



Department
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Modular Acceleration Programme (MAP) Process Evaluation – Interim Report

Research Report

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Executive summary

This report outlines interim findings from an evaluation of the Modular Acceleration Programme (MAP), commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE). The MAP aims to accelerate supply and support delivery of individual modules of higher technical qualifications (HTQs) ahead of the launch of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE).

This process evaluation aims to understand the issues and challenges faced by providers when developing and recruiting to modular learning, and the levels of awareness and appetite for modular learning. This interim report draws on evaluation data collected between February 2025 and August 2025, including:

- management information
- surveys with learners (those participating in module learning) and module leads (provider staff designing and delivering MAP modules)
- in-depth interviews with provider senior leaders, module leads, learners and some of those who showed initial interest but chose not to engage with the MAP (enquiry providers and enquiry learners)

These elements of evaluation evidence collection are ongoing, with final analysis and reporting due in August 2026.

Delivery of the MAP

By the end of July 2025, 18 providers had started delivering MAP modules to learners. A total of 50 modules were offered across 6 occupational areas:

- digital
- business and administration
- construction
- design and build
- health and science
- engineering and manufacturing
- education and early years

Three of a further 7 providers initially selected for the MAP hoped to start modules from September 2025 and the remainder did not expect any module delivery before the end of the MAP (December 2025).

Between April 2024 and July 2025, 352 learners had started a module. Learner starts varied across the delivery period, with the highest enrolment levels seen in Autumn 2024 (140 learners) and Spring 2025 (119 learners). Module and learner numbers were lower than MAP provider organisations had anticipated when they submitted proposals for the programme (which totalled 108 modules and 1,800 learners).

There was no consistent data available from providers about learner retention on modules to date. Indicative evidence from module leads and learner survey respondents identified some non-completions.

Most participating learners¹ were aged between 21 and 50, employed, identified as White and had a self-reported previous highest level of education of Level 3. There were slightly more men than women engaged in MAP modular learning. The cohort also included those identifying as Black, Asian and mixed ethnicities, and those with previous highest level of education of Levels 4, 5 and 6 or above.

Provider plans and module delivery

Common reasons for providers to submit a bid for the MAP included:

- recognition of the value of modular learning
- an opportunity to develop modules in a supported way in preparation for LLE

An important motivator for providers was the funding available, both for module tuition fees and demand raising activities.

The small number of enquiry providers interviewed (those that had enquired but did not participate in the MAP) said their decision was influenced by concerns about administrative burden and uncertainty about learner demand. Participating MAP providers also identified that recruitment onto modules would be their main challenge.

Providers were either neutral or positive about the ease of process for module development. Whilst development was made easier by building on existing HTQ modules, some said the rigidity of HTQ frameworks and administrative burden of validation processes limited their ability to tailor module content to specific employer or learner needs. Equally, it was not always straightforward to make decisions regarding the mode of delivery (face to face, online or blended) given the mix of learner experiences and needs.

¹ For which data was available - total numbers vary across the demographic characteristics.

There appears to be some lack of consistency amongst MAP providers regarding the provision of standardised transcripts². Fewer than one-fifth of learners that completed a module reported receiving one. There was limited awareness among MAP providers of the DfE template developed for this purpose. Provider senior leaders also expressed some uncertainty about how credit transfer could work across different institutions, awarding bodies, qualifications, levels or sectors. Some suggested national or regional approaches were needed to address the challenges and support the more accessible learning offer intended through LLE (for example, with learners able to mix and match modules to achieve a qualification).

MAP providers engaged employers in a variety of ways to support choice and content of modules, and recruitment. Small to medium sized employers were identified as most suited to getting involved with the modular approach. Providers built on their established relationships with employers and made use of existing employer networks. They considered one-to-one communication as effective in encouraging employer involvement and tailoring module content to meet needs. Some providers found it more difficult to engage employers, experiencing challenges which included low levels of understanding about HTQs, unfamiliarity with the MAP and modular approach, and uncertainty around employer funding issues.

Most MAP providers planned to continue offering HTQs and modular learning in the future, reiterating their value in offering opportunities for potential learners and responding to employer needs. Providers suggested improvements for future delivery, which included more flexible timetabling, stronger promotion to industry, and enhanced support for learners with limited prior education or returning to study after a break. Providers' ongoing introduction of and recruitment to modules were influenced by external factors such as funding, links to local skills plans, and clarity around pathways and credit transfers.

Recruitment and learner engagement

The most common demand raising activities delivered by MAP providers included:

- employer engagement
- building an online presence
- awareness raising with potential learners

² Transcripts provide a record of what a learner has studied, their grades and the skills gained. Standardised transcripts are intended to provide a consistent record across providers, modules, qualifications and learners, which can aid credit transfer across different providers and qualifications; and employer recognition during recruitment.

Providers identified that effective recruitment strategies included engaging with existing networks, advertising and social media campaigns, one-to-one communications with learners, dedicated marketing staff and a focus on accessibility. Some providers also considered the legacy of their marketing campaigns, creating materials that they could use in the future, such as case studies and student profiles. Factors that helped with recruitment were:

- focused messaging on modules offering a shorter, lower-intensity option and the opportunity to “try before you buy”
- employers being committed and offering support to employees that participate in modular learning
- including interviews or a readiness assessment as part of the recruitment process to support alignment between learner expectations and course demands

Nevertheless, overall, the demand raising funding and activities did not achieve the learner engagement that providers had anticipated when they submitted proposals to the MAP. At the point at which the interim report was written, 7 MAP providers had not yet delivered module learning and there was a gap between anticipated and actual learner numbers. Around half of provider senior leaders expressed some dissatisfaction with the number of learners achieved. While some felt they did the best they could with the funding available for demand raising, others said, on reflection, they would do more or approach recruitment differently in the future to generate more engagement in modules.

Most stakeholders identified recruitment and retention for modular learning as the most challenging issue. Barriers included generally low awareness of modular learning and HTQs, low engagement and support from employers, and learner apprehension around academic expectations and a return to education. In some cases, delays to delivery or decisions to integrate learners within existing full-programme courses further impacted potential learner interest and retention.

Providers, module leads and learners who participated in the MAP most commonly identified employed individuals as the type of learner most suited to MAP modules. As such, learners were primarily motivated by career-related goals, including gaining knowledge and skills relevant to current roles and seeking to improve overall employability. Other suitable target groups identified by stakeholders included those looking to retrain or return to work, and parents or guardians caring for children.

A key enabler of learner participation was the accessibility of modular learning. Learners, module leads and provider senior leaders cited factors such as local and low-cost learning, flexibility to study a single module, and evening or online options. Challenges to undertaking modules included the time required for completion, balancing the

commitments of the module with other employment or personal responsibilities, and difficulties with some course content or undertaking assessments.

Both providers and learners indicated there was mixed awareness about the LLE, with notable gaps in clarity and communication. Several module leads thought the LLE was not well understood. Whilst most learners understood they could progress from individual modules to full HTQ courses, almost half were unclear about the effect that studying their module had on their future entitlement.

Impact and effectiveness

Learners were very positive about aspects of MAP module delivery, reporting strong satisfaction with the frequency of lessons, course duration, delivery methods, learning content, and the quality of teaching. In a small number of cases, learners were concerned about their ability to attend evening sessions, delivery styles, content alignment and quality of delivery. Recommendations for improvement included faster enrolment, clearer course previews and stronger academic support (e.g. writing, researching or referencing).

Provider senior leaders and module leads also generally regarded MAP module delivery as effective, highlighting accessibility and alignment to learner and employer needs. Many praised the modular format for its ability to accommodate adult learners, particularly those in employment or with caring responsibilities. Challenges for delivery related to accommodating mixed cohorts with differing levels of previous education and employment experience, supporting formal learning expectations, and issues with internal systems for registering learners on standalone modules.

Whilst respondent numbers were small at this stage, there was some evidence that MAP modules can positively contribute to further learning and employment outcomes for those who have completed them. Most learners who had started their planned next steps (including completing a full HTQ course, undertaking an apprenticeship or starting a new job) at least partially attributed their achievements to participating in the MAP module. Learners also reported a range of personal and professional benefits, including career progression and increased confidence, upskilling, supporting re-engagement with education, and assisting future careers.

Summary of interim findings

Evaluation Aim 1 - demand raising activities:

Providers identified some effective approaches for demand raising for the MAP modules. Nevertheless, demand raising activities did not always achieve the learner engagement

anticipated by providers in their submitted proposals for the MAP. While some providers felt they did the best they could with the funding available, others recognised they could have done more to raise demand, including more proactive and targeted campaigns.

Evaluation Aim 2 – facilitators and challenges:

Factors that made implementation and delivery easier included funding, building on existing HTQ frameworks and employer networks and a focus on modular learning. The greatest challenge was recruitment to modules. Emerging lessons included:

- **Pre-enrolment information:** The importance of providers offering clear information, advice and guidance for potential learners prior to enrolment to help address some of the challenges associated with recruitment and retention.
- **National awareness raising:** The potential for clearer messaging and awareness raising at national level focused on developing understanding amongst providers, employers and learners regarding HTQs, modular learning and the LLE.
- **Credit transfer system:** The need for national or regional approaches to manage and administer an approach to credit transfer to support the more accessible offer intended through LLE.

Evaluation Aim 3 - impact:

There was some early evidence (though in small numbers) that MAP modules can positively contribute to further learning and employment outcomes.

Evaluation Aim 4 – employer engagement:

Some providers engaged employers in the MAP to support the choice and content of modules, and the recruitment of learners. Some found it more difficult to engage employers, being hindered by employers' unfamiliarity with HTQs and the modular approach, and some uncertainty around employer funding issues.

Introduction

This report outlines interim findings from the evaluation of the Modular Acceleration Programme (MAP), undertaken on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE). The MAP aims to accelerate supply and support delivery of individual modules of higher technical qualifications (HTQs).³ The findings of the evaluation will support the provider readiness and stakeholder engagement activities ahead of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) implementation in January 2027 (with learners able to enrol from September 2026).

The Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE)

The LLE aims to broaden access to high-quality, flexible education and training. It will transform the existing post-18 student finance system into a single funding system, replacing higher education (HE) student finance loans and advanced learner loans.

From September 2026, learners can apply for LLE funding for courses and modules that will start from January 2027 onwards. The LLE will allow individuals to develop and acquire new skills and qualifications at a time that is right for them. This system will enable individuals to access finance flexibly over their working lives to train, retrain or upskill.

From launch, learners will be able to use their LLE entitlement for⁴:

- full courses at [level 4 to 6](#), such as degrees, technical qualifications, and designated distance-learning and online courses
- modules of high-value technical courses (HTQs) at level 4 to 5
- modules from full level 6 qualifications – for example, degrees – that align to:
 - priority skills needs
 - the government's industrial strategy

Eligible learners will be able to access a tuition fee loan for up to 4 years' worth of study and a maintenance loan to cover living costs. The LLE will not affect learners who are already [eligible for targeted support](#) and the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) will also continue to be available for those studying 30 or more credits per course under the LLE.

Certain subjects which address priority skills needs and align with the government's industrial strategy, such as medicine degrees for example, will qualify for additional

³ [Higher technical education reforms - GOV.UK](#)

⁴ [Courses included under the LLE - GOV.UK](#)

entitlement. This means that existing graduates who have already drawn down all their fee support can also access priority additional entitlement to retrain in an eligible subject.

Learners must start repaying their loan when they have left their course and earn more than £25,000 a year before tax, the amount repaid being 9% of an individual's gross salary over the repayment threshold. Learners will continue making repayments unless the loan is repaid in full, their earnings drop below the repayment threshold (£25,000), or 40 years have passed, at which point any remaining balance will no longer need to be repaid.

Higher technical qualifications (HTQs) and modular learning

HTQs were introduced in 2020, as part of a set of reforms to higher technical education (HTE) designed to improve the quality of training on offer, encourage more people to engage in HTE and introduce a national approval scheme. They provide an alternative to apprenticeships or degrees, with various existing qualifications brought together under the HTQ⁵ umbrella, including higher national certificates, higher national diplomas and foundation degrees.

A number of funding programmes for learners and providers have supported the launch of HTQs. The HTE skills injection fund⁶ made £32 million available for providers to purchase specialist equipment and perpetual software licence costs, alongside up to £10 million in resource for delivery of HTQs. Further to this, a higher education short course trial⁷ contributed £2 million of funding to providers to develop short courses from existing modules of degree courses.

