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RESEARCH & CONSULTANCY

**REPORT (FINAL DRAFT)**

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## Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	4
1.0 INTRODUCTION .....	11
2.0 SQA PROFILE.....	13
2.1 SQA’s Credibility.....	13
2.2 Satisfaction with SQA’s Overall Performance.....	19
2.3 SQA Knowledge and Information Profile .....	20
3.0 SQA QUALIFICATIONS PROFILE.....	23
3.1 Qualification Knowledge and Credibility.....	23
3.2 Changes in Views About SQA Qualifications.....	29
4.0 SQA CONTACT AND COMMUNICATIONS PROFILES .....	33
4.1 Contact Profile .....	33
4.2 Communications Profile.....	37
5.0 SQA CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT PROFILE.....	51
6.0 SQA’S VALUES PROFILE .....	55
7.0 KEY MESSAGES .....	60
7.1 SQA Profile.....	60
7.2 SQA Qualifications Profile .....	60
7.3 SQA Contact and Communication Profiles.....	61
7.4 SQA Consultation and Engagement Profile.....	63
7.5 SQA Values Profile .....	63

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### SQA Profile

- Overall, approaching three out of five respondents in November/December 2023 rated SQA's credibility as being **high** (with this outcome being most notable amongst those in Management roles and Learners), with a third of respondents, overall, believing SQA to have low credibility (with this outcome being most notable amongst Lecturers)
- Since the last survey, there was an increase in the extent to which respondents, overall, believed SQA to have low credibility (with this being exclusively driven by Lecturers)
- For those stating they believe that SQA had high credibility in November/December 2023, this was primarily due to 'SQA having good and well-recognised qualifications', whilst for those believing SQA to have low credibility, this was primarily due to a belief that 'some courses and materials are out of date'
- Between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023, there were increasing unprompted references here to 'beliefs that some courses and materials are out of date', 'issues relating to assessment procedures', 'there being room for improvement in terms of SQA's credibility' and 'speculation about SQA's replacement'
- Overall, respondents in November/December 2023 provided an average score of 6.53 out of a possible 10 in terms of their satisfaction with SQA's performance overall, with highest levels of satisfaction being noted by Learners and there being little change, overall, in this regard since the last survey (although there were changes in this regard within the audiences)
- Overall, almost seven out of ten respondents in November/December 2023 believed that they 'knew enough about SQA', with this outcome

being highest amongst those in Management roles and lowest amongst Learners and, since the last survey, there was a notable increase in beliefs amongst respondents, overall, that they knew enough about SQA (with this being exclusively driven by those in Management roles)

- Amongst those stating that they didn't believe they knew enough about SQA, their primary desire was to know more about 'how decisions are made by SQA', with there being increasing reference here between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023 to desires for more information on 'how decisions are made by SQA', 'course setting' and 'marking schemes'

### **SQA Qualifications Profile**

- In November/December 2023, overall, respondents most commonly stated that they knew enough about 'National 5s', 'HNCs/HNDs' and 'Highers', with lowest levels of belief that enough was known about 'National 1s to National 3s'
- Since the last survey, there were increases in the extent to which, overall, respondents believed they knew enough about 'Highers', 'National 5s' and 'SVQs'
- In November/December 2023, respondents most commonly believed 'National 5s', 'Highers', 'Advanced Highers', 'SVQs', 'HNCs/HNDs' and 'PDAs' to have high credibility and were least likely to believe that 'National 1s to National 4s' have high credibility
- Overall, a third of respondents in November/December 2023 stated that their overall views on the credibility of all qualifications they had heard of – taken together – had changed over the last year (with this outcome being most common amongst Lecturers and Learners), approaching a quarter of respondents stated that their views had changed and become less positive (with this being most likely amongst Lecturers), around one in

eight respondents stated that their views had changed and become more positive (with this being most likely to be the case amongst Learners) and approaching two thirds of respondents stated that their views hadn't changed (with this most likely to be the case amongst those in Management roles)

- Since the last survey, there was a rise in the extent to which respondents, overall, stated that their views had not changed (which was driven by all three audiences) and a decrease in the extent to which respondents' views had changed and become less positive (with this being primarily driven by those in Management roles and Learners)
- For those stating that their views on the credibility of all qualifications they had heard of – taken together – had become more positive, this was primarily due to 'respondents becoming more knowledgeable about SQA per se', 'the recovery of qualifications post-COVID' and 'respondents being more knowledgeable about SQA qualifications', whilst for those whose views had become less positive, this was primarily due to beliefs that 'questions and/or subjects requiring to be updated' and 'standards of qualifications having lowered'

### **SQA Contact and Communications Profile**

- Approaching three out of five respondents in November/December 2023 stated that they had had contact from SQA or have contacted SQA (with this being the case most prominently amongst those in Management roles and, thereafter, Lecturers) and, between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023, there was a notable increase in the extent to which respondents stated that they had had contact from SQA or had contacted SQA (with this increase being driven by those in Management roles and Lecturers)
- Amongst those who had had contact from SQA or had contacted SQA, a rating of 6.89 out of a possible 10 was provided in terms of this contact/

these contacts (with the highest ratings being provided by those in Management roles and Learners) and this rating increasing since the last survey (with this being primarily driven by Learners)

- For those noting a positive rating of their SQA's contacts, this was primarily due to 'SQA's quick response to queries' and, since the last survey, there were notable increases in unprompted references to a range of other reasons for providing a positive rating of SQA contacts
- Respondents in November/December 2023 provided an average score of 6.54 out of a possible 10 in terms of the appropriateness of 'the level of detail of communications' (with this outcome being highest amongst those in Management roles and Learners) and, since the last survey, there was a notable increase in the rating provided in this regard (with this being driven by those in Management roles and Learners)
- Respondents in November/December 2023, provided an average score of 6.50 out of a possible 10 in terms of the 'clarity of communications from SQA' (with this outcome being highest amongst those in Management roles and Learners) and, since the last survey, there was a rise in the overall rating provided in this regard (with this being driven by those in Management roles and Learners)
- In November/December 2023 respondents provided a rating of 6.45 out of a possible 10 in terms of the 'timeliness of communications from SQA' (with this outcome being highest amongst Learners and those in Management roles) and, since the last survey, there was a notable increase in the rating provided in this regard (with increases being apparent across all three audiences and most notable amongst Learners)
- Respondents in November/December 2023 noted an average score of 6.55 out of a possible 10 in terms of their 'overall rating of communications with SQA' (with this outcome being highest amongst those in Management roles and Learners) and, since the last survey, there was a notable

increase in the overall rating provided in this regard (with this increase being driven by those in Management roles and Learners)

- For those providing a positive rating for SQA in terms of their overall communications, this was primarily due to ‘SQA providing a good service in terms of its communications’, ‘respondents receiving regular communication updates’, ‘communications being helpful’, ‘SQA’s quick response to queries during communications’ and ‘communications being informative’
- For those providing a poor rating of SQA in terms of their overall communications, this was primarily due to ‘general communications being poor’, ‘communications being slow’, ‘communications being too late’ and ‘personal experience of SQA communications’
- Respondents in November/December 2023 most commonly made prompted reference to ‘direct mail’ being their preferred communications channel, particularly those in Management roles (although there is a possibility that respondents have interpreted the term ‘direct mail’ to refer to ‘direct email’)
- Approaching three out of five Lecturers, those in Management roles and Learners collectively in November/December 2023 stated that they ‘understand the communications issued by SQA’ (particularly those in Management roles)
- Approaching half of Lecturers and those in Management roles collectively in November/December 2023 agreed ‘they receive clear information about SQA that helps them carry out their role’, well over half believed that ‘the quantity of emails they receive is about right’ and over half believed that ‘the frequency of newsletters is about right’. In all three cases, these views were most likely to be noted by those in Management roles



- A third of Learners in November/December 2023 believed that the quantity of publications they receive from SQA is 'about right', with one in five believing that they 'don't receive enough publications'

### **SQA Consultation and Engagement Profile**

- In terms of consultation and engagement, respondents in November/December 2023 provided an average score of 5.89 out of a possible 10 (with this score being highest amongst Learners and those in Management roles), with there only being a slight – although statistically significant – increase in this regard since the last survey
- For those providing a positive rating in terms of SQA's consultation and engagement, this was primarily due to 'good consultation exclusively' or 'good engagement exclusively', whilst for those providing a poor rating in this regard, this was primarily due to 'lack of engagement', 'lack of communication' and 'respondents not being consulted'
- Between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023, there was increasing unprompted reference to positive ratings of 'good consultation', 'good engagement' and 'good communications during consultation/engagement' being reasons for the provision of a positive rating here

### **SQA's Values Profile**

- In November/December 2023, almost exactly half of respondents agreed that 'SQA can be trusted' (particularly those in Management roles and, thereafter, Learners), two in five respondents agreed that 'SQA is an enabling organisation' (particularly those in Management roles and, thereafter, Learners) and approaching two out of five respondents agreed that 'SQA is a progressive organisation' (particularly amongst those in Management roles)

- There was little difference, overall, in the outcomes here between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023 in terms of agreement that ‘SQA can be trusted’ (although there were notable changes within audiences, partly relating to respondents being unable to express an opinion or providing neutral responses here) there was an increased extent to which respondents agreed that ‘SQA is an enabling organisation’ (with this being driven by those in both Management roles and Learners) and there was an increasing extent to which, overall, respondents believed ‘SQA to be a progressive organisation’ (with this being primarily driven by those in Management roles)
- In November/December 2023, overall, one in five respondents disagreed that ‘SQA can be trusted’ (particularly Lecturers), a quarter of respondents disagreed that ‘SQA is an enabling organisation’ (particularly Lecturers) and three out of ten disagreed that ‘SQA is a progressive organisation’ (once again, particularly amongst Lecturers)
- Since the last survey, there was a notable increase in the extent to which, overall, respondents disagreed that ‘SQA can be trusted’ (with this being very largely driven by Lecturers), a notable increase in the extent to which respondents disagreed that ‘SQA is an enabling organisation’ (with, again, this being primarily driven by Lecturers) and a notable increase in the extent to which respondents, overall, disagreed that ‘SQA is a progressive organisation’ (with this increase, once again, being overwhelmingly driven by Lecturers)

## Key Theme

- There is a key theme which is apparent throughout the outcomes of this research in that, although overall numbers are similar or marginally better since the last survey phases, results for Lecturers tend to be poorer in relative terms, whilst there is a general improvement in outcomes for Management and Learners

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report details findings to emerge from research undertaken on behalf of SQA by Ashbrook Research & Consultancy Ltd.

The research focused on the derivation of information from three respondent types:

- Individuals with teaching responsibilities in Scottish FE colleges ('Lecturers')
- Individuals with management responsibilities in Scottish FE colleges ('those in Management roles')
- Individuals learning in Scottish FE colleges ('Learners')

The information was collected during November and December 2023 by means of the administration of an online questionnaire, with the following number of responses being achieved:

- Those in Management roles (101)
- Lecturers (160)
- Learners (143)

Each of the three audiences were weighted equally during the analysis process.

Sections 2.0 to 6.0 inclusive provide the following profiles for:

- SQA
- SQA's qualifications
- SQA's contact and communication
- SQA's consultation and engagement
- SQA's values

Within each of these sections, where possible and appropriate:

- Variances between each of the three audiences are noted
- Variances in outcomes from the most recent research and that undertaken in February/March 2023 are noted

All of the variances noted in both regards are statistically significant. It should be stressed that those variances that are cited are the most notable statistically significant variances, but that not all statistically significant variances are cited due to a desire to avoid producing an overly lengthy report.

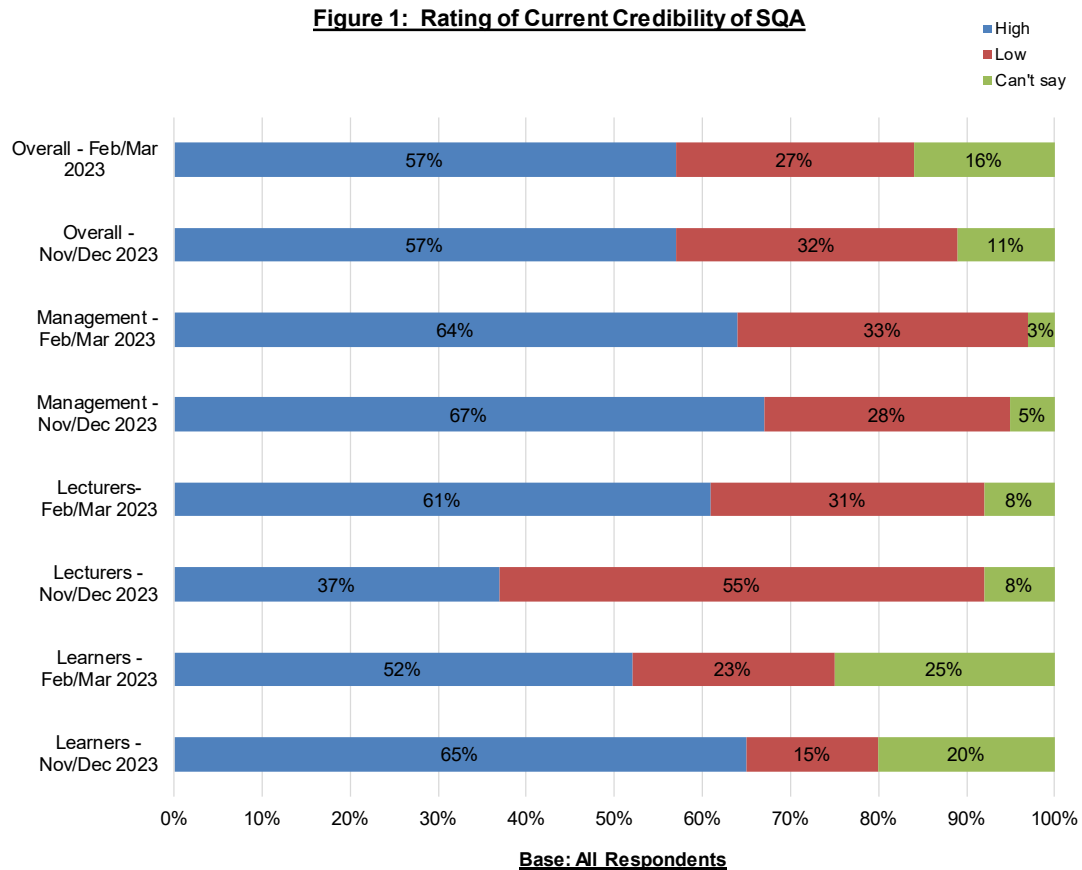
The statistical tests applied to data to test the significance of variances found in the data samples was determined by the type of data/variable that was being tested and included chi-square tests, t tests and analysis of variance, with SPSS being used to carry out both survey analysis and statistical testing.

Finally, Section 7.0 provides a number of key messages for SQA which emerged from the research that was undertaken.

## 2.0 SQA PROFILE

### 2.1 SQA’s Credibility

*‘How would you rate the current credibility of SQA?’*



From Figure 1, it can be seen that, overall, approaching three out of five respondents in November/December 2023 (57%) rated SQA’s credibility as being **high**, with this outcome being most notable amongst those in Management roles and Learners (67% and 65% respectively compared to 37% for Lecturers).

Figure 1 also indicates that, overall, a third of respondents in November/December 2023 (32%) believed SQA to have **low credibility**, with this outcome being most notable amongst Lecturers (55% compared to 28% and 15% respectively for those in Management roles and Learners).

It should also be stressed that Learners were far more likely to provide a '**can't say**' response here (20% compared to 8% and 5% respectively for Lecturers and those in Management roles).

From Figure 1, it can also be seen that, between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023, there was no change in terms of the percentage of respondents, overall, who believed SQA to have **high credibility**, an increase in the extent to which respondents, overall, believed SQA to have **low credibility** (rising from 27% to 32%) and a decrease in the provision of '**can't say**' responses overall (falling from 16% to 11%).

