

# Background Information for: Perceptions of Vocational and Technical Qualifications in England – Wave 5

An Ofqual commissioned report

July 2022

Ofqual/22/6940/2

The logo for YouGov, featuring the word "You" in red and "Gov" in grey.

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## Introduction

### Background

This document accompanies the findings of wave 5 of the Perceptions of Vocational and Technical Qualifications Survey and should be read alongside the report. This project was commissioned by Ofqual and managed by YouGov. The design template for charts used in the report was provided by Ofqual.

This project was undertaken over Winter 2021-22, with fieldwork being undertaken between 21st December 2021 - 14th February 2022.

### Context

Ofqual is the independent regulator of general and vocational qualifications in England, and is responsible for regulating around 180 awarding organisations who between them provide over 15,000 live qualifications for learners.<sup>1</sup> Ofqual's responsibilities include making sure that:

- regulated qualifications reliably indicate the knowledge, skills and understanding students have demonstrated
- assessments and exams show what a student has achieved
- people have confidence in the qualifications they regulate, and
- students and teachers have information on the full range of these qualifications

Ofqual regulates general qualifications such as GCSEs, AS levels and A levels, but also a wide range of other qualifications and assessments, including Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQs) and currently around 300 [apprenticeship end-point assessments \(EPAs\)](#), where it acts as an External Quality Assurance provider<sup>2</sup>, alongside a wide range of other Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs).

Ofqual collects and uses insight on perceptions of qualifications and the qualifications system from the range of stakeholders – including learners, teachers, and employers - that take, work with and use qualifications. This research focussed on vocational and technical qualifications and assessments.

Ofqual has continued to annually assess employers', learners' and providers' perceptions of FSQs, EPAs and other VTQs since wave 1 (2018). Ofqual has an interest in stakeholder views both from the perspective of a regulator of those qualifications, some of which are currently subject to reform, and as an External Quality Assurance provider. The aim of this project was to understand how stakeholders (employers, learners and providers) view and use these qualifications and assessments.

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<sup>1</sup> [Details of all the qualifications regulated by Ofqual](#)

<sup>2</sup> External Quality Assurance (EQA) monitors the EPA that apprentices undertake at the end of their apprenticeship, to ensure that it is fair, consistent and robust across different apprenticeship standards and between different assessment organisations. The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education oversees EQA delivery and is also responsible for managing the development and approval of T levels

The first part of the survey consisted of a section focussed on perceptions of Vocational Qualifications generally. The second part of the survey asked about VTQs, FSQs and T Levels, followed by EPAs. The survey was routed dependent on survey respondent's responses. For example, learners were only asked questions about perceptions of the qualification type which they were taking. In this wave, the survey was expanded to collect data on understanding of T levels.

## **2020-21**

The outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and the resulting measures applied across England from March 2020, has had a multitude of impacts on the education sector. For significant parts of 2020 and 2021, schools and colleges in England were closed and there was a shift to remote and online learning for almost all students. Given the unusual and unprecedented circumstances of those years, formal assessments and exams for vocational and technical qualifications did not take place; likewise this was the case for GCSEs, AS and A Levels. The regulatory framework for the assessment and awarding of Vocational and Technical Qualifications was set out in the Extraordinary Regulatory Framework (ERF) and the Extended Extraordinary Framework (EERF) for 2020 and the Vocational Contingency Regulatory Framework (VCRF) for 2021, each developed by Ofqual at different points in time.

In January 2021, the government announced that examinations and other formal assessments in schools and colleges would not take place in summer 2021, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Following this, Ofqual consulted on and published the Vocational and Technical Qualifications Contingency Regulatory Framework (VCRF) on 24 March 2021. In addition to permitting adaptations, in line with government policy, the VCRF permitted awarding organisations to issue results based on Teacher Assessed Grades at either qualification or unit level. This was made possible by the VCRF for qualifications used for progression to higher or further study, or into employment for students expecting to sit assessments between 1 August 2020 and 31 August 2021.

Given the uniqueness of 2020 and 2021, Ofqual's wave 4 and 5 surveys included a 2020 or 2021 specific section to gauge perceptions of vocational and technical qualifications based solely on that year. Where the original perceptions questions were asked upfront in the survey, respondents were asked to think about each of these qualifications generally and were informed that a 2020 or 2021 section would follow later in the survey. These modifications were made so that we could track key measures over time despite those exceptional years.

The fieldwork for the 2021-22 survey was conducted over winter, when there were many staff shortages in schools and colleges as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This resulted in lower engagement with a number of campaigns and initiatives, and it proved harder to reach those working at various types of training providers. A sample of 539 training providers was reached (higher than the previous year) though there was a much higher response rate from FE colleges, and a lower response rate from Independent Training Providers (ITPs) than in previous years. The data is weighted (as previously) to adjust for this and to ensure comparability with previous waves.

## **Project objectives**

The objectives of the project were to investigate training providers', learners' and employers':

- Overall perceptions of Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs), Functional Skills qualifications and end-point assessments of Apprenticeships; and

- Perceptions of a number of topical aspects of the qualifications system for vocational and technical qualifications.

### **Geographical coverage**

Ofqual regulates general and vocational qualifications in England. The focus of this project was to gain the perceptions of training providers, learners and employers in England. Samples of these groups were drawn from England.