An evaluation of the Higher Education Short Course (HESC) trial⁸ revealed that providers were unclear on target markets for short courses, short course development was more complex than anticipated, and the lack of funding for marketing meant that providers had to meet these costs from existing budgets. Furthermore, learners were uncertain about the value of credits obtained by undertaking a short course.

Other recent research and stakeholder consultations have documented a range of issues and challenges with HTE, HTQs, and module-based learning, including that learners often face financial barriers to participating in higher education⁹.

⁵ [Higher Technical Qualification \(HTQ\): an introduction - GOV.UK](#)

⁶ [Higher technical education skills injection fund 2022 to 2023: information for successful applicants - GOV.UK](#)

⁷ [Evaluation of the higher education short course trial - Office for Students](#)

⁸ [Higher Education Short Course \(HESC\) trial](#)

⁹ [HE reform consultation analysis research report.pdf](#)

The Modular Acceleration Programme (MAP)

The MAP is a two-year grant-funded programme that supports the development and delivery of individual modules of HTQs. It provides up to £5 million of new funding to Office for Students (OfS) registered providers who already offered, or were planning to offer, full HTQs over the academic years 2023/24 and 2024/25. The funding is specifically for demand raising activities for MAP, capped at £20,000 per provider, and the tuition fees for learners taking part.

The modules delivered via the MAP were derived from a parent Level 4 or 5 HTQ and are stackable with remaining modules from the same course ('parent course') to make up a full HTQ qualification. Modules must also be a minimum of 30 credits and a maximum of 40 credits, and must be delivered in England. MAP funding supported modules in the following occupational areas:

- business and administration
- construction, design and build
- digital
- education and early years
- engineering and manufacturing
- health and science

MAP funding covers tuition fees for students participating in the modules and, as such, they do not have to pay back these funds (as they would as part of LLE). However, the amount of entitlement that MAP learners have under LLE in the future will be reduced by the amount of funding used for these MAP modules.

Provider selection process

A group of 25 OfS registered providers were selected to be part of the MAP initially over the academic years 2023/24 and 2024/25. A delay in the expected launch for the LLE, alongside slower than anticipated take-up for MAP modules across the providers involved, led to an extended timescale for delivery to December 2025 (an additional 4 months).

Providers initially bid for a minimum of 60 credits up to a maximum of 240 credits, to be delivered as individual, stackable modules of 30 to 40 credits. As such, the minimum they could deliver was two 30-credit modules and the maximum was eight 30-credit or six 40-credit modules. Providers were not limited to one 'credit size' for all modules as part of their bid. Providers were then selected based on their ability to deliver against the programme requirements, value for money and geographical spread across England. Out

of the 39 bids submitted, 25 were successful, and those 25 planned to offer 108 modules to learners, 88 of which were 30-credit modules and 20 were 40-credit modules.

Methodology

This process evaluation of the MAP seeks to enhance DfE's understanding of:

- the facilitators, issues and challenges providers face in developing modular learning and recruiting students to undertake modular study
- students' awareness of and appetite for this way of learning

To avoid delays during the 2024 General Election period, when contract commissioning was not possible, the evaluation was initially set up and launched in-house by DfE's LLE Policy Analysis and Evaluation team. York Consulting LLP (YCL) were commissioned to continue the evaluation from February 2025. The evaluation aims were to investigate:

- **Aim 1:** The impact of demand raising activities on encouraging take up of modular learning.
- **Aim 2:** Any implementation facilitators and challenges experienced by providers and how challenges were overcome.
- **Aim 3:** The impact of modular study on learner choices and experiences, and short-term outcomes.
- **Aim 4:** How providers engaged with employers on the development of modular courses.

A detailed evaluation framework (summarised in Table 1) incorporates these aims and sets out the core research questions addressed by the evaluation within 6 overarching themes as follows:

- participation drivers and influences (providers and learners)
- delivery of modular learning
- impacts and effectiveness
- facilitators and challenges
- future provider plans
- implications and lesson

Table 1: Evaluation framework

Participation drivers and influences	Delivery descriptive	Impacts and effectiveness
• Providers: Why providers participate in MAP: ○ Why apply for MAP funding? ○ Why not apply for MAP funding? • Learners: Insight into learner demand for modular provision ○ Why learners take modular courses: ▪ Motivations for undertaking ▪ Facilitators & challenges when deciding to participate in modular learning ▪ Facilitators and blockers of undertaking modular learning ○ Extent learners understand how participating in the MAP affects future entitlement to their LLE ○ Extent that the availability of grant funding influenced learners' decisions to undertake modular learning ○ How did learners hear about MAP funded modules?	• Promotion: Demand raising activities developed by providers ○ Programme-funded demand raising activities undertaken ○ Additional (non-MAP funded) activities undertaken ○ How identified and targeted activities toward intended audience • Developing modules: Insight into the development, decision-making and delivery of HTQ modules ○ Selecting modules and units ○ Recruitment activities ○ Extent providers engaged employers in module offer and content ○ How providers engaged employers in development of modular courses • Participants: Characteristics of learners accessing modules of HTQs: ○ How many learners started/completed & characteristics (age, gender, employment status etc) ○ Types of learners (types of study, student background characteristics, personal circumstances) ○ Reasons for non-enrolment or non-completion	• Promotion/recruitment: Impact of demand raising activities: ○ Extent students aware of the demand raising activities ○ Extent demand raising activities funded by MAP encouraged take up ▪ Effectiveness in reaching the intended audience ▪ Student perceptions - extent demand raising activity influenced decision-making ▪ Provider perceptions - demand raising activities most effective? • Learners: Impact on learner choices, experiences and short-term outcomes ○ Opened higher technical learning to those not otherwise undertaken ○ Learner plans without the MAP offer ○ Satisfaction with course curriculum and delivery ○ Short-term outcomes achieved (e.g. promotion or moved to a new sector) ○ Learners' plans for employment/study after course completion ○ How anticipated completion of the module will support their future career ○ Number of learners who believe completion of module helped achieve career goal

Source: MAP Evaluation Plan

Facilitators and Challenges	Future Provider Plans	Implications and Lessons
• Facilitators: Successes and facilitators for provider participation in the MAP: ○ How easy/difficult to recruit suitable learners to modules ○ Demand raising activities reaching intended audience ○ How easy/difficult to develop & deliver HTQ/MAP modules? ○ Successes/facilitators for engaging employers in determining/developing modules • Challenges: Challenges for/limitations of provider participation in the MAP: ○ Demand raising activities reaching intended audience ○ Development and delivery of HTQ/MAP modules ○ Challenges for engaging employers in determining/developing modules • Overcoming challenges: Extent and how challenges overcome for: ○ Delivering demand raising activities ○ Reaching intended audience ○ Development and delivery of HTQ/MAP modules ○ Engaging with employers	• Plans: Plans for modular HTQ learning in the future • Adaptations: How are providers planning to adapt their demand raising and marketing strategies in the future? • Facilitators/challenges for offering future modular HTQ modules	• Demand: Understand demand (target audience), drivers & influences • Experiences: Stories and case descriptors: ○ Impacts/experiences of learners, short-term outcomes, planned destinations ○ Demand raising and recruitment activities ○ Module development, engaging employers • Wider programme: continued development and implementation: ○ Clarifying the target market ○ Funding/targeted promotion and recruitment activities ○ Supporting module development, flexible delivery, institutional approval ○ Facilitating employer engagement • Future provision: What works well? Overcoming challenges/limitations? ○ Demand raising activities ○ Development and delivery • Engaging employers in modular courses

Source: MAP Evaluation Plan

Phases of activity

The evaluation involves a mixed-method approach including:

- scoping and design
- collation and analysis of management information
- surveys with learners and module leads
- in-depth interviews with a range of stakeholders
- analysis and reporting

Scoping and design (February to May 2025)

Following a series of scoping consultations with DfE stakeholders, the evaluation team further developed and defined the evaluation framework. Building on those initially developed by the in-house DfE team, research tools were drafted and agreed. A summary of the research tools developed is provided in Table 2 (together with a description of each of the stakeholder types).

Table 2: Evaluation research tools

Research tool type	Stakeholders	Stakeholder description
Topic guide	Provider senior leaders	Senior leaders from the 25 organisations participating in the MAP
Topic guide	Enquiry provider senior leaders	Senior leaders from organisations that showed some interest in the MAP but did not progress with an application
Topic guide	Module leads	Staff within the 25 provider organisations that take a lead on designing and delivering the MAP modules within their organisation
Topic guide	Learners	Individuals that undertook the MAP modules
Topic guide	Enquiry learners	Individuals that showed an interest in or applied for a MAP module but did not sign up
Topic guide	Strategic stakeholders	DfE staff responsible for the LLE policy and MAP
Surveys	Learner starter survey Follow-up and combined surveys Module lead survey	-
Communication materials	Provider senior leaders Module leads Learners and enquiry learners	-

Source: MAP evaluation data

A robust communication strategy was also developed to support engagement of the 25 provider organisations in the evaluation. This included:

- introductory emails to provider senior leaders
- virtual meetings with key provider staff to describe evaluation purpose and anticipated stakeholder involvement, with an initial focus on clarifying data sharing expectations and timescales
- check-in meetings to clarify and explore further data sharing needs
- provision of informed consent information to support engagement of module leads and learners.

Elements of this approach were included as part of an original intention to enable effective participation of delivery providers in the evaluation. However, additional elements included virtual meetings and check-ins to ensure access to more robust and complete management information from providers. Whilst information was previously provided to the DfE team, the quality and consistency of this data required some improvement and cleansing before it could be used for analysis or engagement of learners and module leads in the fieldwork.

Management information (April to July 2025; September to December 2025)

This phase involved the collation and analysis of management information (MI) pertaining to the delivery of MAP modules and learners participating, as illustrated in the table below.

Table 3: MI data collected by stakeholder type

Stakeholder type	Data collected
Provider	Module names, module start and end dates, learners per module (and details below), number of non-completions, module lead contact details.
Learners	Provider name, module name, cohort, module start and end dates, learner number, end status, reason for not completing, short term outcomes, name, email address, phone number, age, gender identity, ethnicity, previous qualification level, employment status, disability status, caring responsibilities, current occupation sector and socio-economic classification.
Enquiry learners	Provider name, module name, status (enquiry made/application made), module start and end dates, reason for enquiry, reason for withdrawal/not continuing with application, name, email address, phone number, age, gender identity, ethnicity, previous qualification level, employment status, disability status, caring responsibilities, current occupation sector and socio-economic classification.

Source: MAP evaluation data

The data received from providers was collated, cleansed and organised to support data analysis and the distribution of learner and module lead surveys. Following the evaluation team's direct engagement with providers to share and improve data consistency, overall data quality improved and was generally robust after some cleansing and organisation. Nevertheless, some gaps and inconsistencies remained, for example, 6 records lacked demographic data, and a further 26 lacked contact details. A small number of duplicates were identified and removed during processing.

Data analysis for this interim report entailed descriptive statistics to describe patterns of take-up, attendance, learner characteristics and performance analysis to understand take-up, completions, and withdrawals.

Further rounds of data collation and analysis would be undertaken from September 2025 onwards to capture evidence regarding new module starts and learner take-up in the new academic year (prior to the end of the MAP in December 2025).

Surveys (rolling programme April 2024 to June 2026)

Online surveys are being distributed on a rolling basis to learners undertaking the MAP modules and provider module leads delivering the provision.

Learner surveys

Learner surveys include:

- Starter surveys distributed close to the beginning of their modular learning. This includes a small number distributed by the in-house DfE team plus those that had begun but not yet completed a MAP module by June 25.
- Follow-up surveys to be distributed five months after individuals have completed their module.
- Combined surveys distributed to those who began and completed modules before March 2025. It would also be distributed 5 months after module completion to learners who finished between April and June 2025. These surveys were designed to capture both starter and follow-up feedback from learners; and were necessary for the cohort of learners that had been supported prior to YCL being commissioned to conduct the evaluation.

Learner survey questions cover themes including:

- details of the module studied and how they came across the programme
- reasons and motivations for modular study
- understanding the effect of the modules on LLE
- previous education, employment and future plans
- satisfaction with modules
- outcomes achieved as a result of modular learning and learner demographics

A summary of the response rates in August 2025 is detailed in Table 4.

