Department for Education

Modular Acceleration Programme (MAP) Process Evaluation - Final Report

Research Report

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Executive Summary

This is the final report of the evaluation of the Modular Acceleration Programme (MAP), commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE). The MAP aimed 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 report provides an update to the MAP process evaluation interim report (published in February 2026) including additional data and insight following the end of the programme.

This process evaluation aimed 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 report draws on evaluation data collected between November 2024 and July 2026[1], 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)
- additional qualitative evidence gathered through webinars, provider case studies and learner vignettes.

Delivery of the MAP

Between April 2024 and December 2025[1], 18 providers delivered 65 modules across 6 occupational areas – digital, business and administration, construction, design and build, health and science, engineering and manufacturing, and education and early years. Over this period, 560 learners enrolled on a MAP module[2], with notable peaks in Autumn 2025 (192 learners), Autumn 2024 (140) and Spring 2025 (128).

Modular delivery took place across six of the nine regions of England. Most learners (three-fifths) enrolled at the five providers with the greatest MAP intake. The highest number of enrolments were in the digital (153), business and administration (138) and engineering and manufacturing (98) sectors, and the fewest in education and early years (22).

[1] Although the MAP was delivered between April 2024 and December 2025, evaluation data collection ended 6 months after programme end, in July 2026, to allow some months for learner outcomes to be realised.

[2] The total number of learners reported is based on learner data supplied by individual providers to York Consulting LLP (YCL). Learner totals for some providers differ from the total number of learners claimed as starts from DfE for the MAP. In some cases, this includes learners who started MAP modules but did not complete in time for DfE programme funding.

Most participating learners[3] 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.

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 and responding to the needs of the local population. An important motivator for providers was the funding available, both for module tuition fees and demand raising activities. Both participating MAP providers and enquiry providers (those that had enquired but did not participate in the MAP) had some uncertainty about the potential for learner demand and recruitment to modular learning.

MAP providers considered a range of factors when selecting and designing MAP modules, such as labour market needs, sector suitability, employer and learner needs, and the accessibility of learning. Curriculum teams were commonly responsible for considering accessibility features such as the timing of delivery (evening, weekend, block delivery), mode of learning (face to face, online or blended) and support for learners (readiness assessments, wraparound support).

In terms of steps to support learner mobility (facilitating transfer between courses and providers), there was some inconsistency amongst MAP providers regarding the provision of standardised transcripts[4]. There was also some uncertainty about how credit transfer[5] could work in practice across different institutions, awarding bodies, qualifications, levels or sectors.

MAP providers were either neutral about the ease of process for MAP module set up and delivery, or they found it relatively straightforward. Facilitators included being able to build on existing HTQs and validated modules, and the involvement of curriculum leads to support practical and tailored approaches to meet learner and employer needs.

MAP providers identified some challenges for module design and delivery which had sometimes limited their ability to tailor module content and offer flexibility to potential learners. They included the rigidity of HTQ frameworks and administrative burden of

[3] For which data was available - total numbers vary across the demographic characteristics.
[4] 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.
[5] Credit transfer is a mechanism that allows credit that is conferred by awarding bodies to be recognised, quantified and included towards the credit requirements for a programme delivered by another provider or between programmes offered by a provider.

academic validation processes, the viability of standalone module delivery, provider delivery constraints and meeting mixed learner needs.

Many MAP providers had consulted employers about which modules to offer and the specific skills and training that would be most useful to them. Employers were also commonly involved in promoting MAP modules to their employees. Characteristics, such as employer size and sector, had some bearing on levels of engagement. Small and medium sized employers and those operating in sectors experiencing fast-paced advancements (digital, engineering and manufacturing, health) or more traditionally used to releasing employees (construction, engineering) were identified as the most suited or easier to engage with modular learning.

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 linked to unfamiliarity with HTQs, MAP and modular learning, difficulties with releasing staff for modular learning and uncertainty around funding issues.

Most MAP providers planned to continue offering HTQ modules in the future, reiterating their value in offering opportunities for potential learners and responding to employer needs. Providers identified improvements for their future delivery linked to more flexible timetabling, stronger promotion to industry, and enhanced support for learners with limited prior education or returning to study after a break. Providers also referenced external factors that would influence their future modular delivery, such as funding, national awareness-raising and clarity around pathways and credit transfers.

Recruitment and learner engagement

MAP providers were granted up to £20,000 each to deliver bespoke demand raising activity such as employer engagement, building an online presence and raising awareness with potential learners. Facilitators of effective recruitment included engaging with existing employer networks, promotion strategies focused on the accessibility of modular learning, and dedicated resource for one-to-one communications with prospective learners.

Across all 25 MAP providers, the number of learners engaged was lower than providers had anticipated and had bid for when they submitted proposals to the MAP. MAP providers linked recruitment challenges to a range of factors including:

- low levels of awareness of HTQs and modular learning
- learner apprehension regarding academic expectations and the time or commitment required from them

- delivery constraints which delayed start dates, or limited provider capacity to dedicate resource to converting interest into applications or to offer accessible learning
- employer engagement constraints, sometimes more prevalent for individual providers or in certain sectors
- changing life priorities or new opportunities for prospective learners.

Some provider senior leaders identified learning from their own and other providers' recruitment and delivery activities which would help address the challenges faced. They included more targeted campaigns and accessible delivery plans for modular learning in the future. Some also highlighted the potential for more regional and national awareness raising for HTQs and modular learning.

Learners were primarily motivated to engage with HTQ modules by career goals. This was reflected in the profile of MAP module learners, with most being employed, looking to upskill or retrain. Other types of learner included those who were parents or guardians caring for children and those who had been out of education for many years wishing to return to work.

The accessibility of learning was a key facilitator for engagement with MAP modules. Learners and enquiry learners cited features such as local learning, tuition-free access, short and low intensity modules and mode of learning matched to needs.

Module leads and learners themselves reported mixed levels of awareness and understanding amongst learners regarding modular learning, HTQs, the LLE and progression opportunities. Whilst most learners understood they could progress from individual modules to full HTQ courses, two-fifths were unaware of standardised transcripts and credit transfer processes. A third were unclear about the effect that studying their module had on their future entitlement under the Lifelong Learning Entitlement[6].

Impact and effectiveness

Learners were very positive about the MAP module delivery experience. Most reported that their expectations had been met and they had high levels of satisfaction with course content, delivery methods, teaching quality, timescales and frequency of lessons.

Features of effectiveness identified by learners included the focused and short modular structure, building on workplace practice, flexibility of delivery, and high-quality engaging

[6] MAP funding covered 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. See further information here - How much LLE you could get - GOV.UK.

teaching. Provider senior leaders and module leads also praised the modular format for its ability to accommodate adult learners, particularly those in employment or with caring responsibilities.

Some of the challenges faced by MAP module learners were linked to overall levels of commitment and balancing this with other responsibilities, academic requirements, course content or delivery methods not suiting specific learner needs, and limited employer support. Evidence across data sources indicated a module non-completion rate for MAP learners of between 17% and 20%[7]. Reasons for this varied and included employment or personal commitments, mode of delivery, course content or intensity, academic readiness, and teaching quality.

Participation in MAP modules positively contributed to further learning and employment outcomes for many of those that completed. Provider senior leaders, module leads and learners themselves cited success stories of learners who progressed to full HTQ courses, gained promotions or transitioned to new roles after completing a module. Most learners who had started their planned next steps (completing an HTQ, undertaking an apprenticeship or starting a new job) attributed their achievements, at least in part, to participating in MAP modules. 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.

Conclusions and implications

The MAP was an opportunity for higher and further education providers to develop and test their approach to demand raising for and delivery of individual HTQ modules.

The accessibility of the learning offer was of critical importance to generating interest in MAP modules and supporting retention. Providers developed some successful approaches to demand raising including building on existing employer networks, developing an online presence and directly communicating with potential learners.

Feedback identified key features of effective engagement strategies such as communications focused on accessibility, dedicated resource for marketing and pre-enrolment guidance, and targeted campaigns to promote benefits and clarify understanding. Recruitment and retention constraints faced by MAP providers were linked to awareness, delivery capacity, employer engagement and learner circumstances.

Most learners valued their module delivery experience and participation in MAP modules was attributed to further learning and career progression for many. Some learners were

[7] There is no direct national comparison, though OfS data suggests a 30% non-completion rate for UK domiciled “Other undergraduate” part-time learners who started their course in 2017-18. Student characteristics data: Outcomes data dashboard - Office for Students.

challenged by the intensity and academic requirements of modules, balancing learning with other responsibilities, and delivery being misaligned with their needs.

MAP providers highlighted some key considerations for the delivery of modular learning in the future and preparations for the LLE. They fed back that:

- providers need to develop their capacity to design and deliver an accessible modular offer which incorporates flexible timetabling and tailored provision, standalone modules, specialist staff and wrap around support for learners
- future recruitment and capacity building may be more challenging under LLE's loan funded model (rather than the grant-funded approach for MAP)
- there is some potential for clearer messaging and awareness raising at national level to support better understanding amongst providers, employers and prospective learners regarding HTQs, modular learning and the LLE
- there is a need for clear and consistent mechanisms to enable modular learners to progress to other learning within and across providers, awarding bodies, qualifications and sectors.

Introduction

This report outlines findings from the evaluation of the Modular Acceleration Programme (MAP), undertaken on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE). The MAP aimed to accelerate supply and support delivery of individual modules of higher technical qualifications (HTQs)[8]. The evaluation was commissioned to provide valuable insights around modular study of HTQs ahead of the launch of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) in January 2027 (with learners able to apply for funding 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 some Advanced Learner Loans (ALLs).

From autumn 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 for[9]:

- full courses at level 4 to 6, such as degrees, technical qualifications, and designated distance-learning and online courses
- modules of approved 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 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.

[8] Higher technical education reforms - GOV.UK
[9] Courses included under the LLE - GOV.UK

The LLE operates under Plan 5 terms and conditions, where 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[10].

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 HTQ[11] 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 fund[12] 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 (HESC) trial[13] contributed £2 million of funding to providers to develop short courses from existing modules of degree courses.

An evaluation of the HESC trial[14] 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 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 education[15].

The Modular Acceleration Programme (MAP)

The MAP was a two-year grant-funded programme that supported the development and delivery of individual modules of HTQs. It provided up to £5 million of new funding to Office for Students (OfS) registered providers who already offered, or were planning to

[10] These are current repayment terms and could change in the future.
[11] Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ): an introduction - GOV.UK
[12] Higher technical education skills injection fund 2022 to 2023: information for successful applicants - GOV.UK
[13] Evaluation of the higher education short course trial - Office for Students
[14] Higher Education Short Course (HESC) trial
[15] HE reform consultation analysis_ research report.pdf

offer, full HTQs. The funding was 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 were stackable with remaining modules from the same course ('parent course') to make up a full HTQ qualification. Modules were also required to be a minimum of 30 credits and a maximum of 40 credits, and 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 covered tuition fees[16] 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 four 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 selected based on their ability to deliver against the programme requirements, value for money and geographical spread across England. Out of 39 bids submitted, 25 were successful, and those 25 planned to offer 108 modules to learners. Of these modules 88 were 30-credits and 20 were 40-credits.

[16] This did not include maintenance payments.

Methodology

This process evaluation of the MAP sought 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 aimed 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 six overarching themes as follows:

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

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 and 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 and 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 the 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

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 and 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 and 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 involved 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-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 took a lead on designing and deliver-ing MAP modules within their organisation
Topic guide	Learners	Individuals that undertook MAP modules
Topic guide	Enquiry learners	Individuals that showed an interest in or applied for a MAP module but eventually did not sign up
Topic guide	Strategic stakeholders	DfE staff responsible for the LLE policy and the MAP
Surveys	Learner starter, follow-up and combined surveys Module lead survey	
Communica-tion materials	Provider senior leaders Module leads Learners and enquiry learners	

Source: MAP evaluation data

A robust communication strategy was 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-July 2025; September-June 2026)

This phase involved the collation and analysis of management information (MI) pertaining to the delivery of MAP modules and learners participating, as illustrated in Table 3.

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

Following the evaluation team's engagement with providers as described above, overall data quality improved. Nevertheless, there remained some gaps in information and inconsistencies with DfE data on the number of learner starts. The data received from providers was collated, cleansed and organised to support data analysis and the distribution of learner and module lead surveys. Data analysis entailed descriptive statistics to describe patterns of take-up, attendance, learner characteristics and performance analysis to understand take-up, completions, and withdrawals.

Surveys (rolling programme April 2024-July 2026)

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

Learner surveys

Learner surveys included:

- Starter surveys distributed close to the beginning of modular learning, for learners who started between April 2025 to October 2025 (plus a small number distributed by the in-house DfE team prior to that).
- Follow-up surveys distributed five months after individuals had completed their module (if a starter survey had been completed).
- Combined surveys for learners who had completed modules before March 2025 and those who completed between April and December 2025 but had not completed a starter survey (distributed five months after module completion). These surveys were designed to capture both starter and follow-up feedback from learners.

Learner survey questions covered the following themes:

- 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 the 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 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)	277	100	36%
Follow-up surveys	95	49	52%
Combined surveys	409	96	23%
Total	**781**	**245**	

Source: MAP evaluation data June 2026

The learner survey sample was broadly aligned with both the pattern of module take-up across providers and sectors and the characteristics of the MAP learner population (details of which are covered in the following section). One provider (Shrewsbury College) who had the second highest take-up of learners, was slightly underrepresented in the survey responses. For both the survey and MAP population cohorts most learners were aged between 21 and 50. Compared to the full MAP population, slightly fewer men and learners that identified as White responded to the survey.

Module leads survey

Module leads responsible for designing and delivering MAP modules were invited to participate in the survey[17]. Topics explored included:

- the nature of the modules offered
- 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.

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

A total of 70 module lead surveys were distributed, with responses received from 41 (a response rate of 59%). This included 12 administered by the DfE in-house team in 2024, and the remainder processed by the YCL team between April 2025 and June 2026.

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

In-depth semi-structured interviews were undertaken with a range of stakeholders involved in developing, delivering and participating in the MAP. They explored the 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 completed (number)
DfE policy and research team members	5
Provider senior leaders	25
Enquiry providers	5
Module leads	9
Learners	32
Enquiry learners	19

Source: MAP evaluation data June 2026

Additional qualitative evidence was gathered to deepen understanding of delivery and effectiveness with selected providers. This included facilitation of two webinars (in March 2026) incorporating presentations and discussions from four MAP providers, production of depth case studies for five MAP providers (see Appendix A), and development of eight learner vignettes exploring individual learner experiences of MAP modules (see Appendix B).

Analysis and reporting

This final report expands on findings from an interim report[18] (published February 2026). It provides insights and learning to inform ongoing and future delivery of modular learning as part of the LLE roll-out. The report collates and analyses findings across all evidence sources. It was structured in accordance with the overarching evaluation framework, covering the core themes and issues identified at the outset, incorporating examples of individual experience across providers and learners.

[18] Modular acceleration programme: process evaluation interim report - GOV.UK

Delivery of the MAP

This section reports on the analysis of data collated from MAP providers to give an overview of MAP delivery. It covers the number and type of modules developed by participating providers, module take-up and non-completion rates, and characteristics of those participating in modular learning.

MAP modules offered

Between April 2024 and December 2025, 18 providers delivered a total of 65 MAP modules[19]. This was across six occupational areas:

- digital (10 providers)
- business and administration (six providers)
- construction, design and build (six providers)
- health and science (six providers)
- engineering and manufacturing (four providers)
- education and early years (one provider).

Seven of the providers originally selected were not able to deliver modules within the timescales of the MAP. This was most commonly due to the recruitment challenges faced.