### **Related publications**

- [Vocational and other qualifications quarterly](#)
- [Perceptions of A levels, GCSEs and other qualifications: wave 20](#)

### **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 [data.analytics@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:data.analytics@ofqual.gov.uk).

## Method and guidance

### Overview of method

Wave 5 of the Perceptions of Vocational and Technical Qualifications Survey was carried out by YouGov, on behalf of Ofqual. The survey was conducted online using YouGov's proprietary survey system. The fieldwork was conducted between 21st December 2021 and 14th February 2022.

### Sampling

The sampling of participants was designed with a view to achieving respondent samples that were representative of the wider population. Full 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:

- 539 education professionals (referred to throughout this report as training providers) who work for an establishment that offers vocational or technical qualifications
- 533 people (referred to throughout this report as learners) who are currently taking or have taken in the last three years a Functional Skills qualification, vocational or technical qualification, or non-degree Apprenticeship
- 2,002 senior managers or directors and above (referred to throughout this report as employers) who have HR decision-making involvement or influence in their organisation

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 training providers, learners 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. Therefore throughout this report, perceptions attributed to sample groups are inferred from those who took part in the survey.

### Survey design

The wave 5 survey was designed in collaboration between Ofqual and the YouGov project team. The survey covered themes explored in previous waves of the survey in addition to new content.

A copy of all of the questions included in this wave of the survey is available in Appendix B.

### Guidance on analysis

Throughout the 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. The intention of this report is to summarise the main themes in the data and not produce a full replication of the entire data set 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%.

## **Data limitations**

### **Sample effects**

It should be recognised that the sampling procedures adopted in waves 3, 4 and 5 differ from the approach taken in the previous waves. For waves 3, 4 and 5, the sample for learners and employers was drawn from the YouGov panel of over 1,000,000 UK adults who have signed up to take part in our surveys. Similarly, for training providers, the sample was drawn from a combination of the YouGov panel and another source. In wave 2, by comparison, each sample was selected from targeted contact databases.

### **Mode effects**

The various modes of data collection have their advantages and disadvantages and differences will be seen in the results of the same or similar questions asked using various modes. These advantages and disadvantages of data collection methods do not mean that one mode is more or less accurate than the other, more that when looking to compare data over time using different modes it needs to be considered that the data may vary.

A key advantage of online research is the neutrality of the interview mode. Independent research has found that respondents modify their answers in the presence of an interviewer, including via telephone. A key finding from a past study conducted by YouGov for Ofqual<sup>3</sup> was that respondents had an increased propensity to provide a more positive response when asked a question by an interviewer over the telephone compared to when individuals answered online in their own time and in private. Online responses can be considered more effective for capturing sensitive data in a way that gives the respondent a greater sense of anonymity.

### **Time series data**

Given the changes made to the sampling approach and mode of data collection for this research since wave 3, when looking to compare results over time it needs to be considered that the data may vary.

YouGov and Ofqual to advise taking caution when interpreting changes over time between waves 3, 4 and 5, and waves 1 and 2 as time series analysis could be unreliable due to the changes in methods.

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<sup>3</sup> Perceptions of A levels and GCSEs: Wave 12, perceptions of heads of schools, teachers, the general public, parents and students (Ofqual 2014)

## Glossary

### **Base size**

The number of respondents answering the question.

### **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.

### **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.

### **Apprenticeship framework**

These were developed by sector bodies, primarily focused on qualifications. They were phased out in 2020-21 and replaced by apprenticeship standards. Framework apprenticeships are assessed throughout by completing a unit at a time but there is no endpoint assessment.

### **Apprenticeship standard**

New apprenticeship standards, developed by employers, to show what an apprentice will be doing, and the skills required of them, by job role. Standards are developed by employer groups known as 'trailblazers'. Standards are occupation-focused rather than qualification-led, with the apprentice being assessed through an end-point assessment. The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education ('the Institute'), supports employer groups in the development of apprenticeship standards. The Institute is an employer-led organisation focussed on enabling people of all ages and backgrounds have the opportunity to maximise their potential and contribute to improving social mobility and the UK's productivity.

### **Awarding organisation**

An organisation recognised by the qualifications' regulators in England, Wales or Northern Ireland to develop, deliver and award qualifications. In England, this includes organisations that are regulated by Ofqual as End Point Assessment Organisations (EPAOs).

### **End-point assessment of apprenticeship (EPAs)**

End-point assessment (EPA) is an independent assessment that takes place at the end of the apprenticeship training. This is to test that the apprentice is competent in their occupation.

### **Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQs)**

Functional Skills qualifications are available in English, maths and ICT and are available in levels from Entry 1 to Level 2. Functional Skills assessments test the fundamental, applied skills in these subjects for life, learning and work.

It should be noted that reformed Functional Skills qualifications were introduced for first teaching in September 2019. Legacy qualifications are no longer available.



## **Vocational & Technical Qualifications (VTQs)**

These normally have a vocational focus and include, amongst others, Technical Qualifications and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). For this report, this term refers to qualifications other than FSQs, EPAs and T Levels.

## **Further Education (FE)**

Further education (FE) includes any study after secondary education that's not part of higher education (that is, not taken as part of an undergraduate or graduate degree).

## **Local Authorities (LAs)**

Local Authorities (LAs) are responsible for a range of vital services for people and businesses in defined areas, including social care, schools and adult education.