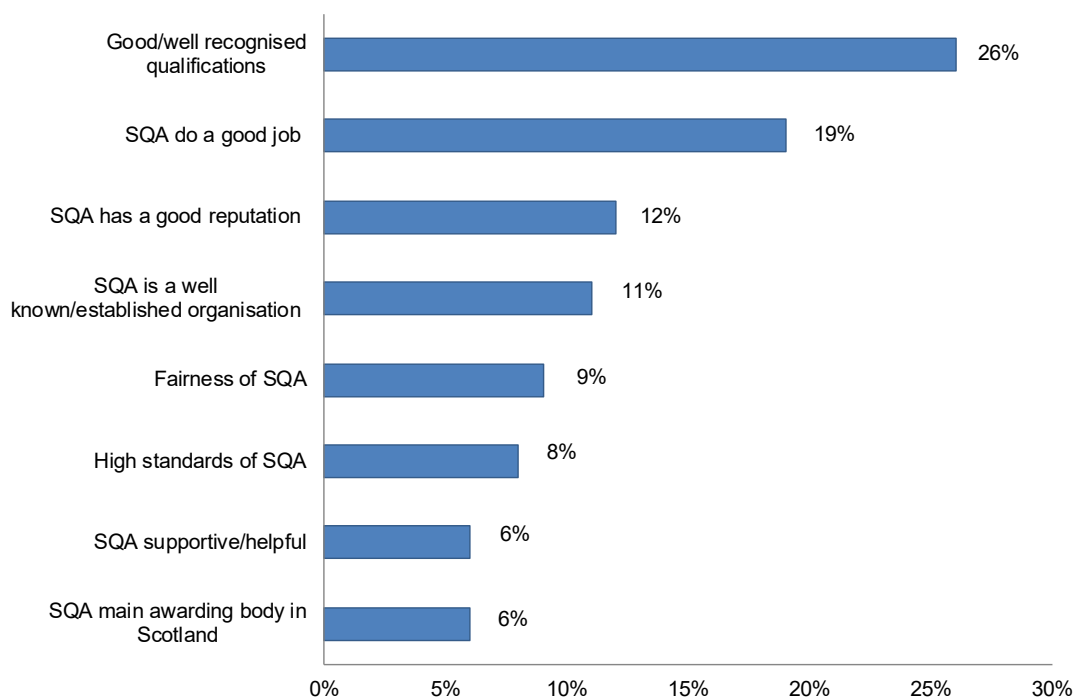
Further examination of the data indicated that the increase in the score for perceived low credibility was exclusively driven by Lecturers (rising from 31% to 55%). Indeed, for the two remaining audiences, perceptions of low credibility fell between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023, ie:

- Those in Management roles (falling from 33% to 28%)
- Learners (falling from 23% to 15%)

It should also be noted that the decreased provision of '**can't say**' responses here was exclusively driven by Learners (falling from 25% to 20%).

*‘Why did you provide this rating?’*

**Figure 2: Reason for Providing High Rating of SQA Credibility (Unprompted)**



**Base: Respondents Believing SQA to Have High Credibility**

From Figure 2, it can be seen that, when those stating their belief that SQA had **high credibility** were asked – on an unprompted basis – why this was the case, their **primary response** focused around ‘SQA having good and well-recognised qualifications’ (26%).

Thereafter, secondary unprompted mention was made in this regard of a number of other reasons, including:

- Beliefs that SQA ‘does a good job’ (19%)
- SQA having a good reputation (12%)
- SQA being a well-known and well-established organisation (11%)

Further examination of the data indicated the following differences in terms of a number of the outcomes noted in Figure 2 being most prominently cited by the audience types indicated below:

- **SQA having good and well-recognised qualifications:** those in Management roles (30% compared to 25% and 20% respectively for Lecturers and Learners)
- **Beliefs that SQA ‘does a good job’:** Lecturers (27% compared to 18% and 15% respectively for those in Management roles and Learners)
- **SQA has a good reputation:** those in Management roles and Learners (14% and 13% respectively compared to 6% for Lecturers)
- **SQA being a well-known and well-established organisation:** those in Management roles and Lecturers (16% and 12% respectively compared to 2% for Learners)

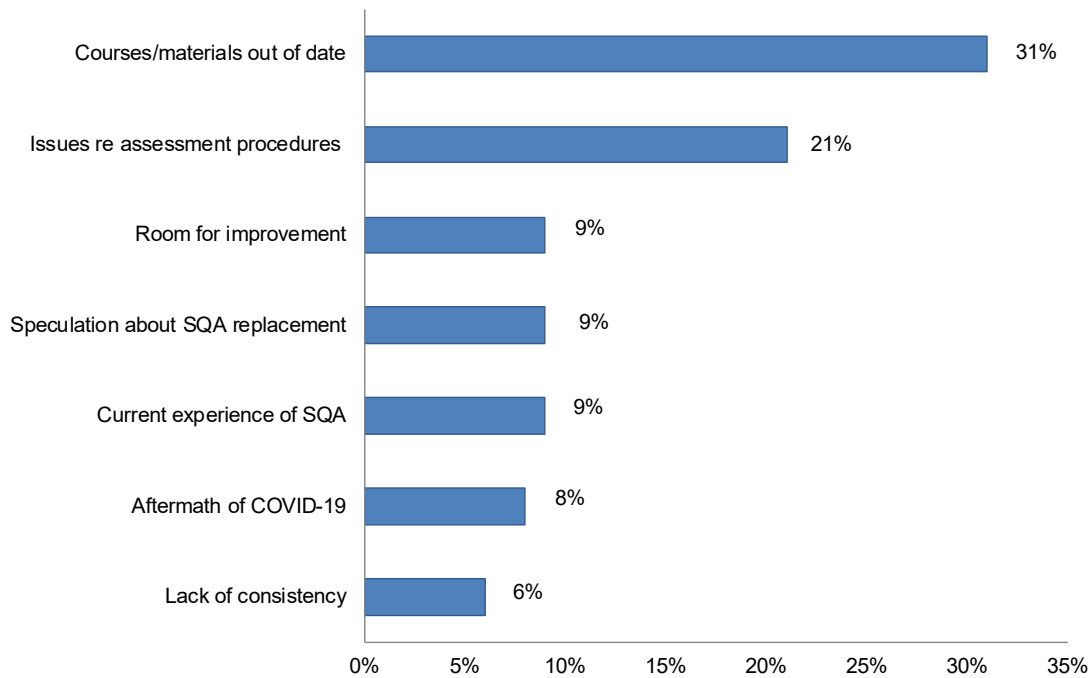
Further examination of the data also indicated that, since the last survey, there were notable differences in terms of a number of the reasons cited in Figure 2, including **increased unprompted reference** to:

- SQA having good and well-recognised qualifications (rising from 14% to 28%)
- SQA having a good reputation (rising from 2% to 12%)
- The fairness of SQA (rising from 0% to 9%)
- SQA having high standards (rising from 3% to 8%)



*‘Why did you provide a low rating of SQA’s credibility?’*

**Figure 3: Reason for Providing Low Rating of SQA Credibility (Unprompted)**



**Base: Respondents Believing SQA to Have Low Credibility**

When those stating their belief that SQA had **low credibility** were asked – again, on an unprompted basis – why they believed this to be the case, Figure 3 indicates that their **primary response** focused around a belief that ‘some courses and materials are out of date’ (31%).

Thereafter, **secondary unprompted mention** was made here of ‘respondents having issues relating to assessment procedures’ (21%).

Further examination of the data here indicated that the following audience types were most likely to make unprompted reference here to the reasons noted below:

- **Some courses and materials being out of date:** those in Management roles and, thereafter, Lecturers (48% and 25% respectively compared to 11% for Learners)
- **Issues regarding assessment procedures:** exclusively Lecturers and those in Management roles (26% and 10% respectively)

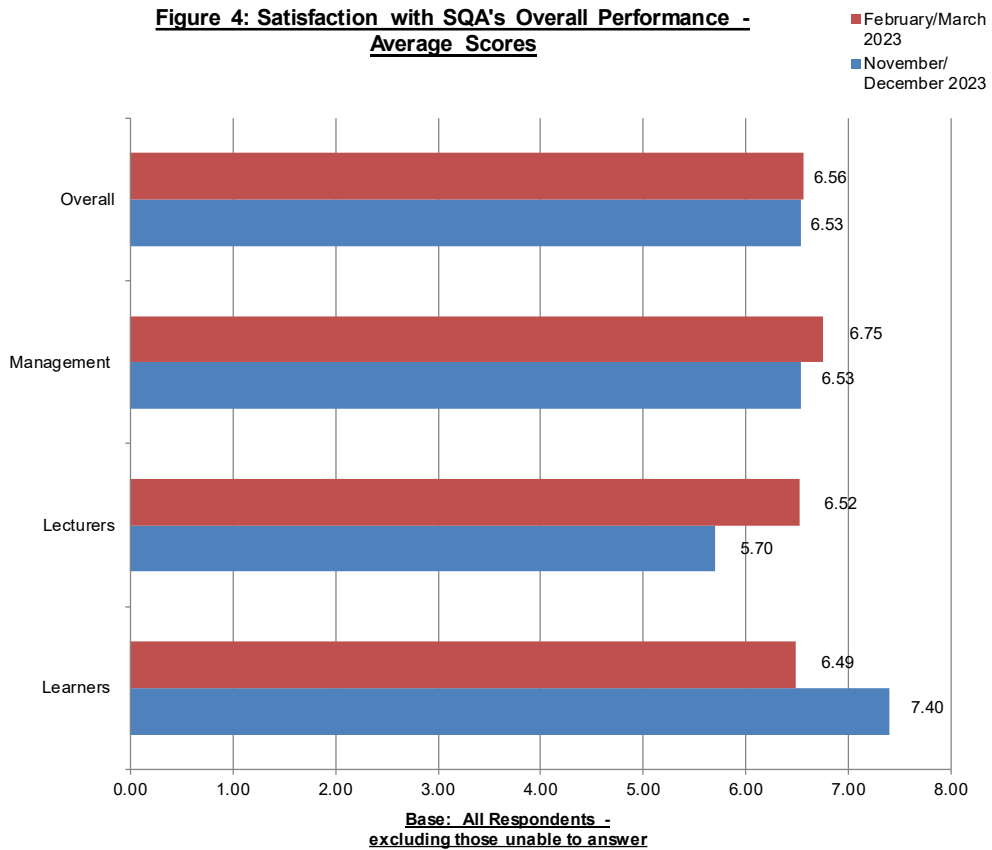
It should be noted that references to ‘issues relating to assessment procedures’ were almost exclusively noted by Lecturers and those in Management roles and, although none emerged with notable prominence here, the issues most commonly cited related to ‘students being over assessed in some subjects’, ‘outdated assessment materials and criteria’, ‘assessments being dumbed down’ and ‘guidance for assessment being vague, restrictive or ambiguous’.

Further examination of the data also indicated that, between February/ March 2023 and November/December 2023, there were notable differences in terms of a number of the reasons noted in Figure 2, including **increasing unpromoted references** to:

- Beliefs that some courses and materials are out of date (rising from 16% to 31%)
- Issues relating to assessment procedures (rising from 0% to 21%)
- There being ‘room for improvement’ in terms of SQA’s credibility (rising from 0% to 9%)
- Speculation about SQA’s replacement (rising from 0% to 9%)

## 2.2 Satisfaction with SQA’s Overall Performance

*‘How satisfied would you say you are with the performance of SQA overall, where ‘1’ means ‘completely dissatisfied’ and ‘10’ means ‘completely satisfied’?’*



Overall, respondents in November/December 2023 provided an average score of 6.53 out of a possible 10 in terms of their satisfaction with SQA’s performance overall, with **highest levels of satisfaction** being noted by **Learners**, ie:

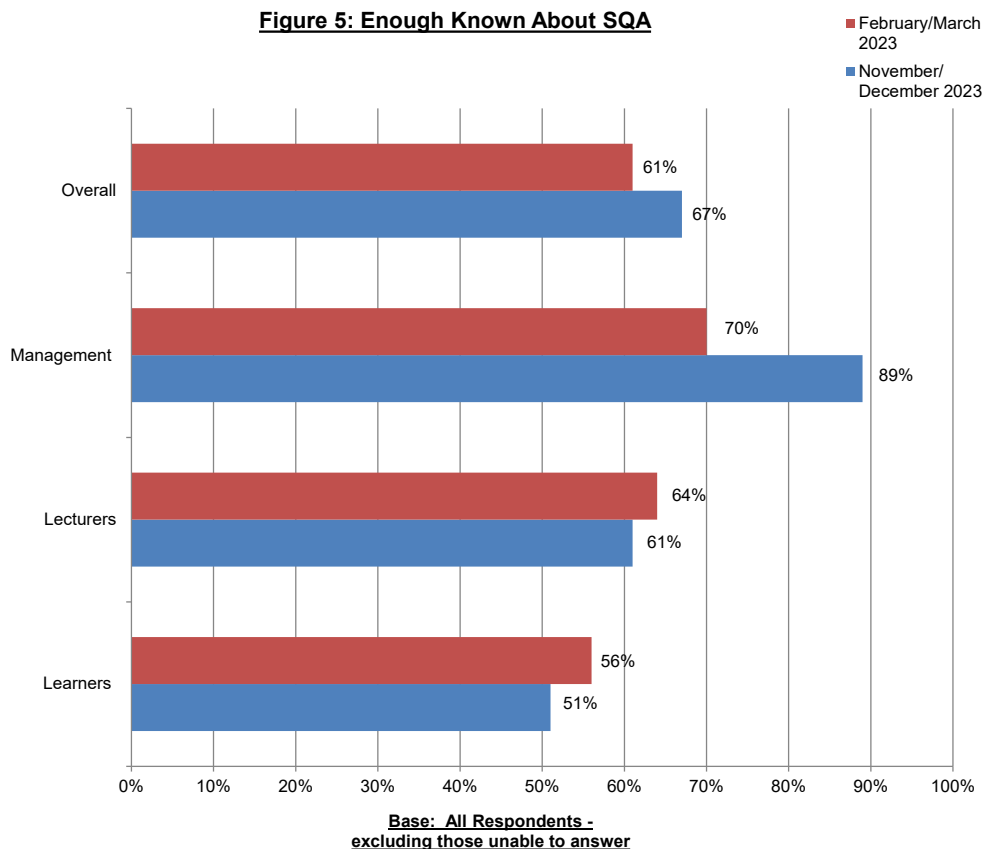
- Learners (7.40)
- Those in Management roles (6.53)
- Lecturers (5.70)

Figure 4 also indicates that, overall, there was very little change between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023 in terms of satisfaction with SQA’s performance overall (falling from 6.56 to 6.53 out of a possible 10). However, during that time, there were

decreases in levels of satisfaction amongst those in Management roles (from 6.75 to 6.53) and Lecturers (from 6.52 to 5.70), with these falls being very largely counterbalanced by increased levels of satisfaction amongst Learners (from 6.49 to 7.40).