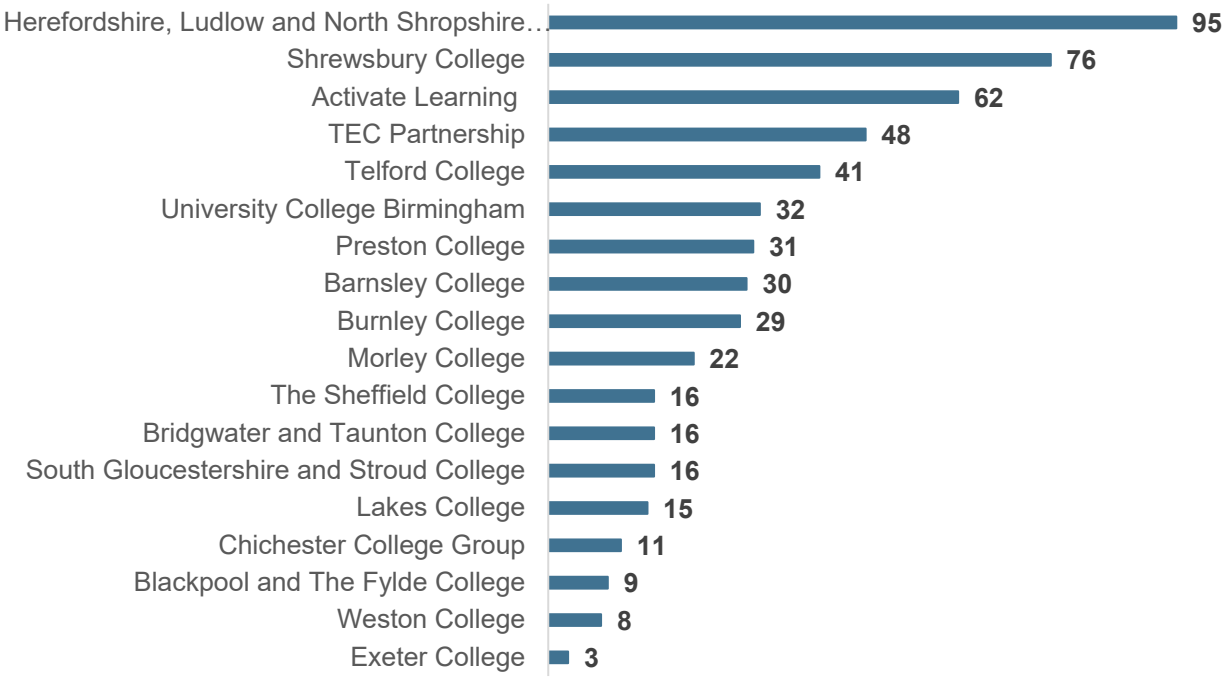
Learner take-up of MAP modules

Across the 18 providers and 65 modules, a total of 560 learners[20] had enrolled on a MAP module between April 2024 and December 2025. Almost three-fifths of MAP learners (58% or 322 learners) had participated in modular learning at one of five providers with the highest number of learner starts (Figure 1).

Overall module and learner numbers were lower than the numbers MAP provider organisations had anticipated and subsequently bid for in their proposals for the programme (which totalled 108 modules and 1,800 learners).[21]

[19] The total number of providers and modules is based on learner data supplied by individual providers to YCL. This differs from the totals recorded by DfE based on the learner claims they received for MAP module starts.
[20] The total number of learners reported is based on learner data supplied by individual providers to YCL. Learner totals for some providers differ from the total number of learners claimed as starts from DfE for the MAP. In some cases, this includes learners who started MAP modules but did not complete in time for DfE programme funding.
[21] As part of their original application to the MAP, providers 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.

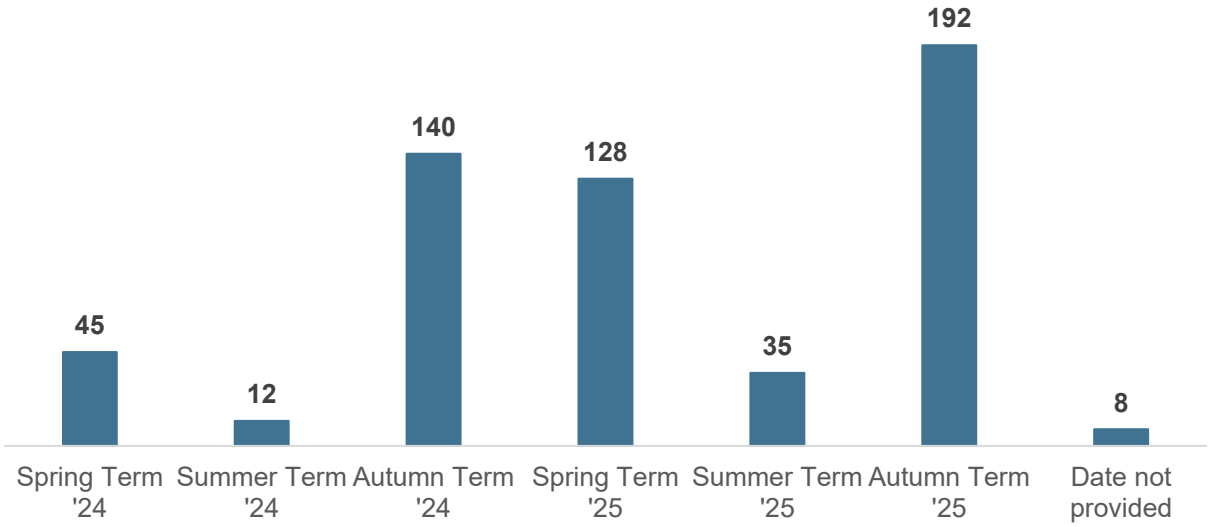
Figure 1: Number of MAP learners by provider



Source: MAP learner data June 2026, n=560

Learner enrolment varied considerably across the delivery period (Figure 2), with notable peaks and troughs in module start dates. The periods of highest enrolment were in Autumn 2025 (192 learner enrolments), Autumn 2024 (140) and Spring 2025 (128).

Figure 2: Number of MAP learners by module start date



Source: MAP learner data June 2026, n=560

Modular delivery took place across six of the nine regions in England (Table 6). The West Midlands (which includes three of the MAP providers with the highest learners) had the greatest number of learners enrolled (244).

Table 6: Learner enrolment by region and provider

Region	Provider	Learner numbers
West Midlands	University College Birmingham, Telford College, Shrewsbury College, Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College	244
South-West	Weston College, Bridgwater and Taunton College, South Gloucestershire and Stroud College, Exeter College	43
North-West	Lakes College, Preston College, Blackpool and The Fylde College, Burnley College	84
London	Morley College	22
South-East	Chichester College Group, Activate Learning	73
Yorkshire and Humber	Barnsley College, TEC Partnership - East Riding and GIFHE (Grimsby Institute) College, The Sheffield College	94

Source: MAP learner data June 2026, n=560

There were MAP learner enrolments in each of the six occupational sectors for which funding was available (Table 7), with the highest number in the digital, business and administration and engineering and manufacturing sectors. The fewest enrolments were in the education and early years sector.

Table 7: Learner enrolment by sector of module studied

MAP module sector	Learner numbers
Digital	153
Business and administration	138
Engineering and manufacturing	98
Construction, design and build	80
Health and science	67
Education and early years	22

Source: MAP learner data June 2026, n=558[22]

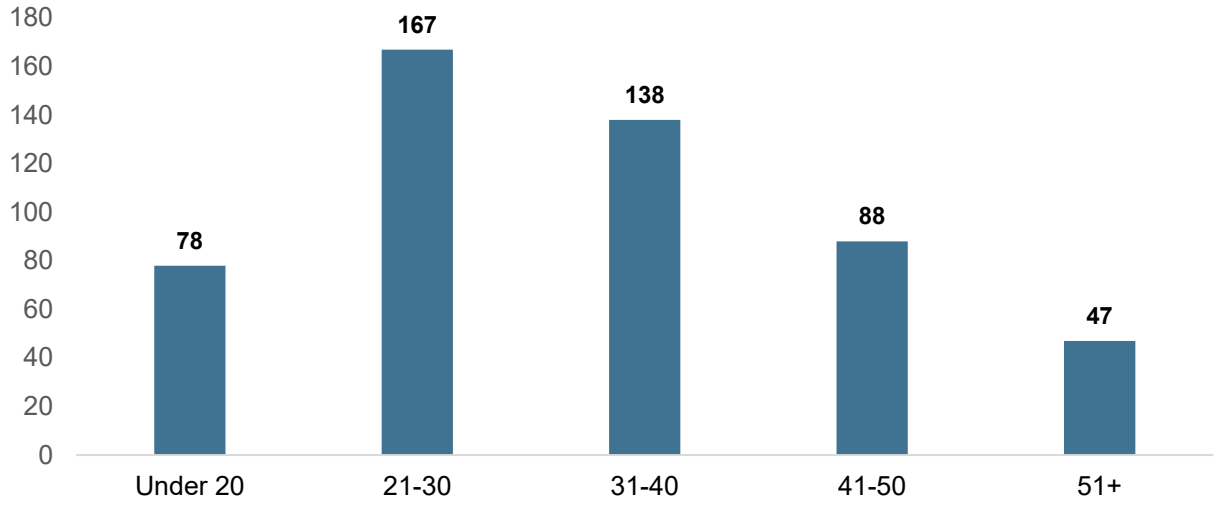
[22] Data was not provided for module sector for 2 learners.

Learner characteristics

There was some inconsistency in the demographic data supplied by providers regarding MAP learners. For most categories there was a relatively high number of learners for whom data either 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 MAP enrolments by age (Figure 3) showed that the largest group was learners aged 21-30 with 167 learners (32% of 518 learners where data was available), followed by aged 31-40 (138 learners, 27%), and aged 41-50 (88 learners, 17%). There were 78 learners (15%) under 20, while the older age group (51+) included 47 learners (9%). This age profile differed from that for all Level 4 and 5 entrants in England in AY2024/25 which had a higher proportion of under 20 entrants (25%) and lower proportion of entrants aged 21 to 39 (25% aged 21 to 29 years and 24% aged 30 to 39 years)[23].

Figure 3: Number of MAP learners by age

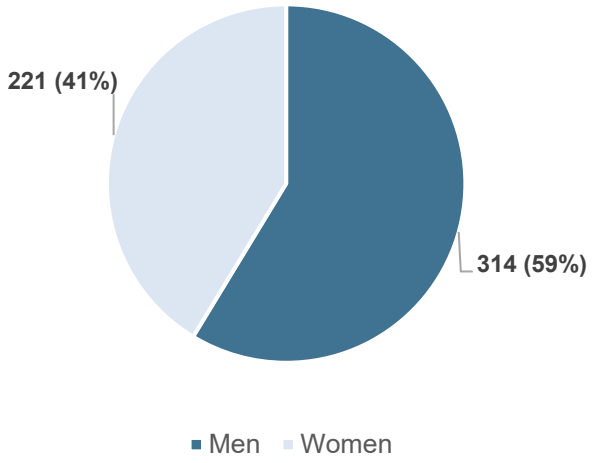


Source: MAP learner data June 2026, n=518 (excludes 'not provided' and 'prefer not to say')

Data regarding gender (Figure 4) showed that 314 MAP learners identified as men (59% of 535 for which data was available) and 221 as women (41%). This gender profile differed from that for all Level 4 and 5 entrants in England in AY2024/25 which had a higher proportion of women (55%) compared to men (45%)[24].

[23] Source: Higher Level Learners Data - Level 4/5 entrants to HE in England, AY2024/25.
[24] Source: Higher Level Learners Data - Level 4/5 entrants to HE in England, AY2024/25.

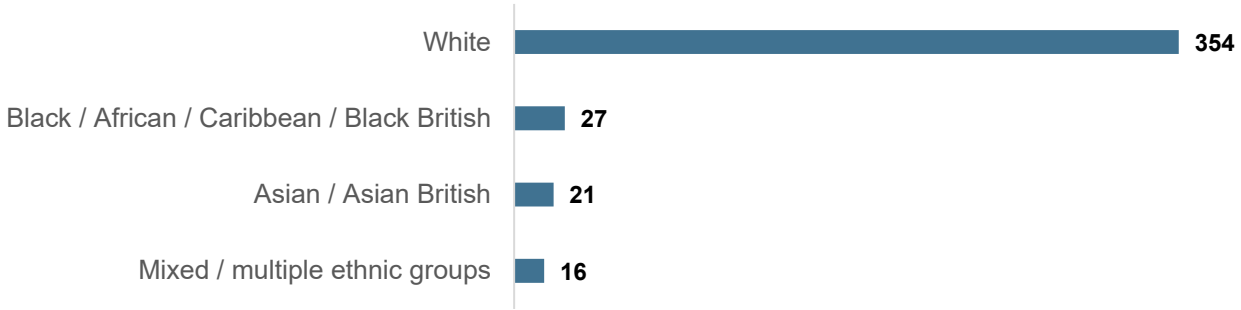
Figure 4: Number of MAP learners by gender



Source: MAP learner data June 2026, n=535 (excludes 'not provided' and 'prefer not to say')

Ethnicity data (Figure 5) showed that the majority of MAP learners identified as 'White', accounting for 354 individuals (85% of 418 for which data was available). Other represented groups included 'Black / African / Caribbean / Black British' with 27 learners (6%), 'Asian / Asian British' with 21 learners (5%), and 'Mixed/multiple ethnic groups' with 16 learners (4%). The ethnicity profile, where known, of HE Level 4 and 5 entrants in England in AY2024/25 included a comparatively lower proportion of those that identified as 'White' (71%) and higher from other represented groups (12% Asian, 10% Black, 4% Mixed, 3% other)[25].

Figure 5: Number of MAP learners by ethnicity



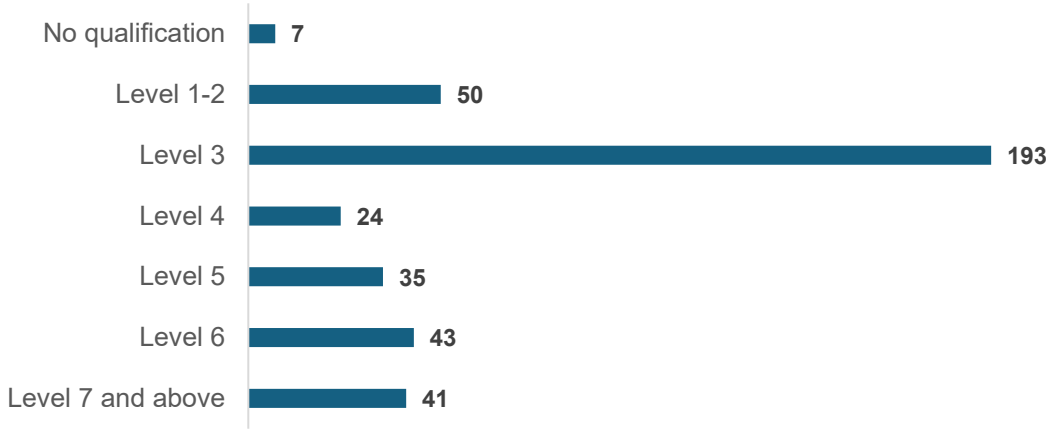
Source: MAP learner data June 2026, n=418 (excludes 'not provided' and 'prefer not to say')

Previous highest qualification data[26] (Figure 6) showed that the most common level amongst MAP learners was Level 3, held by 193 learners (49% of 393 leaners where data was available). Other notable groups included Levels 1-2 (50 learners, 13%), Level 6 (43 learners, 11%), and Level 7 and above (41 learners, 10%). Level 3 was the highest level of prior qualification for HE Level 4 and 5 entrants for OfS recognised HE in England in AY2024/25, also at a rate of 49%. A lower proportion of the national Level 4

[25] Source: Higher Level Learners Data - Level 4/5 entrants to HE in England, AY2024/25.
[26] 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.

and 5 entrants had prior qualifications of Level 4, 5 and 6 (13% in total compared to 26% for MAP learners)[27].