## **T Levels**

T Levels are new programmes of study which follow GCSEs and are equivalent to 3 A levels. These 2-year courses, which launched for first teaching from September 2020, have been developed in collaboration with employers and businesses. T Levels offer students a mixture of classroom learning, through a compulsory Technical Qualification and English, maths and digital provision, and 'on-the-job' experience during an industry placement of at least 315 hours (approximately 45 days). Ofqual is responsible for regulating the Technical Qualification component of the T Level. The Institute also has responsibility for managing the development and approval of T levels.

## **Training providers**

The scope of the survey sample included providers in the following categories: Further Education (FE); Higher Education (HE); private class-based; private work-based; public sector community based; public sector 'other'; schools; voluntary sector education.

## Appendix A – Technical report

Appendix A outlines the composition of the achieved sampling and additional information on the methods used in wave 5.

### Weighting

A table for each sample group is included in this appendix breaking down the achieved unweighted samples by key characteristics. Alongside this, the weighted base and weight factors applied are also shown. The unweighted base shown in the tables details the number of completed surveys before any weighting took place. Comparatively, the weighted base shown details 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 size being lower than what would be expected in a representative sample.

Weighting adjusts the contribution of individual respondents to aggregated figures and is used to make surveyed populations more representative of a project-relevant, and typically larger, population by forcing it to mimic the distribution of that larger population's significant characteristics, or its size. The weighting tasks happen at the tail end of the data processing phase on cleaned data.

When standard weighting variables are used to reweight the achieved sample back to target profiles, a simple weighting factor is created for each record. This weighting factor is a decimal number, such as 1.0 or 1.2 or 0.5. It is calculated by dividing the target proportion required by the actual proportion from the achieved sample data. The weight factor is used as a multiplier for each respondent during aggregation to determine their weighted contribution.

A weight of 1 occurs when the respondent (and respondents with the same profile) exactly reflect our target (i.e. we have the exactly accurate number of such respondents in our sample); weights of <1 occur when the target has been exceeded, and weights of >1 occur when we have under-achieved the target. This is calculated for each individual respondent, and the largest and smallest weight factors for each sample have been detailed in the tables that follow.

YouGov uses RIM (Random Iterative Method) weighting as its standard approach. RIM weighting is used when there are a number of different standard weights that all need to be applied together. This weighting method calculates weights for each individual respondent from the targets and achieved sample sizes for all of the quota variables. RIM weighting is an iterative process, whereby it recalculates the weights a number of times until the required degree of accuracy is reached. All weights are capped at six, and a weighting report is produced for each project. A summary of weights can be seen in the tables below.

### Training provider sample

#### Sample coverage

The sample was designed to be representative of the establishments that offer vocational or technical qualifications across England.

The scope of the survey sample included providers from the following types of establishments: Sixth form that is part of a school; Sixth form college; Further Education College; Independent Training

Provider (ITP); Adult and Community Learning Provider (ACL); Local Authority or Council; Employer Provider; Higher Education Institution; Voluntary and community sector organisation.

## **Sample frame**

The sample of training providers was drawn from two sources.

### **Education and Skills Funding Agency registered provider database**

Mirroring the approach taken for waves 3 and 4, the Education and Skills Funding Agency registered provider database was used as the main sample frame, providing access to c.4,700 providers from which to sample from in wave 5.

This was used as a database to select contacts in establishments to be surveyed. The database contained named establishments with generic email addresses that allowed the survey to be targeted at the establishments that met our criteria.

### **YouGov Panel**

The survey was also conducted using education professionals registered to the YouGov panel, who have consented to participate in surveys with YouGov. A quota sampling approach was used for the sample drawn from the YouGov panel to ensure broad representativeness by establishment type and region.

## **Sample selection**

The sample was selected to ensure the representativeness of the results in line with the VTQ provider population in England. The sample frame was stratified by the following variables:

- Establishment type
- English region

Using the Education and Skills Funding Agency registered provider database, all establishments that met the sample criteria were invited to take part in this research. This gave establishments an equal opportunity to take part in the research and for YouGov to deliver a random probability sample.

For the respondents drawn from the YouGov panel, soft quotas were applied to control for establishment type and region. From the available sample frame, identified respondents were invited at random to take part in the survey.

## **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 shows 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 1: Achieved sample size by establishment type and region

	Training provider sample		Training provider sample	
	Unweighted base	Weighted base	Smallest weight factor	Largest weight factor
<b>Establishment type</b>				
Sixth form	145	75	0.47	0.56
FE College	214	70	0.30	0.36
Independent training provider	81	296	3.27	3.94
ACL	20	16	0.69	0.84
LA or council	52	5	0.09	0.11
Employer provider	4	22	5.21	5.71
HEI	10	16	1.45	1.75
Voluntary sector	7	11	1.37	1.65
Other	6	27	4.28	4.72
<b>Region</b>				
East of England	51	43	0.10	3.58
West and East Midlands	111	97	0.09	5.21
London	69	75	0.10	5.71
North West and North East	125	129	0.11	4.66
South	122	135	0.11	4.72
Yorkshire and Humber	61	59	0.10	5.43

## Learner sample

### Sample coverage

The sample was designed to be representative of learners who are currently studying or have studied one of the following qualifications in the last three years:

- Functional skills in English, maths, or ICT
- Vocational or Technical qualifications (e.g. NVQs, BTECs)
- Apprenticeship (non-degree)

### Sample frame

The sample of learners was drawn from the YouGov panel. Over the last twenty years, YouGov has carefully recruited a panel of over 1,000,000 UK adults to take part in our surveys.