### 2.3 SQA Knowledge and Information Profile

*‘Do you believe you know enough about SQA?’*



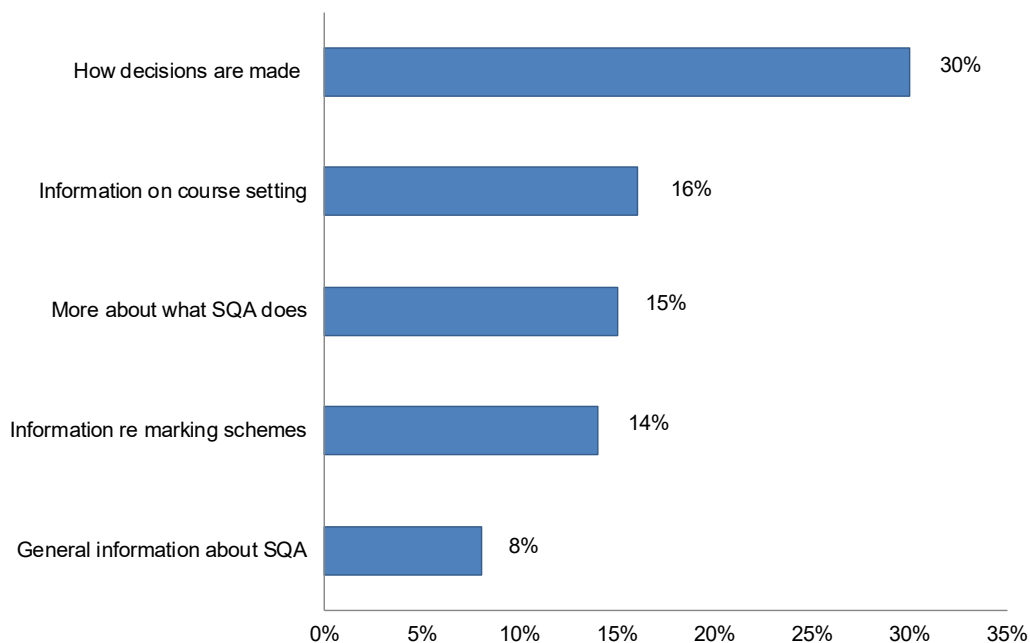
Overall, two thirds of respondents in November/December 2023 (67%) stated their belief that they knew enough about SQA, with this outcome being **highest** amongst those in Management roles and lowest amongst **Learners**, ie:

- Those in Management roles (89%)
- Lecturers (61%)
- Learners (51%)

Figure 5 also indicates that, between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023, there was a notable increase in beliefs amongst respondents, overall, that they knew enough about SQA (rising from 61% to 67%). This rise was exclusively driven by those in Management roles (with a rise from 70% to 89%). Indeed, it should be noted that, during that time, there were small falls in beliefs that enough was known about SQA by Lecturers (falling from 64% to 61%) and Learners (falling from 56% to 51%).

*‘What would you like to know more about SQA?’*

**Figure 6: Information Desires re SQA (Unprompted)**



**Base: Respondents not Knowing Enough About SQA**

When those who did not believe that they knew enough about SQA were asked – on an unprompted basis – what they would like to know more about SQA, Figure 6 indicates that their **primary response** was that of ‘how decisions are made by SQA’ (30%).

Thereafter, **some unprompted mention** was made here of desires for:

- Information on course setting (16%)
- More information about what SQA does (15%)
- More information about marking schemes (14%)

It should be noted that the subsample of respondents here is insufficient to allow a meaningful breakdown on the basis of respondent type. However, it is worth noting that references to ‘general information about SQA’ was exclusively cited by Learners (24%), whilst ‘information on course setting’ was exclusively cited by Teachers and those in Management roles (28% and 13% respectively).

It should also be noted that, since the last survey, there was **increasing unprompted reference** made here for desires for more information on:

- How decisions are made by SQA (rising from 5% to 30%)
- Course setting (rising from 5% to 16%)
- Marking schemes (rising from 0% to 14%)

### 3.0 SQA QUALIFICATIONS PROFILE

#### 3.1 Qualification Knowledge and Credibility

*‘Do you think you know enough about SQA qualifications of which you are aware?’*

**Table 1: Enough Known About Qualifications of Which Respondents Are Aware**

	Overall		Management		Lecturers		Learners	
	Feb/Mar 2023	Nov/Dec 2023	Feb/Mar 2023	Nov/Dec 2023	Feb/Mar 2023	Nov/Dec 2023	Feb/Mar 2023	Nov/Dec 2023
Highers	70%	87%	84%	93%	83%	79%	78%	86%
Advanced Highers	68%	65%	68%	73%	64%	54%	70%	68%
National 1s	33%	43%	26%	31%	26%	22%	56%	57%
National 2s	38%	44%	26%	31%	26%	24%	54%	57%
National 3s	51%	44%	37%	34%	30%	30%	58%	67%
National 4s	77%	50%	73%	76%	65%	67%	78%	76%
National 5s	82%	72%	90%	92%	78%	88%	81%	83%
HNCs/HNDs	87%	83%	89%	97%	90%	91%	84%	74%
PDA	67%	79%	78%	90%	74%	58%	54%	48%
SVQs	61%	83%	65%	82%	65%	50%	60%	69%

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From Table 1, it can be seen that, in November/December 2023, overall, respondents **most commonly** stated that they knew enough about the following qualifications of which they were aware:

- Highers (87%)
- HNCs and HNDs (83%)
- SVQs (83%)
- PDAs (79%)

Table 1 also indicates that **lowest levels** of belief that enough was known about qualifications of which respondents are aware related to:

- National 1s (43%)
- National 2s (44%)
- National 3s (44%)

Further examination of the data indicated that **highest levels** of belief that enough is known about qualifications of which respondents were noted by the audience types indicated:

- **National 1s:** Learners (57%)
- **National 2s:** Learners (57%)
- **National 3s:** Learners (67%)
- **HNCs/HNDs:** those in Management roles and Lecturers (97% and 91% respectively)
- **PDAs:** those in Management roles (90%)
- **SVQs:** those in Management roles and Learners (82% and 69% respectively)

Table 1 also indicates that, between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023, there were **increases** in the extent to which, overall, respondents believed they knew enough about a number of the qualifications of which they were aware:



- Highers (rising from 70% to 87%)
- National 1s (rising from 33% to 41%)
- National 2s (rising from 38% to 44%)
- PDAs (rising from 67% to 79%)

In contrast, between February/March 2023 and November/December 2024, there were **decreases** in relation to the following qualifications:

- National 3s (falling from 51% to 44%)
- National 4s (falling from 77% to 50%)
- National 5s (falling from 82% to 72%)

*‘How would you rate the credibility of qualifications of which you are aware?’*

**Table 2: Perceived High Credibility of Qualifications of Which Respondents Are Aware**

	Overall		Management		Lecturers		Learners	
	Feb/Mar 2023	Nov/Dec 2023	Feb/Mar 2023	Nov/Dec 2023	Feb/Mar 2023	Nov/Dec 2023	Feb/Mar 2023	Nov/Dec 2023
Highers	79%	87%	77%	90%	84%	76%	76%	94%
Advanced Highers	84%	86%	74%	91%	94%	73%	80%	94%
National 1s	54%	43%	59%	38%	66%	23%	60%	62%
National 2s	47%	44%	61%	38%	65%	27%	58%	62%
National 3s	34%	44%	51%	42%	63%	37%	55%	53%
National 4s	41%	50%	53%	48%	62%	43%	63%	66%
National 5s	80%	72%	76%	75%	79%	60%	83%	87%
HNCs/HNDs	84%	83%	83%	88%	81%	74%	88%	89%
PDAs	80%	79%	84%	87%	79%	62%	77%	87%
SVQs	81%	83%	83%	92%	86%	68%	75%	81%

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From Table 2, it can be seen that, in November/December 2023, the qualifications of which respondents were aware which were **most commonly** perceived to have **high credibility** were:

- Highers (87%)
- Advanced Highers (86%)
- HNCs and HNDs (83%)
- SVQs (83%)
- PDAs (79%)
- National 5s (72%)

Table 2 also indicates that the qualifications of which respondents were aware which were **least commonly** believed to have **high credibility** were:

- National 1s (43%)
- National 2s (44%)
- National 3s (44%)
- National 4s (50%)

It should also be noted that Table 2 indicates that levels of **perceived high credibility** of qualifications of which respondents were aware were noted by the following audience types:

- **Highers:** Learners and those in Management roles (94% and 90% respectively)
- **National 1s:** Learners (62%)
- **National 2s:** Learners (62%)
- **National 3s:** Learners (53%)
- **National 4s:** Learners (66%)
- **National 5s:** Learners (87%)
- **HNCs/HNDs:** Learners and those in Management roles (89% and 88% respectively)

- **PDAs:** those in Management roles and Learners (both 87%)
- **SVQs:** those in Management roles and Learners (92% and 81% respectively)

Table 2 also indicates that, between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023, there were **notable increases** in the extent to which those aware of a number of qualifications believed them to have high credibility, namely:

- Highers (rising from 79% to 87%)
- National 3s (rising from 34% to 44%)
- National 4s (rising from 41% to 50%)

In contrast, there were notable **decreases** noted here in relation to:

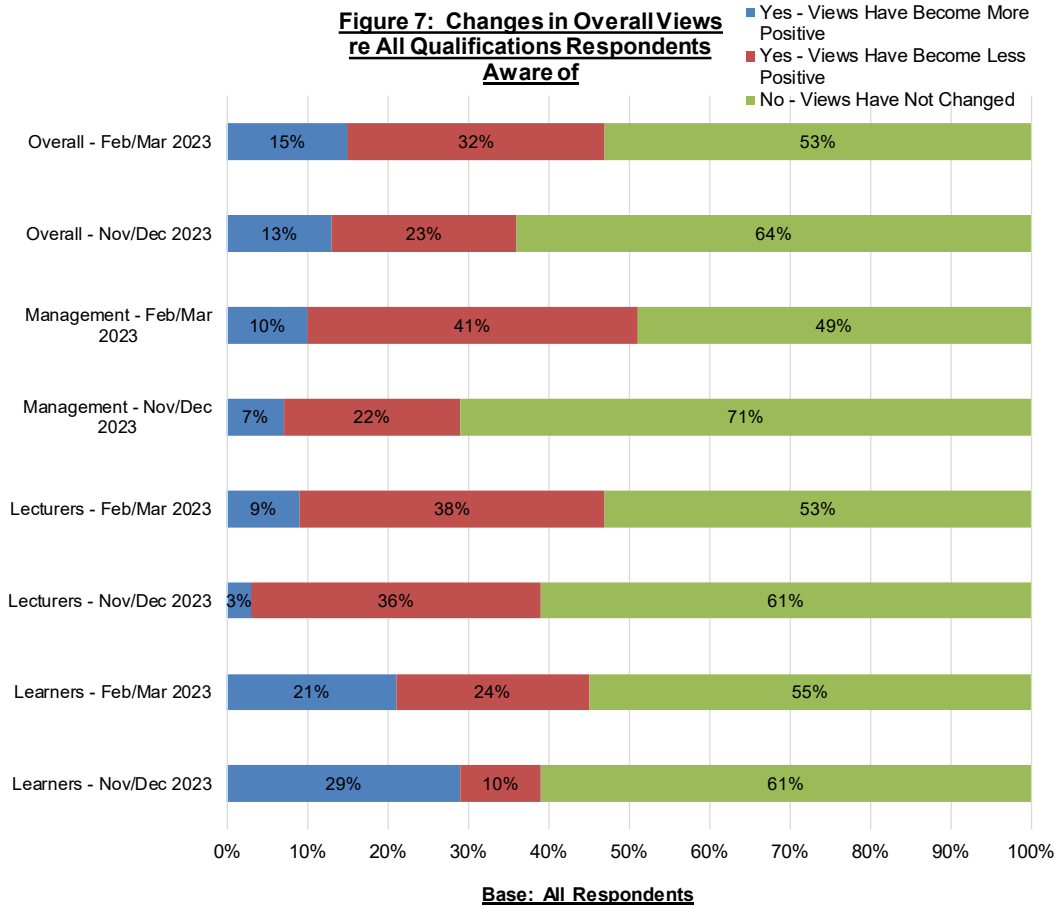
- National 1s (falling from 54% to 43%)
- National 5s (falling from 80% to 72%)

It can also be seen from Table 2 that, since the last survey, there were notable **decreases** in the extent to which those aware of a number of qualifications believed them to have high credibility, with these decreases being **primarily** driven by:

- **National 1s:** those in Management roles (falling from 59% to 38%) and Lecturers (falling from 66% to 23%)
- **National 2s:** those in Management roles (falling from 61% to 38%) and Lecturers (falling from 65% to 27%)
- **National 3s:** Lecturers (falling from 63% to 37%) and, thereafter, those in Management roles (falling from 51% to 42%)
- **National 4s:** Lecturers (falling from 62% to 43%)
- **National 5s:** Lecturers (falling from 79% to 60%)

### 3.2 Changes in Views About SQA Qualifications

*‘Have your overall views on the credibility of all of the qualifications you have heard of taken together changed over the last year?’*



From Figure 7, it can be seen that, overall, over a third of respondents in November/December 2023 (36%) stated their views on the credibility of all qualifications they had heard of – taken together – had changed over the last year, with this outcome being most common amongst Lecturers and Learners (both 39% compared to 29% for those in Management roles).

Figure 7 also indicates that, overall, approaching a quarter of respondents in November/December 2023 stated that their views had changed and become **less positive** (23%), with this being most likely to be the case amongst Lecturers (36%).

Overall, around one in eight respondents in November/December 2023 (13%) – whose views on qualifications had changed – stated that they had become **more positive**, with this most likely to be the case amongst Learners (29%).

Finally, Figure 7 indicates that, overall, approaching two thirds of respondents in November/December 2023 (64%) – whose views on qualifications of which they had heard – stated that their views **hadn't changed**, with this most likely to be the case amongst those in Management roles (71%).

In terms of changes since the last survey, it can be seen from Figure 7 that it was apparent that there was:

- A rise in the extent to which respondents stated that their views had not changed (rising from 53% to 64%), which was driven by all three audiences, ie
  - Those in Management roles (rising from 49% to 71%)
  - Lecturers (rising from 53% to 61%)
  - Learners (rising from 55% to 61%)
- A decrease in the extent to which respondent views had changed and become less positive (falling from 32% to 23%), with this being primarily driven by those in Management roles (falling from 41% to 22%) and Learners (falling from 24% to 10%)

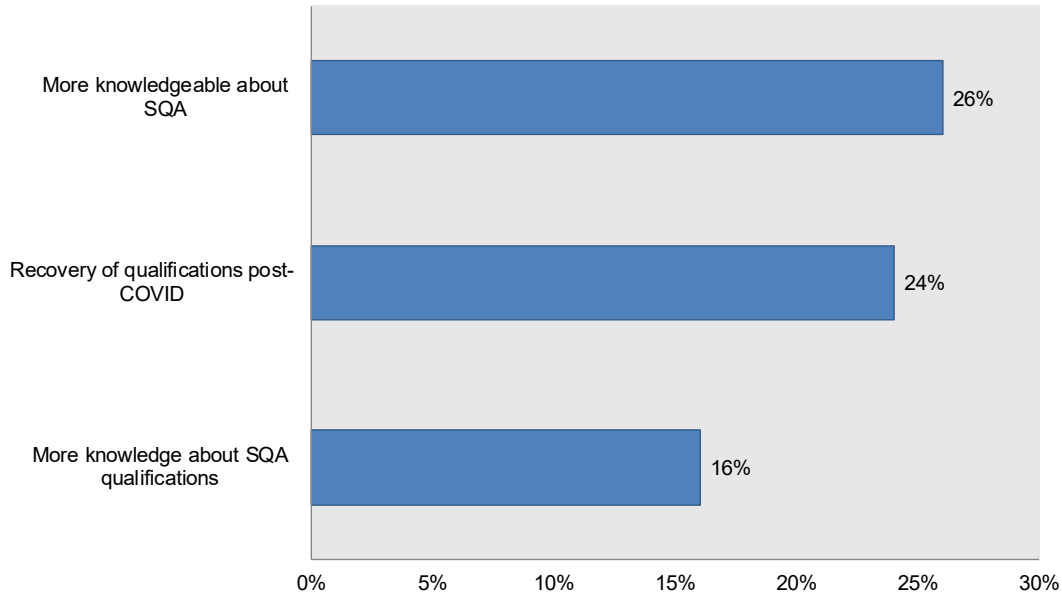
Lastly, it should be noted that, although there was little change between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023 in terms of overall beliefs that views had changed and had become more positive (falling by only 2%), there are two variances which are worth noting, namely:

- A decreasing extent to which this was the case amongst Lecturers (falling from 9% to 3%)

- An increasing extent to which this was believed to be the case amongst Learners (rising from 21% to 29%)

*'In which ways have your views become more positive?'*

**Figure 8: Ways In Which Views on the Overall Credibility of Qualifications Have Become More Positive (Unprompted) - Indicative**