Table 4: Learner survey response rates

Survey type	Number of surveys distributed	Number of responses received	Response rate
Starter surveys (including those distributed by in-house DfE team)	109	48	44%
Combined surveys	121	32	26%
Total	230¹⁰	80	35%

Source: MAP evaluation data by July 2025

Future rounds of learner surveys would include:

- follow-up surveys to those learners who completed starter surveys (sent 5 months after completing their modules)
- combined surveys for a) learners who finished modules between April and June 2025 and b) those who were sent but did not complete a starter survey
- new starter surveys to learners who begin modules from September 2025

Module lead survey

Module leads responsible for designing and delivering modules within the MAP providers were invited to participate in the survey¹¹. Topics explored through the survey included:

- the nature of the modules offered
- how they heard about MAP
- factors influencing provider engagement with the MAP
- demand raising activities delivered and recruitment effectiveness
- learner motivations and characteristics
- module development
- delivery effectiveness
- employer engagement
- standardised transcripts
- future plans for modular HTQ delivery

A total of 12 module leads completed surveys distributed by the DfE in-house team in 2024. An additional 30 module leads were sent a survey by the evaluation team in June

¹⁰ The remaining 122 combined surveys (for those completing modules between April and June 2025) will be distributed from September 2025 onwards.

¹¹ All module leads that the evaluation team had contact details for (as supplied by the provider organisations) were invited to participate in the survey.

2025. Of these, 10 had been completed to date. Across both routes, 22 surveys had been completed out of a possible 42 module leads currently delivering MAP modules. Additional responses were expected following a reminder in September 2025. Furthermore, new module leads associated with modules starting in September would also be engaged.

In-depth qualitative research (May to July 2025; September 2025 to March 2026)

In-depth semi-structured interviews were undertaken with the range of stakeholders involved in developing, delivering and participating in the MAP. They allowed for the exploration and understanding of motivations and experiences of engaging (or not) with the MAP, recruitment practices, development and delivery plans, demand raising activities, successes, facilitators, challenges, and future plans.

Table 5: Qualitative data collected by stakeholder type

Stakeholder type	Interviews planned (number)	Interviews completed (number)
Strategic stakeholders	5	5
Provider senior leaders	25	22 (16 YCL & 6 DfE)
Enquiry providers	15	3
Module leads	30	2
Learners	30	4
Enquiry learners	30	7

Source: MAP evaluation data by July 2025

Most MAP provider senior leader interviews had been undertaken at the time of writing this interim report. Those remaining were scheduled from Autumn 2025 onwards and were not included in this interim report.

Some interviews with enquiry providers, module leads, learners and enquiry learners were completed, but many were planned for the next phase of the evaluation, beginning in Autumn of 2025 and ending Summer 2026. Feedback from these stakeholders is included in this interim report, but please note that these represented a small number of views and may not be representative of all stakeholders.

Analysis and reporting (September 2025, August 2026)

The purpose of this interim report was to provide insights and learnings as early as possible ahead of the LLE launch to support policy development and modelling. The

report collated and analysed initial findings across the evidence sources. It was structured in accordance with the overarching evaluation framework, covering the core themes and issues identified at the outset. A final report would be due in August 2026, following completion of all the evaluation fieldwork.

Delivery of the MAP

This section drew primarily on the management information collated from MAP providers to give an overview of the delivery of the MAP up to July 2025. This included comments on the number and types of modules developed by participating providers, take-up of the available modules and non-completion rates, and characteristics of those participating in modular learning.

MAP modules offered

Between April 2024 and July 2025, 18 providers selected and delivered MAP modules across a diverse range of sectors. This was across 6 occupational areas:

- digital (11 providers)
- business and administration (7 providers)
- construction, design and build (7 providers)
- health and science (6 providers)
- engineering and manufacturing (4 providers)
- education and early years (1 provider)

A further 7 providers initially selected for the MAP faced delays to starting module delivery. This was most commonly linked to recruitment challenges. Of these 7 providers, 4 confirmed they did not plan to deliver any modules before the end of the MAP (December 2025).

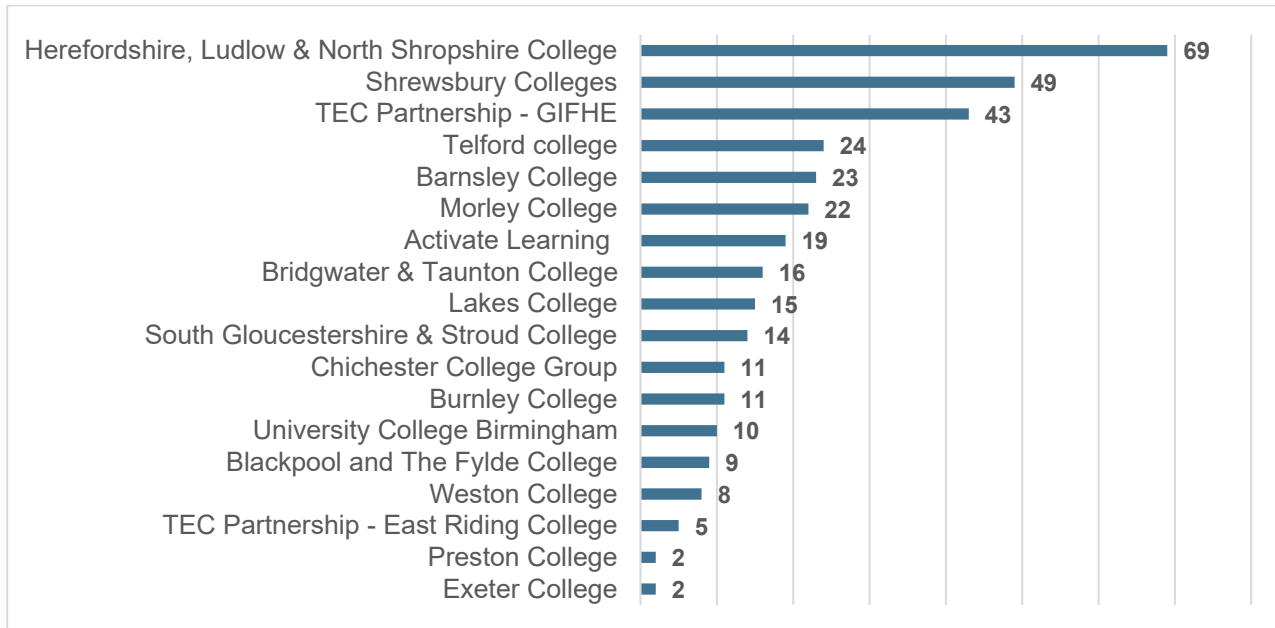
As of July 2025, 14 providers expected to either continue delivering MAP modules or begin new delivery in September 2025.

As part of their original application to the MAP, providers initially submitted proposals including estimates of the number of modules and learners they expected to achieve. Amongst the 25 providers selected in early 2024, a total of 108 modules were proposed which were expected to reach up to 1,800 learners. By the end of July 2025, around half (50) of these modules had begun delivery with a total anticipated learner take up of 494.

Learner take up of MAP modules

Across the 18 providers and 50 modules, a total of 352 learners had enrolled on a MAP module between April 2024 and July 2025 (Figure 1). This represents 70% of the 494 anticipated by providers for these 50 modules in their initial proposals for the MAP.

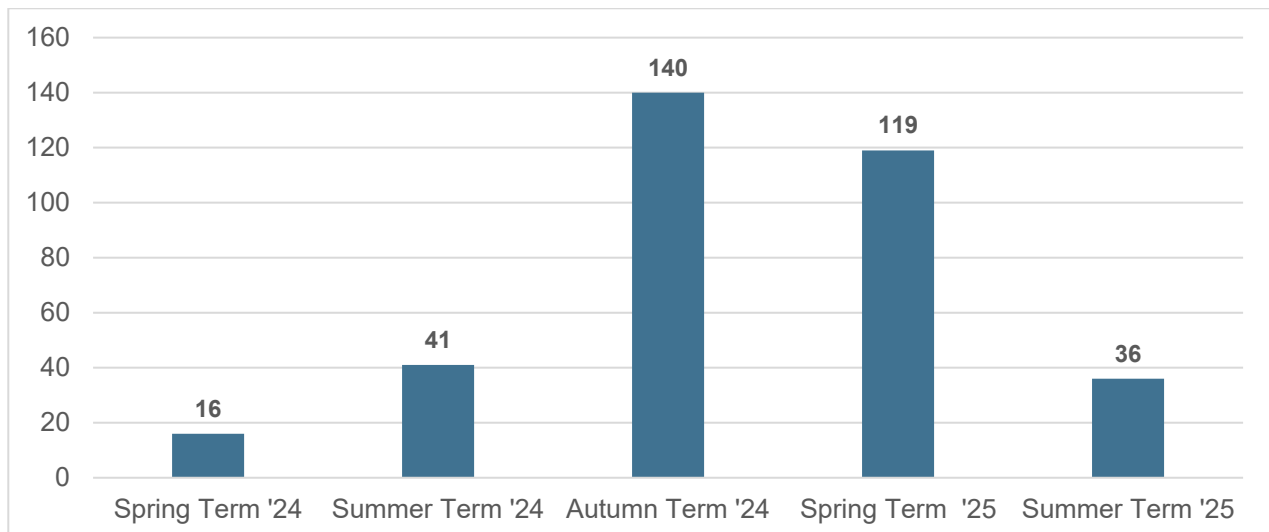
Figure 1: Number of MAP learners by provider



Source: MAP learner data by July 2025, n=352

Learner enrolment varied significantly across the delivery period (Figure 2), with notable peaks and troughs in module start dates. The periods of highest enrolment were in Autumn 2024 (140 learner enrolments) and Spring 2025 (119).

Figure 2: Number of MAP learners by module start date



Source: MAP learner data by July 2025, n=352

Modular delivery took place across 7 of the 9 government regions (Table 6). The West Midlands had the highest number of learners enrolled (152), followed by the North-East (43) and the South-West (40).

Table 6: Learner enrolment by region and provider

Region	Provider	Learner numbers
West Midlands	University College Birmingham, Telford College, Shrewsbury Colleges Group, Herefordshire, Ludlow & North Shropshire College	152
North-East	TEC Partnership - GIFHE (Grimsby Institute)	43
South-West	Weston College, Bridgwater & Taunton College, South Gloucestershire & Stroud College, Exeter College	40
North-West	Lakes College, Preston College, Blackpool and The Fylde College, Burnley College	37
London and South-East	Chichester College Group, Activate Learning, Morley College	52
Yorkshire & Humber	Barnsley College, TEC Partnership - East Riding College	28

Source: MAP learner data by July 2025, n=352

Learner non-completion

Direct data on learner non-completion from providers was generally unavailable. As such, the module lead survey, the combined learner survey and provider interviews were used to draw indicative insights, though these must be interpreted with caution due to small sample sizes and limited representativeness.

Around half of the module leads surveyed reported that some learners had not completed their modular learning. Reasons cited included workload, family commitments, and a mismatch between expectations and module delivery. From the combined learner survey around one-sixth of learners did not complete their module (5 of 32). A few provider senior leaders highlighted non-completion as a concern, often linked to study intensity, academic readiness, and personal circumstances. Some identified that clear information, advice, and guidance before enrolment would be important for addressing some of these challenges for future delivery.