## Sample selection

The sample was selected to ensure the representativeness of the results in line with the actual population of people who have recently studied these qualifications in England.

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 unweighted achieved sample size and breakdown of the samples by key characteristics is shown in Table 2. 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 base being lower than what would be expected in a representative sample.

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

	Learner sample		Learner sample	
	Unweighted base	Weighted base	Smallest weight factor	Largest weight factor
<b>Age</b>				
Under 19	112	132	0.59	1.22
19-24	114	115	0.59	1.08
25+	307	285	0.59	1.20

## 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 senior management roles and above with the ability to answer on behalf of their organisation were eligible to take the survey.

### 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 by organisation size and sector in line with the business population in England using data drawn from the Office for National

Statistics Business Population Statistics. This was calculated based on the number of organisations within each size/sector category, as opposed to on the percentage of employment within each.

### 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 3 below.

The unweighted base shows the number of completed surveys and the weighted base shows 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.

To ensure a robust sample of employers from large organisations, YouGov collected a disproportionately higher number of responses from medium and large organisations than would exist in a representative sample of the business population. Subsequently, weighting has been applied to correct for this imbalance and produce a sample reflective of the actual business population by organisation size.

Table 3: 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 to 5	907	1161	0.45	1.30
6 to 9	244	420	0.63	1.83
10 to 19	215	220	0.38	1.11
20-49	211	120	0.22	0.64
50-99	82	40	0.20	0.58
100-249	84	20	0.11	0.32
250+	259	20	0.04	0.11
<b>Sector</b>				
Private sector	1688	1902	0.11	1.83
Public sector	159	20	0.04	0.63
Third or voluntary sector	155	80	0.06	1.02

## Appendix B – Survey

### Learners

#### Perceptions of qualifications

Question 8. In 2020, employers, training providers or colleges paid awarding organisations in the region of £15-£20 per student for each Functional Skills qualification (Source: Ofqual 2020). To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

“Functional Skills qualifications offer value for money”

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all

Question 9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Functional Skills qualifications?

9a - I value Functional Skills qualifications

9b - People holding Functional Skills qualifications have the appropriate level of skill in English needed by employers

9c - People holding Functional Skills qualifications have the appropriate level of skill in maths needed by employers

9d - People holding Functional Skills qualifications have the appropriate level of skill in ICT needed by employers

9e - The availability of Functional Skills qualifications is sufficiently flexible

9f - Functional Skills qualifications are good preparation for further study

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all

Question 10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about vocational and technical qualifications?

10a - I value vocational and technical qualifications

10b - The purpose of vocational and technical qualifications is well-understood by employers

10c - I understand the purpose of vocational and technical qualifications

10d - Vocational and technical qualifications prepare learners well for the workplace

10e - The availability of vocational and technical qualifications is sufficiently flexible

10f - Vocational and technical qualifications are good preparation for further study

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all

Question 11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about end-point assessments?

11a - I value the end-point assessments of apprenticeship standards

11b - I understand the purpose of end-point assessments of apprenticeship standards

11c - End-point assessments of apprenticeship standards test the competence and vocational and technical skills needed by employers

11d - The availability of end-point assessments of apprenticeship standards is sufficiently flexible

11e - Apprenticeships provide the right skills and knowledge needed for my chosen career.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all

Question 120. Which of the following statements describes your understanding of T Levels?

- Very good understanding
- Quite good understanding
- Limited understanding
- Not very good understanding
- No understanding at all

Base: all



Question 12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about T Levels?

12a - I value T Levels

12b - I understand the purpose of T Levels

12c - T Levels test the competence and vocational and technical skills needed by employers

12d - The availability of T Levels is sufficiently flexible

12e - T Levels are good preparation for work

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all

Question 130. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

“It is clear to me which qualifications are relevant to my needs”

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all

## **Qualifications studied**

Question 14. Thinking about the Functional Skills qualification you are studying/have completed, is this part of an apprenticeship?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Base: all

Question 15. Which Functional Skill qualification/s are you taking, or have you taken? (Please select all that apply)

15a - Functional Skills English

15b - Functional Skills maths

15c - Functional Skills ICT

- Entry
- Level 1
- Level 2
- Don't know

Base: all who are studying FSQs

Question 16. Why did you decide to take a Functional Skills qualification? (Please select all that apply)

- I wanted to improve my English/maths/ICT skills
- I did not pass a GCSE in English/maths/ICT
- I need to complete this as part of an apprenticeship
- My employer advised/required me to
- In order to get a job
- To progress in my current job
- To progress in my studies
- Other (specify)

Base: all who are studying FSQs

Question 17. Now that you have started learning/ have completed learning, what benefits do you expect from taking a Functional Skills qualification/s? (Please select all that apply)

- My English/maths/ICT skills will improve
- I will be able to apply English/maths/ICT skills in everyday life
- I will be more confident using English/maths/ICT
- I will be able to complete my apprenticeship
- I will be able to apply for more jobs
- To progress in my current job
- To be able to find a better job
- I will have better job prospects in the longer term
- To progress to higher level qualifications
- Other (specify)
- Don't know

Base: all who are studying FSQs

Question 18. Thinking about the vocational and technical qualification(s) you are studying/have completed, is this part of an apprenticeship?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Base: all who are studying VTQ

Question 19. Which level is the vocational or technical qualification that you are taking?