**Base: Views Have Become More Positive in Figure 7**

When those stating that their views on the credibility of all qualifications they had heard of – taken together – had become **more positive** over the last year were asked (on an unprompted basis) why this was the case, Figure 8 indicates that their **principal responses** focused around:

- Respondents becoming more knowledgeable about SQA per se (26%)
- The recovery of qualifications post-COVID (24%)
- Respondents being more knowledgeable about SQA qualifications (16%)

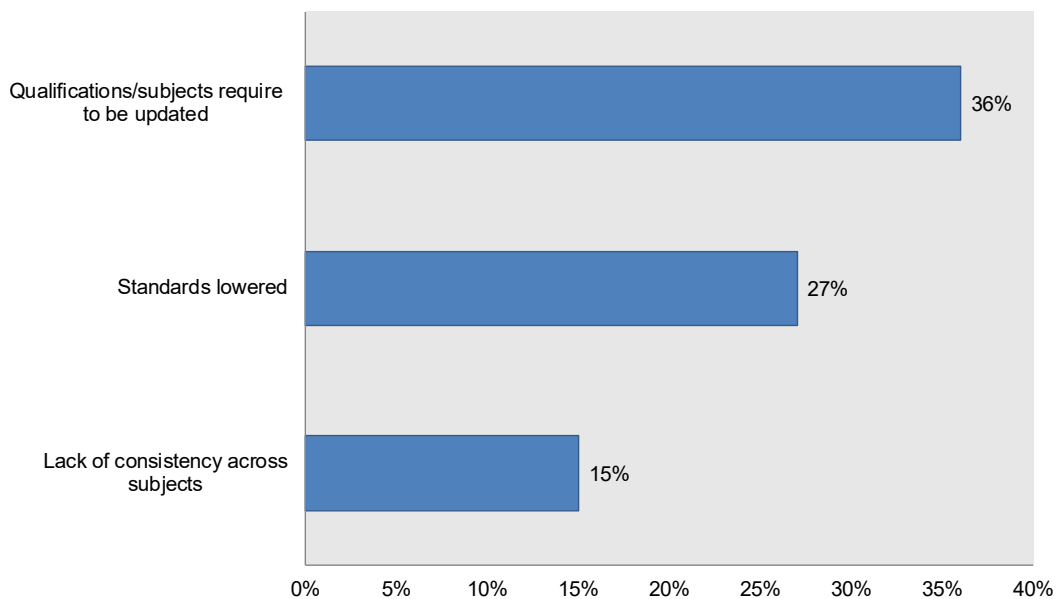
It should be noted that the subsample of respondents here is insufficient to allow a meaningful breakdown to be provided on the basis of respondent type.

Similarly, the subsample of respondents here is insufficient to allow comparisons to be drawn between reasons cited by respondents in February/March 2023 and in November/December 2023.

It should be noted that both of the above comments also relate to the outcomes presented in Figure 9.

*‘In which ways have your views become less positive?’*

**Figure 9: Ways In Which Views on the Overall Credibility of Qualifications Have Become Less Positive (Unprompted)**



**Base: Views Have Become Less Positive in Figure 7**

When those stating that their views on the credibility of all of the qualifications they had heard of had become **less positive** over the last year were asked – on an unprompted basis – why this was the case, Figure 9 indicates that **primary reference** was made here to beliefs that:

- Qualifications and/or subjects require to be updated (36%)
- Standards of qualifications have lowered (27%)

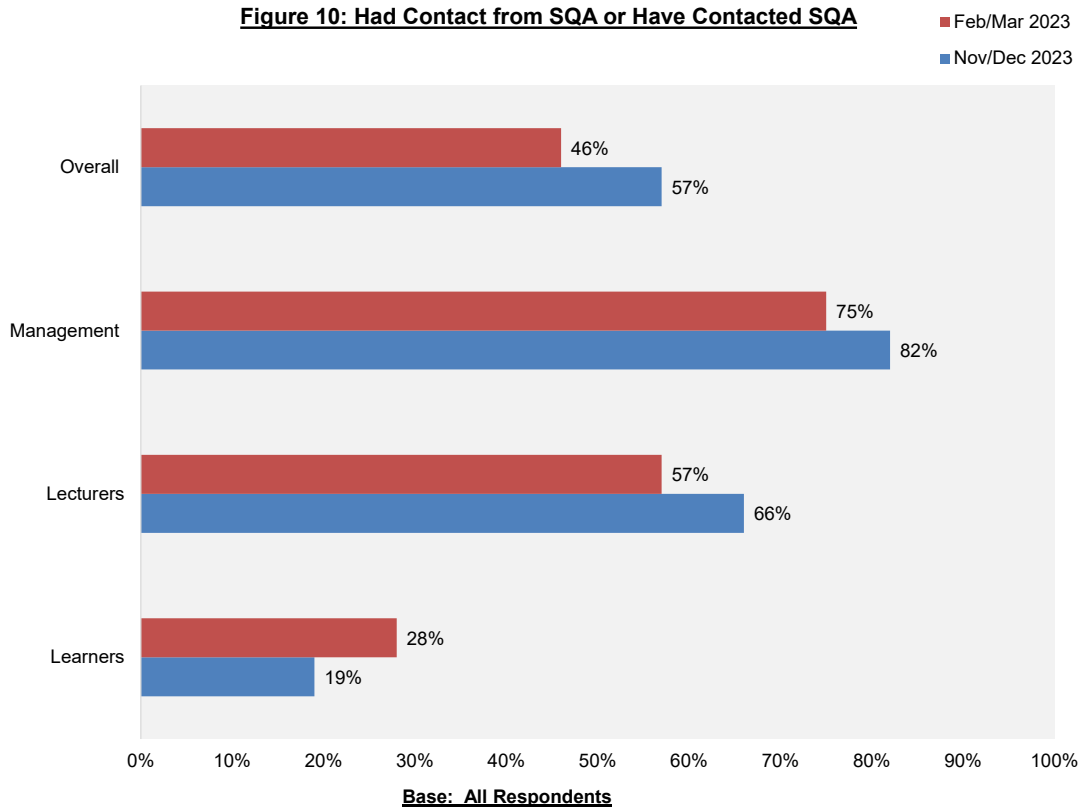
Thereafter, **secondary unprompted mention** was made here of beliefs that ‘there is a lack of consistency in terms of qualifications across subjects’ (15%).



## 4.0 SQA CONTACT AND COMMUNICATIONS PROFILES

### 4.1 Contact Profile

*‘Have you had contact from SQA or have you contacted SQA?’*



From Figure 10, it can be seen that approaching three out of five respondents in November/December 2023 (57%) stated that they had had contact from SQA or have contacted SQA (with this being the case **most prominently** amongst those in Management roles and, thereafter, Lecturers:

- Those in Management roles (82%)
- Lecturers (66%)
- Learners (19%)

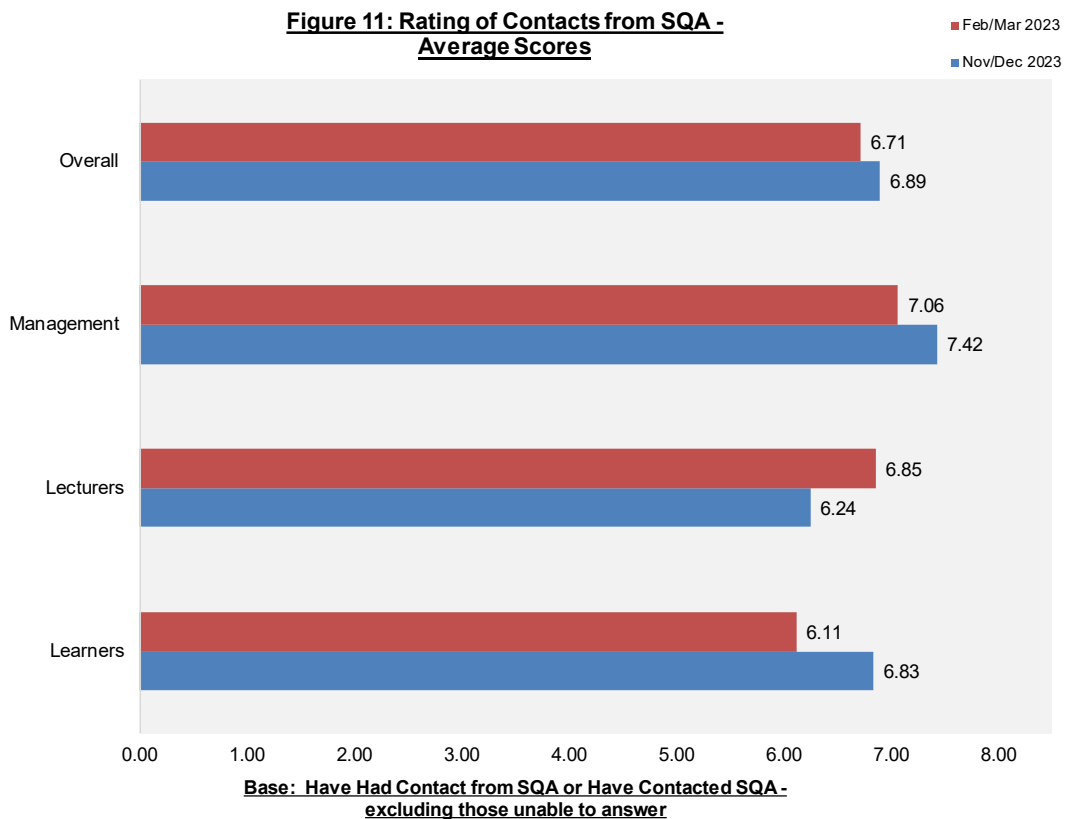
Figure 10 also indicates that, between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023, there was a notable increase in the extent to which respondents stated that they had had contact from SQA or

had contacted SQA (rising from 47% to 57%), with this increase being driven by those in Management roles and Lecturers:

- Those in Management roles (rising from 75% to 82%)
- Lecturers (rising from 57% to 66%)

It is also of interest to note from Figure 10 that, since the last survey, there was a decrease in the extent to which Learners had contacted SQA (falling from 28% to 19%).

*‘How would you rate your contact from SQA or contact with SQA, on a scale from 1 to 10, where ‘1’ is ‘very poor’ and ‘10’ is ‘very good’?’*



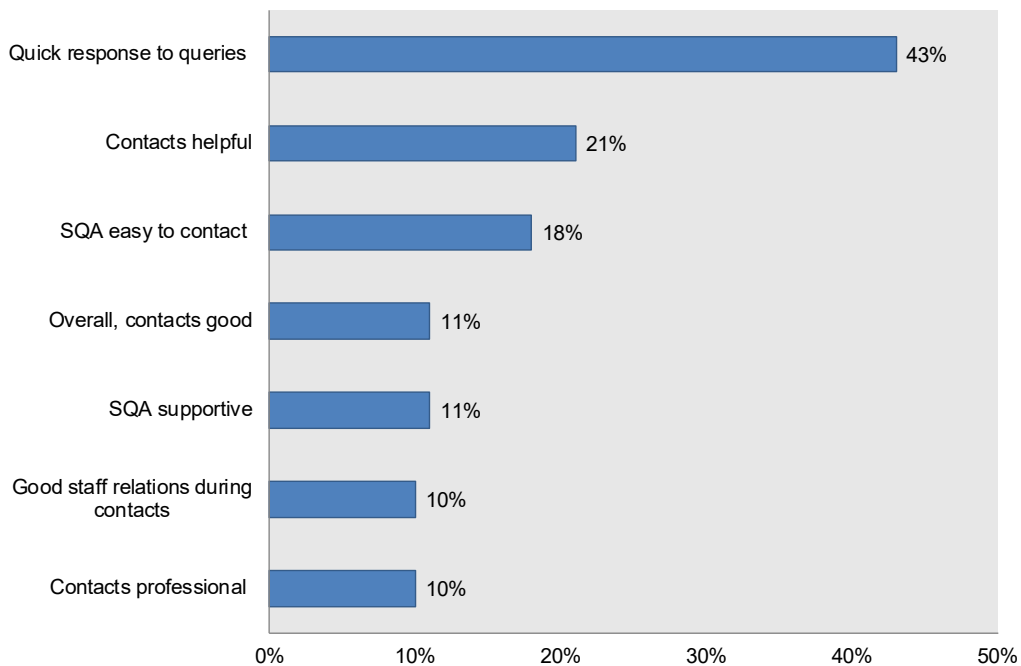
From Figure 11, it can be seen that amongst those who had had contact from SQA or had contacted SQA, a rating of 6.89 out of a possible 10 was provided in terms of this contact/these contacts, with the highest ratings being provided by those in Management roles and Learners:

- Those in Management roles (7.42)
- Learners (6.83)
- Lecturers (6.24)

Figure 11 also indicates that, between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023, there was an increase in the overall rating of contacts (from 6.71 to 6.89), with this increase being **primarily** driven by Learners (rising from 6.11 to 6.83). In this regard, it is also of interest to note from Figure 11 that, since the last survey, there was a reduction in the rating of contacts by Lecturers (falling from 6.85 to 6.24).

*‘Why did you choose a positive rating for SQA contacts?’*

**Figure 12: Reasons for Providing Positive Rating of SQA Contacts (Unprompted)**



**Base: Provided Rating of 6 to 10**

When those noting a positive rating (ie those providing a rating of between 6 and 10) were asked – on an unprompted basis – why this was the case, Figure 12 indicates that this was **primarily** due to ‘SQA’s quick response to queries’ (43%).

Thereafter, **secondary unprompted mention** was made here of:

- The helpfulness of SQA during contacts (21%)
- SQA being easy to contact (18%)

Further examination of the data here – although somewhat indicative in nature – indicated that the following audience types were most likely to make unprompted reference to the reasons noted above, namely:

- **Quick response to queries:** those in Management roles and Lecturers (45% and 41% respectively)
- **The helpfulness of SQA during contacts:** those in Management roles (32%)
- **SQA being easy to contact:** exclusively noted by those in Management roles and Lecturers (21% and 16% respectively)

Further examination of the data also indicated that, between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023, **increasing** unprompted reference was made here to:

- The helpfulness of SQA contacts (rising from 8% to 21%)
- SQA being easy to contact (rising from 0% to 18%)
- Overall, contacts being good (rising from 0% to 11%)
- Good staff relations during contacts (rising from 2% to 10%)
- Contacts being professional (rising from 2% to 10%)

It is also of interest to note that, since the last survey, there was **decreasing** unprompted reference here to:

- SQA being quick to respond to queries during contacts (falling from 49% to 43%)
- The relevance of information provided during contacts (falling from 13% to 6%)

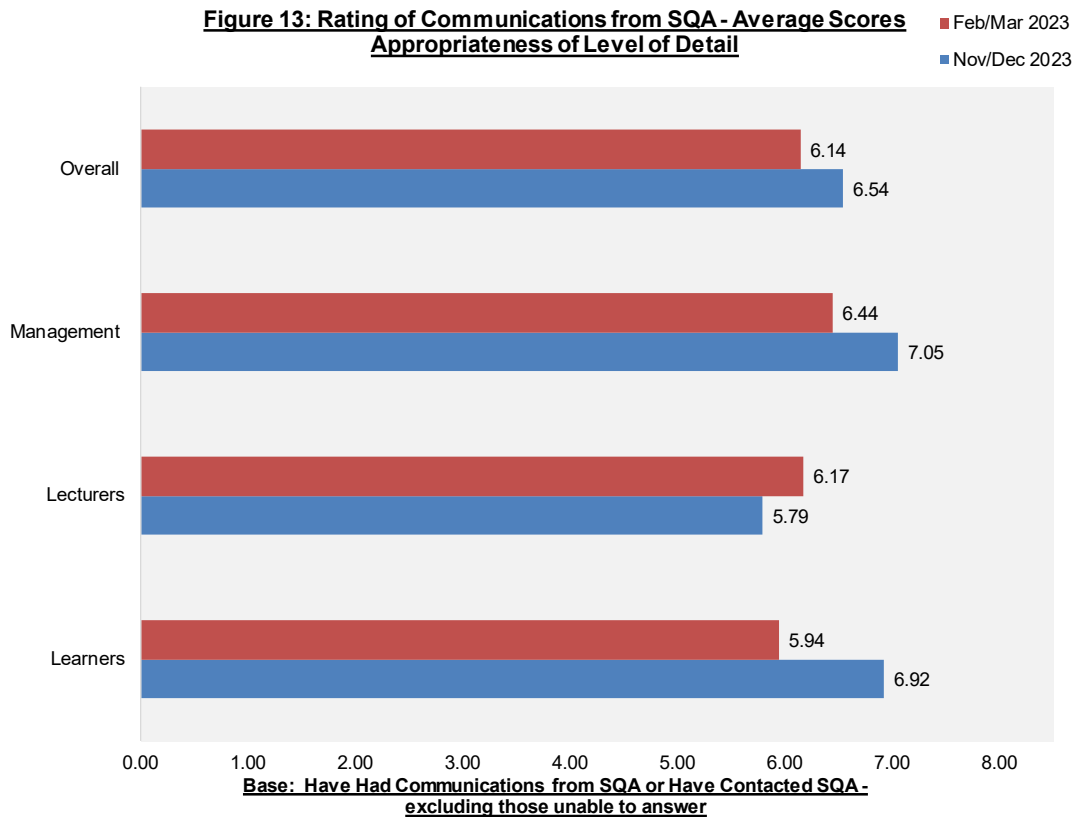
Finally, it should be noted that those who provided a poor rating of SQA contacts (ie those who provided a rating of 1 to 5) were also asked – on an unprompted basis – why they had provided this rating. However, the number of respondents providing such a rating is insufficient to allow a meaningful set of outcomes to be provided in this regard and, in addition, is insufficient to allow a meaningful breakdown of their responses on the basis of audience type to be provided. This also applies to the provision of variances in the outcomes here between February/March 2023 and those in November/December 2023.

