the reviews of marking and moderation, and appeals system for GCSEs and AS/A levels

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree
- f. Don't know

**Base: all who are aware of the appeals system**

9. Are you aware that for any AS or A level subject, or in GCSE English language, English literature and maths, in 2018 a school or college whose concerns about marking that were not addressed during a review of marking could appeal to the exam board on the ground of a marking error as well as on the ground of a procedural failing by the exam board?

- Yes
- No

**Special consideration, reasonable adjustments and malpractice for AS/A levels and GCSEs**

*The following questions are about special considerations and reasonable adjustments.*

**Base: Teachers and Head teachers who teach GCSEs or AS/A levels**

10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please click on the icon if you want to see an explanation. Please click the icon again to remove the explanation)

- 10.1 I have adequate information about the arrangements that are available for a GCSE or AS/A level student who is eligible for special consideration\*
- 10.2 In the current special consideration\* system, the right arrangements are made for the right GCSE and AS/A level students
- 10.3 Special consideration\* makes the qualification system fairer for all GCSE and AS/A level students
- 10.4 I have adequate information about the adjustments that are available for a GCSE or AS/A level disabled\*\* student who is eligible for reasonable adjustments\*\*\*
- 10.5 Currently, the right reasonable adjustments\*\*\* are made for the right GCSE and AS/A level disabled\*\* students
- 10.6 Reasonable adjustments\*\*\* make the qualification system fairer for all GCSE and AS/A level students

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree
- f. Don't know

***Definitions shown to respondents***

\* Defined as: 'Special consideration is a post-examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary illness, temporary injury or some other event outside of the candidate's control at the time of the assessment, which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a candidate's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in an assessment.'

\*\* Defined as: 'Being disabled under the Equality Act 2010 is defined as having a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on the ability to do normal daily activities.'

\*\*\* Defined as: 'The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment. A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements. How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment. There is no duty on Awarding Bodies to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment.'

The following questions are about malpractice.

### Base: Teachers and Head teachers who teach GCSEs or AS/A levels

#### 11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- 11.1 I have adequate information about what constitutes malpractice for GCSEs and AS/A levels
- 11.2 I know to whom I should report an incident of malpractice for GCSEs and AS/A levels
- 11.3 I am confident that incidents of malpractice are fairly investigated for GCSEs and AS/A levels
- 11.4 I am confident malpractice is properly reported when it happens in GCSEs and AS/A levels

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree
- f. Don't know

### Perceptions of Applied General qualifications

*The next few questions are about Applied General qualifications.*

*Applied General qualifications include, but are not restricted to, Pearson BTEC Level 3 Applied qualifications and OCR Cambridge Level 3 Applied Certificates. They are taught in schools and colleges at level 3 (key stage 5) and are identified by the Department for Education as 'Applied Generals' for the purpose of performance table reporting.*

#### 12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- 12.1 Applied General qualifications are well understood by people
- 12.2 Applied General qualifications are trusted qualifications
- 12.3 Applied General qualifications standards are maintained year on year
- 12.4 Applied General qualifications are good preparation for further study
- 12.5 Applied General qualifications are good preparation for work
- 12.6 Applied General qualifications develop a broad range of skills for students
- 12.7 The marking of Applied General qualifications is accurate

*In 2018, schools and colleges paid the exam boards in the region of £60-£170 per student for each Applied General qualification (Source: Ofqual 2018).*

12.8 Applied General qualifications offer "value for money"

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree

- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree
- f. Don't know

**Appeals against results for Applied General qualifications**

**13. Are you aware of the appeals against results process for Applied General qualifications in schools and colleges?**

- Yes
- No

*The following questions are about appeals against results.*

**Base: all who are aware of the appeals against results process**

**14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

- 14.1 I have adequate information about the appeals against results process for Applied General qualifications taught in schools and colleges
  - 14.2 I am confident that appeals are dealt with fairly for Applied General qualifications in schools and colleges
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree
  - f. Don't know

**Malpractice in Applied General qualifications**

*These last questions are about malpractice.*

**Base: Teachers and Head teachers who teach Applied General qualifications in schools or colleges**

**15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

- 15.1 I have adequate information about what constitutes malpractice for Applied General qualifications taught in schools and colleges
  - 15.2 I know to whom I should report an incident of malpractice for Applied General qualifications taught in schools and colleges
  - 15.3 I am confident that incidents of malpractice for Applied General qualifications taught in schools and colleges are fairly investigated
  - 15.4 I am confident malpractice is properly reported when it happens in Applied General qualifications taught in schools and colleges
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree
  - f. Don't know