- Entry
- Level 1
- Level 2
- Level 1/ Level 2
- Level 3
- Level 4
- Level 5
- Level 6
- Level 7
- Level 8
- Don't know

Base: all who are studying a VTQ

Question 190. What is the name/ subject of the vocational or technical qualification(s) you are studying or have studied in the last 3 years?

(free text entry)

Base: all who are studying a VTQ

Question 20. Why did you decide to take a vocational or technical qualification? (Please select all that apply)

- I wanted to improve my skills
- I am interested in the vocational/technical area
- I need to complete this as part of an apprenticeship
- My employer advised/required me to
- In order to get a job
- To progress in my current job
- To progress in my studies
- I preferred vocational or technical qualifications to a more academic route
- Other (specify)

Base: all who are studying a VTQ

Question 21. Now that you have started learning/have completed learning, what benefits do you expect from taking a vocational and technical qualification? (Please select all that apply)

- My vocational/technical skills will improve
- I will be more confident using my vocational/technical skills
- I will be able to complete my apprenticeship
- I will be able to progress in my current job
- I will be able to find a job/a better job
- I will be able to progress in my studies
- I will be more confident in my work/better at my job
- Other (specify)

Base: all who are studying a VTQ

Question 23. Which level is the apprenticeship that you are taking/ have taken?

- Level 2
- Level 3
- Level 4
- Level 5
- Level 6
- Level 7
- Level 8
- Don't know

Base: all who are undertaking an apprenticeship

Question 24. In which sector is the apprenticeship you are taking/ have taken?

- Agriculture, environment and animal care
- Business and administration
- Catering and hospitality
- Childcare and education
- Construction
- Creative and design
- Digital

- Engineering and manufacturing
- Hair and beauty
- Health and science
- Legal, finance and accounting
- Protective services
- Sales, marketing and procurement
- Social care
- Transport and logistics
- Other (specify)

Base: all who are undertaking an apprenticeship

Question 25. Are you aware that end-point assessments are specific to apprenticeship standards?

- Yes
- No

Base: all who are undertaking an apprenticeship

Question 26. Please tell us which of the following statements best describes your understanding of end-point assessment of apprenticeship standards:

- Very good understanding
- Quite good understanding
- Limited understanding
- Not very good understanding
- No understanding at all

Base: all who are undertaking an apprenticeship standard

Question 27. Why did you decide to take an apprenticeship? (Please select all that apply)

- I wanted to improve my skills
- I am interested in the vocational/technical area
- Because I can learn skills on the job
- In order to find a better job
- To progress in my current job
- To progress in my studies
- Other (specify)

Base: all who are undertaking an apprenticeship

Question 28. Now that you have started learning/have completed learning, what benefits do you expect to get from taking an apprenticeship? (Please select all that apply)

- I will have a broader range of skills to apply in the workplace
- I will have better knowledge of how to do my job
- I will have more confidence in applying my skills/knowledge
- I will be able to progress in my current job
- I will be able to find a better job
- I will be able to progress in my studies
- Other (specify)

Base: all who are undertaking an apprenticeship

Question 30. Which T Level are you currently taking?

- Design, surveying and planning for construction
- Digital production, design and development
- Education and childcare

Base: all who are studying T Levels

Question 31. Why did you decide to take a T Level? (Please select all that apply)

- My employer advised/required me to
- In order to get a job
- To progress in my current job
- To progress in my studies
- Other (specify)

Base: all who are studying T Levels

Question 32. Now that you have started learning, what benefits do you expect from taking a T Level?  
(Please select all that apply)

- I will be able to apply for more jobs
- To progress in my current job
- To be able to find a better job
- I will have better job prospects in the longer term
- To progress to higher level qualifications
- Other (specify)
- Don't know

Base: all who are studying T Levels

## Providers (all types)

### Perceptions of qualifications

Question 9. In 2020, employers, training providers or colleges paid awarding organisations in the region of £15 to £20 per student for each Functional Skills qualification (Source: Ofqual 2020). To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

“Functional Skills qualifications offer value for money”

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all

Question 10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Functional Skills qualifications?

10a - I value Functional Skills qualifications

10b - People holding Functional Skills qualifications have the appropriate level of skill in English needed by employers

10c - People holding Functional Skills qualifications have the appropriate level of skill in maths needed by employers

10d - People holding Functional Skills qualifications have the appropriate level of skill in ICT needed by employers

10e - Functional Skills qualifications are good preparation for further study

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all

Question 11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about vocational and technical qualifications?

11a - I value vocational and technical qualifications

11b - The purpose of vocational and technical qualifications is well-understood by employers

11c - The purpose of vocational and technical qualifications is well-understood by learners

11d - Vocational and technical qualifications prepare learners well for the workplace

11e - People achieving vocational and technical qualifications have the technical skills needed by employers

11f - Vocational and technical qualifications are good preparation for further study

11g - Vocational and technical qualifications offer value for money

- Strongly agree
- Agree

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all

Question 18. Are you aware that end-point assessments are specific to apprenticeship standards?

- Yes
- No

Base: all

Question 12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about end-point assessments of apprenticeship standards?