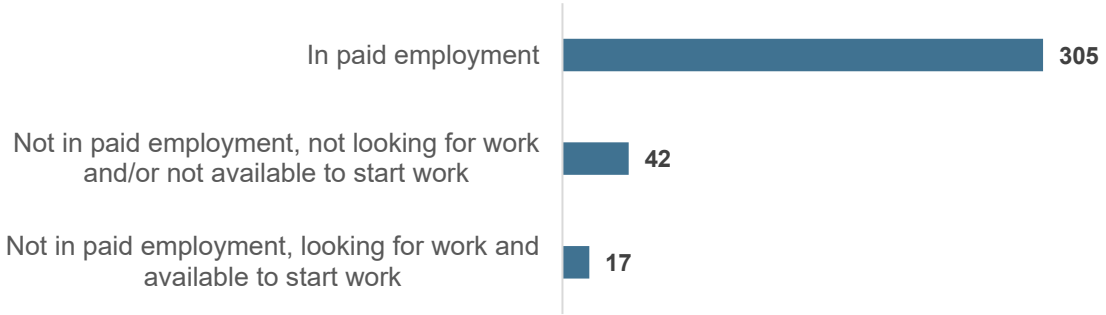
Figure 6: Number of MAP learners by previous level of education



Source: MAP learner data June 2026, n=393 (excludes 'not provided' and 'prefer not to say')

Employment data revealed (Figure 7) that the majority, 305 MAP learners, were in paid employment (84% of 364 learners where data was available). Other employment categories included 42 learners (12%) who were not employed and not looking or unavailable for work, and 17 learners (5%) who were unemployed and looking for work.

Figure 7: Number of MAP learners by employment status



Source: MAP learner data June 2026, n=364 (excludes 'not provided' and 'prefer not to say')

Other data on MAP learners' demographics showed:

- **Disability**: 330 learners (83% of 396 for which data was available) reported no disability, while 66 learners (17%) indicated they had a learning difficulty, disability, or health need. Where known, the proportion of HE Level 4 and 5 entrants in England with a disability was similar at 18% in AY2024/25[28].
- **Caring responsibilities**: 125 learners (82% of 152 learners where data was available) reported no caring responsibilities. A total of 27 learners (18%) reported some form of caring responsibilities, including childcare, caring for a

[27] Source: Higher Level Learners Data - Level 4/5 entrants to HE in England, AY2024/25.
[28] Source: Higher Level Learners Data - Level 4/5 entrants to HE in England, AY2024/25. 82% of this group having no known disability, and 18% with a self-reported disability.

family member or close relative, or both childcare and other caring responsibilities.

- **Occupational sector of employment:** Of those in paid employment, engineering and manufacturing-related fields were the most represented, with 76 learners (34% of 225 for which data was available), followed by construction, design and build (42 learners, 19%), education and early years (40 learners,18%), health, science and care services (26 learners, 12%), business, administration, legal, and finance (22 learners, 10%). 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 (30% of 167 leaners where data was available), followed by 'intermediate occupations' (29 learners, 17%), 'routine occupations' (27 learners, 16%) and 'lower supervisory and technical occupations' (23 learners, 14%). Smaller groups such as 'higher managerial and professional occupations' (12 learners, 7%) and 'small employers and own account workers' (11 learners, 7%) 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 HE entrants more generally in AY2024/25 (14%, 7% and 3% respectively). There was also a lower proportion of those from 'higher managerial and professional occupations' (18% for this wider HE learners groups in AY2024/25 in England) [29].

[29] Source: HESA: English permanent address full-time at English providers, for all HE courses in AY2024/25 (Please note – this includes all HE courses and not just Level 4 and 5 courses).

Provider plans and module delivery

This section outlines provider reflections on the factors that influenced their 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 the LLE and progressing delivery in practice in a supported way.

> "We were very keen on the 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*

Evidence from provider senior leaders

- Around 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.

Evidence from module leads

- Just over half of module leads (23 of 41 that completed a survey) reported that their education provider was motivated by a general belief in modular learning.
- Over a third (15 of 41) said their reason for signing up was to prepare for the LLE.
- Over a third (14 or 41) said that they wanted to test demand for HTQ modules in the future.
- Over a third (14 of 41) said that they were seeking to increase learner demand for modular learning.

Source: Provider senior leader interviews, n=25; Module lead survey responses, n=41

Providers also commonly cited meeting local needs and support for upskilling in key sectors as reasons for participating in the MAP. Some said they had aligned planned provision with Local Skills Improvement Plans, local labour market information and employer needs.

MAP provider example - engineering and manufacturing, construction, digital, health and science sectors

One MAP provider referenced the skills priorities in their Local Skills Improvement Plan to identify the 4 key sectors within which they would deliver MAP modules. They hosted skills advisory panels with representatives from each sector to gather further information on local need and tailor delivery to employer and learner needs in the area.

The funding available via the MAP (both for module tuition fees and demand raising activities) was an important motivating factor for some providers, offering the opportunity to develop their HTQ provision. A few providers also thought that the funding for module tuition fees gave them a useful hook with which to engage employers.

> "We were already actively delivering HTQs in a part time, weekend and evening mode. It was just about offering a different route for learners to come in." – *Provider senior leader*

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

The five[30] enquiry providers interviewed (those who showed interest in, but did not bid to take part in the MAP) cited the following influences on their decision not to engage:

- their previous experiences with similar programmes (e.g. the Office for Students short course trial), which were regarded as administratively burdensome, with low student recruitment, high cost and return of unspent grant funding
- concerns about administrative workload and uncertainty around student interest and uptake
- concerns over organisational readiness and agility to deliver quality modular study of HTQs.

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

[30] 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

MAP providers considered a range of factors when selecting and designing MAP modules, such as labour market needs, sector suitability, employer and learner needs, the accessibility of learning, and supporting learner mobility.

Labour market and sector needs

Local labour market needs and priorities often influenced provider decisions regarding which modules to offer and how to develop them:

- More than half (22 out of the 41) of the module leads surveyed said that local skills demand had helped them decide which HTQ module to offer.
- Several module leads and provider senior leaders referenced that knowledge of their area's labour market had contributed to module development.
- Module content was also commonly 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*

Some provider senior leaders said they had focused on those sectors they thought were more suited to modular study. This was either because they were experiencing fast-paced advancements and required a more up-to-date workforce (such as health, engineering and manufacturing and digital sectors) or they were more traditionally used to releasing employees for training (for example, construction, engineering and manufacturing sectors).

MAP provider example – digital sector

One senior leader at a MAP provider highlighted sectors such as health, engineering and digital as more appropriate for modular learning. These sectors are fast-changing industries and require constant upskilling. Comparatively, they thought there was less need for, or interest in, studying individual modules within business or education-related industries.

Employer and learner needs

MAP providers commonly invested time and resource to ensure that MAP modules reflected employer and learner needs. For example, some providers opted to introduce modules that were foundational or introductory, to meet the needs of those just starting out in an industry. Feedback from employers also sometimes contributed to content decisions.

MAP provider example - business and administration sector

One provider involved employers, such as local NHS trusts, in developing content for modules, with the aim of aligning it to industry needs. Employers fed into decisions around how content should be delivered and moulded to reflect the world of work. Working in partnership with employers worked best with employers that had a clear understanding of the changing landscape in education and funding.

Accessibility

The accessibility of learning was an important consideration for the curriculum teams that were typically responsible for selecting and designing modules. Features taken into account included timing, method of delivery and tailoring to learner needs.

Timing: Some MAP providers sought to meet needs through the timing of module delivery which often needed to be flexible enough to fit around learners' work and personal commitments and employer preferences. This sometimes meant evening and weekend delivery (9 of the 25 MAP providers had set up at least one of their modules to run classes in the evening or at the weekend) and a few provider senior leaders identified block delivery as best for learners and employers that preferred (and had the capacity for) shorter, intense periods of learning.

Mode of delivery: MAP providers aimed to offer accessible learning via a mix of face to face, online and blended learning routes. Several provider senior leaders said online delivery was sought after by their learners, and that online and evening delivery suited some employer preferences. In other cases, learners preferred face-to-face learning and for some sectors, an element of face to face was necessary due to the use of equipment requirements and more involvement from tutors.

> "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*

MAP provider example – digital sector

A senior leader from one MAP provider highlighted that despite high demand for online delivery of modules, HTQ modules in certain industries (e.g. engineering) are less suited to fully remote formats. Modular learning in these sectors heavily relies on practical tasks, special equipment or software, and direct support from tutors (as opposed to more independent study). As such, they require a certain level of in-person teaching which cannot be replicated effectively via only online provision.

"(…) ultimately technical quals require some level of in-person. (…) There will be certain bits of equipment that need to be used in-classroom, can't have learners use it at home."
– *Provider senior leader*

Tailoring to learner needs: Some MAP providers introduced support for learners who had been out of education for a while or were balancing commitments with personal or employer responsibilities. A few provider senior leaders said they had used interviews and readiness assessments as part of the recruitment process, which enabled them to tailor module content and focus on practical elements.

> "It's about monitoring the commitment of the students. [...] We've had to do a lot of work on our IAG. [...] We did some work around skill scans and then got [learners] to do "get ready" workshops." – *Provider senior leader*

> "[Learners] were interviewed by the course team because we needed to make sure initially that they were able to meet the level and the requirements of the course and to make sure as well that they knew what the course entailed so they could make that decision of whether it really met what they wanted to cover. We also sort of did an advice and guidance session with them to explain the impact of the LLE." – *Provider senior leader*

Others cited the use of wraparound support to help learners manage academic elements or wider commitments.

> "Some learners tend to be nervous because they haven't been in learning for a while – but the college provides good wraparound services for academic writing that they can use in their own time." – *Provider senior leader*

In cases where MAP providers had infilled module learners within existing HTQ learning groups, they had sought to pitch content, material and staffing to meet varying audience needs.

> "How to pitch and deliver according to variance in audience, the tone and type of delivery is important – in a classroom like that you will have those in a module and those longer-term learners." – *Provider senior leader*

Supporting learner mobility

One important goal underpinning the LLE is to support greater learner mobility, with clear pathways between courses and providers. As such, some MAP providers put thought into the mechanisms required to enable this, specifically the use of standardised transcripts[31] and the practicalities of credit transfer[32] processes.

Standardised transcripts

The introduction of a template for standardised transcripts was a commitment made by the government as a result of responses received from an LLE consultation . The DfE developed a transcript template for MAP providers to test and issue to learners. In this evaluation, stakeholders expressed some uncertainty and lack of consistency in relation to the provision of standardised transcripts. Whilst over two-fifths of module leads (18 of 41 that completed a survey) said they had provided standardised transcripts, around a quarter (10 of 41) said they had not. Equally, only one-fifth of learners (31 of 145 learner survey respondents that had completed a MAP module), reported receiving a standardised transcript, while over a third (53 of 145) were unsure whether they had received one. Additionally, amongst those providing transcripts for their learners, there was limited use of the DfE template (just 5 of the 18 providers that provided transcripts).

Since the MAP was delivered, the department has worked with providers on implementation challenges for standardised transcripts. This included setting out the core information for inclusion, moving away from mandating a fixed template and making incorporation of learning outcomes an optional addition. The department is planning to develop and iterate this guidance in collaboration with providers and learners as the LLE rolls out.

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

[31] 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.

[32] Credit transfer is the process by which an awarding body, such as a higher education provider or awarding organisation, recognises credits a learner has achieved on one course towards the credit requirements of another. This can occur within or between awarding bodies and enables learners to move between similar programmes without repeating prior study.

same awarding body, learners would also be required to further demonstrate their knowledge against learning outcomes. They said this would be challenging to do on a large scale, and it would require a lot of resource.

MAP provider example – digital sector

One MAP provider senior leader was apprehensive about the resource required for credit transfer of modular learning using existing recognition of prior learning processes. They thought it may be easier for certain qualifications (e.g., HNC and HND) where modules in a parent course may be similar to other providers but more difficult for others (e.g., Diplomas of Higher Education, international qualifications). They noted that this issue requires further consideration and clarification on the best practice.

"We do have recognition of prior learning, but if every single applicant will need to do this, that would be a huge amount of resource." – *Provider senior leader*

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

> "We haven't got a combined award, e.g. 30 credits for sport and 30 credits for health and fitness. […] you can't mix and match different modules that don't equal anything and learners would end up spending their entitlement." – *Provider senior leader*

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.

Module design and development: facilitators and challenges

Most provider senior leaders and module leads were either neutral about the ease of process or they found module set-up and delivery relatively straightforward. Provider senior leaders generally regarded MAP modules as flexible, accessible, and well-aligned with learner and employer needs.

Stakeholders referenced some key factors that had facilitated their module development processes. These linked to building on existing HTQs and validated modules, and the involvement of curriculum leads.

Building on existing HTQs: Previous experience with HTQs and similar modules facilitated the development and delivery of standalone modules:

- Most module leads (34 of 41) and around half of provider senior leaders said that the modules already being part of an HTQ made it easier to develop standalone modules
- Around half (22 of 41) of module leads surveyed said that that prior experience with similar HTQ modules positively contributed to module delivery
- Over a third (15 of 41) of module leads surveyed said that previous delivery of similar modules also positively contributed to module delivery.

Use of validated modules: The use of already validated modules also facilitated MAP module development, given the usual timescales for validation of new modules would have been prohibitive to the MAP delivery timelines.

Curriculum leads involvement: The involvement of curriculum leads in the design and development of modules helped to support development of practical and tailored content to meet learner and employer needs.

Challenges included rigid frameworks, viability of standalone delivery, provider delivery constraints and mixed learner needs.

Rigid HTQ framework and validation processes: Stakeholders 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*

Viability of standalone module delivery: In a few cases it was necessary for MAP providers to infill module learners within existing HTQ learning groups. Some provider senior leaders said this was the only viable option for reasons of low demand, cost-effectiveness and alignment with B3 metrics[33][34].

[33] Office for Students' B3 metrics relate continuation, completion and progression outcomes for individual providers, where learners must achieve positive outcomes in respect of continuing in their studies; completing their studies; progressing into managerial or professional employment, or further study; and any other areas as determined by the Office for Students.
[34] How OfS regulation will change when the LLE is introduced - Office for Students

> "[…] 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*

Provider delivery constraints: Sometimes internal or practical constraints limited the ability of MAP providers to offer flexibility to potential learners, for example, in terms of the timing of module unit delivery, access to specialised staff and remote delivery.

> "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 3-4 times more than what we could offer to teach." – *Module lead*

> "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*

Mixed learner needs: Module leads felt that learners' mixed levels of prior education and employment made MAP module delivery more challenging. Three-fifths of module leads (24 of 41 that completed a survey) reported learners with mixed levels of prior education and more than a third (14 of 41) with mixed levels of relevant employment experience.

Employer engagement

Most providers had engaged employers in some way in the design and delivery of MAP modules. This included helping to shape module selection and content and support with recruitment to modular learning.

> "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*

Evidence from provider senior leaders and module leads

Choice and content of modules

- Provider senior leaders commonly said they had 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.
- Half of module leads (12 of the 24 surveyed that engaged with employers) said that employers helped with selection of which modules to offer through the MAP.
- In some cases, providers anticipated that a cohort of module learners could be filled via a single employer. In those cases, the content was honed in to focus on employer needs.

Promotion of modules

- Two-thirds of the module leads (16 or 24 surveyed that engaged with employers) said that employers actively promoted the modules to their employees.
- Half of module leads (12 of 24) said employers had helped recruit learners that would benefit from modular learning.

Source: Provider senior leader interviews, n=25; Module lead survey responses, n=41

Feedback from some stakeholders identified that employer characteristics had some bearing on levels of employer engagement with MAP modules:

- **Employer size:** More than half of module leads (22 of 41 that completed a survey) said that small to medium sized employers were most suited to getting involved with the modular approach.

  "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*

- **Sector:** Some provider senior leaders identified sectors more traditionally used to releasing employees for training as generally easier to engage, such as construction or engineering. Whereas health, early years and leadership and management were more difficult to engage for this purpose.

MAP provider example - construction, engineering and manufacturing, digital and business sectors

One MAP provider experienced difficulties with recruiting learners who work in the health industry. Although employers saw the benefits of modular learning, they were not able to release staff during working hours for learning. Learners were therefore discouraged by having to attend evening sessions in addition to full-time work. In comparison, this provider was more successful with recruitment to construction and engineering modules – the provider senior leader reflected that employers in these sectors are more used to releasing staff for upskilling and continuous development.