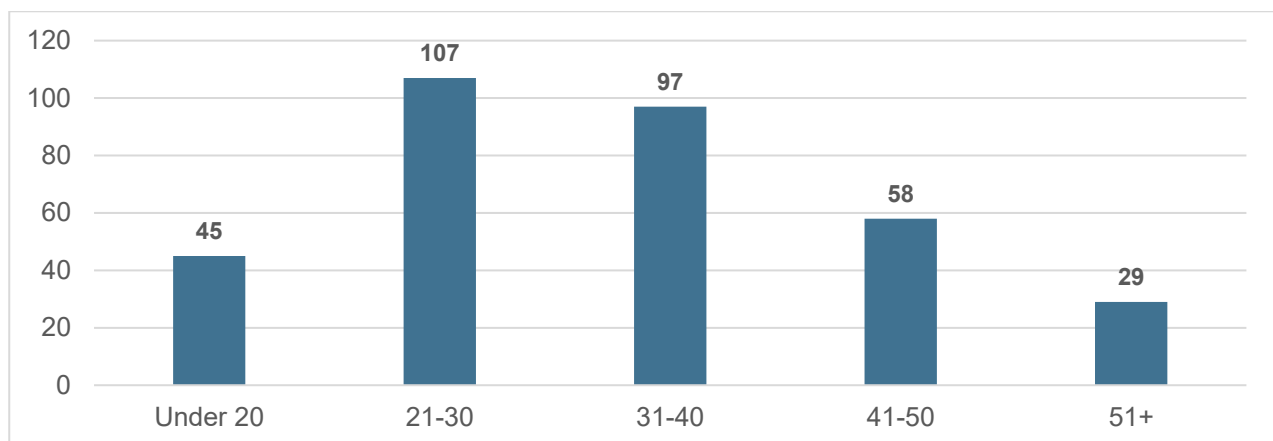
Learner characteristics

Demographic data was available for a total of 350 participating learners. However, for most categories there was a relatively high number of learners for which either data was not provided or the 'preferred not to say' category was selected. In the following analysis,

therefore, proportions reported relate to the total number of learners for which data was available (i.e. excluding the 'not provided' and 'prefer not to say' categories).

The data on enrolled learners by age (Figure 3) showed that the largest group was aged 21 to 30 with 107 learners (32% of 336 for which data was available), followed by aged 31 to 40 (97 learners, 29%), and aged 41 to 50 (58 learners, 17%). There were 45 learners (13%) under 20, while the older age group 51+ included 29 learners (9%). This age profile differed from that for all Level 4 and 5 entrants in England in AY2023/24 which had a higher proportion of under 20 entrants (34%) and lower proportion of entrants aged 21 to 40 (25% aged 21 to 29 years and 21% aged 30 to 39 years)¹².

Figure 3: Number of MAP learners by age



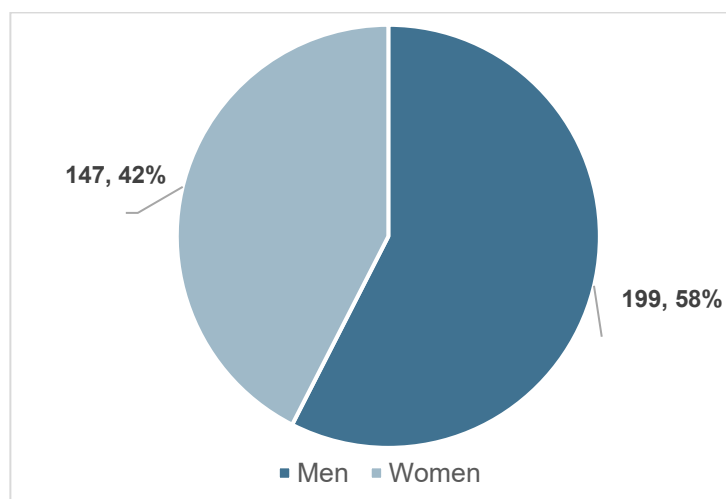
Source: MAP learner data by July 2025, n=336 (excludes 'not provided' and 'prefer not to say')

Data regarding gender (Figure 4) showed that 199 learners identified as men (58% of 346 for which data was available) and 147 as women (42%). This was similar to the national gender profile for Level 4 entrants in England in AY2023/24 (54% men and 46% women) but different to that for Level 5 entrants, more than half of which (55%) identified as women and 44% identified as men.¹³

¹² Source: [Higher Level Learners Data](#) - Level 4/5 entrants to OfS recognised HE in England, AY2023/24

¹³ Source: [Higher Level Learners Data](#) - Level 4/5 entrants to OfS recognised HE in England, AY2023/24

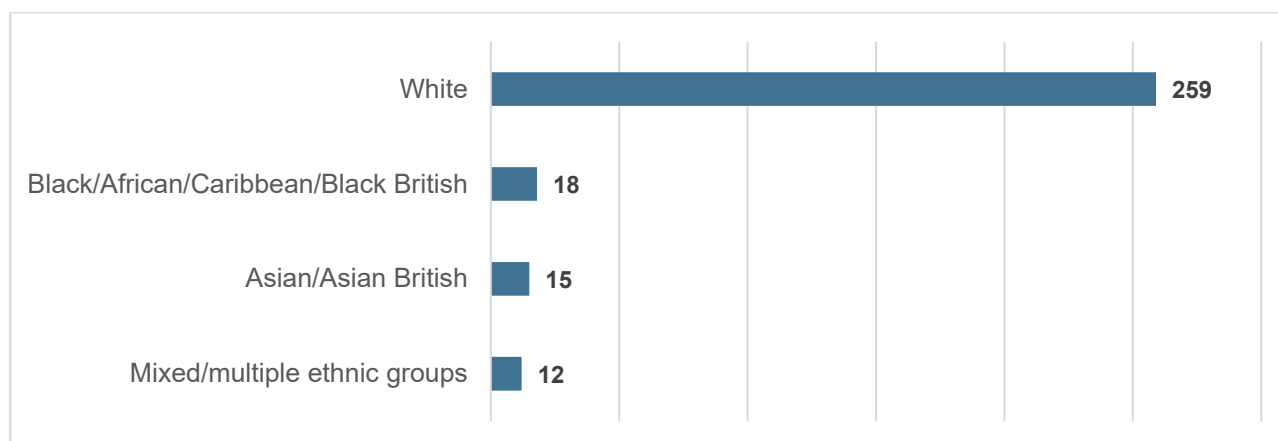
Figure 4: Number of MAP learners by gender



Source: MAP learner data by July 2025, n=346 (excludes 'not provided' and 'prefer not to say')

Ethnicity data (Figure 5) showed that the majority of learners identified as 'White', accounting for 259 individuals (85% of 304 for which data was available). Other represented groups included 'Black / African / Caribbean / Black British' with 18 learners (6%), 'Asian / Asian British' with 14 learners (5%), and 'Mixed/multiple ethnic groups' with 12 learners (4%). The ethnicity profile, where known, of HE Level 4 and 5 entrants in England in AY2023/24 included a comparatively lower proportion of those that identified as 'White' (68%) and higher from other represented groups (12% Asian, 10% Black, 4% Mixed, 2% other).¹⁴

Figure 5: Distribution of enrolled learners by ethnicity



Source: MAP learner data by July 2025, n=304 (excludes 'not provided' and 'prefer not to say')

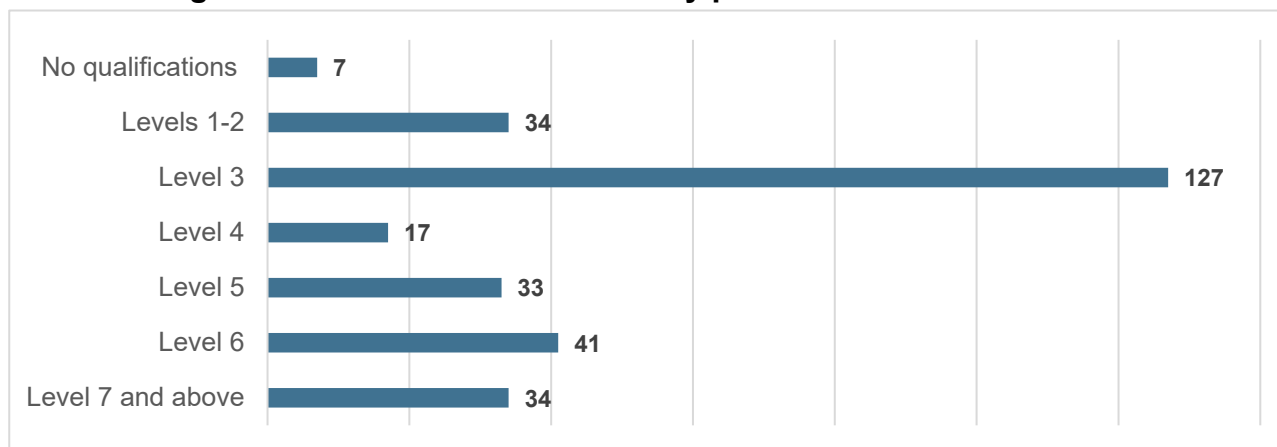
Previous qualification data¹⁵ (Figure 6) showed that the most common level amongst learners was Level 3, held by 127 learners (43% of 293 for which data was available).

¹⁴ Source: [Higher Level Learners Data](#) - Level 4/5 entrants to OfS recognised HE in England, AY2023/24. 3% of this group had unknown ethnicities.

¹⁵ This data derives from enrolment forms, reported on by providers. The self-reporting of previous qualifications may affect the accuracy or quality of this data.

Other notable groups included Level 6 (41 learners, 14%), Level 5 (33 learners, 11%), and Level 7 and above (34 learners, 12%). Level 3 was also often the highest level of prior qualification for HE Level 4 and 5 entrants in England in AY2023/24, though at a higher rate of 53%. A lower proportion of the national Level 4 and 5 entrants had prior qualifications of Level 4, 5 and 6 (16% in total compared to 37% for MAP learners)¹⁶.

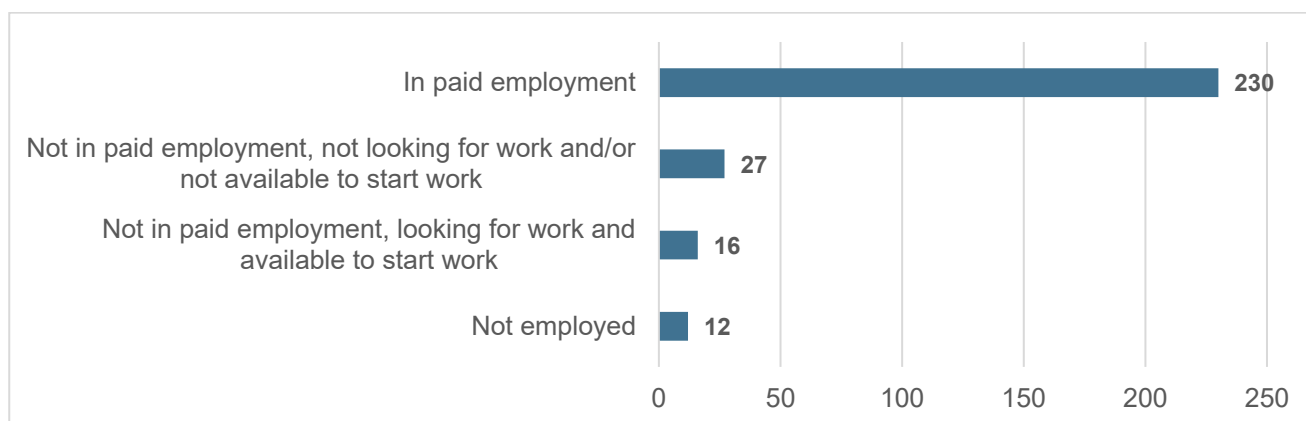
Figure 6: Distribution of learners by previous level of education



Source: MAP learner data by July 2025, n=293 (excludes 'not provided' and 'prefer not to say')

Employment data revealed (Figure 7) that the majority, 230 learners, were in paid employment (81% of 285 for which data was available). Other employment categories included 27 learners (9%) not looking or unavailable for work, 16 learners (6%) looking for work and 12 learners (4%) not employed.

Figure 7: Number of MAP learners by employment status



Source: MAP learner data by July 2025, n=285 (excludes 'not provided' and 'prefer not to say')

Other data on learners' demographics showed:

- **Disability:** 242 learners (82% of 295 for which data was available) reported no disability, while 53 learners (18%) indicated they had a learning difficulty, disability,

¹⁶ Source: [Higher Level Learners Data](#) - Level 4/5 entrants to OfS recognised HE in England, AY2023/24. Previous highest attainment for this group at Level 4, 5, and 6 were 6%, 3%, and 7% respectively.

or health need. This was the same as the profile for HE Level 4 and 5 entrants in England in AY2023/24¹⁷.