12a - I value end-point assessments of apprenticeship standards

12b - Learners understand the purpose of end-point assessment of apprenticeship standards

12c - People passing end-point assessments of apprenticeship standards have the competence and vocational and technical skills needed by employers

12d - The availability of end-point assessments of apprenticeship standards is sufficiently flexible

12e - End-point assessments of apprenticeship standards offer value for money

12f - Apprenticeships provide the right skills and knowledge needed for learner's chosen careers.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all

Question 13. Approximately how many learners at your establishment are currently taking Functional Skills qualifications?

(free text entry)

Base: if establishment offers FSQs

Question 14. Of these learners taking Functional Skills qualifications, approximately what PROPORTION are currently taking Functional Skills qualifications in:

- Maths
- English
- ICT

(free text entry)

Base: if at least one learner is currently taking an FSQ

Question 15. Approximately how many learners at your establishment are currently undertaking Apprenticeships?

(free text entry)

Base: if establishment offers apprenticeships

Question 16. Of these learners, approximately what PROPORTION are currently taking:

- Apprenticeship standards

- Apprenticeship frameworks (specification of apprenticeship standards for England/SASE)  
(free text entry)

Base: if at least one learner is currently doing an apprenticeship

Question 17. Do you understand the difference between apprenticeship frameworks and the new apprenticeship standards?

- Yes
- No

Base: all

Question 19. Which of the following describes your understanding of the end-point assessment of apprenticeship standards?

- Very good understanding
- Quite good understanding
- Limited understanding
- Not very good understanding
- No understanding at all

Base: all

Question 20. Approximately how many learners in your establishment went on to the following destinations in the last 12 months?

- University/Higher Education
- Further Education (technical/work based)
- Employment (not apprenticeship)
- Employment as an apprentice
- Promotion with current employer

(free text entry)

Base: all



## Employers

### Perceptions of qualifications

Question 12. Please indicate your level of understanding about the four types of qualifications listed below.

12a - Functional Skills qualifications

12b - Vocational and technical qualifications in my sector or organisation

12c - Apprenticeships in my sector or organisation

12d - T levels or the technical qualifications within T levels

- Very good understanding
- Quite good understanding
- Limited understanding
- Not very good understanding
- No understanding at all

Base: all

Question 13. To what extent do you agree to the following statement?

It is clear which qualifications are relevant to my organisation

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all

Question 13a. Please indicate which of the following statements best describes your understanding of the changes that have been, or are currently being made to vocational and technical qualifications in your sector.

- Fully understand the changes proposed or taking place
- Have some understanding of the changes proposed or taking place
- Aware of, but don't know what changes are proposed or taking place
- Not aware of any changes at all

Base: all who have at least a limited understanding of vocational and technical qualifications in their sector

Question 14. Have you, or anyone else in your organisation, been involved in supporting the development of the following in the last five years? For example, you may have been a member of a working group, responded to an online consultation or contributed to assessment design.

14a - Functional Skills qualifications

14b - Vocational and technical qualifications in my sector or organisation

14c - Apprenticeships in my sector or organisation

14d - T levels or the technical qualifications within T levels in my sector

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Base: all who indicate that they have at least some understanding for each qualification

## **Perceptions of Functional Skills Qualifications**

Question 15. Please indicate which of the following statements best describes your organisation's involvement in recruitment and training in **Functional Skills qualifications**.

- We recruit people with Functional Skills qualifications
- We arrange training leading to Functional Skills qualifications
- We both recruit people with **and** arrange training leading to Functional Skills qualifications
- We neither recruit people with Functional Skills qualifications nor arrange training leading to Functional Skills qualifications
- Don't know

Base: all who indicate that they have at least some understanding of Functional Skills qualifications

Question 16. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about Functional Skills qualifications. Please speak from the perspective of your own organisation i.e. not the views you believe other employers have.

16a - We value Functional Skills qualifications

16b - People holding Functional Skills qualifications have the appropriate level of skill in English needed by my organisation

16c - People holding Functional Skills qualifications have the appropriate level of skill in maths needed by my organisation

16d - People holding Functional Skills qualifications have the appropriate level of skill in ICT needed by my organisation

16e - The availability of Functional Skills qualifications is sufficiently flexible

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all who indicate that they have at least some understanding of Functional Skills qualifications

Question 17. You said you agree that your organisation values Functional Skills qualifications - can you please explain why?

(free text entry)

Base: all who agree that they value Functional Skills qualifications

Question 18. You said you disagree that your organisation values Functional Skills qualifications - can you please explain why?

(free text entry)

Base: all who disagree that they value Functional Skills qualifications

## Perceptions of vocational and technical qualifications

Question 21. Please indicate which of the following statements best describes your organisation's involvement in recruitment and training in **vocational or technical qualifications**.

- We recruit people with vocational or technical qualifications
- We arrange training leading to vocational or technical qualifications
- We both recruit people with **and** arrange training leading to vocational or technical qualifications
- We neither recruit people with vocational or technical qualifications nor arrange training leading to vocational or technical qualifications
- Don't know

Base: all who indicate that they have at least some understanding of vocational and technical qualifications

Question 22. Which vocational or technical qualification/s does your organisation typically recruit for? (free text entry)

Base: all who indicate that they have at least some understanding of vocational and technical qualifications

Question 23. Thinking about the qualifications that your organisation typically uses, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements in relation to vocational and technical qualifications in your sector. Please answer from the perspective of your own organisation i.e. not the views you believe other employers have.