## 4.2 Communications Profile

### 4.2.1 Rating of Communications

*‘How would you rate the level of detail in communications from SQA, on a scale from 1 to 10, where ‘1’ is ‘very poor’ and ‘10’ is ‘very good’?’*

**Figure 13: Rating of Communications from SQA - Average Scores**  
**Appropriateness of Level of Detail**



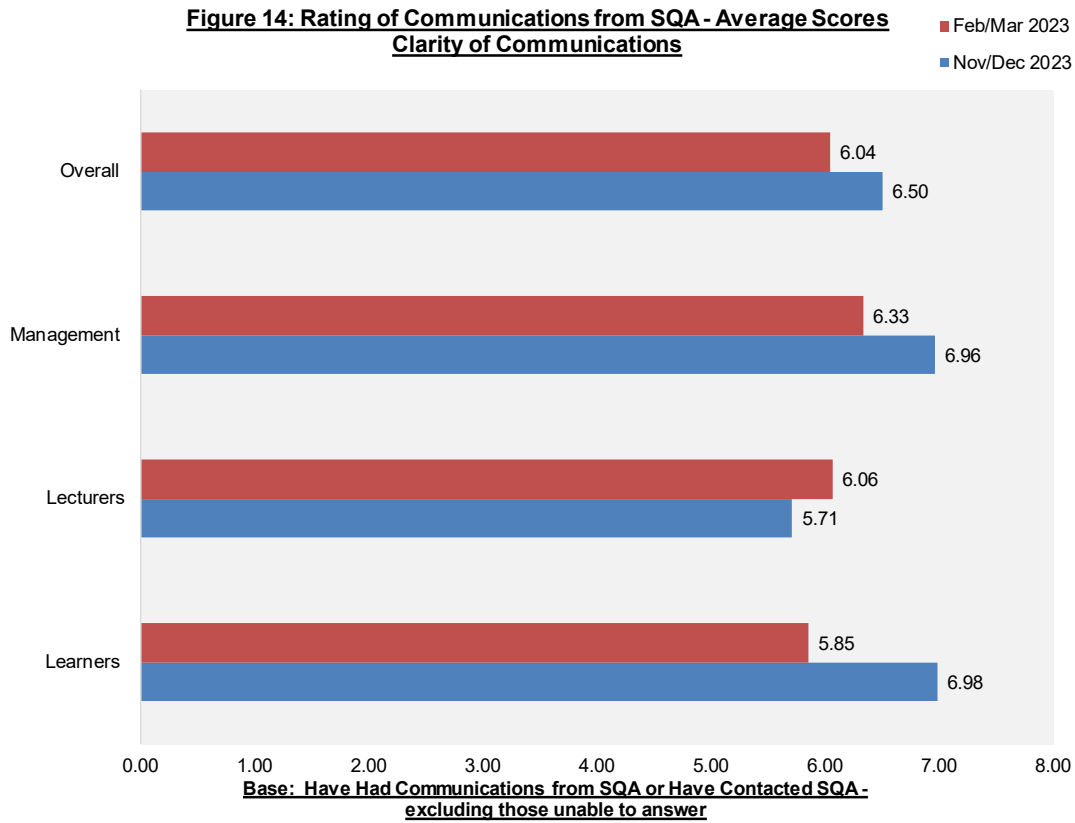
From Figure 13, it can be seen that respondents in November/December 2023 provided an average score of 6.54 out of a possible 10 in terms of the **appropriateness of the level of detail of communications from SQA**, with this outcome being highest amongst those in Management roles and Learners:

- Those in Management roles (7.05)
- Learners (6.92)
- Lecturers (5.79)

Figure 13 also indicates that, between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023, there was a notable **increase** in the rating of the appropriateness of the level of detail of communications from SQA (rising from 6.14 to 6.54), with this increase being driven by those in Management roles (rising from 6.44 to 7.05) and Learners (rising from 5.94 to 6.92).

It should also be noted that, since the last survey, there was a **fall** in the rating of the appropriateness of the level of detail of communications from SQA amongst Lecturers (from 6.17 to 5.79).

*‘How would you rate the clarity of communications from SQA, on a scale from 1 to 10, where ‘1’ is ‘very poor’ and ‘10’ is ‘very good’?’*



From Figure 14, it can be seen that respondents provided an average score of 6.50 out of a possible 10 in terms of the **clarity of communications from SQA**, with this outcome being highest amongst Learners and those in Management roles (6.98 and 6.96 respectively compared to 5.71 for Lecturers).

Figure 14 also indicates that, since the last survey, the overall rating of the clarity of communications from SQA rose notably (from 6.04 to 6.50), with this rise being driven by those in Management roles (from 6.33 to 6.96) and Learners (from 5.85 to 6.98).

It should also be noted that, since February/March 2023, the rating of the clarity of communications noted by Lecturers fell (from 6.06 to 5.71).

*‘How would you rate the timeliness of communications from SQA, on a scale from 1 to 10, where ‘1’ is ‘very poor’ and ‘10’ is ‘very good’?’*

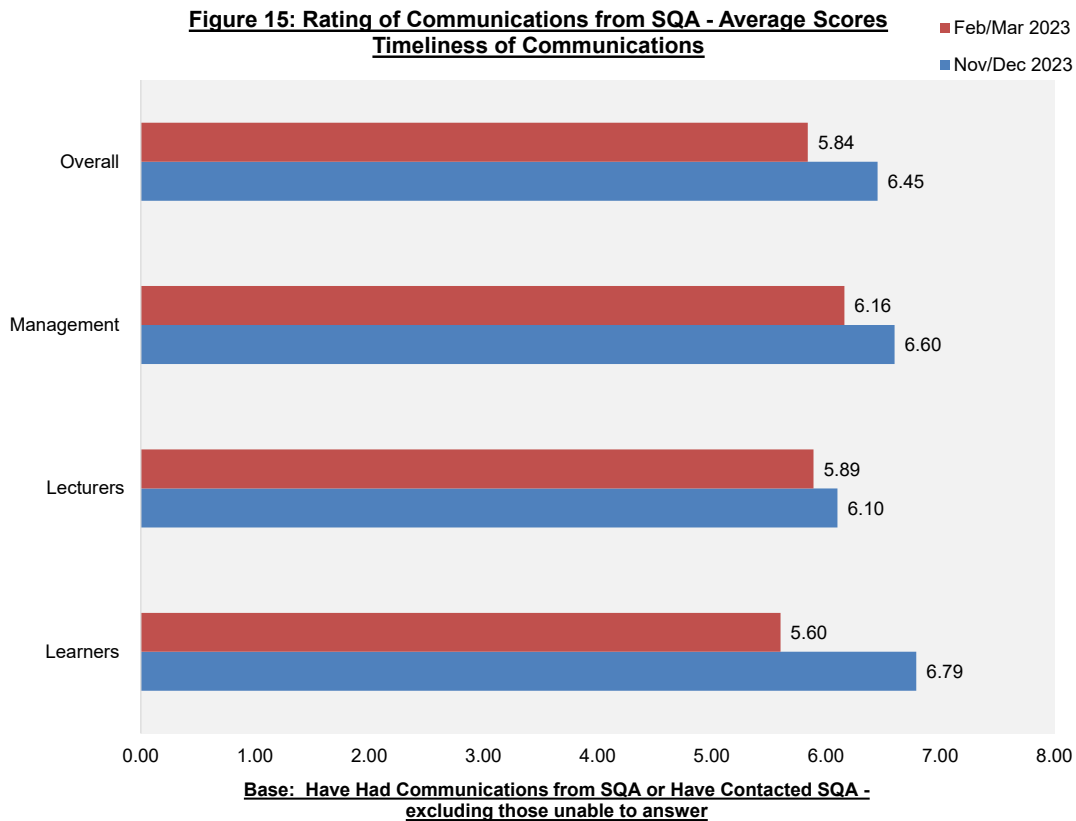
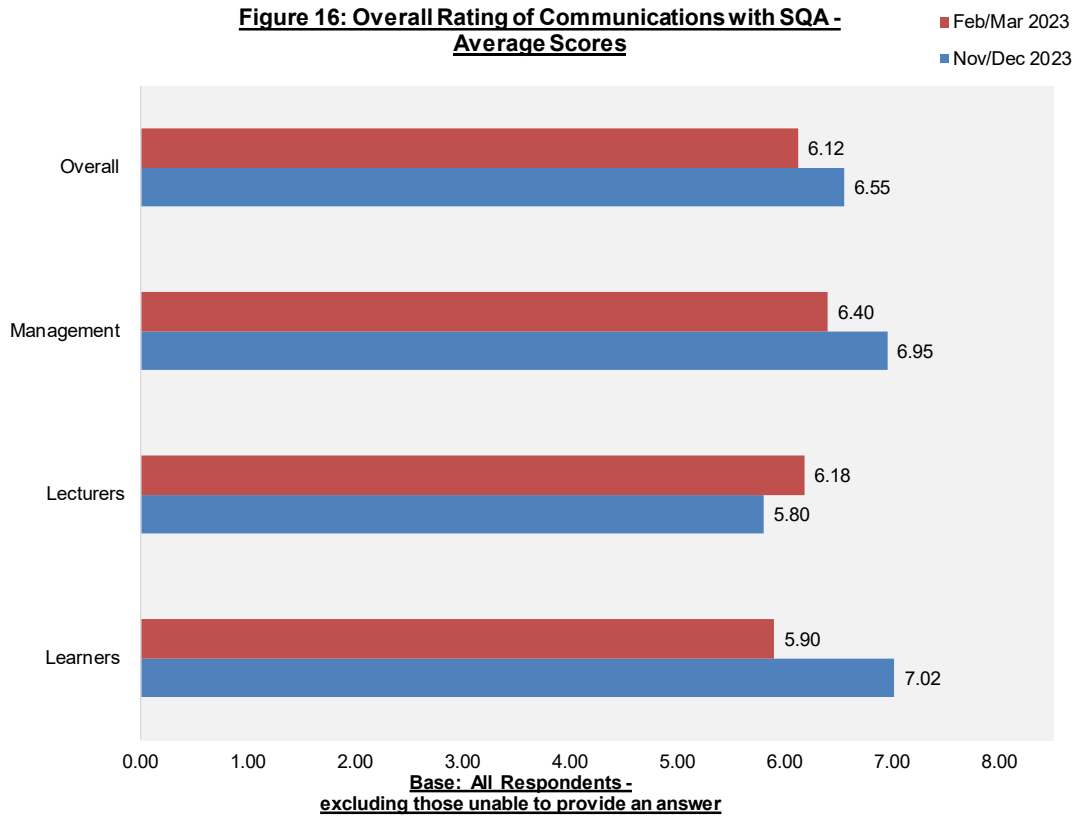


Figure 15 indicates that, in November/December 2023, respondents provided a rating of 6.45 out of a possible 10 in terms of the **timeliness of communications from SQA**, with this outcome, once again, being highest amongst Learners and those in Management roles (6.79 and 6.60 respectively compared to 6.10 for Lecturers).

It can also be seen from Figure 15 that, between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023, there was a notable increase in the rating of the timeliness of communications from SQA (rising from 5.84 to 6.45), with increases being apparent across all three audiences and most notable amongst Learners (rising from 5.60 to 6.79).



*‘Overall, how would you rate communications from SQA, on a scale from 1 to 10, where ‘1’ is ‘very poor’ and ‘10’ is ‘very good’?’*

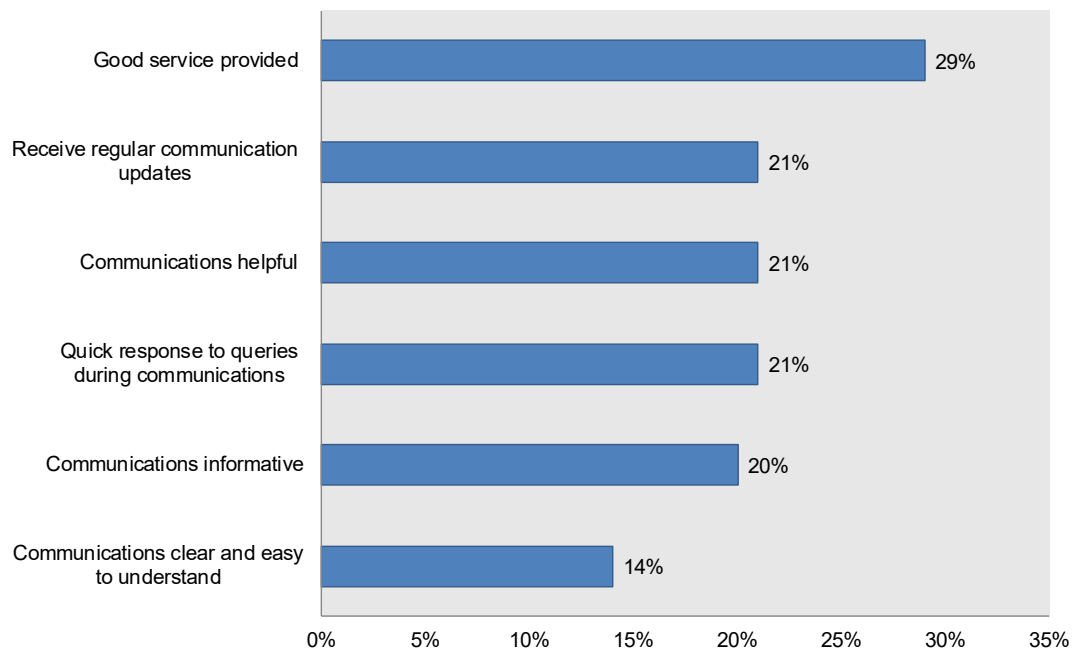


From Figure 16, it can be seen that respondents in November/ December 2023 noted an average score of 6.55 out of a possible 10 in terms of their **overall rating of communications from SQA**, with this outcome being highest amongst Learners and those in Management roles (7.02 and 6.95 respectively compared to 5.80 for Lecturers).

Figure 16 also indicates that, since the last survey, there was a notable increase in the overall rating of communications from SQA (from 6.12 to 6.55), with this increase being driven by those in both Management roles (rising from 6.40 to 6.95) and Learners (rising from 5.90 to 7.02). Indeed, it can also be seen that, since the last survey, the overall rating of communications noted by Lecturers fell (from 6.18 to 5.80).