- **Caring responsibilities:** 100 learners (79% of 127 for which data was available) reported no caring responsibilities. A total of 27 learners (21%) reported some form of caring responsibilities, including childcare, caring for a family member or close relative, or both childcare and other caring responsibilities.
- **Occupational sector:** Education-related fields were the most represented, with 38 learners (24% of 159 for which data was available), followed by construction (21 learners, 13%), engineering and manufacturing (20 learners, 13%), business, administration, legal, and finance (15 learners, 9%), and health and science, including care services (14 learners, 9%). A wide range of other sectors were also represented in smaller numbers.
- **Socio-economic classification:** The most commonly reported category was 'lower managerial and professional occupations', with 50 learners (34% of 145 for which data was available), followed by 'intermediate occupations' (29 learners, 20%), and 'lower supervisory and technical occupations' (18 learners, 12%). Smaller groups included 'routine occupations' (14 learners, 10%), and 'higher managerial & professional occupations' (11 learners, 8%). A few 'small employers and own account workers' and 'semi-routine occupations' were also mentioned. This socio-economic profile for MAP learners included higher proportions of those from 'lower managerial and professional', 'intermediate' and 'lower supervisory and technical' occupations than for all UK permanent address entrants in English providers for all HE entrants more generally in AY2023/24 (14%, 7% and 3% respectively). There was also a lower proportion of those from 'higher managerial and professional occupations' (17% for this wider HE learners groups in AY2023/24 in England)¹⁸.

¹⁷ Source: Higher Level Learners Data - Level 4/5 entrants to OfS recognised HE in England, AY2023/24. 82% of this group having no known disability, and 18% with a self-reported disability.

¹⁸ Source: [HESA](#): UK permanent address full-time entrants at English providers, for all HE courses (Please note – this includes all HE courses and not just Level 4 and 5 courses)

Provider plans and module delivery

This section outlines stakeholder reflections on the factors that influenced provider engagement with the MAP and modular learning, the processes involved in setting up and delivering modules, employer engagement, and future plans for HTQs and modular learning. It drew on evidence from the module lead survey and across interviews with provider senior leaders, module leads and enquiry providers.

Provider drivers and influences

Provider senior leaders and module leads identified some key drivers for their participation in the MAP. These commonly related to recognition of the value of modular learning, the opportunity to develop modules in preparation for LLE and progressing delivery in practice in a supported way.

“We were very keen on LLE and think there is a good opportunity for us. We had a few courses that had HTQ accreditation so [we thought] we may as well take advantage of this.” – *Provider senior leader*

“I think it’s a good initiative, it will allow mature students to come back into education.” – *Provider senior leader*

Provider senior leaders

- Half of provider senior leaders interviewed were keen to take advantage of the opportunity to trial modular learning and strengthen their existing HTQ offer.
- Several had been interested in offering modular provision for a while and the funding available allowed them to explore this possibility.
- Several already had plans as part of their strategy to deliver modularised Level 4 and 5 provision.
- Those that worked in areas of high deprivation felt that modular provision would support upskilling the local population.
- Some felt that their participation in the MAP might stimulate learner demand for modular learning and engagement in higher education.

Source: Provider senior leader interviews, n=22

Module leads

- More than three-fifths of module leads (14 of 22 that completed a survey) reported that their education provider was motivated by a general belief in modular learning.
- Over two-fifths (9 of 22) said their reason for signing up was to prepare for the LLE.
- Over two-fifths (9 of 22) said that they were motivated by seeing how delivery of HTQ's work in practice.

Source: Module lead survey responses, n=22

Providers identified the funding available (both for module tuition fees and demand raising activities) as an important motivating factor for them to get involved with the MAP.

“It seemed a nice way to be able to get some money into front load staffing to prepare for the new quals coming forward and push that for us.” – *Provider senior leader*

Not only did this support provide marketing and development costs, but it also gave them a useful hook with which to engage employers (offering them an opportunity to upskill their staff without needing to financially commit to training).

“Funded opportunities are always a benefit; it's something employers would find useful to explore without a financial risk.” – *Provider senior leader*

The 3¹⁹ enquiry providers interviewed (those who showed interest in, but did not bid to take part in MAP) cited the following influences on their decision not to engage with the MAP:

- their previous experiences with similar programmes (for example, the Office for Students short course trial), which were regarded as administratively burdensome, with low student recruitment, high cost and financial clawbacks
- a perceived increase in competitiveness among HE institutions
- concerns about administrative workload and uncertainty around student uptake.

Participating MAP providers were also apprehensive about learner demand, anticipating that recruitment of learners onto modules would be their main challenge.

¹⁹ Please note that enquiry provider interview numbers are low, and, as a result, views represented should be seen as indicative.

“I knew from another college who had done a modular learning pilot that there was a small uptake, so knew this would be a challenge.” – *Provider senior leader*

“I was aware of the challenges faced by the short course pilot. Getting interest from students was a major challenge, with only 10-20% of target learners met.” – *Provider senior leader*

Module design and development

Curriculum teams were typically responsible for selecting and designing modules, ensuring they were relevant to local skills priorities and learner readiness. This autonomy allowed for thoughtful integration of professional qualifications and practical content, which enhanced the perceived value of the modules. Commonly, local labour market needs and priorities influenced decisions regarding which modules to offer and how to develop them. Around half (12 out of the 22) of the module leads surveyed said that local skills demand helped them decide which HTQ module to offer. Several module leads and provider senior leaders also highlighted that knowledge of their area’s labour market made the creation of modules easier. Delivery of modules was often aligned to Local Skills Improvement Plans priorities to address skill shortages and upskill staff.

“[We] wanted to address the skills gap noted in industry. [...] colleagues are well aware of the issues faced by the sector. Growth in education is fed by colleagues’ passion and their understanding of what the industry lacks.” – *Provider senior leader*

Most provider senior leaders and module leads were either neutral about the ease of process or they found module set-up relatively straightforward.

Starting from existing HTQ modules contributed to the ease of module development - most module leads (21 of 22 that completed a survey) and half of provider senior leaders said that the modules already being part of an HTQ made it easier to develop standalone modules. The usual timescales required for validating new modules also meant that providers often used already validated modules, including bundling existing units together to achieve the 30 or 40 credits. Where modules were infilled into existing HTQ cohorts, delivery was smoother and more cost-effective, suggesting that integration with existing provision was a viable model for future expansion.

Nevertheless, stakeholders also highlighted that the rigidity of HTQ frameworks, particularly the requirement to use pre-approved modules, limited the ability to tailor content to specific employer or learner needs. Validation processes, especially when involving external universities, were often described as administratively burdensome and inflexible, making it difficult to adapt assessments or delivery methods.

“The two generic modules we offer are probably not of interest [...] to employers [...]. We cannot tailor it. We lost the flexibility [...] with the HTQs, because they have a rubber stamp from IFATE [...]. We can't change the 8 units. We've talked to our awarding body and even raised it up higher, but no success in trying to communicate.” – *Provider senior leader*

“We [...] considered creating a bespoke 30 credit module, but validation would take too long.” – *Provider senior leader*

Stakeholders also discussed other considerations for module design related to accessibility for learners (and employers), mode of delivery, and record of learning.

Accessibility

Some provider senior leaders said that taking time to consider the needs of learners and employers when designing delivery methods was important.

“We carefully considered how to deliver [...], identifying the right method of delivery for people who have caring responsibilities, different education backgrounds, unemployed, or leaving prison.” – *Provider senior leader*

Alongside the rigidity of HTQ frameworks and validation processes, some stakeholders said that internal constraints also limited their ability to offer flexibility to potential learners in relation to, for example, the timing of module unit delivery or access to specialised staff. Some providers said modules were only viable by infilling learners into existing HTQ groups. In some cases, this limited the flexibility of the offer (for example, to existing class times and dates) and may have further affected overall recruitment.

“Timetabling was difficult and had to be in the evening to infill the MAP students with our Higher Education cohorts.” – *Module lead*

“We need specialists and due to the pay scales of what a college can offer vs industry, there is a massive gap. Someone could be offered 3 to 4 times more than what we could offer to teach.” – *Module lead*

It was sometimes challenging to decide whether to deliver the modules face to face or online. Several provider senior leaders said online delivery was sought after by their learners and it worked well in practice. In a few cases, remote delivery was unfeasible within the planned timeframe of delivery, while for others, online and evening delivery were thought to be more advantageous for the employers in their area. Some opted for a blended approach. In one case there were non-completions due to students not being able to commit to the face-to-face elements of delivery.

“On the website we advertised as blended delivery, however, students that lived geographically quite far away pulled out because they could not commit to the in-person time required. Going forward we must describe it more clearly.” – *Provider senior leader*

Standardised transcripts

There appeared to be some uncertainty and lack of consistency amongst MAP providers in relation to the provision of standardised transcripts²⁰. Whilst several module leads (8 of 22 that completed a survey) said they had provided standardised transcripts, a similar amount (9 of 22) said they had not. Equally, only one-fifth of learners (6 of 27 that completed a survey and had completed a MAP module) reported receiving a standardised transcript, while more than half (15) were unsure whether they had received one.

Most provider senior leaders indicated that their transcript process did not differ from their other provision. The same was said for awarding certificates.

The introduction of a template for standardised transcriptions was a commitment made by the government as a result of responses received from a consultation on the LLE. The DfE developed a transcript template for MAP providers to test and issue to learners. Amongst those providing standardised transcripts there was limited awareness of the DfE template.

Credit transfer

Most provider senior leaders said that their institution would permit credit transfers internally or with other providers as long as it was for the same HTQ. They said that existing recognition or accreditation of prior learner (RPL or APL) processes would apply. In a couple of cases, provider senior leaders said that whilst RPL was in place for the same awarding body, learners would also be required to demonstrate their knowledge against learning outcomes. They said this would be challenging to do on a large scale, requiring a lot of resource.

Provider senior leaders were less clear about how credit transfer could work more generally across different institutions, awarding bodies, qualifications, levels or sectors. This impacts on the potential for learners to mix and match modules to achieve a qualification.

“We haven’t got a combined award, for example 30 credits for sport and 30 credits for health and fitness. [...] you can’t mix and match

²⁰ Transcripts provide a record of what a learner has studied, their grades and the skills gained. Standardised transcripts are intended to provide a consistent record across providers, modules, qualifications and learners, which can aid credit transfer across different providers and qualifications; and employer recognition during recruitment..

different modules that don't equal anything and learners would end up spending their entitlement.” – *Provider senior lead*

Provider senior leaders also highlighted some current uncertainties about awarding responsibilities where credit transfers did take place, and specifically which provider would grant the award if a learner had more than one provider. Some felt this should be the last provider the learner finished the qualification with.

Employer engagement

Most stakeholders reported that employers were engaged to some degree in the selection, content, advertisement, recruitment or delivery of the MAP modules. The summary below outlines some of the ways that providers involved employers.

“It’s good to have 1:1 engagement so we can ask what they need from certain staff so we can tailor what is offered to them.” – *Provider senior leader*

“Sometimes a learner cohort is all from one employer so you tailor learning to that employer, other times when they're from a mix, the learning needs to be more transferable.” – *Provider senior leader*

Choice and content of modules

- Providers commonly asked employers about the skills and training most useful to them and this shaped the choice of the modules and content that featured in the modules.
- In some cases, if providers anticipated that a cohort of module learners could be filled via a single employer, then the content could be homed in to focus on employer needs.

Source: Provider senior leader interviews, n=22

Promotion and recruitment to modules

- The most engaged employers, who are willing and able to invest in the training of their staff, were more likely to release their employees to take part in the modules.
- Most module leads (17 of 22 that completed a survey) said their institution had engaged with employers to some degree, most commonly to help recruit learners that would benefit from modular learning.
- Several module leads also said that employers actively promoted the modules to their employees.

Source: Module lead survey responses, n=22

Most module leads (18 of 22 that completed a survey) said that small to medium sized employers were most suited to getting involved with the modular approach. While bigger companies might find it easier to release staff and accommodate the time required by learners to complete coursework, they often prefer or have the resources to train internally.

“Small businesses were more enthusiastic about taking advantage of the training. Larger companies aren't as bothered as they just train in-house.” – *Module lead*

Feedback from provider senior leaders and module leads identified a range of facilitators and challenges for effective employer engagement.

Employer engagement facilitators

The most effective ways of engaging employers included making use of existing employer networks and direct contact (in person or remotely). Some providers benefited from pre-existing networks and employer input, which supported module planning and learner recruitment. Many had established employer networks within key sectors – they commonly made up advisory panels or employer forums and fed into the decisions around which modules to run. Some providers had direct links with bodies such as the Department of Work and Pensions or Chambers of Commerce that they used to seek out advice and support.