23a - We value vocational and technical qualifications

23b - The purpose of vocational and technical qualifications is well-understood by my organisation

23c - Vocational and technical qualifications prepare learners well for the workplace

23d - People achieving vocational and technical qualifications have the technical skills needed by my organisation

23e - The availability of vocational and technical qualifications is sufficiently flexible

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all who indicate that they have at least some understanding of vocational and technical qualifications

Question 24. When answering the previous question, were you thinking mostly about vocational and technical qualifications as part of an apprenticeship or taken outside of an apprenticeship?

- Mostly **as part of** an apprenticeship
- Mostly **taken outside of** an apprenticeship
- Don't know

Base: all who indicate that they have at least some understanding of vocational and technical qualifications

Question 25. You indicated you agree that your organisation values vocational and technical qualifications - can you please explain why?

(free text entry)

Base: all who agree that they value vocational and technical qualifications

Question 26. You indicated that your organisation does not value vocational and technical qualifications - can you please explain why?

(free text entry)

Base: all who disagree that they value vocational and technical qualifications

## **Perceptions of end-point assessments of apprenticeship standards**

Question 27. Do you know the difference between apprenticeship frameworks and the new apprenticeship standards?

- Yes
- No

Base: all who indicate that they have at least some understanding of apprenticeships in their sector

Question 28. Before taking this survey, were you aware that end-point assessments are specific to apprenticeship standards?

- Yes
- No

Base: all who indicate that they have at least some understanding of apprenticeships in their sector

Question 29. You indicated earlier that your organisation currently employs apprentices. Approximately how many apprentices do you currently employ? Please provide a whole number (no decimal point).

(free text entry)

Base: all who currently employ apprentices

Question 30. Of the apprentices your organisation currently employs, approximately what PROPORTION are currently taking:

If unsure, please leave blank.

- Apprenticeship standards
- Apprenticeship frameworks (specification of apprenticeship standards for England/SASE)

(free text entry)

Base: all who currently employ apprentices

Question 31. Please indicate which of the following statements best describes your understanding of end-point assessment of apprenticeships.

- Very good understanding (i.e. you have clear knowledge of the knowledge, skills and behaviours being assessed, and how they are assessed)
- Quite good understanding (i.e. you have reasonable, but not full knowledge of the knowledge, skills and behaviours being assessed, and how they are assessed)
- Limited understanding (i.e. you have very limited knowledge of the knowledge, skills and behaviours being assessed, and how they are assessed)

- Not very good understanding (i.e. you are aware of it but have no knowledge of the knowledge, skills and behaviours being assessed, and how they are assessed)
- No understanding at all (i.e. you were not aware of it prior to this survey)

Base: all who indicate that they have at least some understanding of apprenticeships in their sector/organisation

Question 32. Have any of the apprentices in your organisation undertaken their end-point assessment?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Base: All who currently employ apprentices

Question 33. Please tell us your level of agreement with the following statements about end-point assessments of apprenticeships in your sector. Please answer from the perspective of your own organisation i.e. not the views you believe other employers have.

33a - We value end-point assessments of apprenticeship standards

33b - People completing end-point assessments of apprenticeship standards have the occupational competence and vocational and technical skills needed by my organisation

33c - The availability of end-point assessments of apprenticeship standards is sufficiently flexible

33d - Apprenticeships provide the right skills and knowledge needed for learner's chosen careers.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all who indicate that they have at least a limited understanding of end-point assessment of apprenticeship standards

Question 34. When answering the previous question, in terms of the industry sector or subject, which apprenticeship standards end-point assessments were you thinking of?

(free text entry)

Base: all who indicate that they have at least a limited understanding of end-point assessment of apprenticeship standards

Question 35. You indicated you agree that your organisation values end-point assessments of apprenticeship standards - can you please say why?

(free text entry)

Base: all who agree that they value end-point assessments of apprenticeship standards

Question 36. You indicated that your organisation does not value end-point assessments of apprenticeship standards - can you please say why?

(free text entry)

Base: all who disagree that they value end-point assessments of apprenticeship standards

## Use of qualifications – recruitment

Question 40a. When recruiting new employees, are any of the following essential for the following types of roles?

Q40aa - Professional and managerial roles

Q40ab - Skilled and supervisory roles

Q40ac - Entry level and admin roles

- 5 GCSEs at 9-4 or A\*-C
- Maths and English GCSEs
- Maths and English Functional Skills
- Relevant vocational or technical qualification
- Completion of a level 2 or level 3 apprenticeship
- Completion of a level 4 or level 5 apprenticeship
- Completion of a level 6, level 7 or level 8 apprenticeship
- Relevant work experience
- A levels
- HN, HE Diploma or equivalent level 4 or level 5 qualification
- Degree or equivalent level 6 qualification
- Masters or equivalent level 7 qualification
- PhD or equivalent level 8 qualification
- None of these

Base: all

Question 41. Has your organisation had any vacancies in the last 12 months, regardless of whether you were able to fill them?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Base: all

Question 42. How often, if ever, does your organisation typically recruit people from the following groups?

42a - Aged 16-18 - first job from school, college or training provider

42b - Aged 19-24 - first job from school, college or other training provider

- All of the time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- None of the time
- Don't know

Base: all

## Use of qualifications – training

Question 43. In the last 12 months, has your organisation arranged or funded training for your employees?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Base: all

Question 43b. How was this training funded? Please select all that apply.