Employer engagement facilitators

Provider senior leaders commonly cited employer networks and direct contact (in person or remotely) as successful approaches for engaging with employers. Some providers benefited from pre-existing networks and employer input, which had helped with module planning and learner recruitment. Many had established employer networks within key sectors, with advisory panels or employer forums feeding into 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 often part of general provider practice for employer engagement in other modes of learning.

> "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

Employer engagement had been challenging for some MAP providers. Common issues identified across MAP providers included:

- **Familiarity with modules and HTQs:** Of the module leads surveyed that had engaged with employers (24), over half (14) said that employers did not know about the MAP modules. The same number (14 of 24) said that employers were unfamiliar with qualification names and the various acronyms used. Some of the module leads interviewed emphasised the time it takes for employers to understand and get accustomed to new qualifications.
- **Relationships with employers:** Other module leads said a general lack of interest from employers (11 of 24) made employer engagement difficult, alongside limited relationships with employers, and the time required to engage employers.
- **Apprenticeship levy:** Some provider senior leaders said that employers' preference for using the apprenticeship levy to support workforce development and upskilling was a barrier to seeking employer support for modular learning.
- **Releasing staff:** Many smaller employers and sectors also faced constraints associated with releasing staff for modular learning, even if funded, as this would impact operations.

- **Perceptions around 'free funding':** Some provider senior leaders noted difficulties with employer and learner perceptions around the modules being funded for "free". Not only was it difficult to communicate this concept in marketing efforts, but in some cases, there were internal disagreements among provider staff as to whether the modules could be advertised as "free".

> "With the messaging that module was 'free', there was a lot of going back and forth between us and the DfE and we were hoping that it wasn't just our legal team – other providers also raised it. Our legal team wouldn't market it as "free", they felt it was misleading, because even though they didn't have to pay for it, it was coming off out learners' entitlement. It caused confusion." – *Provider senior leader*

Future plans

Most provider senior leaders and more than half of module leads surveyed (23 of 41 that completed a survey) said their institution was likely to offer HTQ modules in the future. 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 16-18 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 provider senior leaders 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 on successful methods and target certain types of learners.
- **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 or micro-credentials:** A few providers thought offering 15-credit instead of 30 or 40-credit modules might be more attractive to learners. This was the case especially for those who have been out of education for a while, are not used to that level of study and might find the larger credit modules too intense.

"Something that has come out is that 30 credits, the minimum for MAP modules […] was one off-putting factor for enquirers – they would have preferred 15 credits, as 30 was too burdensome." – *Provider senior leader*

Stakeholders also referenced external factors that future delivery of modular learning would be 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 the LLE would need some time to adjust to.

"[The LLE is] 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 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 recognition and accreditation of prior learning admissions policy in prerequisite

requirements to incorporate the LLE. It does require all institutions to deliver […]. 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 the demand raising activities delivered by MAP providers, perceptions of their effectiveness, the facilitators and challenges associated with recruitment and factors influencing engagement in modular learning. Evidence was considered from surveys and interviews with provider senior leaders, enquiry providers, module leads and participating and enquiry learners.

Demand raising and engagement activities

Providers were granted up to £20,000 each as part of the MAP to deliver bespoke demand raising activity. The activities delivered 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.

Evidence from provider senior leaders and module leads

Employer engagement

- Business events – half of module leads (19 of 41) said they had spoken at or engaged employers through business events.
- Direct employer contact – a third of module leads (14 of 41) communicated with employers over the phone to promote modules and encourage take up from staff.

Online presence

- Social media – half of module leads (21 of 41) said they posted about MAP modules on social media. This included paid targeted ads (e.g. Google Ads) to reach specific groups of learners and using platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn.
- Website development – half of module leads (20 of 41) developed their existing provider website to advertise MAP modules. In some cases, this allowed providers to track interest by including the option to input learner contact details.

Awareness-raising with potential learners

- Events – half of provider senior leaders had spoken at open days, careers fairs and enrolment events.
- Direct contact – a quarter of module leads (10 of 41) promoted and provided information about modules over the phone.
- Campaigns – some 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=25; Module lead survey responses, n=41

Recruitment facilitators

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.

MAP provider example - business and administration sector

For one provider, employer engagement was the most successful strategy for recruiting learners. Engagement focused on larger employers who were able to add the opportunity to their existing CPD plans which helped to widen the reach of the offer. Fostering strong partnerships with local healthcare trusts generated a high interest in the modules from public sector health employers.

Other features of demand raising that stakeholders identified as effective for recruitment included:

- advertising modular learning via an online presence (social media, websites)
- a focus on accessibility – promoting modules as short courses, highlighting flexibility, low-level commitment and showcasing career pathways available
- time and resource put to converting initial interest into learner starts, including pre-enrolment discussions, clarifications and support for prospective learners
- 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*

MAP provider example - business and administration, digital, construction, design and build, engineering and manufacturing, health and science sectors

One provider's marketing team used social media campaigns, billboards, and featured information about MAP modules on the provider's website. Their team delivered clear messaging about the programme, including:

- what modules were offered
- what the LLE was
- what to expect from 'short modular courses', and
- what the next steps could be once a module has been completed.

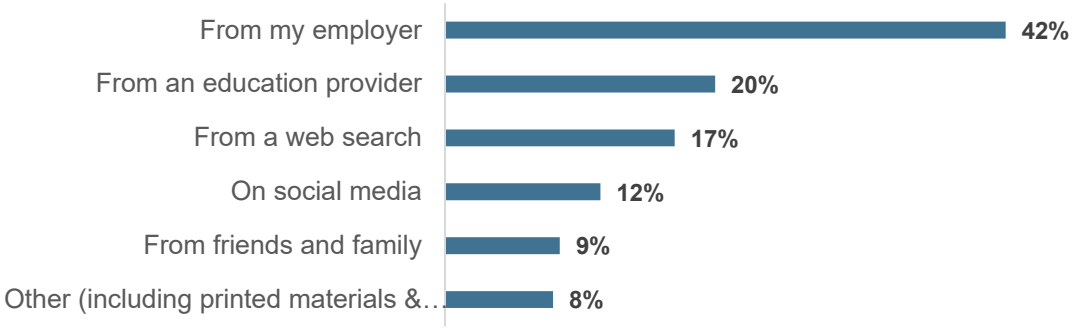
Provider staff also spoke directly with learners and used physical materials to advertise MAP modules at a higher education open day. This provider considered their demand raising activities to be successful based on their learner recruitment numbers.

MAP provider example - construction, education and early years, health and science sectors

One MAP provider senior leader highlighted their effective marketing approach, which had resulted in successfully converting expressions of interest into applications. They conducted an online campaign, with simplified language to draw interest and a dedicated portal for individuals to express interest in the modules. The enrolment team spoke over the phone with potential learners to provide one-to-one support with enrolment and clarify any concerns. The effectiveness of these methods was reflected in learner feedback, with several learners describing the sign-up process as straightforward and supportive.

Feedback from learners broadly aligns with provider views on the most effective demand raising activities. Figure 8 shows that the most commonly reported source of information about modules studied was via employers (42%, or 83 of 196 learner survey respondents), followed by education providers (20%, or 40 of 196) and a web search (17%, or 34 of 196).

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



Source: Learner survey data July 2026, Base=196
% of all starter and combined survey respondents
Multiple choice so percentages do not add to 100%

Qualitative feedback from learners also indicated they often heard about MAP modules through one of these routes (employers, provider websites or a self-directed web search). Employer referral was a particularly dominant route into MAP modules, including through staff development communications or when the employer was a provider of the course.

> "The first time I heard about the free module element was through the [provider]. Other than that, I didn't come across much of the literature available. I think it could have been publicised a lot more" – *MAP Learner*

In a few cases, support from the learner's employer had contributed positively to their participation in a MAP module. Of those learner survey respondents that were employed, around a quarter (25%, or 39 of 156) had received paid time off to attend class and a fifth (19%, or 30 of 156) had been given funding from their employer to support their studies. Findings from the learner survey identified some sector differences regarding employer support received for completing modules, with learners in engineering and

manufacturing, construction, build and design and health and science sectors were more likely to do so than in other sectors.

MAP learner example

For one MAP learner their employer's support played an important role in module completion. The support included paid time-off to attend classes and time-off to complete assignments, which was especially useful when the learner had competing deadlines over a short period of time. The support has helped the learner progress in their learning – completing a full HTQ – and is now on track to receiving a promotion at work.

Recruitment challenges

Across all 25 MAP providers, the number of learners engaged was lower than providers had anticipated and had bid for when they submitted proposals to the MAP:

- seven providers were not successful in recruiting learners for any modules
- around half of provider senior leaders interviewed were dissatisfied with the number of learner enrolments they had achieved – in some cases providers decided the modules were unviable given the low level of interest
- most module leads identified recruitment and retention to modules as challenging - just under three-quarters (29 of 41 completing a survey) said that recruitment was somewhat or extremely difficult.

MAP provider example - business and administration sector

One MAP provider was not successful in recruiting learners, despite efforts and "spending longer than usual" on promotion and recruitment. They advertised on their website, used leaflets and press releases, and engaged in employer discussions at events and forums. Employers were positive about the benefits of modular learning, but this did not convert to any actual take-up from learners. The provider senior leader attributed this in part to generally low awareness and understanding of HTQs and the LLE. Though the provider was not successful in recruiting for the MAP, they did plan to build on lessons from this experience for future delivery. This included experimenting with different delivery methods (e.g., class sizes, number of credits) to help boost learner interest.

"We were a bit disappointed – hit the market at the wrong time as people didn't know what it was." – *Provider senior leader*

Evidence from provider senior leaders, module leads and enquiry learners identified the main barriers to recruitment as:

- low awareness of modular learning and HTQs – amongst learners and employers

- learner apprehension regarding academic expectation and level of commitment required
- delivery constraints (often resulting from low levels of interest) leading to course delays or limits on the ability to offer accessible or tailored learning
- employer engagement challenges for some providers or in some sectors.

Awareness

Many module leads cited employers' low level of understanding of HTQs and the module offer as a challenge for engaging employers (14 of 24 that had engaged with employers). Around half (21 of 41 completing a survey) also said learners were unaware of modular learning, while 19 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*

> "Promotion and marketing of HTQs have been a challenge in itself, particularly with explaining the differences between an HTQ and HND/HNC or apprenticeships." – *Provider senior leader*

Academic expectations

More than a third of module leads (15 of 41) reported that learners were apprehensive about assessments and that learners had fears around returning to education. Feedback from enquiry learners also highlighted apprehension regarding academic expectations, particularly referencing and citation, which led in some cases to frustration or withdrawal of interest in the programme. Some recommended delivery improvements included clearer course previews and stronger academic support.

> "To complete the assignments, if you are using somebody else's work, you've got to reference it. […] it was quite overwhelming. At Level 3 you didn't have that." – *Enquiry learner*

Commitment required

Several module leads (eight of 41) 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.

Provider delivery constraints

In some cases, delays to delivery or decisions to integrate learners within existing full-programme courses (infilling) impacted potential learner interest and retention. Enquiry learners reported delays in course start dates, unclear enrolment processes, lack of clear provider communication and scheduling conflicts, as common barriers to their enrolment in modules, with several reporting never receiving enrolment confirmation despite chasing or being told months later that the cohort would not run due to low numbers.

> "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 some cases, infilled courses impacted negatively on the accessibility of the learning offer (for example limiting delivery to existing class times and dates), which sometimes affected whether prospective learners could participate.

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

> "The module clashed with my work schedule." – *Enquiry learner*

Employer engagement

Some provider senior leaders also identified that recruitment to HTQs and modular learning can be more challenging in those sectors that are less used to releasing employees for training, such as business and health; or where employers have existing experience of or preference for using the apprenticeship levy.

> "We struggled to a certain degree, our sector is a bit stuck on the apprenticeship model – not been easy to get off the ground." – *Provider senior leader*

Converting interest into applications

For some MAP providers, whilst demand raising activities had generated some interest this had not always converted applicants to module learners. Some provider senior leaders said they had not been able to commit the dedicated resource to this task that others had.

> "Converting interest into actual application took so much resource and time. While there was interest it did not convert sufficiently into applications, let alone into further stages of the admissions process." – *Provider senior leader*

Others said that prospective learners decided, after finding out more about the module, that the learning would be too demanding for them in terms of content or timing. Some enquiry learners highlighted changing life commitments or new opportunities (e.g., jobs, promotions or other courses) meant they could not dedicate time to modules or had different priorities.

> "I wanted to study the course, but I moved house so the college is now far away and my son has started nursery, so it conflicted with my schedule." – *MAP learner*

> "I came across a different course that aligned a bit more with what I needed and the timeframe that I needed it in." – *MAP learner*

MAP provider example - business and administration sector

One MAP module lead highlighted that some enrolled learners were not interested in a certificate of completion or progressing on to the full qualification. Instead, their focus was on some elements of learning they could access through the module. As a result, these learners did not engage with the assessments required to complete, however, they rated the course highly.

Lessons for future module delivery

Some provider senior leaders identified learning from their own and other provider's recruitment and delivery activities which would help address some of the recruitment challenges faced, and support more targeted campaigns with accessible delivery plans for modular learning in the future.

Some provider senior leaders also identified lessons for regional and national stakeholders, and specifically the need to support better awareness and understanding of HTQs and modular learning.

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

MAP provider example - education and early years sector

One of the MAP providers delivered demand raising activities focused on employers and prospective learners in the sports sector. Despite initial interest, there were some barriers which negatively impacted on actual enrolments:

- employers were worried about releasing staff for learning and how this would impact their staff availability
- delivery times were not flexible enough for learners (e.g., evening sessions, after work, did not suit them)
- learners had limited capacity to engage with learning (e.g., limited time availability)
- some learners did not meet eligibility criteria (e.g., too young to participate).

To improve engagement in future module delivery, the provider planned to:

- deliver more targeted module selection and awareness campaigns focused on providing alternate pathways, supporting those from less academic backgrounds to engage and promoting HTQ/module benefits
- develop more accessible module provision including multiple entry intakes, fewer assessments, and opportunities for credit transfer with other institutions.

Learner motivations

Learners were primarily motivated to engage with modular learning by career goals. Most learner survey respondents had enrolled in MAP modules to support their career progression (83%, or 162 of 196 that completed a starter or combined survey[35]). Additionally, 49% (96 of 196) aimed to gain knowledge and skills relevant to their current roles, and 46% (90 of 196) sought to improve their overall employability. This was reflected both in the profile of MAP module learners given that 84% were employed, and the views of modules leads that the learners most suited to MAP modules were already in some kind of employment, looking to upskill or retrain (identified, respectively, by 23, 19 and 15 of the 41 module leads that completed a survey).

Feedback from learner and enquiry learner interviews also echo these motivations. Most reported that they wanted to progress in their current work, re-enter the workforce after a period of disruption, or upskill for a career change. One learner described their 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. Short, focused learning that could be directly applied in the workplace especially appealed to learners. Of those learners and enquiry learners who were seeking a change in sector, several highlighted they want to progress in business, construction and digital (including developing IT and cyber security skills).

> "I was in my current role as an admin within [the Employer]. I was looking at careers prospects and looking at what I needed for management roles – that's how you move up the career ladder in my department." – *MAP learner*

Other types of learner motivated to engage with modules included:

- Learners who were parents / guardians caring for children, cited by 18 of 41 module leads that completed a survey. Qualitative feedback revealed that learners valued the flexibility of modules (e.g., online or evening sessions), which they could fit around childcare responsibilities, and undertaking a single module rather than a full course made participation easier.

[35] Reasons for applying was not asked during the follow-up survey as it had already been addressed.

"I've got two small children and just being able to put them to bed and be at home was great. I would not be able to do that course if it had been fully in-person." – *MAP learner*

- 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. Interviews with learners showed that many were returning to study later in life – often balancing work and caring responsibilities – the MAP modules offered a manageable, low commitment way to 'test' higher-level study.