*‘Why did you choose a high rating number here?’*

**Figure 17: Reasons for Choosing Good Rating of SQA Communications (Unprompted) - Indicative**



**Base: Providing Rating of 6 to 10**

When those providing a positive rating for SQA in terms of their overall communications (ie those providing a rating of 6 to 10) were asked – on an unprompted basis – why this was the case, Figure 17 indicates that their **principal responses** (which are largely indicative in nature) related to:

- SQA providing a good service in terms of its communications (29%)
- Respondents receiving regular communication updates (21%)
- Communications being helpful (21%)
- SQA’s quick response to queries during communications (21%)
- Communications being informative (20%)

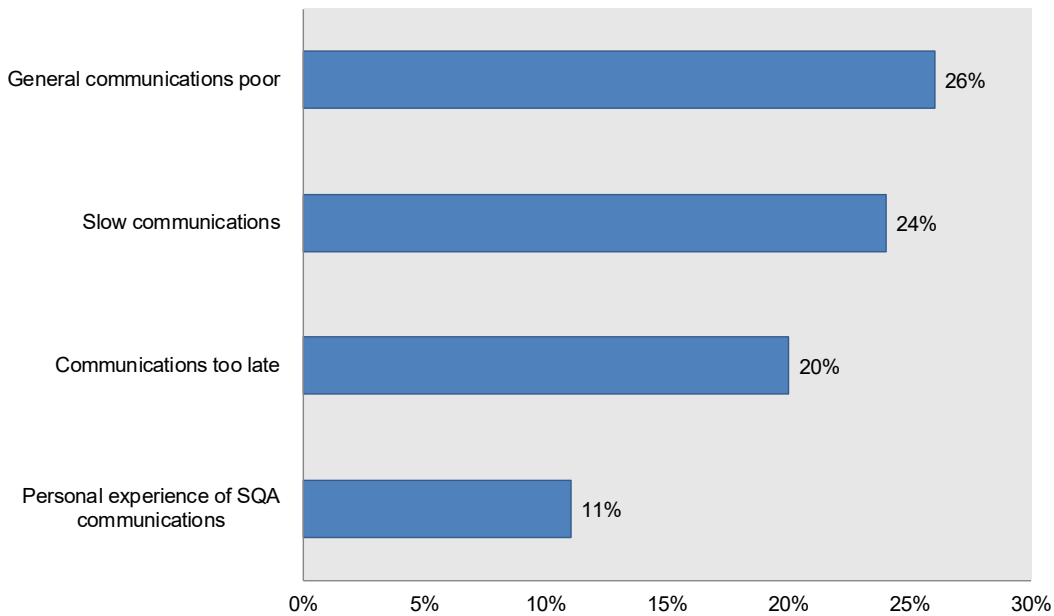
Figure 17 also indicates that **secondary unprompted mention** was made here to ‘SQA communications being clear and easy to understand’ (14%).

Although on an indicative basis, the reasons noted above for choosing a good rating of SQA communications were most commonly noted by the audiences indicated below:

- **Respondents receiving regular communication updates:** exclusively Lecturers and those in Management roles (27% and 24% respectively)
- **Communications being helpful:** those in Management roles (28%)
- **SQA communications being clear and easy to understand:** those in Management roles (20%)

*‘Why did you choose a low rating number here?’*

**Figure 18: Reasons for Choosing Poor Rating of SQA Communications (Unprompted)**



**Base: Providing Rating of 1 to 5**

When respondents providing a poor rating of SQA communications (ie those who provided a rating of 1 to 5) were also asked – on an unprompted basis – why they had chosen this rating, Figure 18 indicates that the **primary** reasons cited were those of:

- General communications being poor (26%)
- Communications being slow (24%)
- Communications being too late (20%)
- Personal experience of SQA communications (11%)

It should be noted that the subsample of respondents is insufficient to allow a meaningful breakdown to be provided on the basis of audience type.

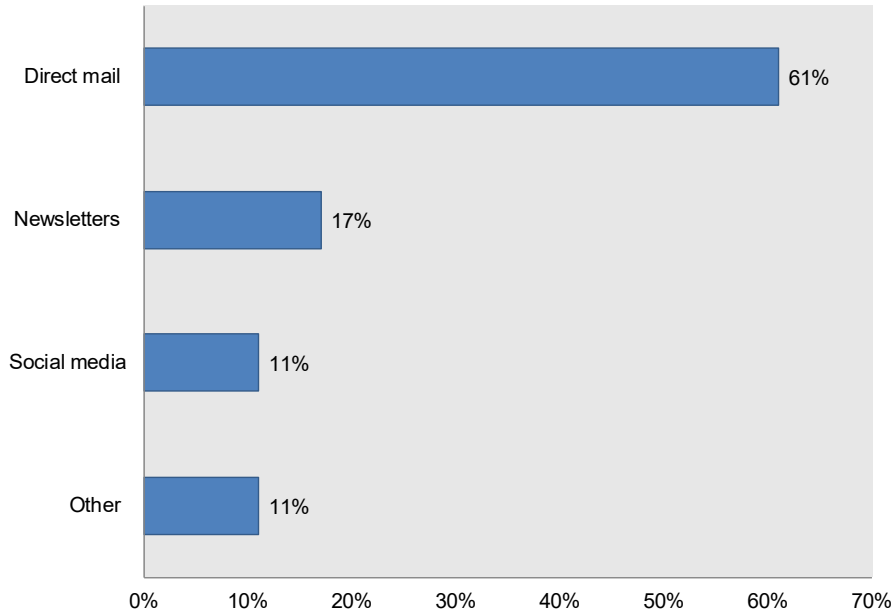
However, it is of interest to note that, since the last survey, there were increasing **unprompted references** here to:

- General communications being poor (rising from 21% to 26%)
- Communications being too late (rising from 0% to 20%)
- Personal experience of SQA communications (rising from 2% to 11%)

## 4.2.2 Other Communications Issues<sup>1</sup>

*‘What is your preferred communications channel?’*

**Figure 19: Preferred Communications Channels**



**Base: All Respondents**

From Figure 19, it can be seen that respondents in November/December 2023 **most commonly** made prompted reference to ‘direct mail’ being their preferred communications channel (61%)<sup>2</sup>.

Thereafter, far **lesser prompted reference** was made here to ‘newsletters’ (17%) and ‘social media’ (11%).

Further examination of the data indicated the following variances on the basis of audience type:

- Greatest level of preference to make use of **direct mail** amongst those in Management roles (74%)

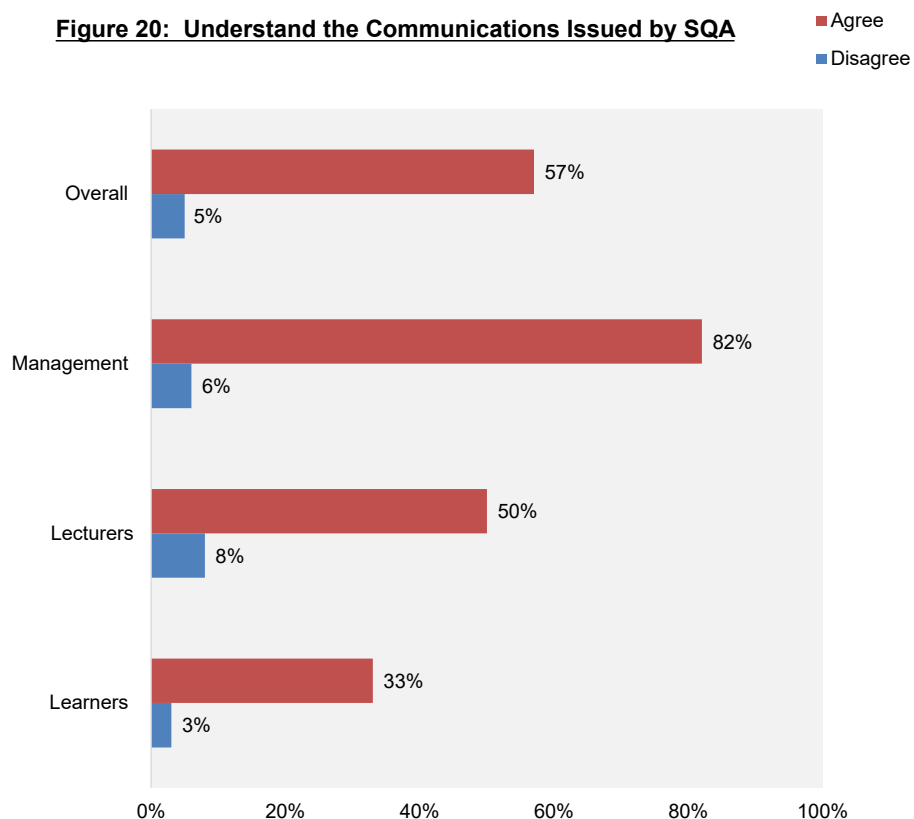
<sup>1</sup> The outcomes noted in Section 4.2.2 of this report relate to questions which were asked for the first time in November/December 2023

<sup>2</sup> There is the potential that respondents may have interpreted the term ‘direct mail’ to refer to ‘direct email’

- Greatest level of preference for the use of **newsletters** amongst Lecturers and those in Management roles (21% and 16% respectively)
- Greatest level of preference to make use of **social media** amongst Learners (37%)

*‘To what extent do you agree that you understand the communications issued by SQA?’<sup>3</sup>*

**Figure 20: Understand the Communications Issued by SQA**



**Base: All Lecturers, Those in Management Roles and Learners**

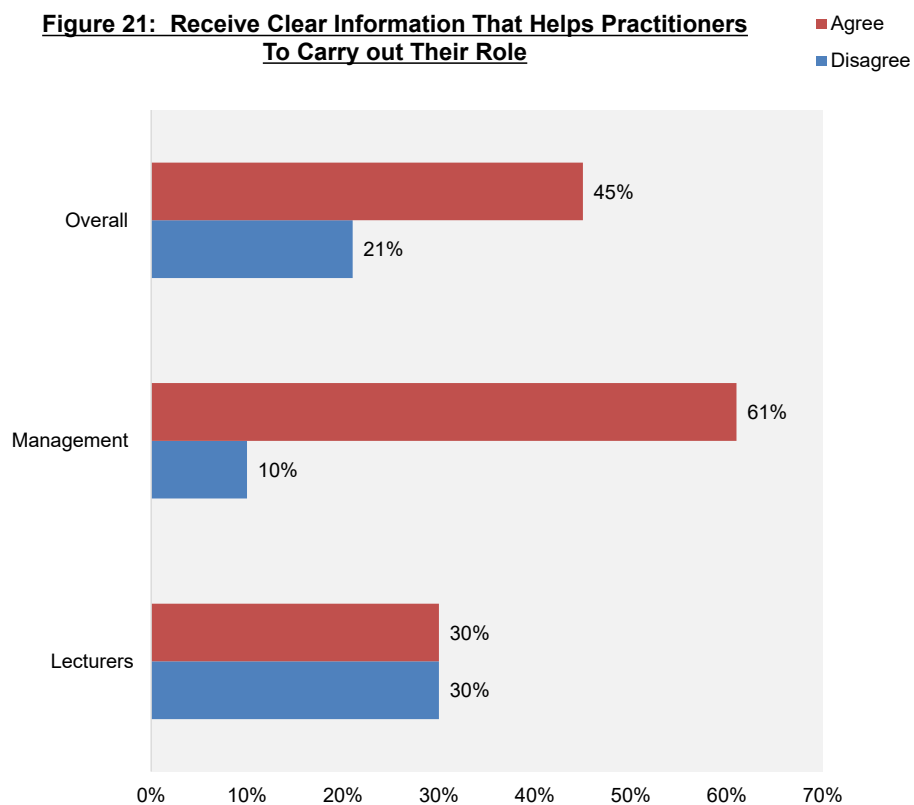
<sup>3</sup> The outcomes noted in Figures 20 to 24 exclude those unable to answer each question

From Figure 20, it can be seen that, overall, approaching three out of five Teachers, those in Management roles and Learners collectively in November/December 2023 (57%) stated that they ‘understand the communications issued by SQA’, with this outcome being most prominent amongst those in Management roles (82% compared to 50% and 33% respectively for Lecturers and Learners).

Figure 20 also indicates that few respondents overall here (5%) stated that they didn’t understand communications issued by SQA, with this varying little across the three audiences (ranging from 3% to 8%).

*‘To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?’*

**Figure 21: Receive Clear Information That Helps Practitioners To Carry out Their Role**

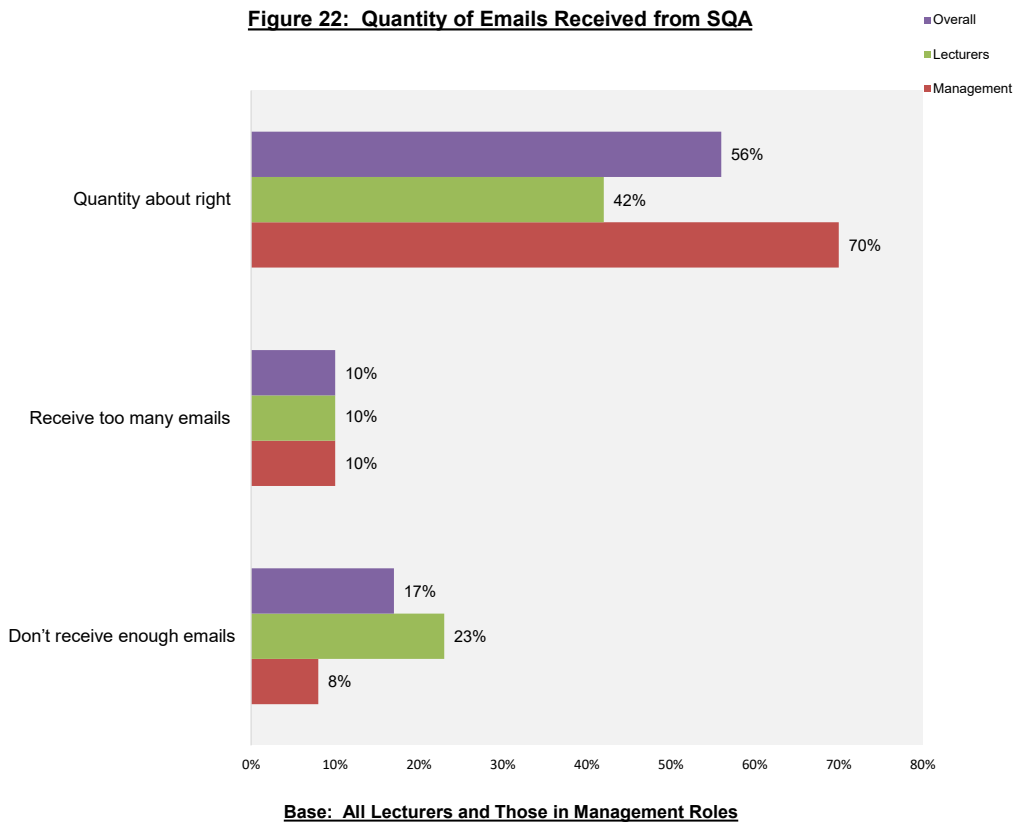


**Base: All Management and Lecturers**

From Figure 21, it can be seen that approaching half of Lecturers and those in Management roles collectively (45%) agreed that ‘they receive clear information about SQA that helps them carry out their role’, with this being far more likely to be the case amongst those in Management roles (61% compared to 30% for Lecturers).

Figure 21 also indicates that around one in five Lecturers and those in Management roles collectively (21%) disagreed that they receive clear information from SQA that helps them carry out their role, with this being far more likely to be the case amongst Lecturers (30% compared to 10% for those in Management roles).