- Privately
- Government funding (including apprenticeship levy)
- Other (specify)

Base: all responding yes to Q43

Question 44. Thinking about the training your organisation has arranged or funded in the last 12 months, how much of it, if any, typically results in a qualification for the following?

44a - Professional and managerial roles

44b - Skilled and supervisory roles

44c - Entry level and admin roles

- All training leads to a qualification
- Most training leads to a qualification
- Some training leads to a qualification
- No training leads to a qualification
- Don't know

Base: all who have arranged or funded training for employees in last 12 months

Question 45. Has any of the training your organisation has arranged or funded in the last 12 months led to any of the following? Please select all that apply.

- Functional Skills qualification (English, maths or ICT)
- GCSE in English or maths
- Other English or maths qualification
- Vocational or technical qualification
- End-point assessment of an apprenticeship
- Other (specify)
- Don't know

Base: all who have arranged or funded training for employees in last 12 months

Question 46. Can you please indicate why your organisation hasn't arranged or funded training that led to a vocational or technical qualification [and/or] apprenticeship? Please select all that apply.

- No need for them
- Not aware of them
- Don't know which ones are relevant for us
- Too expensive
- Too time consuming
- Takes employees away from the day job
- Not of a high quality standard
- Too easy
- Too difficult
- Not enough Government funding to pay for them
- Can no longer afford to fund them, but funded them in the past
- Do not have any apprentices in our organisation
- Other (specify)
- Don't know

Base: all who have arranged or funded training for employees in last 12 months which has not led to Vocational/technical qualification or End-point assessment of an apprenticeship standard

Question 47. You indicated that your organisation has no need to arrange or fund vocational or technical qualifications or apprenticeships. Can you please indicate why? Please select all that apply.

- Our employees don't need these qualifications
- We recruit people with these qualifications
- We test applicants e.g. competency tests so no need for qualifications
- Other (specify)
- Don't know

Base: all who indicate that there is no need to arrange or fund vocational or technical qualifications or apprenticeships

Question 48. Can you please indicate which of the following factors are taken into account when your organisation decides which qualifications to offer its employees? Please select all that apply.

- Reputation of the awarding organisation (exam board)
- Sector recognised (valued) qualification
- Relevance for our organisation
- Size of the qualification (the amount of time it takes to complete e.g. hours/days/months/years depending on the type of qualification and level)
- Level of qualification
- Flexible assessment
- Organisation culture i.e. always offered these qualifications
- Regulation of the qualification Including by professional body, or occupational regulation, licence to practice etc
- Other (specify)
- None of these factors are taken into account
- Don't know

Base: all who have arranged or funded training for employees in last 12 months

## Business benefits associated with qualifications

Question 49. For your employees who achieve vocational or technical qualifications within an apprenticeship or end-point assessment of an apprenticeship standard, how often, if ever, does this lead to the following?

49a - A pay increase

49b - A promotion or improved job status

49c - New responsibilities

49d - Permanent employment

- All of the time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- None of the time
- Don't know

Base: all who have arranged or funded training for employees in last 12 months



Question 50. For your employees who achieve vocational or technical qualifications outside an apprenticeship, how often, if ever, does this lead to the following?

50a - A pay increase

50b - A promotion or improved job status

50c - New responsibilities

- All of the time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- None of the time
- Don't know

Base: all who have arranged or funded training for employees in last 12 months (Q43=1)

## 2021 specific section – for all 3 sample groups

### Perceptions

This section asks again about your perceptions of \_vocational and technical qualifications\_. For this part of the survey, please think specifically about perceptions you have had between March 2021 and December 2021.

Question 2021\_VTQs. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

2021\_VTQsa - Vocational and technical qualifications in 2021 were well understood by people

2021\_VTQsb - Vocational and technical qualifications in 2021 were trusted qualifications

2021\_VTQsc - Vocational and technical qualifications standards were maintained in 2021

2021\_VTQsd - Vocational and technical qualifications in 2021 were good preparation for further study

2021\_VTQse - Vocational and technical qualifications in 2021 were good preparation for work

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all

This section asks again about your perceptions of \_Functional Skills\_. For this part of the survey, please think specifically about perceptions you have had between March 2021 and December 2021.

Question 2021\_FS. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

2021\_FSa - Functional Skills qualifications in 2021 were well understood by people

2021\_FSb - Functional Skills qualifications in 2021 were trusted qualifications

2021\_FSd - Functional Skills qualifications standards were maintained in 2021

2021\_FSd - Functional Skills qualifications in 2021 were good preparation for further study

2021\_FSd - Functional Skills qualifications in 2021 were good preparation for work

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree

- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all

This section asks again about your perceptions of \_end-point assessments of apprenticeship standards\_. For this part of the survey, please think specifically about perceptions you have had between March 2021 and December 2021.

Question 2021\_EPA. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

2021\_EPAA - End-point assessments of apprenticeship standards in 2021 were well understood by people

Q2021\_EPAB - End-point assessments of apprenticeship standards in 2021 were trusted qualifications

Q2021\_EPAC - End-point assessments of apprenticeship standards were maintained in 2021

Q2021\_EPAD - End-point assessments of apprenticeship standards in 2021 were good preparation for further study

Q2021\_EPAE - End-point assessments of apprenticeship standards in 2021 were good preparation for work

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all