Providers also often attended events or had in-person meetings with employers and, in some cases, providers would have a rolling programme in place where employers came to speak to learners about their respective industries. One-to-one engagement with an employer worked well in both encouraging employers to engage with modular learning

and tailoring module content to meet their needs. These activities were all part of general provider practice of employer engagement for other modes of learning outside of HTQs.

“We worked with the employer on modular delivery, selecting preferred modules, offering clear explanations and information about HTQs, modular provision, terminology and delivery models.” –
Provider senior leader

Employer engagement challenges

Nevertheless, several module leads felt that employer engagement, both to support module planning and learner recruitment, was difficult. Employer engagement is often contingent upon their understanding of the offer and how it can fill their skills gaps.

Less than two-fifths of module leads (8 of 22 that completed a survey) identified employer unfamiliarity with the MAP and its modules as a barrier. Others reported a lack of interest from employers (six of 22), limited relationships with employers, and the time required to engage employers.

Some module leads (6 of 22) highlighted that employers are still struggling to understand HTQs, particularly with the various acronyms used. Those interviewed emphasised the time it takes for employers to understand and get accustomed to new qualifications. Some provider senior leaders also referenced the need for a national campaign to raise awareness.

“More needs to be shared about HTQs to dispel misunderstandings and mistrust.” – *Provider senior leader*

“Once employers understand modular, they love it.” – *Provider senior leader*

Many smaller employers and sectors also faced constraints associated with releasing staff for modular learning, even if funded, as this would impact operations. Equally, there was some uncertainty from some employers around free funding, levy contributions, and repayment structures.

Future plans

The majority of provider senior leaders said they would offer HTQs and modular learning in the future. Module leads expressed optimism about the future of MAP provision. Over three-quarters (15 of 22 that completed a survey) said their institution was somewhat or extremely likely to offer HTQ modules again. Stakeholders reiterated the value of HTQ modules in providing a great opportunity for learners to engage with HE study and to respond well to employer needs.

“They are an extremely valuable option to reenergise and to empower people to re-enter education, or to upskill/ reskill.” – *Module lead*

“We recognise that many 16 to 18 learners lack confidence and may not see themselves as ‘good enough’ for higher-level study, so we are developing modules to build confidence and aspiration.” – *Provider senior leader*

Some provider senior leaders identified ways they planned to expand upon what they had delivered to date, including:

- running additional modules within the industries they have already focused on
- expanding into other industries that the providers had not yet delivered an HTQ in (those mentioned included Early Years, Catering and Hospitality, Health and Science, Accounting and Finance and Marketing and Procurement)
- developing modules from degree programmes to generate further interest from learners

Drawing on lessons from the MAP, many of the providers interviewed also planned to revise their approach to module development and delivery in the future. Suggested improvements included more flexible timetabling, stronger promotion to industry, and enhanced support for learners with limited prior education, particularly those returning to study after a break:

- **Advertising:** A few provider senior leaders said they would change their approach to advertising modules, to focus more on successful methods (discussed in more detail in the next section) and targeting certain types of learner.
- **Mode of delivery:** Some were considering whether online or block delivery would be more convenient for the learners and their employers.

“[We are] considering an intensive block mode of delivery, but that would depend on student employment status.” – *Provider senior leader*

- **Shorter modules:** A few providers thought offering 15-credit instead of 30-credit modules might be more attractive to learners, especially those who have been out of education for a while and are not used to that level of study. One module could be an opportunity for learners to “*dip their toe*” into HE.

Stakeholders also referenced national context and external factors that future delivery of modular learning is dependent on:

- **Funding:** Some provider senior leaders said they would only deliver modular learning in the future if additional funding was available. It was anticipated that the change planned through LLE would need some time to adjust to.

“It’s a big change for institutions in terms of how it will be financed. There will be a struggle with the jump off jump on model rather than doing traditional three-year/ one-year courses.” – *Provider senior leader*

- **Local Skills Plans:** For some provider senior leaders, the industries and modules chosen must adhere to local skill needs and employer demands.

“[We] want it to be responsive to industry. Our staff will speak to employers to work out which modules work for them and to set that up.” – *Provider senior leader*

- **Clarity around pathways and credit transfers:** Some providers were uncertain about how credit transfers would work between providers (as outlined above) and felt that a central system of administration was needed to manage this with a regulating body to oversee it.

“Every HE institution will need to amend their RPL/APL admissions policy in prerequisite requirements to incorporate LLE. It does require all institutions to deliver and accept MAP. It needs to be national.” – *Provider senior leader*

- **National awareness-raising campaign:** Several provider senior leaders highlighted the need for national campaigns to raise awareness of and provide information for modularised learning, the LLE and HTQs more broadly.

“Not sure I’ve seen any advertising for modular learning, and I didn’t know about the pilot. During open evenings in our region, people are more aware of T levels. I am not sure if job centres were promoting these courses and [...] I don’t think I’ve seen a national campaign for modular learning.” – *Provider senior leader*

Recruitment and learner engagement

This section outlines how providers used the demand raising funding to encourage learner take up of the MAP modules. It captured stakeholder perceptions of the effectiveness of these activities, the challenges for recruitment and factors influencing engagement in modular learning. Evidence was considered from provider senior leaders, enquiry providers, module leads and participating and enquiry learners.

Demand raising and engagement activities

In recognition of some of the known challenges for recruiting to modular learning, providers were granted up to £20,000 each as part of the MAP. This was to deliver bespoke demand raising activity which included information and guidance for learners and prospective learners.

The demand raising activities delivered by MAP providers included:

- employer engagement
- building an online presence
- awareness raising with potential learners

Some providers also considered the legacy of their marketing campaigns, creating materials that they could use in the future, such as case studies and student profiles.

Demand raising activities delivered by MAP providers

Employer engagement

- Business events – half of module leads (11 of 22 that completed a survey) said they had spoken at or engaged employers through business events.
- Direct employer contact – 8 of 22 module leads communicated with employers over the phone to promote modules and encourage take up from their staff.

Online presence

- Website development – half of module leads (11 of 22) developed their existing provider website to advertise MAP modules. In some cases, this allowed providers to track interest by having an area on the portal where learners could submit their details.
- Social media – over two-fifths (9 of 22) of module leads posted about MAP modules on social media. This included paid targeted ads (such as Google Ads) which focused on reaching specific groups of learners. Platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn were most frequently mentioned.

Awareness-raising with potential learners

- Events – half of the provider senior leaders said they had spoken at open days, careers fairs and enrolment events.
- Direct contact – 7 of 22 module leads promoted and provided information about modules over the phone.
- Campaigns – several provider senior leaders and module leads said they had developed audio and audio-visual campaigns for local radio stations and TV.

Source: Provider senior leader interviews; n=22; Module lead survey responses; n=22

Provider senior leaders and module leads commonly said that engaging with employer networks and contacts was effective in supporting learner engagement with the modules. This included speaking at business events, engaging with employers over the phone and visiting employers in person. In some cases, this entailed understanding and responding to employer needs through module design, which in turn supported recruitment to the modules.

“We used the funds well to gain the information that we needed that contributed to either understanding which modules we needed to change or how they wanted it structured” – *Provider senior leader*

Of those approaches outlined above, those considered most effective were:

- online engagement (posting on social media, advertising on external websites, or on the provider website)
- advertising on billboards and through flyers, or through TV or radio
- engaging with learners over the phone

Some provider senior leaders highlighted particular features of their recruitment approach that contributed to effectiveness, including:

- **focus on accessibility** - advertising the modules as short courses, highlighting flexibility, low-level commitment and showcasing career pathways available.

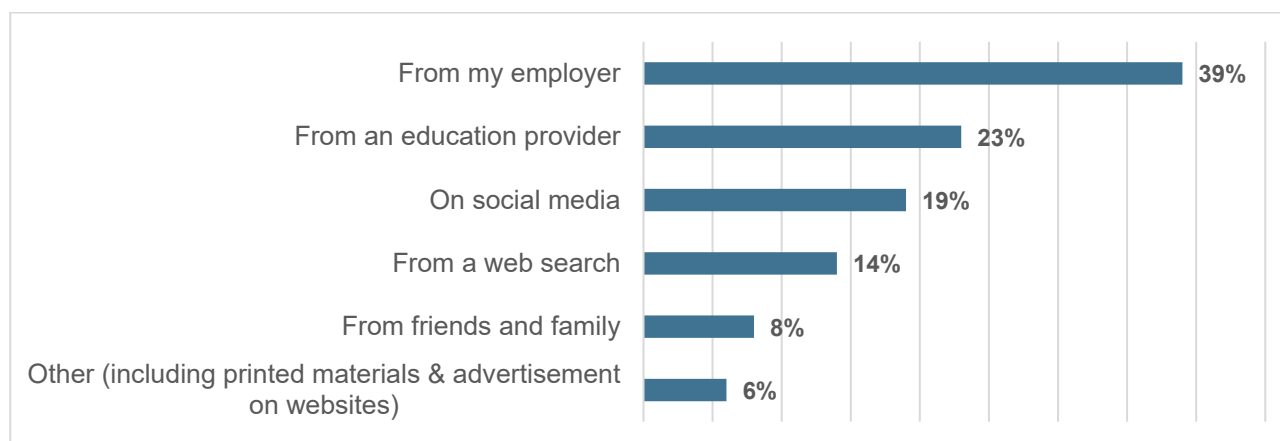
“We were hoping that offering as part of our suite of provision would suit learners who just want to trial HE learning or not commit too much time but help them get on the skills escalator.” – *Provider senior leader*

- **dedicated staff** to support marketing and business development.

“What was critical was having someone to take charge of it from a business development aspect, identifying where to target.” – *Provider senior leader*

Feedback from learners broadly aligns with provider views on the most effective demand raising activities. The most commonly reported source of information about modules studied was via employers, followed by education providers and social media (Figure 8).

Figure 8: How learners heard about the MAP module they are studying



Source: Learner survey data by July 2025, n=80.
% of all starter and combined survey respondents
Multiple choice so percentages do not add up to 80

Nevertheless, it is clear that in several cases, the demand raising funding and activities were not effective in delivering the learner engagement anticipated for modules when MAP providers submitted their proposals. As referenced in earlier sections, 7 of the 25 MAP providers had not been successful in recruiting learners for any modules and four did not plan or expect to recruit any before the end of the MAP (December 2025).

Around half of provider senior leaders expressed some dissatisfaction with the number of learners achieved. While some felt they did the best they could with the funding available for demand raising, others said, on reflection, they would do more or approach recruitment differently in the future to generate more engagement in modules. They identified the potential for more proactive and targeted campaigns in the future.

Recruitment and retention

Most module leads identified recruitment and retention to modules as challenging. Under four-fifths (17 of 22 completing a survey) said that recruitment was somewhat or extremely difficult. Several provider senior leaders also said that converting interest into enrolments was tough.

Several MAP providers delayed the launch of their modules due to low interest from potential learners. Some found it difficult to convert interest into applications and hoped that more time spent recruiting would yield more applications. However, providers considered some modules to be unviable given the low level of interest and they decided not to run them.

The main barriers to recruitment, cited by provider senior leaders and module leads, were low awareness of modular learning and HTQs, learner apprehension of

assessments and a return to education, the commitment required by providers, and delivery delays.

Challenges for recruitment

Awareness:

Over half of module leads (12 of 22 completing a survey) said learners were unaware of modular learning, while 8 said that learners were unaware of HTQs.

“We knew it would be hard to explain what the different qualifications and methods of learning are to learners.” – *Provider senior leader*

Academic expectations:

Two-fifths of module leads (nine of 22) reported that learners were apprehensive about assessments and seven highlighted learner fears around returning to education. The enquiry learner interviews highlighted challenges with academic expectations, particularly referencing and citation, which led to frustration or withdrawal of interest in the programme.

“A key barrier to completion was reluctance to undertake assessments. Initial engagement was good, but drop-off occurred around assessment time for many learners.” – *Provider senior leader*

“The main challenge in my opinion was (with some students) the lack of preparedness to engage with academic writing. We had a dedicated tutorial to help with this, and also our HE support staff. Unfortunately, due to limited available time for those who were working (60% of cohort) the take up of the support was not great.” – *Module lead*

Commitment:

Several module leads (6 of 22) indicated that the commitment of modules was challenging for learners, either in terms of the size of the units (30 credits or more) or practical factors (living costs, time commitment, travel requirements, other responsibilities). In addition, several provider senior leaders were concerned that bundling units together (to achieve the 30 or 40 credit bundle) had deterred potential learners who perceived the bundle as too much of a commitment.