*‘Do you think that the quantity of emails you receive from SQA is about right?’*



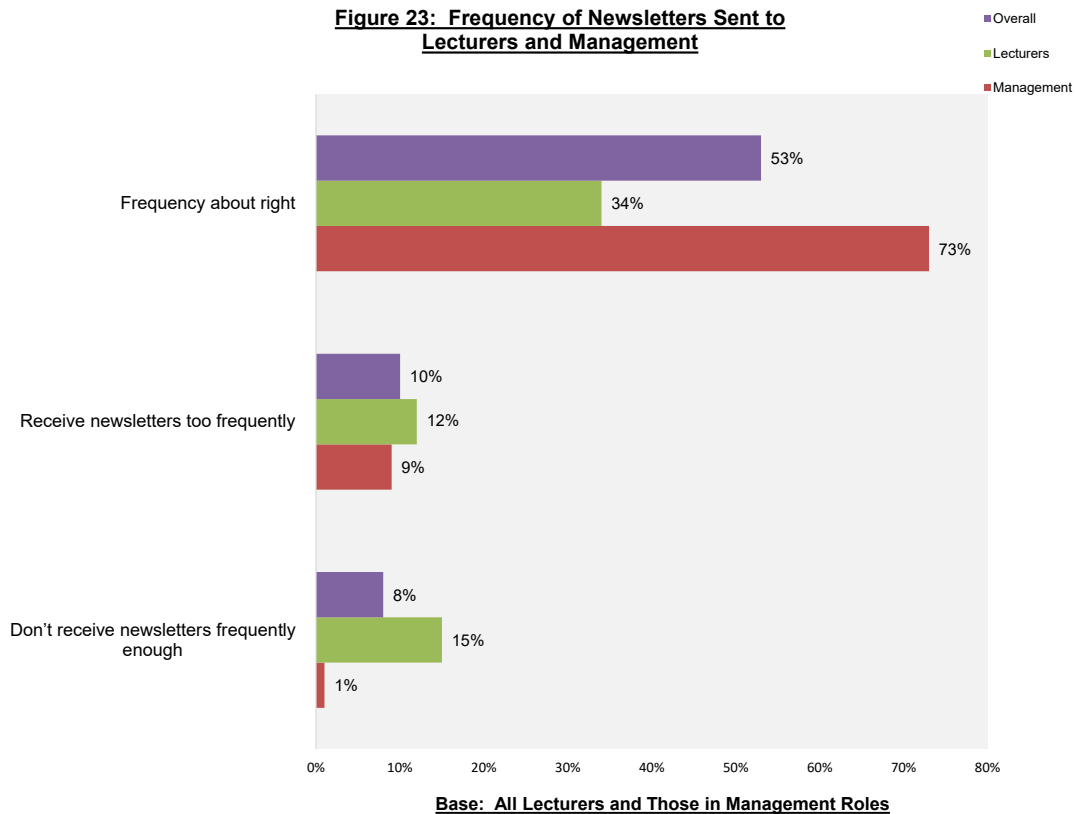
From Figure 22, it can be seen that approaching three out of five Lecturers and those in Management roles collectively (56%) believed that the quantity of emails they receive from SQA is ‘about right’, with this being far more likely to be the case for those in Management roles (70% compared to 42% for Lecturers).

Thereafter, one in ten Lecturers and Teachers collectively (10%) believed that they received ‘too many emails’, with this outcome being identical for the two audiences.



Finally, it should be noted from Figure 22 that, overall, around one in six Lecturers and those in Management roles collectively (17%) believed they ‘don’t receive enough emails’, with this being far more likely to be the case amongst Lecturers (23% compared to 8% for those in Management roles).

*‘Do you think the frequency of newsletters is right?’*



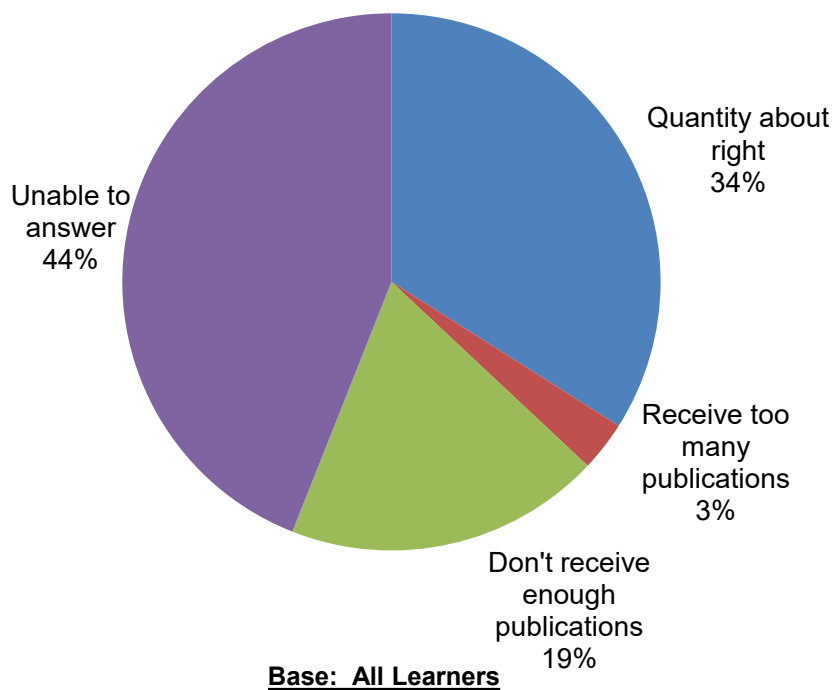
From Figure 23, it can be seen that over half of Lecturers and those in Management roles collectively (53%) believed that the frequency of newsletters from SQA ‘is about right’, with this being far more likely to be the case amongst those in Management roles (73% compared to 34% for Lecturers).

Thereafter, Figure 23 indicates that around one in ten Lecturers and those in Management roles collectively (10%) believed that newsletters were sent to them by SQA ‘too frequently’, with this outcome being slightly higher amongst Lecturers (12% compared to 9% for those in Management roles).

Finally, Figure 23 indicates that one in twelve Lecturers and those in Management roles collectively (8%) stated that they 'don't receive newsletters frequently enough', with this being far more likely to be the case amongst Lecturers (15% compared to 1% for those in Management roles).

*'Do you think that the quantity of publications you receive from SQA is about right?'*

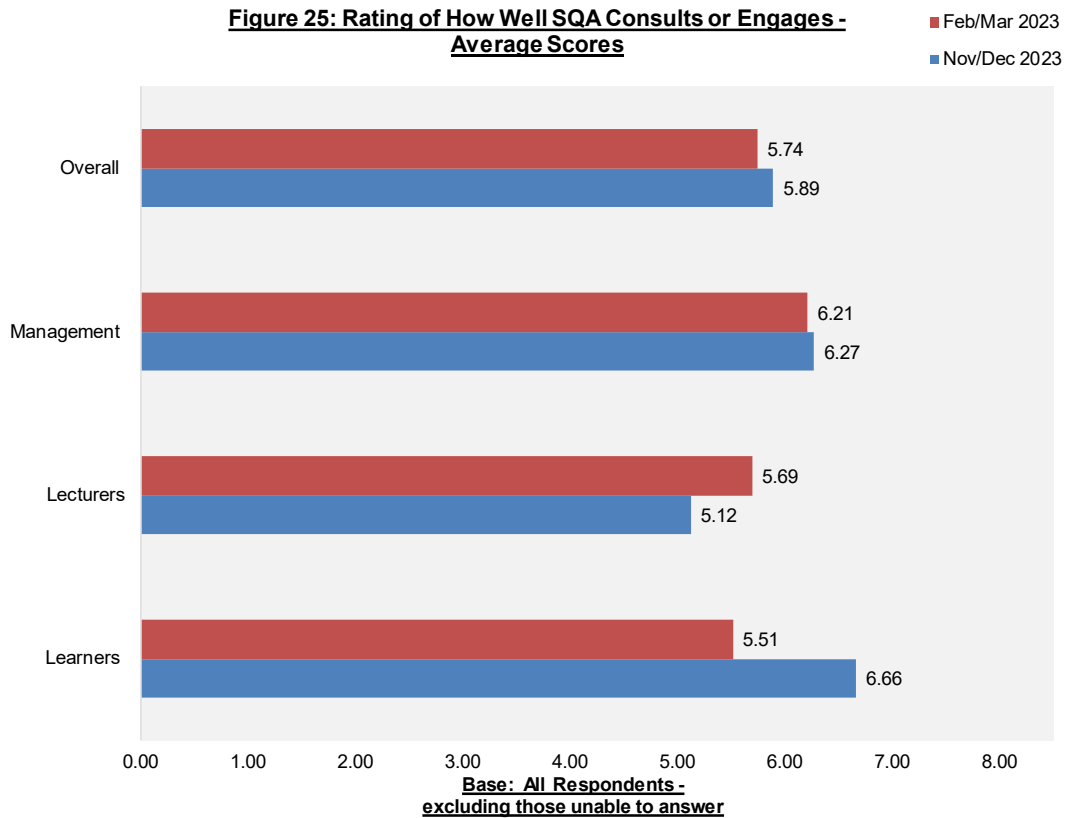
**Figure 24: Quantity of Publications Received by Learners**



From Figure 24, it can be seen that a third of Learners in November/December 2023 (34%) believed that the quantity of publications they receive from SQA is 'about right', with one in five (19%) believing that they 'don't receive enough publications' and very few (only 3%) believing that they 'receive too many publications'.

## 5.0 SQA CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT PROFILE

*‘How would you rate how well SQA consults or engages with you or you and your peers, on a scale from 1 to 10, where ‘1’ is ‘very poor’ and ‘10’ is ‘very good’?’<sup>4</sup>*



When respondents were asked to rate how well SQA ‘consults or engages with them or their colleagues’ (in the case of those in Management roles and Lecturers) and ‘consults with themselves or their peers’ (as in the case of Learners), Figure 25 indicates that an average score of 5.89 out of a possible 10 was noted, with this score being highest amongst Learners and those in Management roles (6.66 and 6.27 respectively compared to 5.12 for Lecturers).

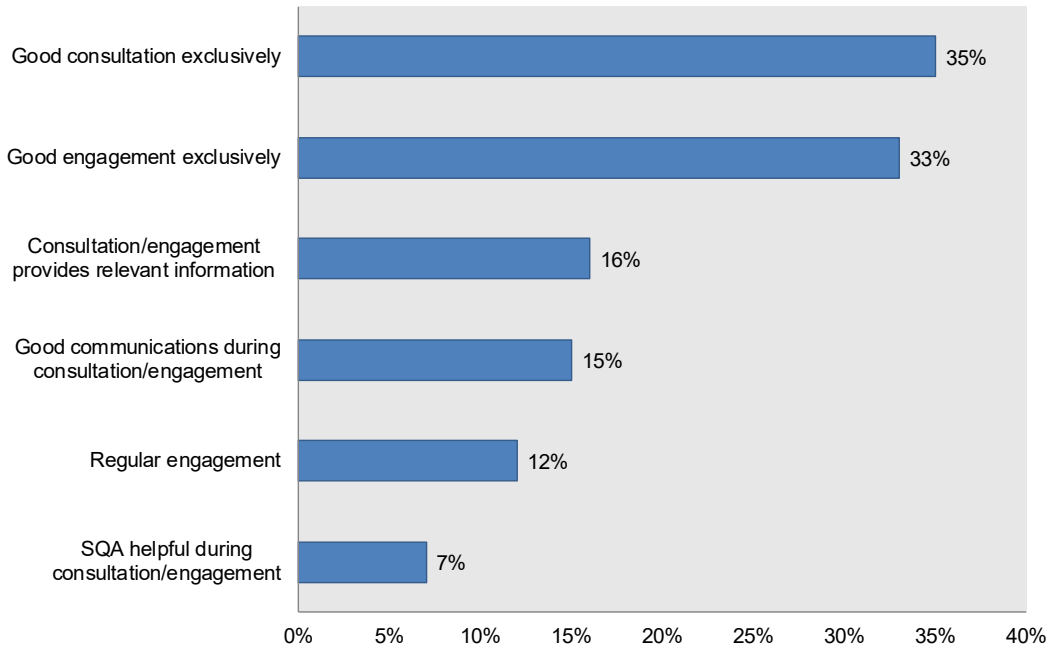
It can also be seen from Figure 25 that, overall, there was only a slight – albeit statistically significant – increase in the rating of how well SQA consults or engages (from 5.74 to 5.89), with this improvement being

<sup>4</sup> This rating excludes those unable to answer

almost exclusively noted by Learners (rising from 5.51 to 6.66).  
Indeed, it should be noted that, since the last survey, there was a fall in the rating provided by Lecturers in this regard (from 5.69 to 5.12).

*‘Why did you choose this rating number?’*

**Figure 26: Reasons for Providing Good Rating re Consultation and Engagement (Unprompted)**



**Base: Provided Rating of 6 to 10**

The data presented in Figure 26 indicates that, when those providing a **good rating** number for SQA in terms of its consultation and engagement (ie those providing a score of between 6 and 10) were asked – on an unprompted basis – why this was the case, the **primary reasons** cited were those of:

- Good consultation exclusively (35%)
- Good engagement exclusively (33%)

Thereafter, **secondary unprompted reference** was made to a number of other reasons, including:

- Consultation/engagement providing relevant information (16%)
- Good communications during consultation/engagement (15%)

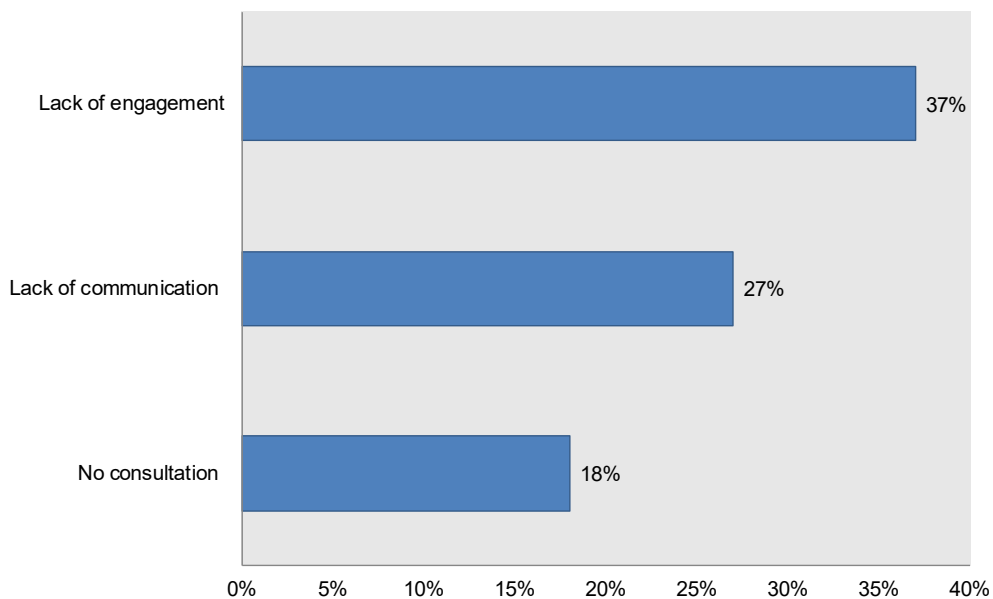
- The regularity of engagement (12%)

It should be noted that the subsample of respondents here is insufficient to allow a meaningful breakdown to be provided on the basis of audience type. However, it is of interest to note that, since the last survey, there was increasing unprompted reference made here to:

- Good consultation exclusively (rising from 11% to 35%)
- Good engagement exclusively (rising from 9% to 33%)
- Good communications during consultation/engagement (rising from 0% to 15%)

*‘Why did you choose this rating number?’*

**Figure 27: Reasons for Providing Poor Rating re Consultation and Engagement (Unprompted)**



**Base: Provided Rating of 1 to 5**

The outcomes noted in Figure 27 indicate that, when those providing a poor rating of SQA’s consultation and engagement (ie provided a rating of between 1 and 5) were asked – on an unprompted basis – why this was the case, their **primary responses** focused around:

- Lack of engagement (37%)
- Lack of communication (27%)