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

Table 8: 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	116	59%
I didn't have to pay tuition fees	116	59%
The flexibility of studying a single module rather than a full course	92	47%
The flexibility to study at a lower intensity	90	46%
Being able to learn face to face	82	42%
Being able to undertake some learning online	52	27%
The facilities available at the education provider	50	26%
I am familiar with the education provider and trust them	48	24%

Source: Learner survey data July 2026, n=196
% of all starter and combined survey respondents
Multiple choice so count does not add up to 196

Learners, enquiry learners and module leads identified several accessibility features that were important for engaging learners in the MAP funded HTQ modules. Table 8 shows that local learning and tuition fees being paid were the most commonly cited by learners (59%, or 116 of 196 learners), with the flexibility to study a single module (47%, or 92 of 196) and at a lower intensity (46%, or 90 of 196) also important to many.

Local learning: "Being local to the college makes attendance easy and affordable." – *MAP learner*

Evidence from module leads, learners and enquiry learners

Funding: Most module leads agreed that tuition-free access was the most appealing feature (25 of 41 that completed the survey). Qualitative feedback from learners and enquiry learners indicated that the availability of funding encouraged participation for those who would not have otherwise considered higher-level study due to finances being a barrier. The absence of fees allowed learners to 'test out' a new subject and develop their skills without incurring debt.

"The fact I didn't have to worry about the funding meant it was less high risk, in case it was something that turned out not to be what I wanted." – *MAP learner*

"Because the modules were free - I could dip my toe in it before carrying on to the full programme." – *MAP learner*

Focused learning – short, lower intensity, single module: Most module leads (25 of 41 that completed a survey) identified the opportunity to study a single module as important to learners. Learners and enquiry learners said that the modules offered shorter learning opportunities aligned to their goals, delivered at lower intensity and with less scheduled teaching time. This was more manageable and feasible than full HTQ courses.

"How it was set up felt manageable and attracted me to it." – *MAP learner*

"It was one evening a week teaching time which really worked for me – I could not have done it without that." – *MAP learner*

Mode of learning: Evening, online and hybrid formats were important for some learner groups, supporting them to balance study with other life commitments, like care responsibilities and work. Some learners also valued when they could match mode of learning to their needs upon changing circumstances.

"The course was in-person, however if you couldn't attend you could join remotely. On two occasions I couldn't attend the class due to not having childcare and I could easily attend online." - *MAP learner*

Source: Module lead survey responses, n=41; Learner interviews, n=32, Enquiry learner interviews, n=19

Reflecting different needs and expectations of the MAP learner cohort, there was a mix of views on mode of learning: while around a quarter of learners (27%, or 52 of 196) appreciated being able to learn online, over two-fifths of learners (42%, or 82 of 196) appreciated being able to learn face-to-face.

Learner awareness

There were mixed levels of awareness and understanding amongst learners regarding modular learning, HTQs, the LLE and progression opportunities.

Modules and HTQs

Despite communication and marketing efforts, some provider senior leaders and around half of module leads indicated low levels of awareness of modular learning and HTQs. Half of module leads surveyed (21 of 41) said that learners were unaware of modular learning and 19 of 41 said that learners were unaware of HTQs. Low awareness was an issue highlighted for both learners and staff.

MAP Provider example – digital sector

One of the MAP provider senior leaders highlighted some lack of understanding amongst prospective learners regarding the LLE and how participation in the MAP would affect learners' future entitlement. Learners commonly considered participation in their module as 'free' with limited awareness that their future entitlement would be reduced. Awareness of the LLE was low, both among employers and learners. The provider suggested that uncertainties could be reduced in future through:

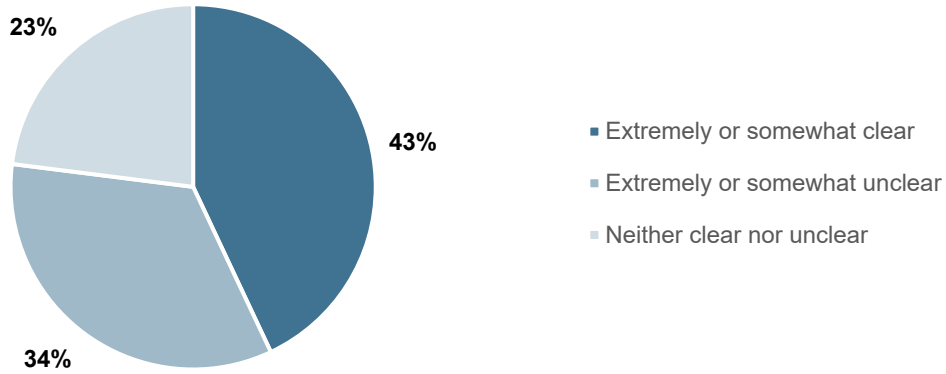
- standard text (from DfE) to help explain the financial impact of participating in the MAP or modular learning on the LLE
- wider national promotion of the LLE.

Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE)

Figure 9 summarises learners' self-reported understanding of how studying their course would affect their LLE. Responses indicate a mixed level of clarity, with around two-fifths clear, a quarter neither clear nor unclear, and a third unclear.

> "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." – *MAP learner*

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



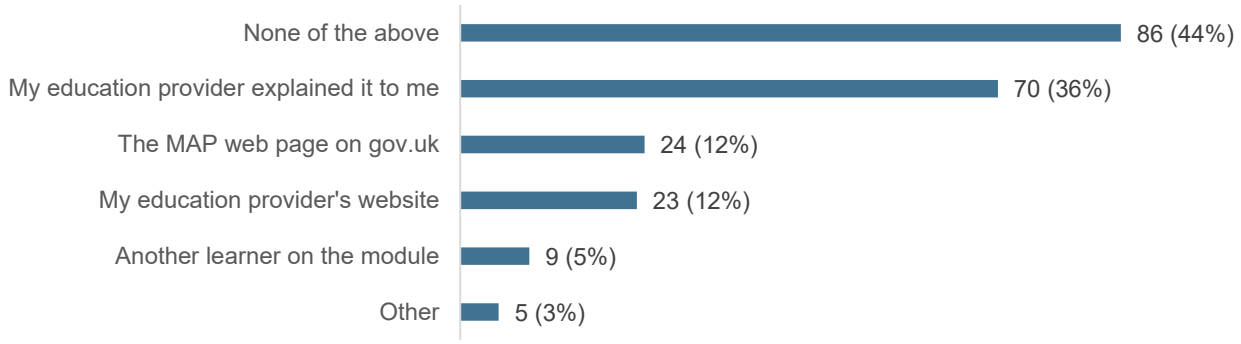
Source: Learner survey data July 2026, n=196
% of all starter and combined survey respondents

Several provider senior leaders 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 a good one but is unknown, and as such not really understood by applicants. A nationwide promotion of LLE would be helpful." – *Module lead*

Some learners felt that communication from education providers had improved their understanding of the LLE. Figure 10 shows that over a third of learner survey respondents (36%, or 70 of 196) said their provider helped them understand how their course affected their LLE entitlement. Online sources, such as the MAP web page (12%, 24 of 196) and providers' websites (12%, 23 of 196) also helped, albeit to a lesser degree. Conversely, 44% of learners (86 of 196) said that nothing helped them understand their LLE entitlement.

Figure 10: What helped respondents understand the impact on future LLE entitlement



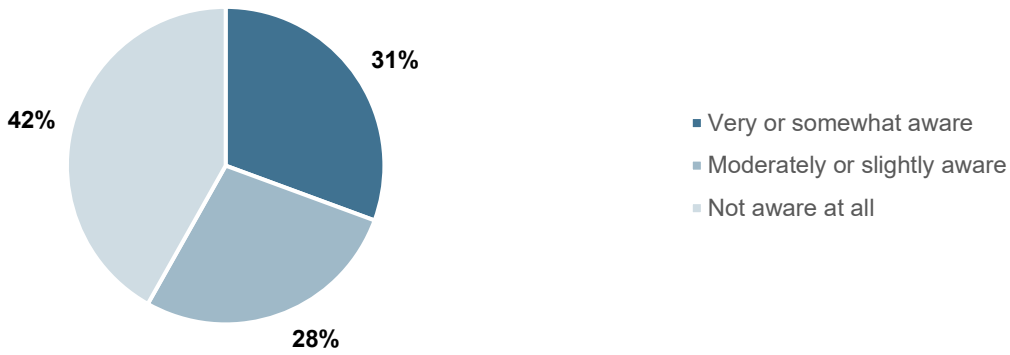
Source: Learner survey data July 2026, Base=196
% of all starter and combined survey respondents
Multiple choice so percentages do not add to 100%

Transfer and progression opportunities

There were also mixed levels of awareness amongst learners regarding the receipt of transcripts for their module learning, the potential to transfer credits elsewhere and for progression to further module or full-HTQ learning.

Figure 11 shows that just under a third of learners surveyed (31%, 60 of 196) were somewhat or very aware that they would receive a standardised transcript after completing their MAP module and 28% (54 of 196) were moderately or slightly aware. However, over two-fifths (42%, 82 of 196 that completed a survey) did not know they would receive a standardised transcript.

Figure 11: Learners' awareness of receiving standardised transcripts upon completion of a MAP module



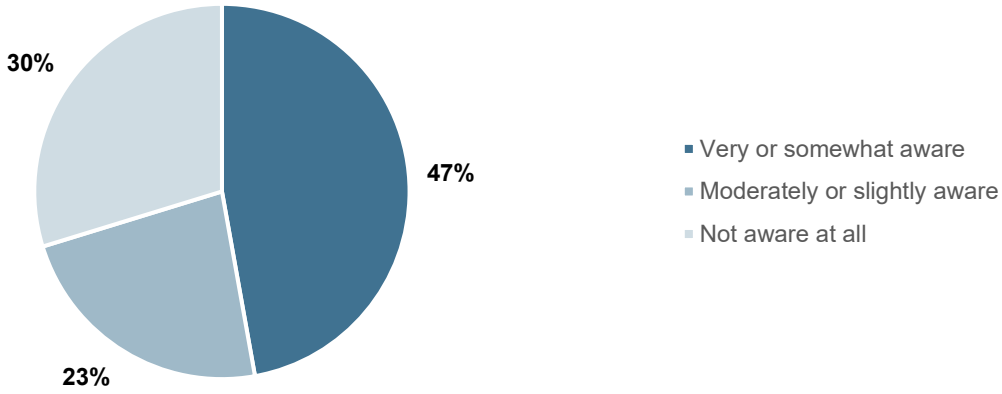
Source: Learner survey data July 2026, n=196
% of all starter and combined survey respondents
Rounded percentages may not always add up to 100%

A similar pattern was observed for learners' awareness of credit transfer – just under a third of learners surveyed (30%, or 59 of 196) were somewhat or very aware, a quarter

slightly or moderately aware (24%, 48 of 196), and as much as 45% (89 of 196) were not aware that credits could be transferred between providers.

Learners' awareness regarding progression to HTQs was stronger. Figure 12 shows that almost half of learners surveyed (47%, 92 of 196) were somewhat or very aware that individual modules can contribute toward a full HTQ, and 23% (45 of 196) were moderately or slightly aware. However, just under a third of learners surveyed (30%, 58 of 196) were not aware at all.

Figure 12: Learners' awareness that individual module study can contribute toward achieving a full HTQ



Source: Learner survey data July 2026, n=196
% of all starter and combined survey respondents

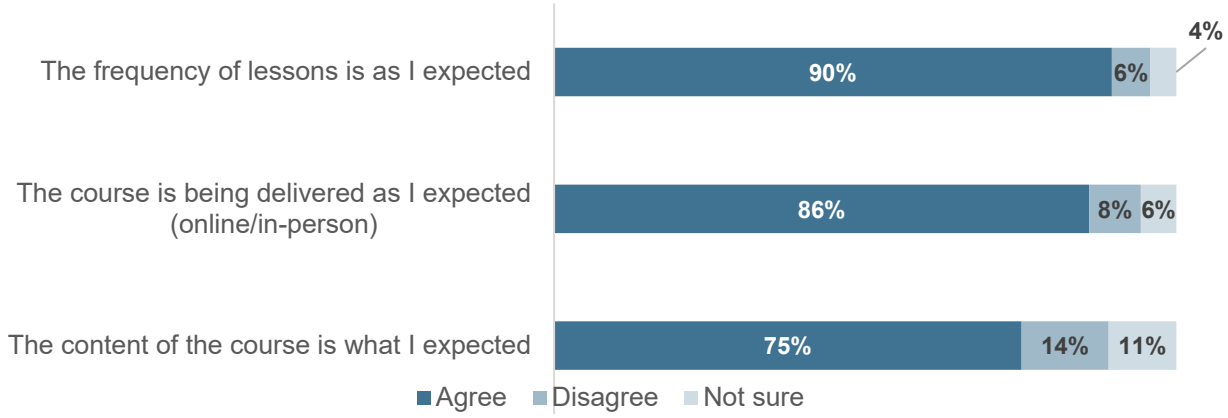
Impact and effectiveness

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 and module lead surveys. Qualitative insights were gathered through interviews with learners, enquiry learners, provider senior leaders and module leads.

Delivery experience

Learners were very positive about their MAP module delivery experience. Most learner survey respondents agreed that the frequency of lessons (90%, or 173 of 193 that completed a survey), method of delivery (86%, or 166 of 193), and course content (75%, or 145 of 193) met their expectations (Figure 13).

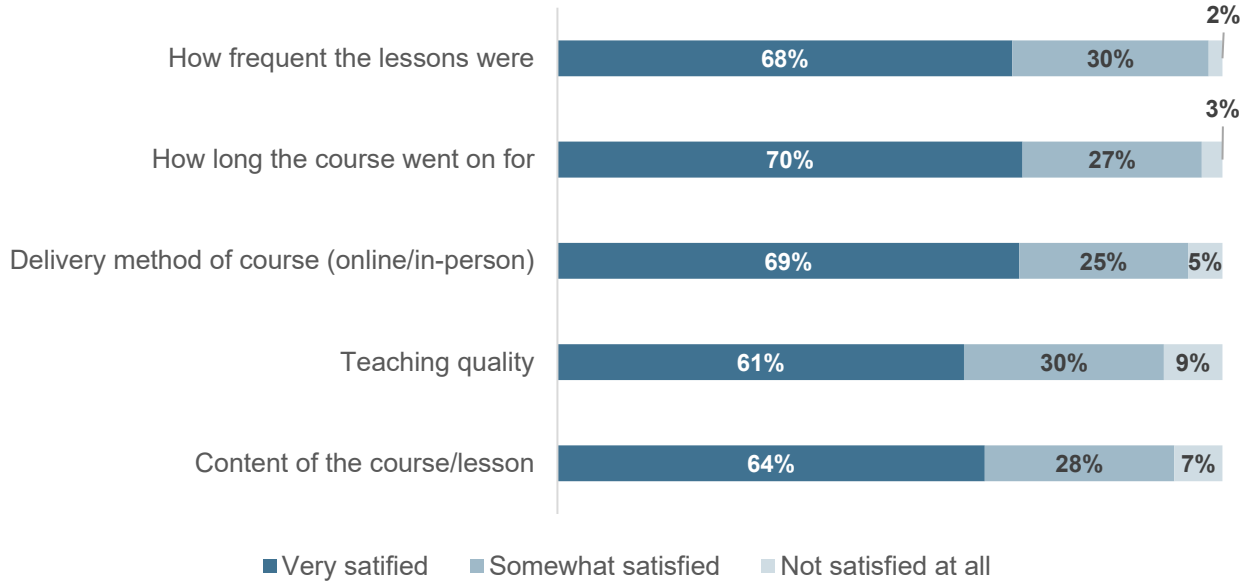
Figure 13: Extent to which MAP module delivery met learner expectations



Source: Learner survey data July 2026, n=193
(excludes DfE distributed surveys which did not ask this question)
% of all survey respondents (across all types of survey)

The majority of learners reported high levels of satisfaction with these elements of delivery, alongside other aspects of course length (97%, or 187 of 193 were somewhat or very satisfied) and teaching quality (91%, or 176 of 193 were somewhat or very satisfied) (Figure 14.)

Figure 14: Learner satisfaction with module delivery



Source: Learner survey data July 2026, n=193
(excludes DfE distributed surveys which did not ask this question)
% of all survey respondents (across all types of survey)

Successes

Feedback from learner interviews highlighted several factors that had contributed to their positive experience of modular learning, including:

- some of the accessibility features that had encouraged learners to engage with MAP modules, such as focused and short modular structure and flexible delivery
- other positive delivery aspects linked to course content, building on workplace practice and high quality and engaging teaching.