Source: Provider senior leader interviews, n=22; Module lead survey responses, n=22

Challenges for recruitment (*continued*)

Delayed delivery:

Enquiry learners reported delays in course start dates, unclear enrolment processes, and scheduling conflicts as common barriers.

“When I initially expressed interest, the college was only collecting expressions of interest and had not yet opened formal enrolments. At that point, I had a window of availability and motivation - I was eager to begin learning immediately and integrate new skills into my freelance work. Rather than wait, I took matters into my own hands and began self-directed learning.” – *Enquiry Learner*

In-filling:

Due to low interest from learners or the size of the cohort, some providers integrated module learners within existing classes (infilled) for full-time programmes. This limited the time of year or day that the learners could participate in the modules, which they felt impacted learner interest.

“It would be good to avoid infilling because the best experience for a learner is not to go in a class that already exists. We suggest moving towards running bespoke classes, which was what we've done with our other short courses that were under the OfS trial.” – *Provider senior leader*

“[...] if you were to run it as a module on its own in the evening that would be brilliant, but when you have small numbers, realistically you would have to run it alongside a full-time course.” – *Provider senior leader*

Source: Provider senior leader interviews, n=22; Module lead survey responses, n=22

It is clear that awareness, academic expectation, commitment, delayed delivery, and in-filling also impacted retention on the MAP modules. The small number of learners that had not completed their module (5 of 32 that completed a combined survey) often commented that they had been unable to cope with the intensity and time required for completion of the modules.

“I received my first assignment [...] and couldn't dedicate time to it. My employer didn't want to reimburse for the time despite the fact that they recommended it to me.” – *Learner not completing module*

Other reasons for non-completion related to module content differing from original expectations, mode of learning, or dissatisfaction with teaching quality.

“The people teaching us were outside of their area of expertise. The delivery was quite dry and dull. They struggled. It's not their fault. They're not qualified teachers [...] delivering to a full room of qualified teachers.” – *Module learner*

For those learners that were employed, the level of support received from their employer also impacted their engagement and retention in modular learning. In most cases learners reported no additional support from their employer (38 of 66 (58%) learner survey respondents that were employed). Nevertheless, in some cases employers supported and encouraged learners, with 12 employed learner respondents (18%) receiving paid time off to attend class and 11 (17%) given funding to support their studies. The enquiry learners interviewed revealed mixed employer attitudes: some encouraged participation, while others offered little flexibility or recognition.

Provider senior leaders, module leads and learners identified a number of modular learning features that they felt helped mitigate some of the risks associated with learner non-completions and promoted learner engagement:

- **The use of interviews or readiness assessments** as part of the recruitment process resulted in better alignment between learner expectations and course demands.
- **Short courses** were considered to be less daunting for some potential learners who valued the ability to study a single, lower-intensity module. This included for those with additional barriers for example linked to the need to commute, or experiencing mental health challenges.
- The modules allowed learners to engage with a “try before you buy” model before committing to a full HTQ, without having to stop earning a living.

Learner motivations

Learners were primarily motivated by career-related goals. Most learners responding to the survey enrolled in MAP modules to support career progression (63 of 80 completing a survey, 79%). Additionally, 41% (33 learners) aimed to gain knowledge and skills relevant to their current roles, and 36% (29 learners) sought to improve their overall employability.

The learner interviews confirmed these motivations, with participants highlighting the appeal of short, focused learning that could be directly applied in the workplace. One learner described the module as “a stepping stone” to a new career path, while another valued the opportunity to “build confidence and re-engage with education” after a long break.

These motivations were echoed in the enquiry learner interviews, where participants described initial interest being linked to change in careers, re-entering the workforce, or gaining a promotion. Modules in IT, business, and HR were particularly attractive due to their practical and transferable relevance. Most enquiry learners interviewed remained open to modular learning, especially if it was short, flexible, and clearly aligned with their goals.

These perspectives were also reflected in the views of provider senior leaders and module leads regarding the type of learners most suited to MAP modules. The most frequently mentioned included:

- Learners already in some kind of employment, whether that be full-time, part-time or self-employed that were looking to upskill or retrain (identified, respectively, by 14, 10 and 9 of the 22 module leads that completed a survey). This was because the modules were ideal for those looking to upskill in their industries but could not commit to full-time qualifications. Amongst the learners that completed a survey, 83% (66 of 80) were employed.
- Learners who were parents/ guardians caring for children, cited by 10 of 22 module leads that completed a survey. Some module delivery approaches were flexible enough to work around childcare or allow this group to make adaptations to childcare to fit it in their schedules.
- Other suitable groups mentioned included those who had been out of education for a number of years, those wishing to return to work and those wanting to break into other industries.

“A lot of people are looking to retrain; they would be able to fit it in better this way.” – *Provider senior leader*

Accessibility was also a key enabler of participation. From the learner survey, 65% (52 of 80 learners) said the course being local to them made it easier to take part, and 58% (46) cited the absence of tuition fees as a critical factor. The enquiry learner interviews reinforced this, with several stating that free or low-cost access was essential, particularly for those with financial constraints. Most module leads agreed that tuition-free access was the most appealing feature (14 of 22 that completed the survey).

Flexibility to study a single module rather than a full course was also important. Most module leads (14 of 22 that completed a survey) and 46% of learners (37 of 80 that completed a survey) highlighted this feature as a key appeal of the MAP offer.

There was a mix of views on mode of learning with equal proportions of learners (36%) appreciating face-to-face and online learning (each identified by 29 of 80 that completed a survey). Evening and online formats helped some learners balance study with work and caregiving.

Table 7: Practical factors that made it easier for learners to take part in the module

Practical factors	Number of learners	% of all learner survey responses
The course is local to me	52	65%
I didn't have to pay tuition fees	46	58%
The flexibility to study at a lower intensity	39	49%
The flexibility of studying a single module rather than a full course	37	46%
Being able to undertake some learning online	29	36%
Being able to learn face to face	29	36%
I am familiar with the education provider and trust them	28	35%
The facilities available at the education provider	19	24%

Source: Learner survey data by July 2025, n=80.
 % of all starter and combined survey respondents
 Multiple choice so count does not add up to 80

Challenges faced by learners when undertaking modules were similar to those identified by providers that affected recruitment and retention:

- **Time commitment:** 54% of learners (43 of 80 that completed a survey) said overall time commitment for completing the module was difficult for them.
 “Time management, self-confidence, and academic expectations were challenges for me. The college did its best to support me and the flexibility and responsiveness of staff helped mitigate these issues.” – *Learner*
- **Balancing responsibilities:** Some learners found balancing commitments for the module with other responsibilities challenging. 25% of learners (20 of 80 that completed a survey) said this was the case in relation to job/employer commitments and 29% (23 of 80) referenced personal commitments such as childcare or caring responsibilities.

Assessments and course content: 26% of learners (21 of 80 that completed a survey) said that completing assessments was a challenge when taking part in their module, and 10% (8) said they had difficulty with course content. Some learners interviewed expressed frustration with academic expectations and lack of clarity around referencing and assessment standards.

Table 8: Challenges faced by learners when taking part in modules

-	Number of learners	% of all learner survey responses
Time commitment	43	54%
Other responsibilities (e.g. children or caring)	23	29%
Completing assignments	21	26%
Employment commitment	20	25%
Re-engaging with learning after a long time	15	19%
Difficulty of course content	9	11%
Challenges with self-confidence	9	11%
Living & participation (e.g. books, equipment) costs	9	11%
Difficulties in travelling to classes	6	8%
Mental health challenges	7	9%
None	9	11%
Other	4	5%

Source: Learner survey data by July 2025, n=80.
 % of all starter and combined survey respondents
 Multiple choice so count does not add up to 80

Awareness of LLE

Both providers and learners had mixed awareness and understanding of the LLE, with notable gaps in clarity and communication. Several provider senior leaders interviewed said they had actively marketed LLE information through open events, flyers, press releases, and website content. In a small number of cases, providers had offered one-to-one guidance sessions to support learner understanding. These efforts were typically led by admissions or marketing teams. A similar number of provider senior leaders said they found it difficult to explain the entitlement and that they would welcome clearer messaging and support from the DfE around how to effectively relay LLE information to learners.

“The concept is good one but is unknown, and as such not really understood by applicants. A nationwide promotion of LLE would be helpful.” – *Module Lead*

Despite communication and marketing efforts, several module leads (8 of 22 that completed a survey) thought the LLE was not well understood, with low awareness among both learners and staff. While only a subset of provider senior leaders explicitly raised this issue, the theme of limited understanding may well be more widespread, particularly given the mixed feedback from learners (see below) and limited national-level communication identified by provider senior leaders, enquiry providers, and enquiry learners. When asked about whether learners understand the LLE, one provider senior leader said that:

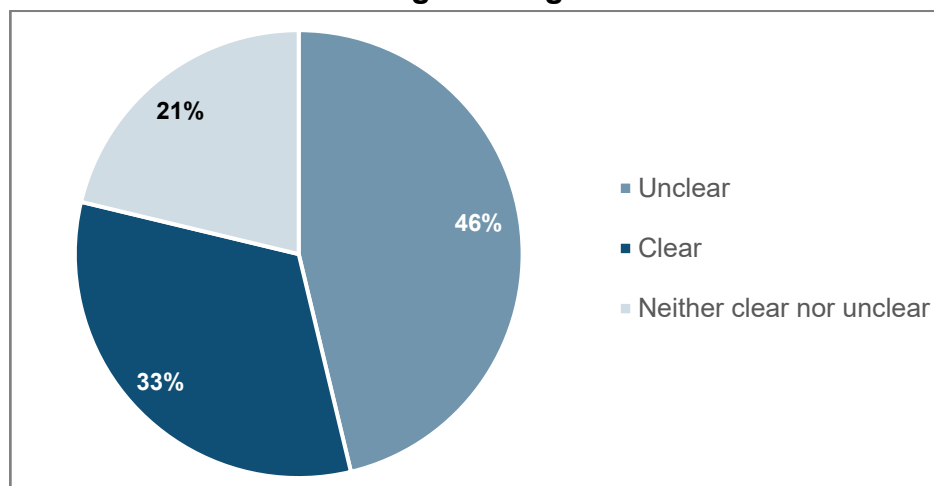
“We explain it when we talk to them and through correspondence during induction, however, I’m not convinced in any way that they fully understand. They hear that they won’t have to pay and that’s it – that’s the message they’re interested in.” – *Provider senior leader*

The figure below summarises learners’ self-reported understanding of how studying their course would affect their LLE. Responses indicate a mixed level of clarity:

- 46% of learners (37 of 80 that completed a survey) reported their understanding as either ‘extremely or somewhat unclear’
- 21% (17 of 80) felt ‘neither clear nor unclear’
- Only 33% (26 of 80) indicated they were ‘somewhat or extremely clear’.

“I didn’t know that we had an entitlement and that was being used up. That wasn’t explained to me prior to doing the course. I don’t know how much the entitlement is in total across your lifetime.” – *Learner*

Figure 9: Learner understanding of the effect that studying this course had on future lifelong learning entitlement



Source: Learner survey data by July 2025, n=80
% of all starter and combined survey respondents

Half of learners (49%, 39 of 80 that completed a survey) did not know they would receive a standardised transcript, and 45% (36 of 80) were unaware that credits could be transferred between providers.

However, most learners (75%, 60 of 80) had some awareness that they could progress from individual modules to a full HTQ. Many learners felt that communication from education providers played a key role in improving clarity: 41% (33 of 80) said their provider helped them understand how their course affected their LLE entitlement. Conversely, 21% of learners (17 of 80) said that nothing helped them understand their LLE entitlement, and 25% (20 of 80) did not respond to whether anything helped them understand.