MAP learner example

One learner described their experience with their MAP module as positive, meeting their expectations. They felt that the module coordinator was supportive, the teaching quality was high and the small class size enabled in-depth interactions and asking questions when needed. They also valued the flexibility of sessions, with online attendance permitted if personal commitments hindered their ability to participate in-person. This was useful as childcare responsibilities were the main barrier to participation for this learner.

Evidence from learners

Course content: Most learners said that the course content was engaging, directly relevant to career goals, linked well to workplace practice and supported the development of relevant and useful skills.

Module structure: Many learners also valued the short, single module structure, which was more manageable than a full course, especially for those who were not able to commit to traditional higher-level study. One module at a time and availability of recorded sessions helped balance learning with other commitments (e.g., childcare).

Delivery format: Preferences for delivery formats differed between learners, with online or in-person appealing more depending on individual circumstances. Several learners valued modules with hybrid formats, including those that offered the ability to attend 'in-person sessions' online when other commitments prevented them from attending. Some learners were positive about evening delivery, explaining it enabled them to balance family commitments or keep their learning independent of their employer, which was particularly helpful if they were considering moving organisation.

"[The flexibility] did make it easier because I work full time. It made it easier to be able to pick up and access the learning in my own time." – *MAP learner*

High-quality teaching and wrap-around support: Many leaners said their tutors were knowledgeable and supportive throughout their module, highlighting clear explanations, practical demonstrations and accessible and easy-to-engage with teaching styles.

"The tutor was so good at starting conversations and making sure that we knew the content. It felt like a safe environment to say anything. If anyone was unsure, she'd explain it in a different way." – *MAP learner*

"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." – MAP *learner*

Source: Learner interviews, n=32

Provider senior leader and module leads also praised the modular format for its ability to accommodate adult learners, particularly those in employment or with caring responsibilities. Several provider senior leads noted that the shorter, more focused nature of modules helped learners stay engaged. In addition, some module leads cited learner motivation (17 of 41 surveyed) and relevant employment experience (11 of 41 surveyed) as factors supporting effective delivery of MAP modules.

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

> "Some learners tend to be nervous because they haven't been in learning for a while – but the college provides good wraparound services for academic writing that they can use in their own time." – *Provider senior leader*

Challenges faced

There was a minority of learners that were less positive with aspects of module delivery: 14% of learners (27 of 193) disagreed that the module content was as they expected (Figure 13) and 9% (17 of 193) were not satisfied with teaching quality (Figure 14). In addition, a comparison of starter and follow-up surveys for those completing both showed that, following module completion, fewer respondents were 'very satisfied' with lesson frequency and course length and more learners were dissatisfied with teaching quality. These differences were statistically significant[36].

Qualitative interviews revealed a range of reasons for some lower levels of satisfaction linked to delivery styles and content that did not align with expectations, academic requirements, and the quality of teaching. Some learners felt that the content was poorly delivered, lacked depth, or did not align with advertised focus.

> "It was a different way of learning. We had two lecturers that had two very different approaches. Having someone read off a PowerPoint and for us to do Google searches, I wasn't too impressed." – *MAP learner*

> "We do not have qualified teachers delivering the course and this was very obvious in the quality of teaching." – *MAP learner*

More broadly, learner survey respondents identified various challenges they faced when taking part in modules (Table 9). These were linked to overall levels of commitment and balancing this with other responsibilities, academic requirements or course content, and delivery methods not suiting specific learner needs.

[36] Statistically significant at the 95% confidence interval. Represents a comparison between learners who completed both a starter and follow-up surveys (the latter distributed around five months after completion).

Table 9: Challenges faced by learners when taking part in modules

Challenges faced	Number of learners	% of all learner survey responses
Time commitment	102	52%
Completing assignments	62	32%
Other responsibilities (e.g. children or caring)	59	30%
Employment commitment	51	26%
Re-engaging with learning after a long time	39	20%
Challenges with self-confidence	23	12%
Living costs	19	10%
Difficulty of course content	19	10%
Difficulties in travelling to classes	18	9%
Mental health challenges	17	9%
Participation (e.g. books, equipment) costs	14	7%
Course intensity (i.e. the number of classes per week) being too high	14	7%
Other	10	5%
None	22	11%

Source: Learner survey data July 2026, n=196
% of all starter and combined survey respondents
Multiple choice so count does not add up to 196

Time commitment: Half of learner survey respondents (52% or 102 of 196) said overall time commitment for completing the module was difficult for them. Some of the learners interviewed said they felt the workload was more demanding than expected, with high word-count assignments and short deadlines putting further strain on them. A few learners also highlighted that the length of time taken to travel to class was a challenge (9%, or 18 of 196), with one referencing their long commute for short sessions that could have been delivered online.

> "It's a very heavy course and I don't think any of us were prepared for that, it was much more intensive than any of us expected." – *MAP learner*

Academic requirements: A third of learner survey respondents (32%, or 62 of 196) said completing assignments was a challenge they faced. Feedback from learner interviews revealed with learners that writing assignments to meet tight deadlines was particularly difficult for some.

> "I've been in further education several times now and I'm used to having a module having the teaching and then having an assignment to submit

> at the end. Whereas on this module we had two teaching sessions before a 2000-word essay was due. It was a lot of new information to take in and if you're not used to that kind of learning, it's difficult." – *MAP learner*

Some learners also struggled with academic referencing, especially those who lacked previous academic experience or those re-engaging with learning after a while. This was evident among a quarter of survey respondents, with 20% (39, of 196 learners) identifying re-engaging with learning after a long time as a challenge.

> "It was a bit challenging for me because I haven't done academic work for more than 10 years, so I was jumping straight back in at a level that I have not done for a long time." - *MAP learner*

Whilst some providers put support in place for MAP learners to help mitigate some of these issues, in some cases other challenges linked to employment or personal commitments limited learner capacity to access this.

> "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*

Balancing commitments: Just under a third of learners (30%, or 59 of 196) said that balancing commitments for the module with personal commitments (such as childcare or caring responsibilities) was challenging and a quarter (26%, or 51 of 196) said this was the case in relation to job or employer commitments. Some of the learners interviewed referenced conflicts between module sessions and work or family responsibilities.

Flexible delivery: In a few cases, conflicts were linked to specific delivery formats, for example with evening sessions clashing with family responsibilities. In other cases, learners said there was a lack of provider flexibility regarding the day that weekly session were held which had clashed with work schedules.

Employer support: Around half of learner survey respondents that were employed reported no additional support from their employer (52%, or 81 of 156). Enquiry learners also revealed mixed employer attitudes: some encouraged participation, while others offered little flexibility or recognition.

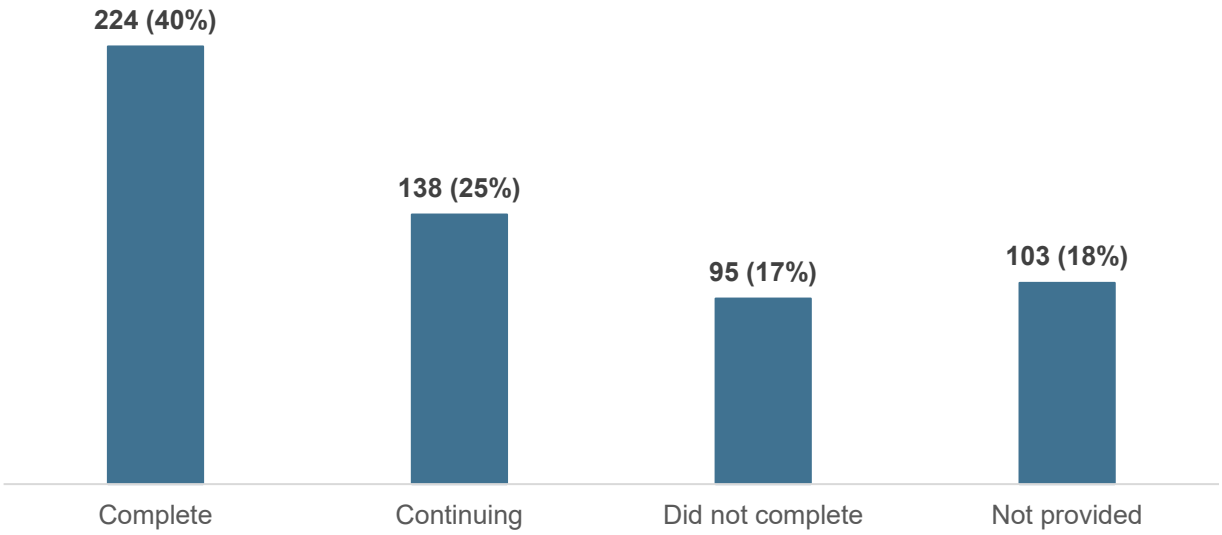
Learner non-completion

Evidence across data sources indicated a module non-completion rate for MAP learners of between 17% and 20%. There is no direct national comparison, though OfS data

suggests a non-completion rate of 30% for “Other undergraduate courses” studied part-time [37]

Half of the module leads surveyed (20 of 41) reported that some learners had not completed their modular learning, and some provider senior leaders also highlighted non-completion as a concern. Data from providers indicated that at least 17% of all MAP learners were non-completions (Figure 15)[38], while learner survey data suggested that around one-fifth of learners did not complete their module (20%, or 29 out of 145).

Figure 15: Number of MAP learners by learning status



Source: MAP learner data June 2026, n=560

Provider data highlighted a mix of reasons for non-completion (Table 10) such as employment and personal commitments, course difficulty, and incomplete assignments. Some provider senior leaders said there was the potential to improve the information, advice, and guidance offered prior to enrolment which would help address some of these issues in future delivery.

[37] UK domiciled “Other undergraduate” part-time learners who started their course in 2017-18. These are typically longer programmes of study, and comparisons should be interpreted with caution. Student characteristics data: Outcomes data dashboard - Office for Students

[38] There was some inconsistency in the module completion information supplied by providers, so this data should be interpreted with caution. This includes some data supplied (and subsequently not updated) whilst module learning was ongoing, which affects the ‘continuing’ and ‘not provided’ totals in Figure 15.

Table 10: Reasons for not completing MAP modules

Reason	Frequency	%
Employment commitments	20	21%
Personal reasons (health, bereavement, other)	13	14%
Course difficultly/misalignment with expectations	13	14%
Incomplete assignments	10	11%
Other reasons or no reason provided	39	41%

Source: MAP learner data June 2026, n=95

Qualitative evidence across the stakeholders interviewed identified that the non-completion of MAP modules was affected by the range of challenges already highlighted both in relation to recruitment and delivery. Those learner survey respondents that did not complete their module (20%, or 29 of 145 combined and follow-up surveys) often commented that they had been unable to cope with the academic requirements, intensity or 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*

> "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*

MAP provider example - business and administration sector

One MAP provider reflected that low completion rates for their modules was a result of some learner needs/interests - whilst they were engaged with the learning and benefited from the knowledge and skills gained, they were less interested in completing assignments or gaining qualifications.

In some cases, non-completions were linked to mode of delivery, with for example students unable to commit to the face-to-face elements of delivery or clashes in work schedules.

> "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*

> "We had a lot of people who dropped out before even the programme started, upon finding out in was in person." – *Provider senior leader*

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

> "The modules were heavily focused on clinical things, which is not great for those in non-clinical management roles." – *Learner not completing module*

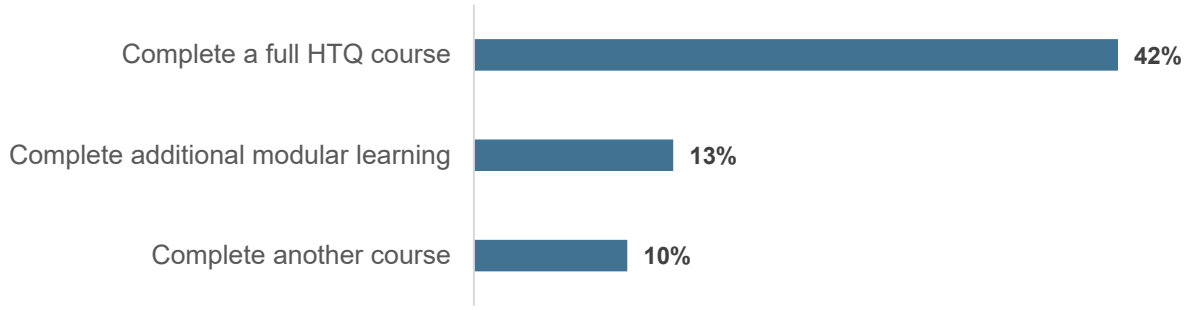
> "There were no lessons planned. The online catch up I watched consisted of a screen shot with a cursor and voice over and was not informative or engaging. The in-class lessons were not much better" – *Learner not completing module*

Outcomes and impact

Progression and educational outcomes

In many cases, participation in MAP modules positively contributed to learners' educational trajectories. Two-fifths of the combined and follow-up survey respondents had either started or achieved a HTQ (42%, or 61 of 145 learners), most of whom (55) had done so for the HTQ that their MAP module was linked to. Some MAP learners also went on to undertake additional modular learning (13%, or 19 of 145) or another course (10%, or 14 of 145).

Figure 16: Educational outcomes started or achieved after participating in module



Source: Learner survey data July 2026, Base=145
% of all combined and follow-up survey respondents. Multiple-choice question.

Of the learners that progressed to further learning, most (82%, or 77 of 94) attributed these outcomes to their participation in a MAP module. This included at least partial attribution to their MAP module for those that progressed to:

- a full HTQ - 50 of 61
- further modular learning – 17 of 19
- new course – 10 of 14.

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.

MAP learner example

One MAP learner was interested in undertaking an HTQ for their career progression and decided to start with a MAP module after being introduced to it though their employer. The module helped the learner gain a better understanding of Microsoft systems, Programmable Logic Controllers and Electrical Machines content, which supported them in the completion of their multi-skills engineer training. Following participation in their MAP module the learner signed up to complete the full HTQ and is on track to receive a promotion at their current company, after achieving their qualification.

Employment and career impact

Several provider senior leaders felt that MAP modules were particularly effective for upskilling individuals already in employment, offering targeted learning that could be immediately applied in the workplace. Success stories were cited of learners who gained promotions or transitioned into new roles after completing a module.

There was also some evidence of employment outcomes for those learners that had completed modules. Of the combined and follow-up learner survey respondents, 15% (22 of 145) had started a new job or apprenticeship. Most of these learners (20 of 22) at least partially attributed their achievement to participating in a 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." – *MAP 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." – *MAP learner*

MAP learner example

One MAP learner was drawn to the MAP module opportunity because it offered an advance in their career, enhancing their employability, and doing so in a less intensive way than taking a full qualification. Upon completion, the module reaffirmed the learner's confidence and provided them with new skills and knowledge. As a result of participating in a MAP module, the learner continued with the HTQ parent course and achieved a new job. The learner said they would recommend the programme to others but emphasised that it required a significant level of commitment and individuals should be prepared for this before enrolling.

Confidence, development and future aspirations

Beyond formal outcomes, learners reported a range of personal and professional benefits. Many of the learners interviewed said participation in a MAP module had supported their future careers. They described gaining a deeper understanding of their industry, improved confidence, and readiness to pursue further education or career opportunities. Other learners also 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. Some 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 helped build my confidence up.” – *MAP learner*

MAP learner example

Initially, this MAP learner enrolled on a MAP module to develop new skills to progress into more senior positions. The learner reported that the module helped them gain new knowledge relevant to their field and interests, contributing to their career progression and employability, and they secured a new employment opportunity, in a more senior role. The learner said that they would not have changed anything about their experience. They believed that modular learning was a great, flexible opportunity for self-development.

Conclusions and implications

The MAP presented an opportunity for higher education providers to develop and test their approach to demand raising for and delivery of individual HTQ modules. Eighteen of 25 MAP providers delivered 65 modules across six occupational areas to a total of 560 learners[39].

Providers that participated expected it would stimulate demand for higher education, HTQs and modular learning and support preparations ahead of the LLE launch. Providers that considered participating in MAP but did not were dissuaded by anticipated challenges with recruitment, staff capacity to develop and deliver modules and administrative workload.

Most MAP learners were employed and primarily driven by career goals such as progression, upskilling, changing careers or re-entering the workforce. With learners also including parents or carers and those returning to education, the accessibility of the learning offer was of critical importance to generating interest in MAP modules and supporting retention.

Providers developed some successful approaches to demand raising for MAP modules which built on existing employer networks, developed an online presence and directly communicated with potential learners. There were some sector differences both in terms of suitability for, and levels of employer engagement with, modular learning. Looking forward, this may affect which modules providers choose to deliver, and the nature and effectiveness of demand raising activities delivered directly with employers.

Feedback from MAP providers identified some key features of effective engagement strategies (of use to MAP providers and others seeking to attract modular learners in the future) which included:

- **Accessibility:** A focus on the accessibility of modular learning in all communications.
- **Dedicated resource:** Putting dedicated time and resource towards marketing, business development, and structured pre-enrolment information and guidance.
- **Targeted campaigns:** Targeted campaigns and materials which raise awareness and promote the benefits of HTQs and modular learning, alongside dispelling myths and clarifying understanding regarding the LLE.

Most learners valued their module delivery experience, and rated the course content, teaching quality, and timing and frequency of lessons highly. Participation in MAP

[39] The total number of learners reported is based on learner data supplied by individual providers to YCL. Learner totals for some providers differ from the total number of learners claimed as starts from DfE for the MAP. In some cases, this includes learners who started MAP modules but did not complete in time for DfE programme funding.

modules was attributed to positive next steps for many learners such as further learning and HTQ completion, and (for a small number) progression to a new job or apprenticeship.

There was a range of recruitment and retention constraints faced by MAP providers linked to awareness, delivery capacity, employer engagement and learner contexts. Some learners were challenged by the intensity and academic requirements of modules, balancing time with other responsibilities, and aspects of delivery being misaligned with their needs.

In addition to the demand raising lessons already cited, MAP providers highlighted other relevant learning:

Provider capacity: Providers told us that they need greater capacity to design and deliver a flexible modular offer which meets accessibility needs. Providers said that they need to consider:

- more flexible timetabling, including the potential for multiple intakes
- offering standalone modules (rather than infilling)
- tailoring timing, content and mode of learning to employer and learner needs
- the opportunity to adapt, develop and validate bespoke modules
- enhanced wrap around support for learners
- ensuring teacher quality and specialist staff where required.

Funding: Many providers reported that the funding made available through MAP played an important role in supporting engagement with learners and employers, and in stimulating demand for modular learning. For learners, funding for tuition fees was one of the most influential factors in deciding to take part. As a result, some providers felt that future recruitment and capacity building may be more challenging under LLE's loan funded model (rather than the grant-funded approach used in MAP).

National awareness and clarification: There is the potential for clearer messaging and awareness raising at national level focused on developing greater understanding amongst providers, employers and learners regarding HTQs, modular learning and the LLE. This could also recognise sector differences in suitability for modular learning and usual practice, and provide a consistent view on funding for modular learning.

Portable learning: There is a need for clear and consistent mechanisms to enable modular learners to progress to other learning within and across providers, awarding bodies, qualifications and sectors. MAP providers called for national or regional approaches to help manage and administer an approach to credit transfer which could support the more accessible offer intended through the LLE.

Appendix A: Provider Case Studies

The following five MAP provider case studies were developed to illustrate the range of experiences, facilitators and challenges associated with developing and delivering MAP modules. They were selected to include a mix of those that achieve high, medium or no learner enrolments.

Morley College London

Morley College London saw their involvement with the MAP as an opportunity to further develop their existing short course offer and introduce potential learners to Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs).

MAP delivery

Morley delivered four modules within the business and administration occupational area covering human resources, leadership and management, accounting principles, business strategy, communications, and technology systems. A total of 22 learners signed up to the modules, with 15 modules completed and 7 withdrawn. Reasons provided from those learners who did not complete included change in personal circumstances (such as health) and incomplete coursework.

Looking forward, Morley hoped to expand modular provision to a broader range of sectors and to develop shared delivery approaches with other institutions.

Demand raising activity

Morley's marketing strategy for the MAP was heavily based on advertising via LinkedIn, as this was considered a likely source of potential learners from the business sector. It proved effective with most MAP learners recruited via this route.

Other demand raising activity included creation of short video adverts, a dedicated page on the college's website, engagement with a micro-employer network (via Grow London[40]) and delivery of a business breakfast event. The latter helped Morley to develop local partnerships, improve their understanding of local need and raise awareness of MAP modules. It was successful in creating some additional interest and sign-up for MAP modules.

Successes

Key enablers for successful MAP module recruitment and delivery were:

- taking the time to ensure learners were adequately informed about module specifications ahead of enrolment, including how the module could contribute towards careers, skills and employment aspirations
- successful employer engagement through local partnerships and events
- attractiveness of the MAP model to employers in the business sector, who tend to have a focus on upskilling their workforce
- good engagement from learners, with a high completion rate (~70%).

[40] Grow London is business support agency, providing advice, innovation strategies and networks.

Lessons Learnt

Morley faced some challenges with employer engagement linked to low levels of awareness of the MAP, modular learning and HTQs more broadly. Some employers had little incentive to support modular learning or HTQs for their staff, and preferred the established apprenticeship model funded via the levy. Nevertheless, some were attracted to the offer of a 'free' (to the employer) module delivered through the MAP.

Morley also identified the following lessons on delivery processes:

- an initial delay in the module start-date was caused by some difficulties contacting students – these were subsequently addressed, with lessons captured for future module delivery
- reporting and data auditing processes for the MAP would have benefitted from being more streamlined.

Learner experiences and outcomes

Several learners mentioned their positive experience with MAP modules delivered by Morley. They highlighted that content and teaching quality met their expectations. Some said they were especially satisfied with the knowledge gained, which was applicable to their day-to-day work and career aspirations (e.g. learning about tools for strategic communication in the workplace). Responsive and supportive tutors, as well as the accessibility of online learning, were highlighted as facilitators to participation. The latter helped mitigate barriers for some, such as long commutes, changes in health circumstances and childcare commitments. Some learners, however, felt the 3-hour sessions were too long and could have been split up.

Outcomes for learners participating in Morley's modules included:

Securing a new position on promotion

Gaining new knowledge and skills which are relevant to current work or career aspirations in this industry

Pursuing a full HTQ course

> "It was hard at times, but it was also worth it, and I think we had a good tutor who really motivated us." – *MAP learner*

> "The teacher was very helpful, (…) every time I sent [them] a message, [they] replied immediately" – *MAP learner*

Sheffield College

Sheffield College viewed participation in the MAP as a natural progression for their existing HTQ delivery. It was an opportunity to trial and refine Level 4 delivery at a time when the number of learners signing up to higher education at the college was in decline. It also aligned well with supporting level 2 and 3 learners (including, those studying T-Levels, for example) to progress to higher level learning.

MAP delivery

Employer and learner research informed Sheffield College's initial offering of MAP modules which were in business, construction, health, early years and digital. However, limited take up across these sectors meant they only delivered one leadership and management module within the business sector. The module consisted of two off-the-shelf (15-credit) units bundled and delivered over a 12-week period via blended learning. The learners were employed, and their employers expressed a preference for daytime release and delivery over a shorter period, rather than weekend learning over a longer timeframe.

Sixteen learners signed up to the modules across two cohorts (Summer 2025 and Autumn 2025). Of these, 10 learners successfully completed at least 1 unit and a further 6 completed two units (though the latter completed too late for the funding to be claimed by Sheffield as part of the MAP).

Demand raising activity

Sheffield College developed promotional leaflets and sector materials specifically focused on modular delivery. Marketing focused on employees, employers, and the wider general population including through radio adverts across Sheffield and the City Region, and targeted social media and mobile advertising campaigns. The college also delivered continuing professional development sessions to inform and engage their staff and existing students in the modular offer.

Successes

Key enablers for recruiting to and delivering modular learning were:

- Learner participation in modular learning was facilitated when employers were engaged and supportive.
- Input from employers also helped the college to align modular learning with workforce needs, e.g. flexible starts and a roll-on, roll-off model accommodated shift patterns.
- The provision of information, advice and guidance sessions, skills scans and "get ready" workshops helped to build learner confidence, especially for those

out of education for some time. These activities also enabled the assessment of learner readiness and commitment prior to enrolment.

Lessons learnt

Sheffield College attributed recruitment challenges to employer and learner awareness and perceptions:

- There was limited awareness or familiarity with the language and terminology associated with modular study and HTQs amongst some employers and learners.
- In some cases, learner uncertainty about the courses being “free” (because of the impact on future LLE entitlement) created hesitation to sign up.
- Less established employer relationships acted as a barrier to learner recruitment in some sectors – some employers were less willing to get involved or had limited operational capacity to support employee learning.

Learner experiences and outcomes

Given the small-scale engagement of module learners at Sheffield College, there is relatively limited feedback available on learner outcomes. There were some views praising the accessibility of online provision to accommodate other commitments. There were also positive views on the quality of teaching and support including lesson planning, group discussions, and accessible tutor support. Some positive outcomes were linked to the modular learning experience, including industry-relevant insight, critical thinking and academic skills, confidence boost and support for promotion.

Future provision

Sheffield College plans to build on its experience of delivering modular HTQ learning through the HN Flex model[41] and further develop provision for adult learners. The college sees modular learning as an important part of its future higher level offer providing flexible opportunities for adults to access individual units, develop skills and build towards higher level qualifications in a way that can fit around work and other commitments. This will support the college to broaden participation in higher level learning and respond more flexibly to the needs of adult learners and employers.

[41] A new study option developed for providers across South Yorkshire and North Nottinghamshire enabling modular study at Level 4 and 5.

Shrewsbury College

Shrewsbury College chose to participate in the MAP as it closely aligned with the college's strategic ambition to expand flexible and accessible learning opportunities. The programme provided an excellent opportunity to build on existing plans to increase access to higher education and develop the potential for modular delivery which could better meet the diverse needs of students and support greater participation in higher-level study.

MAP delivery

Shrewsbury College delivered MAP modules in 4 sectors, focusing on the skills priorities outlined in the Local Skills Improvement Plan for the county. The college had a total take up of 76 MAP students, 50 of whom completed their module.

Sector	Student numbers
Business, management and administration	2
Construction, design and build	38
Digital marketing	12
Engineering and manufacturing	24

Source: Shrewsbury College data

Demand raising activity

Shrewsbury College used demand raising funding in a range of ways including:

- organising bespoke meetings with employers
- Skills Advisory Panels in engineering, construction, health and digital sectors, with representatives from each sector per panel
- marketing and advertising strategies such as billboard and television advertisements.

The college initially targeted employers seeking to upskill their employees. They then focused recruitment activities on potential students interested in career change and those returning to education.

Successes

Two of the most significant successes arising from Shrewsbury College's participation in the MAP were strong student recruitment and enhanced employer engagement. The college's demand raising activities and targeted recruitment approaches proved highly effective, generating strong interest and enrolments across several MAP modules. Recruitment attracted a diverse cohort of students, including both employed

individuals seeking to upskill or progress within their careers and adults returning to education to enhance their qualifications and future opportunities. This demonstrated the appeal of modular study in meeting the needs of students who require flexible, bite-sized opportunities to develop higher-level skills.

The strengthening of employer networks were instrumental in ensuring the relevance and value of the modular offer. Employers provided valuable insight into current and emerging workforce skills needs, helping to shape module content and delivery models that aligned with both business requirements and student aspirations. This collaborative approach strengthened the responsiveness of provision and increased confidence that students were developing skills with direct workplace application and value.

Other notable successes included:

- a strong focus on skills priorities for the region, ensuring modules addressed recognised local and regional workforce needs
- particularly effective recruitment within construction and engineering, where employers demonstrated a clear commitment to continuous professional development and workforce upskilling
- positive student progression from standalone modules into full HTQ programmes, demonstrating the effectiveness of modular learning as a flexible entry point into higher-level study
- increased awareness of flexible higher education opportunities among students who may not previously have considered engaging in higher-level learning.

Lessons Learnt

One area of learning for Shrewsbury College's MAP delivery was that a flexible approach to learning did not guarantee students would complete . Around one-third of MAP students did not complete their module, with reasons including personal circumstances (e.g., moving abroad, change in employment), work commitments, or the module not suiting their learning needs. This highlighted the importance of providing clear pre-enrolment guidance, effective student support, and ensuring students are matched to the most appropriate learning opportunity alongside the commitment of their employer.

Other lessons included:

- The varying capacity of employers to support staff participation in modular learning. Whilst some sectors readily embraced opportunities for workforce development, health employers were often less able to release staff to undertake additional study due to operational pressures.
- Some employers required additional support to understand the differences between HNCs, HNDs and HTQs, as well as the role modular learning can

play in workforce development. Whilst this required more engagement than anticipated, it provided valuable opportunities to strengthen employer relationships and will inform more targeted communications in future.

- The importance of clear and consistent processes for credit transfer and progression between institutions as modular provision continues to develop.
- Delivering individual accredited units required adaptations to administrative and registration processes that have traditionally been designed around full qualifications – this provided valuable learning for the college and helped inform more efficient systems and processes to support future modular delivery.

Student experiences and outcomes

MAP students had a positive experience of modular learning at Shrewsbury College. Over four fifths of those that responded to the evaluation survey said the frequency of lessons, course length, and content met their expectations. Similarly, almost all students were satisfied with the delivery methods and teaching quality. Students said their module provided them with more knowledge and skills, and some (particularly those in full-time employment) valued the flexible format of the modules. A few students found assignment completion challenging and would have preferred more contact with their tutor to support this.

Half of Shrewsbury College students reported progression onto further modular or full HTQ learning, and three said they had started an apprenticeship, new job or promotion. Most said that participating in the MAP module had partially or fully helped them with these outcomes. Other outcomes identified by MAP students from Shrewsbury College included:

Self-confidence

Gaining knowledge and transferable skills relevant to industry

'Trying out' modular learning, with some moving to completing a full course

"I learned a lot more than I thought I would." – *Student*

"Gave me more understanding of the construction industry." – Student

"I am considering completing the full course in the future and probably would not have if I hadn't studied these two units." – Student

University of Staffordshire

The University of Staffordshire sought involvement with the MAP as an opportunity to build on their existing HTQ provision in sports science. The intention was to offer modular learning to local learners that were hesitant to get involved in higher education or could not commit to full-time study.

MAP delivery

The University engaged their sports science HTQ partner, Stoke City Football Club's Community Trust, in some decision-making regarding the development of a module offer. A mixture of Level 4 and 5 modules were planned, including:

- Foundations of Sport Coaching and Coaching Diverse Groups (40 credits)
- Exploring Academic Skills and Industry Practice (40 credits)

These modules were selected because they involved mostly applied as opposed to theoretical learning. The intention was for learners to achieve foundational knowledge in an accessible way which would also support further learning.

Early feedback suggested that learner needs would be served best through module delivery on weekdays rather than weekends and through block delivery. However, for the small number of potential learners that showed some initial interest, block delivery was not, in the event, practical. Equally, staff capacity constraints and institutional restrictions meant it was necessary for the University to offer modules as infill on the full qualification courses. This did not sufficiently or flexibly meet the needs of potential learners. As a result, the University were not successful in recruiting or delivering modular learning within the timescales of the MAP.

Demand raising activity

Demand raising activities for MAP modules included: development of a dedicated webpage, an explanatory video (to inform learners of HTQs, credits, modules, semesters, and the LLE), partnership engagement (Staffordshire Football Association), one-to-one employer engagement, local authority engagement, off campus events, open days and outreach sessions.

While around 10 learners expressed interest in the modules, ultimately none converted to enrolments. Some were too young to participate while others were international students who did not meet the criteria. The inability to be flexible in delivery times and model also contributed negatively to conversions.