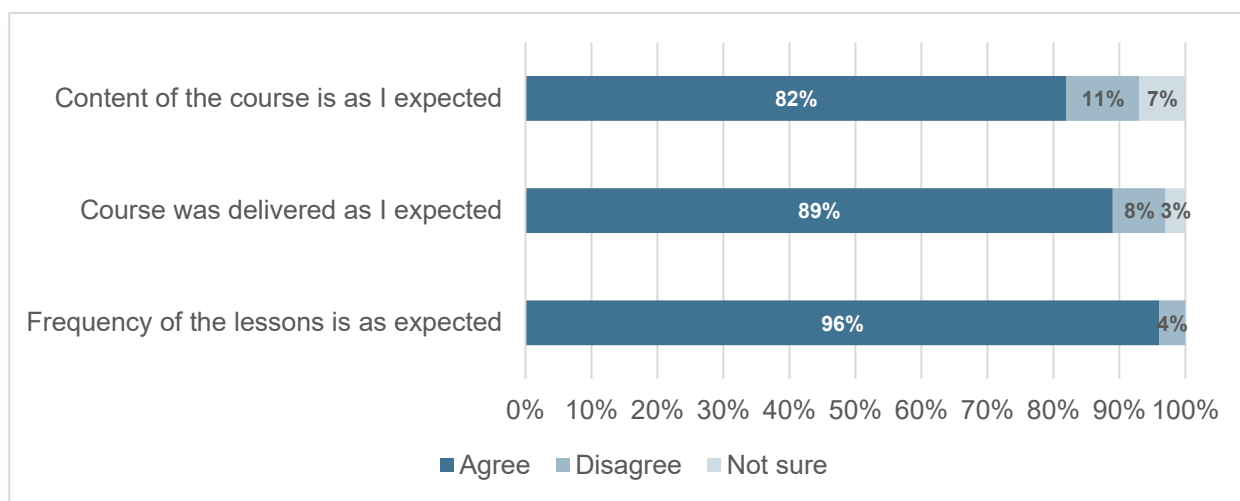
Impact and effectiveness

This section presents findings about the delivery effectiveness of MAP modules and the impact of participating on learner choices, experiences, and outcomes. It drew on the mixed-methods evidence base designed to capture both breadth and depth of learner perspectives. Quantitative data was sourced from the learner (starter and combined) and module lead surveys. Qualitative insights were gathered through interviews with learners, enquiry learners, provider senior leaders and module leads.

Delivery experience and teaching quality

Learner perceptions of MAP module delivery were very positive, with strong satisfaction reported across multiple dimensions. Almost all learners (96% or 68 of 71 that completed a survey) agreed that the frequency of lessons met their expectations and 73% (52 of 71) said they were very satisfied with how often lessons occurred. Similarly, 80% (57 of 71) were very satisfied with the overall course duration, indicating that the modules were well-paced and manageable. Delivery methods, whether online or in-person, were also well-received, with 89% (63 of 71) agreeing that the format matched their expectations and 96% (68 of 71) expressing satisfaction overall.

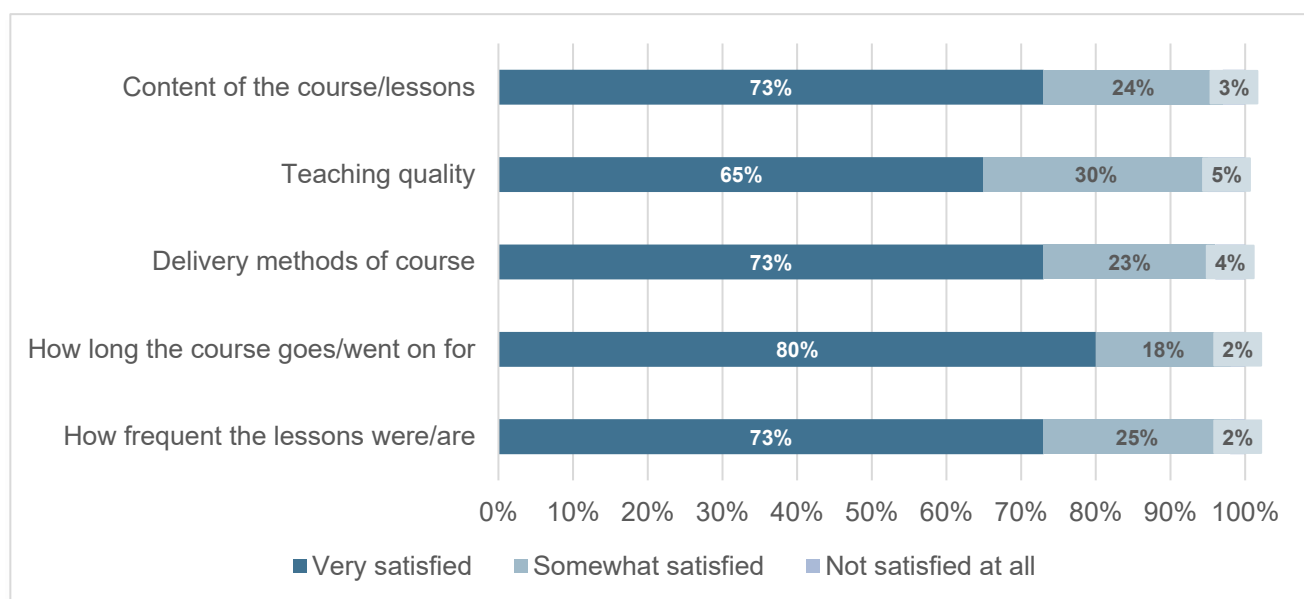
Figure 10: Extent to which MAP module delivery met learner expectations



Source: Learner survey data by July 2025, n=71 (excludes DfE distributed surveys which did not ask this question)

Most learners felt the modules were well-structured and relevant. Positive feedback highlighted engaging tutors, flexible delivery, and useful content. Teaching quality was another area of strength, with 65% (46 of 71) very satisfied and 30% (21 of 71) somewhat satisfied. However, a small minority expressed dissatisfaction, citing issues such as perceived qualification of tutors, poor organisation, and delivery styles that did not align with adult learning principles.

Figure 11: Learner satisfaction with module delivery



Source: Learner survey data by July 2025, n=71 (excludes DfE distributed surveys which did not ask this question)

Qualitative feedback revealed that some learners found the online format challenging, particularly when sessions were scheduled during evenings, which conflicted with work and family responsibilities. Others were positive about evening delivery, explaining it enabled them to keep their learning independent of their employer, which was particularly helpful if they were considering moving organisation. Others felt the course content did not align with the advertised focus, for example, a module titled “Leadership and Management” was perceived as more business oriented.

“The topics exceeded my expectations; however, we do not have qualified teachers delivering the course and this was very obvious in the quality of teaching.” – *Learner*

Enquiry learners recommended faster enrolment, clearer course previews, and stronger academic support for delivery improvements.

Module leads reported a generally balanced experience regarding the delivery of MAP modules. Just under three-fifths of module leads (13 of 22 that completed a survey) described the delivery process as neither easy nor difficult, while a small number selected somewhat easy, extremely easy and somewhat difficult. Several factors contributed positively to the delivery experience of module leads, including prior experience with similar HTQ modules (13 of 22) and previous delivery of the MAP modules (eight of 22). Relevant employment experience and learner motivation were each cited by eight of 22 module leads as supporting effective delivery.

“Some of the students have industry experience and are very useful classroom assets when peer assistance with practical tasks was needed.” – *Module lead*

The delivery of MAP modules was also generally perceived by provider senior leaders as flexible, accessible, and well-aligned with learner and employer needs. Many praised the modular format for its ability to accommodate adult learners, particularly those in employment or with caring responsibilities. Evening and online delivery options were commonly used to increase accessibility, and several providers noted that the shorter, more focused nature of modules helped learners stay engaged.

However, challenges were also evident in some cases. Just over half of module leads (12 of 22 that completed a survey) noted that learners had mixed levels of prior education. Eight of 22 module leads said learners were apprehensive about formal learning, and eight also reported mixed levels of relevant learner employment experience. Some institutions faced challenges with internal systems not being set up to register learners on standalone modules, creating confusion and inefficiencies.

Progression and educational outcomes

In several cases, participation in MAP modules positively contributed to learners' educational trajectories. A total of 25 learners responded to questions about further learning and all either planned or had started to complete a full HTQ. Some were also planning to undertake new modules or other courses. Of those who had already started or achieved further learning (nine learners), most said the MAP module had helped them to progress towards completing a full HTQ.

Provider senior leaders confirmed that MAP modules were effective for upskilling employed learners and often served as a stepping stone into full qualifications. Learners also reported increased confidence and academic readiness.

Employment and career impact

There was some evidence of emerging employment outcomes for those learners who had completed modules. Amongst learners responding to questions about employment (49 learners), one-fifth (11) planned to or had already started a new job or promotion. Nine learners planned to change careers, eight planned to start a new job at their current level and a small number planned to begin an apprenticeship.

A small number had already started these employment changes, all of whom at least partially attributed their achievement to participating in the MAP module. These learners

noted that the module had helped them gain qualifications necessary for advancement or provided relevant industry knowledge that supported their transition.

“I did the module for career development, [...] I was looking at which modules would be beneficial to my role.” – *Learner*

“I hope this will look good on my CV showing that I am proactively upskilling, as well as giving me experience in new areas which will help me decide on a future career path.” – *Learner*

Provider senior leaders highlighted that learner outcomes varied, but many reported positive impacts on progression and confidence. They commonly felt that the MAP modules were particularly effective for upskilling individuals already in employment, offering targeted learning that could be immediately applied in the workplace. Several provider senior leaders shared success stories of learners who gained promotions or transitioned into new roles after completing a module.

Confidence, development and future aspirations

Beyond formal outcomes, learners reported a range of personal and professional benefits. Learners interviewed responded positively to questions about how the module supported their future careers. Many described gaining a deeper understanding of their industry, improved confidence, and readiness to pursue further education or career opportunities. Learners commonly found the course was directly relevant to their current role or aligned with their career aspirations and helped them support others within their workplace through knowledge sharing. Others noted that the module helped them re-engage with education, build academic skills, and feel more prepared for future challenges.

“This has given me the qualifications I need to achieve my desired career progression. It has helped me develop both professionally and personally as it has help build my confidence up.” – *Learner*

Summary of interim findings

This section provides a summary of interim findings in relation to each of the 4 evaluation aims (as set out in the earlier Methodology section).

Aim 1: The impact of demand raising activities on encouraging take up of modular learning

Providers identified some effective approaches for demand raising for the MAP modules. Nevertheless, demand raising activities did not always achieve the learner engagement

anticipated by providers in their submitted proposals for the MAP. While some providers felt they did the best they could with the funding available, others recognised they could have done more to raise demand, including more proactive and targeted campaigns.

Aim 2: Any implementation facilitators and challenges experienced by providers and how challenges were overcome

Stakeholders identified the factors that made implementation and delivery easier included:

- access to MAP funding
- being able to build on existing HTQ modules
- engaging with existing employer networks to support recruitment and delivery of modules
- one-to-one communication with both employers and learners
- a focus on the accessibility of modular learning.

The greatest challenge faced by providers was recruitment to modules. Other factors affecting implementation and delivery included:

- employer and learner understanding of HTQs, MAP and modular learning
- provider uncertainty and a lack of consistency around standardised transcripts and credit transfer
- the rigidity of HTQ frameworks and the administrative burden of validation which inhibited providers' ability to ensure accessibility and tailor to employer and learner needs
- the commitment required and academic apprehension negatively affected learner participation.

Some emerging lessons for consideration regarding the implementation and delivery of modular learning through MAP included:

- **Pre-enrolment information:** The importance of providers offering clear information, advice and guidance for potential learners prior to enrolment to help address some of the challenges associated with recruitment and retention.
- **National awareness raising:** The potential for clearer messaging and awareness raising at national level focused on developing understanding amongst providers, employers and learners regarding HTQs, modular learning and the LLE.
- **Credit transfer system:** The need for national or regional approaches to manage and administer an approach to credit transfer to support the more accessible offer intended through LLE.

Aim 3: The impact of modular study on learner choices and experiences and short-term outcomes

There was some early evidence (though in small numbers) that MAP modules can positively contribute to further learning and employment outcomes. Learners benefited from personal and professional growth, for example, with career progression, confidence, upskilling, re-engagement with education, and assisting future careers.

Aim 4: How providers engaged with employers on the development of modular courses

Some providers engaged employers in the MAP to support the choice and content of modules, and the recruitment of learners. Stakeholder feedback suggests that small to medium sized employers were most suited to support with and participate in modular learning. Some providers found it more difficult to engage employers, being hindered by employers' unfamiliarity with HTQs and the modular approach, and some uncertainty around employer funding issues.



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