Successes

Some of the successes arising from the University's involvement with the MAP were:

- connections with employers led to the development of new links and markets for apprenticeships (Level 4 Sports Coach)
- links with the local authority helped raise awareness with future potential learners and, in particular, those with care experience - the University has since become a Signatory of the Care Leaver Covenant
- more partnership working resulted in better understanding of shared performance indicators between the University and partners
- the potential for future module delivery that builds on employer engagement and meets the needs of the sector.

Lessons learnt and future provision

The recruitment challenges faced by the University resulted from issues with awareness, module selection and the ability to deliver flexible models which meet learner needs. They intend to build on this learning from the MAP to accommodate modular provision in the future. Steps will include:

- Awareness campaigns which:
    - help dispel myths and target more hesitant learners e.g. those from vocational backgrounds who believe they do not possess the academic capability required to participate
    - promote the benefits of HTQ and modular learning with employers as an alternative, flexible route for individual staff skills development.
- Module selection and development which provides alternative pathways – adding value (rather than replicating) existing provision (such as free online provision delivered by others, e.g. the Football Association).
- Planning earlier in the academic year to enable staff capacity and capability to deliver standalone modular learning (as opposed to infilling).
- Design more flexible modular study through:
    - a reduction in the number of assessments
    - greater links between subject specialisms to appeal to prospective learners and better prepare them for graduate level employment
    - multiple entry intakes (e.g. joining in Nov, Jan or March)
    - accepting and supporting learners that undertake units from different institutions.

The TEC Partnership

The TEC Partnership engaged with the MAP to help address recruitment challenges and, in particular, bridge the gap for those interested in education but not ready for a full course. They anticipated that MAP delivery would help them to broaden and diversity their offer and encourage more learners into higher education.

MAP delivery

The TEC Partnership operates several sites, with those involved in the MAP being Grimsby Institute and Beverley (East Riding College). They delivered five modules to a total of 44 learners. Two additional module bundles in Early Childhood Studies were initially planned but subsequently not delivered, due to a lack of demand.

Sector	Learner numbers
Early Childhood Studies	22
Health and Care	18
Construction Management	4

Source: The TEC Partnership data

Module selection and design was influenced by a mixture of market intelligence about learner demand and staff capacity to deliver. The former reflected student feedback, initial employer testing and recent recruitment patterns which had indicated a preference for more flexible higher education delivery (linked to the impact of the pandemic and cost of living crisis).

Demand raising activity

Initial demand raising activity involved use of social media channels, targeting local businesses, and promotion through existing events (e.g. Armed Forces weekend). This resulted in some good engagement, with the evaluation survey indicating that learners were more likely to have heard of the MAP via social media than any other marketing routes. There were also some dedicated marketing events which were less successful. Later in the programme the TEC Partnership employed an external company to deliver their marketing plan which built on the TEC Partnership's online presence and simplified messaging to potential learners. This approach generated over 100 new leads, which were followed up by curriculum heads.

Successes

Key enablers for successful MAP module delivery for the TEC Partnership were:

- the MAP timescales offered flexibility to adjust the marketing approach and test modular delivery over several cohorts

- the revised marketing approach, including more accessible materials, resulted in increased demand when the modules were re-run
- the flexibility to offer online delivery for some modules had a positive effect on recruitment.

Lessons learnt

Learner retention on some modules proved difficult (27 of the 44 learners did not complete). This was commonly due to personal reasons (e.g., bereavement, health, moving abroad, change in other circumstances), the course not aligning with career aspirations, or work commitments.

Other challenges included some low levels of understanding about modular learning and the LLE and a lack of engagement from some employers who found it hard to release staff for training. The TEC Partnership thought national marketing materials would have help improve awareness, understanding and recruitment to modular learning and the LLE.

Learner experiences and outcomes

The TEC Partnership's MAP learners had a generally positive experience of modular learning, with many satisfied with the timing, content and teaching quality. Almost all of those who reported progression to more modular learning or a full HTQ course, attributed their education outcomes to the MAP. Some learners highlighted that delivery was tailored to fit adult learner needs (e.g., assignment information was shared early to complete at own pace) and that they valued the hybrid delivery model (mix of in-person and remote learning) which offered flexibility to participate alongside other commitments. Nevertheless, some learners found it difficult to manage the intensity of two modules and the assessments required.

Outcomes for learners participating in the TEC Partnership modules included:

Gaining knowledge and skills relevant to industry

Boost in confidence

Pursuing further education opportunities

> "I want to change careers which I know I will need to have additional qualifications for. This opportunity allowed me to go back to studying and to have a go at seeing if it's right for me." – *MAP learner*

> "The module has directly contributed to securing a new role, including being positively recognised during the interview stage." – *MAP learner*

Appendix B: Learner Vignettes

The following eight learner vignettes were developed to illustrate the range of experiences for MAP learners that had completed modules. They were selected to include a mix of module sector and learner characteristics (age, employment status and prior level of education).

MAP Learner Vignette 1

Sector:	Engineering and manufacturing
Age:	31-40
Module status:	Completed
Previous Qualification Level:	Level 3
Employment status:	In paid employment

Reasons for participating in a MAP module

- The learner reported that, for their career progression, they had planned to do a HTQ in engineering upon completing their apprenticeship. They decided to take part in the MAP after hearing about it from their employer.
- Funding played a major part in their decision as they had personal family commitments and would not have been able to participate without it. However, the learner was unaware of the impact the MAP had on their LLE entitlement, which they did not think had been explained by the provider.

Experience of module delivery

- The learner's experience was generally positive. They highlighted that the tutor explained the content well, provided support with assignments, and much of the content related back to their job. The learner also valued their employer's flexibility who provided them time to complete assignments and attend classes.
- The learner experienced some challenges associated with participating in modular learning. These included personal time sacrifices (e.g., reduced participation in hobbies) and more challenging content compared to their past apprenticeship, in particular noting that the time spent out of education made returning to education more difficult.

Outcomes and next steps

- The learner highlighted various personal outcomes achieved, including better understanding of Microsoft systems, Programmable Logic Controllers and Electrical Machines content, which helped them complete their multi-skills engineer training. The learner signed up to complete the full HTQ. They hoped to receive a promotion following their upskilling at the same company.
- The learner said they recommended the module to other engineers, particularly those interested in maintenance and design.

MAP Learner Vignette 2

Sector:	Digital
Age:	41-50
Module status:	Completed
Previous Qualification Level:	Level 7 or above
Employment status:	Unemployed

Reasons for participating in a MAP module

- The learner came across their MAP module after searching for digital marketing courses in the local area. They were interested in starting an online business and hence wanted to understand the fundamentals of digital marketing.
- The main reasons for choosing this course were the funding and that the provider was trustworthy.

Experience of module delivery

- The learner enjoyed the campus facilities and face-to-face learning, given it provided an opportunity to interact with fellow students. They also liked the flexibility of being provided notes and recordings from sessions to revisit at their own convenience.
- However, the learner did note some challenges with undertaking the module. The assessments were coursework based, and required academic writing, which the learner felt was challenging as the learner had not done this in a long time. One assignment included building a website for a theoretical business, which the learner noted was difficult without the right level of design skills.
- They suggested that optional sessions could be provided to support students with developing these skills.

Outcomes and next steps

- The learner said that the modules had increased their understanding of digital marketing, including website design, marketing funnels and what works for certain demographics. It also helped them enhance their portfolio and provided ideas for their own business. After completion, the learner progressed to a government funded bootcamp in 3D modelling and visualisation, unrelated to the MAP.
- They would recommend modular study to individuals that have never gone to university or have worked in other fields and would like to try out higher-level education.

MAP Learner Vignette 3

Sector:	Engineering and manufacturing
Age:	41-50
Module status:	Completed
Previous Qualification Level:	Level 6
Employment status:	In paid employment

Reasons for participating in a MAP module

- The learner discovered the module through a web search and contacted the provider directly to explore their options. After completing their degree abroad, the learner wanted to better understand the engineering industry in the UK.
- The modular learning approach was especially appealing and suited their learning needs and availability.
- Although funding was appreciated, the lack of this would not have deterred the learner completely.

Experience of module delivery

- The learner reported that the course did not meet their expectations, noting it lacked applied and practical content, the presentations were brief and insufficient, and assignments were demanding with limited guidance. They suggested that the content should relate more to practice and better explanations could be provided in relation to concepts, industry terms and assignment guidance.
- Additionally, they mentioned that balancing employment responsibilities with studying was challenging, especially given the lack of support or flexibility from their employer.
- Despite this, the learner valued the easy sign-up process, locality of the course, flexibility of studying a single module and the face-to-face sessions, which helped with understanding of content.

Outcomes and next steps

- The learner said that the module provided them with UK engineering sector knowledge, broadening their skills and increasing employability. After completing the module, the learner moved into a new engineering role.
- Despite some challenges, the learner highlighted that they would recommend modular learning to others as it makes education more accessible.

MAP Learner Vignette 4

Sector:	Digital
Age:	21-30
Module status:	Completed
Previous Qualification Level:	Level 6
Employment status:	In paid employment

Reasons for participating in a MAP module

- The learner had explored different options to identify a suitable career path following a series of unsuccessful job applications. The module appealed to them as it offered an opportunity to try something new.
- A key motivator to taking up the modules was the funded nature of the programme, as it reduced both the financial commitment and risk of participation. The learner was not aware of the impact on LLE and felt the college should have explained and advertised this better.

Experience of module delivery

Overall, the learner had a positive experience of their MAP module. They particularly valued group presentations and research tasks, the structure of the bi-weekly sessions, and the focus on real-world, practical content. However, the learner identified several challenges, including:

- lessons finished after 30 minutes, despite being scheduled for 2-3 hours, meaning the learner commuted for in-person sessions that did not feel worthwhile. They suggested that the online session they attended was more effective and this format could have been used more
- the course length was too long, noting that it could have been delivered in a shorter timeframe, describing it as being “dragged out”
- the provider should have been clearer regarding the level of independent study required for the course, as the learner felt there was a lot of additional work related to lessons and a lot of commitment for assignments.

Outcomes and next steps

- The learner highlighted increased confidence in using Microsoft Excel, noting that these skills will be transferable to future employment. They also began an apprenticeship in an administration and marketing role, since completing the module. Although unrelated to the MAP module studied, they hope to apply some skills learnt.

MAP Learner Vignette 5

Sector:	Construction, design and build
Age:	21-30
Module status:	Completed
Previous Qualification Level:	Level 3
Employment status:	In paid employment

Reasons for participating in a MAP module

- The learner was considering a HNC and came across this MAP module. They felt undertaking a single module was a more manageable way of "trying it out".
- The learner was driven by a desire to increase their knowledge and update skills, particularly in construction and building regulations, as these are relevant to their role in a family joinery business.
- Funding played a major role in their decision to take up the module, making the opportunity a more appealing, accessible and low-risk way to gain new skills and knowledge, especially given the learner was unsure about committing to longer-term study
- The learner understood the impact on their LLE after personal extensive research and provider clarification upon request.

Experience of module delivery

- The learner described the sign-up process as smooth and straightforward.
- They were also very satisfied with the teaching quality and applied learning approach. They described that modules were structured around real-life scenarios, which helped to bridge the gap between theory and practise.
- The learner highlighted that the time commitment required, their self-confidence and the academic demands of the module were a challenge. Nevertheless, staff responsiveness helped to mitigate these to some extent.
- Moreover, the provider's flexibility to accommodate assignment extensions and different schedules (e.g., offering evening classes) and access to all necessary resources and facilities, were listed as enablers for participation.

Outcomes and next steps

- The module positively impacted the learner's career by enhancing their skills and confidence.
- They reported that modular learning makes higher-level technical education more accessible, and they have recommended it to a colleague.
- The learner would like to pursue a full HNC, but their plans will have to be put on hold for a few years due to personal circumstances.

MAP Learner Vignette 6

Sector:	Business and administration
Age:	31-40
Module status:	Completed
Previous Qualification Level:	Level 2
Employment status:	In paid employment

Reasons for participating in a MAP module

- The learner initially became aware of the module through a careers advisor at the school where they were employed.
- They were drawn to the opportunity because it offered an advance in their career, enhancing their employability, and doing so in a less intensive way.
- The absence of tuition fees was also a key positive factor in their decision to join the MAP.
- The provider clearly explained how further study would affect their LLE, ensuring the learner fully understood its implications.

Experience of module delivery

- The learner described their experience as largely positive, particularly valuing the provision of evening sessions, the additional support provided in small tutor groups, and the overall course length. They noted that their employer was supportive and flexible, which helped make participation more manageable.
- The learner also emphasised that modular learning was especially accessible for mature learners with work and family commitments due to its flexibility.
- The main challenge the learner faced was managing time commitments and balancing assignments alongside work and family life, particularly given the short turnaround between learning sessions and assignment deadlines.

Outcomes and next steps

- The module reaffirmed the learner's confidence and provided them with new qualifications and knowledge. The learner felt that as a result of the MAP, they had continued the HNC parent course and achieved a new job.
- The learner said they would recommend the programme to others but emphasised that it required a significant level of commitment and individuals should be prepared for this before enrolling.

MAP Learner Vignette 7

Sector:	Business and administration
Age:	51-60
Module status:	Completion status unavailable
Previous Qualification Level:	Level 7 and above
Employment status:	In full-time employment

Reasons for participating in a MAP module

- The learner first came across the module through their employer, who suggested to take up the module to support progression into a leadership role.
- The single-module option was appealing to the learner, and they thought it would provide them with the relevant skills for their role and career progression.
- The module being funded also played a major role in their decision making, as neither the learner nor their employer would have been able to finance this.
- The learner's awareness of LLE and how participating in MAP would affect their future LLE entitlement was low, and they felt it was poorly explained.

Experience of module delivery

The learner described their general experience as negative. Firstly, they felt that initial communications from the provider lacked clarity and the information about the MAP was overwhelming and poorly explained at induction. They thought the teaching and content was only somewhat satisfactory, and said they had relied heavily on self-teaching and external sources. Moreover, the learner felt the workload was intense alongside their full-time work duties and personal life commitments. In particular, they noted that assignment deadlines felt quite tight and they required extensions. However, the learner also described some positive experiences, valuing the online format, frequency of sessions and the convenience of recorded sessions. The learner suggested that the module could be improved through planning more "realistic timelines" and extending assessment deadlines to reduce the load on the learner. They also felt initial communication should be improved.

Outcomes and next steps

- The learner highlighted some key benefits including basic exposure to leadership concepts and transferable skills to the workplace. They planned to focus on their current role, with no intention of taking further modules soon.
- The learner felt the module did not suit someone working full-time in the NHS and would not recommend it to similar learners based on this experience.

MAP Learner Vignette 8

Sector:	Health and science
Age:	31-40
Module status:	Completed
Previous Qualification Level:	Level 7 and above
Employment status:	In paid employment

Reasons for participating in a MAP module

- The learner first became aware of the module via a social media advertisement from the provider.
- The main reasons they engaged with the module was because the course content felt relevant to their current role in social care, and it aligned to their personal interests in healthcare and psychology. The learner also felt the module could offer them new skills to support progression into more senior positions.
- The funding played a key role in their decision making, with the learner highlighting they would not have enrolled if fees had applied.
- They had limited awareness of how this module affected their LLE and thought that the provider had not explained this adequately.

Experience of module delivery

- Their initial experiences with signing up to the module were positive. The learner described this as a straightforward process with plenty of guidance and support from the provider.
- The learner's experience undertaking the module was positive and met their expectations. They felt that the teaching was effective and high quality, and that the module coordinator was supportive. The learner particularly valued the small class size, which enabled in-depth interactions and made asking questions easier. They felt that the sessions were flexible, with online attendance permitted if personal commitments hindered their ability to participate in-person. This was useful as childcare responsibilities were the main barrier to participation for this learner.

Outcomes and next steps

- The learner felt that they gained new knowledge relevant to their field and interests, which has contributed to their career progression and employability. They reported that participating in their MAP module contributed to securing a new employment opportunity, in a more senior role.
- The learner said they would not have changed anything about their experience. They believed that modular learning was a great, flexible opportunity for self-development.
- They suggested expanding availability of funded courses would widen access to modular learning opportunities.

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