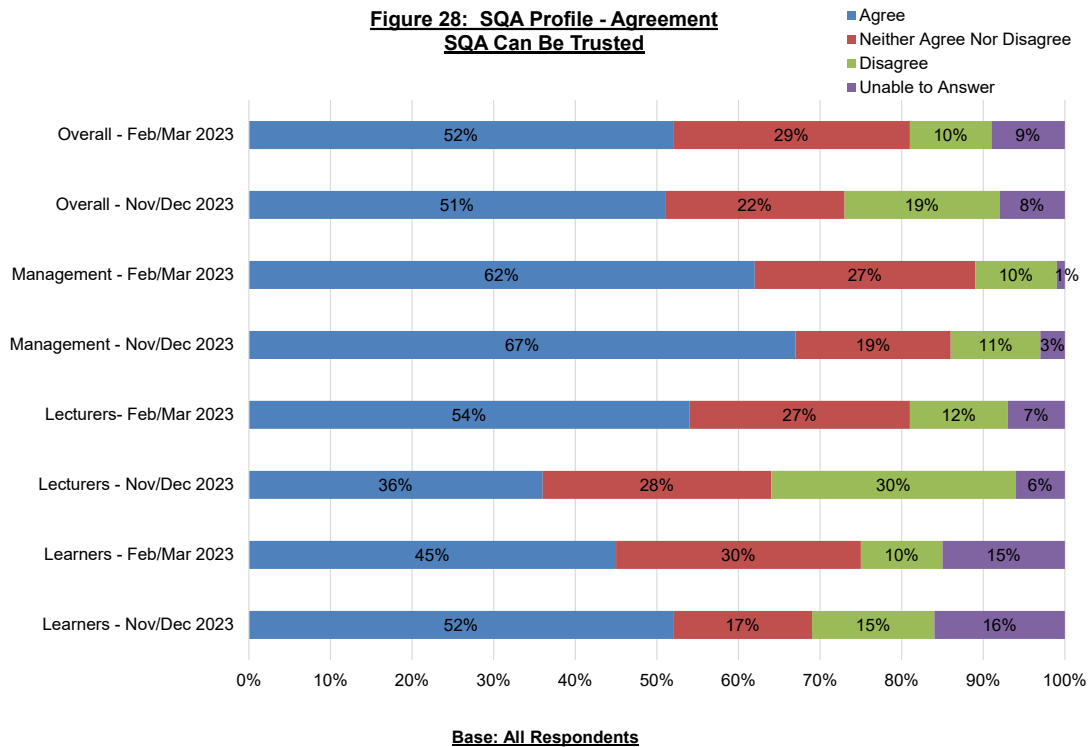
- Respondents not being consulted (18%)

Again, it should be noted that the subsample of respondents here is insufficient to allow a meaningful breakdown of outcomes on the basis of audience type.

However, it should be noted that, between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023, there was a notable increase in unprompted reference here to 'lack of engagement' (rising from 0% to 37%) and decreasing reference to 'not being consulted' (falling from 44% to 18%).

## 6.0 SQA'S VALUES PROFILE

*'How strongly would you agree or disagree that SQA can be trusted?'*



From Figure 28, it can be seen that almost exactly half of respondents in November/December 2023 (51%) **agreed** that 'SQA can be trusted', with this outcome being highest amongst those in Management roles and, thereafter, Learners (67% and 52% respectively compared to 36% for Lecturers).

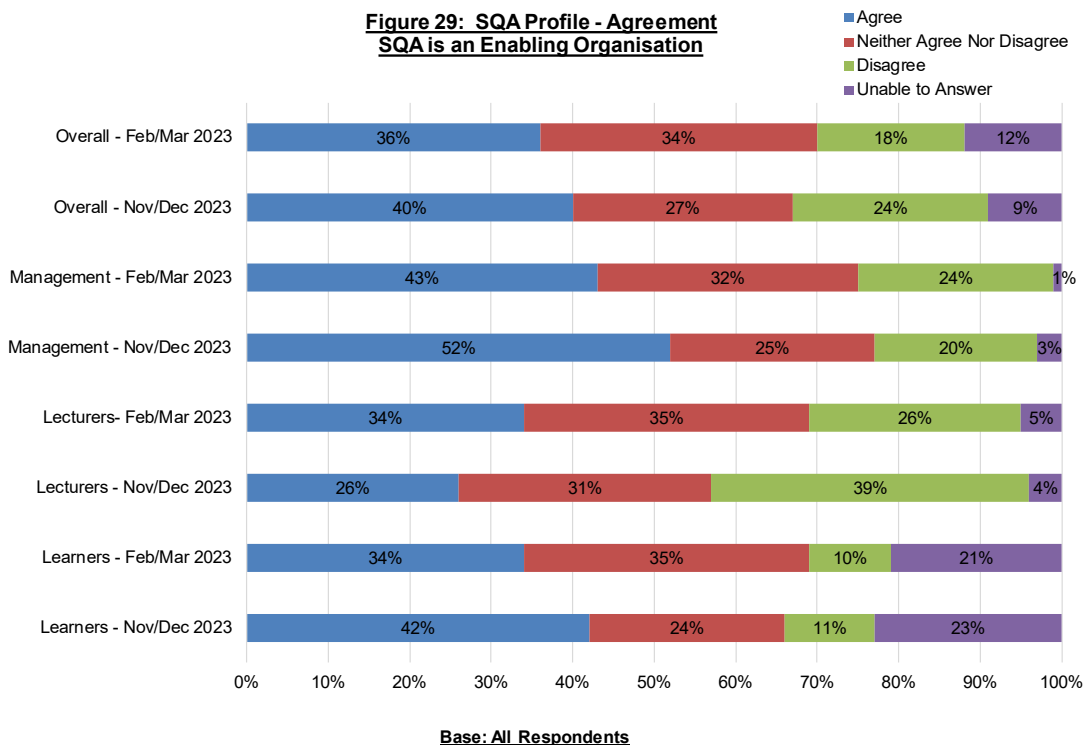
It can also be seen that, whilst there was little difference in the overall outcomes here between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023, there were notable changes within audiences ie:

- Those in Management roles (rising from 62% to 67%)
- Learners (rising from 45% to 52%)
- Lecturers (falling from 54% to 36%)

Further examination of the data also indicated that, between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023:

- Overall, there was an increasing extent to which respondents disagreed that SQA can be trusted (rising from 10% to 19%) which was balanced out by a decreasing extent to which, overall, respondents provided a neutral response in terms of this being the case (falling from 29% to 22%)
- There was an increasing extent to which those in Management roles agreed that SQA can be trusted (rising from 62% to 67%), but a decreasing extent to which those in Management roles provided a neutral response in this regard (falling from 27% to 19%)
- There was a decreasing extent to which Lecturers agreed that SQA can be trusted (falling from 54% to 36%), but an increasing extent to which Lecturers disagreed that this was the case (rising from 12% to 30%)
- There was an increasing extent to which Learners agreed that SQA can be trusted (rising from 45% to 52%) and an increasing extent to which Learners provided a neutral response in this regard (falling from 30% to 17%)

*‘How strongly would you agree or disagree that SQA enables organisations to carry out their roles more effectively?’*





From Figure 29, it can be seen that, overall, two in five respondents in November/December 2023 (40%) **agreed** that 'SQA is an enabling organisation', with this outcome being most prominent amongst those in Management roles and, thereafter, Learners (52% and 42% respectively compared to 26% for Lecturers).

Figure 29 also indicates that, between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023, there was little difference in the extent to which SQA was believed to be an enabling organisation (rising from 36% to 40%). However, during that time, there were changes within audiences here, ie:

- Those in Management (rising from 43% to 52%)
- Learners (rising from 34% to 42%)
- Lecturers (falling from 34% to 26%)

In addition, further examination of the data indicated that, since the last survey:

- Overall, there was increasing disagreement that SQA is an enabling organisation (rising from 18% to 24%) and a decreasing extent to which respondents, overall, provided a neutral response in this regard (falling from 34% to 27%)
- There was increasing agreement amongst those in Management roles that SQA is an enabling organisation (rising from 43% to 52%) and a decreasing extent to which those in Management roles provided a neutral response here (falling from 32% to 25%)
- There was decreasing agreement amongst Lecturers that SQA is an enabling organisation (falling from 34% to 26%) and increasing disagreement that this is the case (rising from 26% to 39%)
- There was an increasing extent to which Learners agreed that SQA is an enabling organisation (rising from 34% to 42%) and a decreasing extent to which Learners provided a neutral response in this regard (falling from 35% to 24%)

*‘How strongly would you agree or disagree that SQA is a progressive organisation?’*

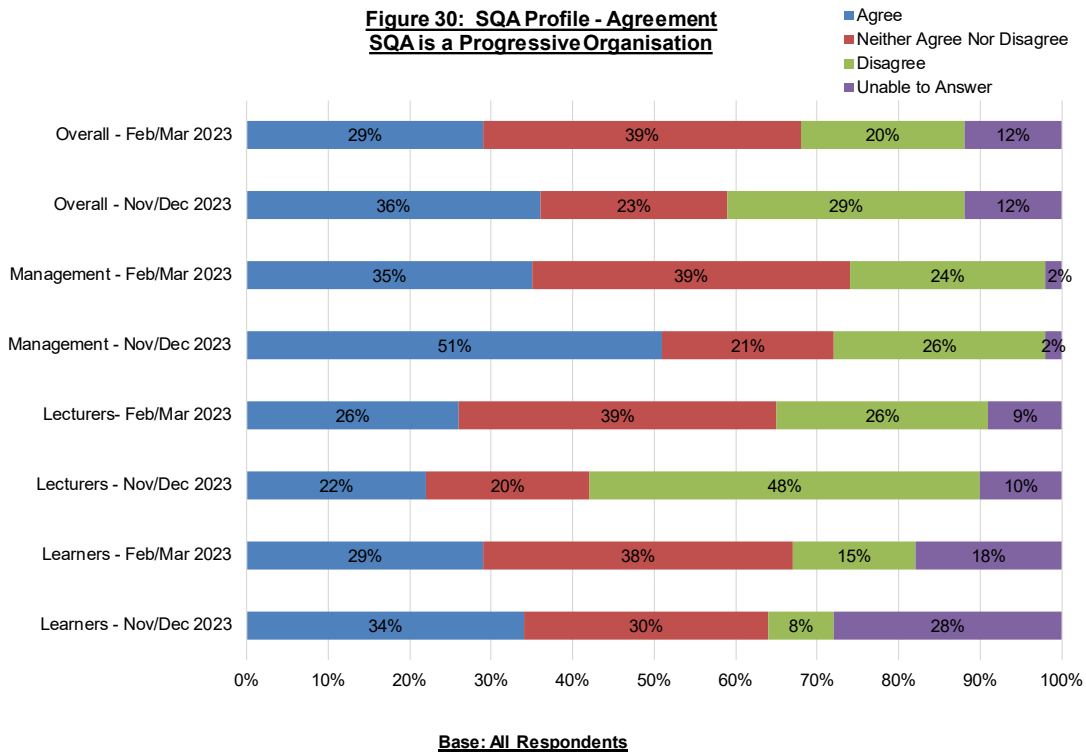


Figure 30 indicates that, overall, approaching two out of five respondents in November/December 2023 (36%) **agreed** that ‘SQA is a progressive organisation’, with this outcome being far more prominent amongst those in Management roles (51% compared to 34% and 22% respectively for Learners and Lecturers).

Figure 30 also indicates that, since the last survey, there was an increasing extent to which, overall, respondents believed SQA to be a progressive organisation (rising from 29% to 36%), with this being primarily driven by those in Management roles (rising from 35% to 51%) and to a lesser extent by Learners (rising from 29% to 34%).

Further examination of the data also indicates that, between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023:

- Overall, there was an increasing extent to which respondents agreed that SQA is a progressive organisation (rising from 29% to

36%), increasing disagreement that this is the case (rising from 20% to 29%) and a decreasing provision neutral responses in this regard (falling from 39% to 23%)

- There was an increasing extent to which those in Management roles agreed that SQA is a progressive organisation (rising from 35% to 51%) and a decreasing provision of neutral responses in this regard (falling from 39% to 21%)
- There was increasing disagreement that SQA is a progressive organisation amongst Lecturers (rising from 26% to 48%) and a decrease in the provision of neutral responses by Lecturers in this regard (falling from 39% to 20%)
- There was an increasing extent to which Learners agreed that SQA is a progressive organisation (rising from 29% to 34%), decreasing disagreement that this is the case (falling from 15 to 8%) and the decreasing provision of neutral responses in this regard (falling from 38% to 30%)

## 7.0 KEY MESSAGES

### 7.1 SQA Profile

Overall, the College Audiences believe SQA to have high credibility (particularly those in Management roles and Learners), although a significant minority of respondents (and, indeed, a majority of Lecturers) believe SQA to have low credibility.

Since the last survey, overall, there was little change in terms of beliefs that SQA has high credibility, but an increase in the extent to which SQA is believed to have low credibility amongst Learners.

The College Audiences are generally satisfied with SQA's overall performance (particularly Learners) and there has been very little change since the last survey in terms of satisfaction with SQA in this regard, albeit that there were variances here within the College Audiences.

Most of those in the College Audiences believe they know enough about SQA (particularly those in Management roles) and, since the last survey, there has been an increase in the extent to which this is believed to be the case amongst those in Management roles.

Amongst those in the College Audiences who would like to know more about SQA, this primarily related to how SQA makes decisions and, indeed, this was noted to a greater extent than in the previous survey.

### 7.2 SQA Qualifications Profile

There are high levels of belief amongst the College Audiences that they know enough about SQA's well-established qualifications, but this is less likely to be the case in terms of qualifications which have been introduced more recently by SQA.

It is also evident that, in a number of cases, Learners were most likely to believe they know enough about qualifications they are aware of, with this also being the case for those in Management roles with respect to HNCs/HNDs, PDAs and SVQs.

SQA's well-established qualifications tend to be viewed as having high credibility, with this being less likely to be the case in terms of qualifications introduced more recently and, in particular, National 1s to National 4s.

Learners tend to have greatest perceived levels of high credibility of a range of SQA qualifications, with this also being the case for those in Management roles with respect to HNCs/HNDs, PDAs and SVQs.

Since the last survey, there was a notable increase in terms of Highers being associated with high credibility, particularly amongst those in Management roles and Learners. In addition, since the last survey, there has been a decline in beliefs that National 1s to National 5s have high credibility, particularly amongst Lecturers and, to some extent, amongst those in Management roles.

Most of those in the College Audiences (particularly those in Management roles) haven't changed their views about SQA qualifications over the last year and, for those whose views had changed, it was roughly twice as likely that they had become less positive than more positive.

### 7.3 SQA Contact and Communication Profiles

Most of those in the College Audiences had a contact history with SQA (particularly those in Management roles and Lecturers), with this increasingly being the case since the last survey (again, particularly amongst the same two audiences).

Those in the College Audiences are generally satisfied with their contact experience with SQA, with this being to a greater extent than in the last survey, particularly amongst Learners.

The College Audiences are generally satisfied with how appropriate SQA's level of communications is, the clarity of its communications and their timeliness, with ratings in all three regards increasing notably since the last survey (again, particularly amongst those in Management roles and Lecturers).

The College Audiences are generally satisfied overall with communications from SQA (particularly those in Management roles and Learners) and there has been a notable increase in the overall rating of communications from SQA since the last survey (once again, particularly amongst those in Management roles and Learners).

Direct mail is the most prominent preferred communications channel for the College Audiences (particularly those in Management roles) – although there is a possibility that respondents have interpreted the term 'direct mail' as 'direct email'.

Approaching three out of five Lecturers, those in Management roles and Learners collectively understand SQA communications, approaching half of Lecturers and those in Management roles believe they receive clear information about SQA that helps in their job, approaching three out of five believe that the quantity of emails they receive from SQA is about right, and over half believe the frequency of newsletters to be about right (with all of these outcomes being most likely to be noted by those in Management roles).

A third of Learners think they receive about the right amount of publications from SQA, although one in five don't believe this to be the case.

## 7.4 SQA Consultation and Engagement Profile

The College Audiences provided a satisfactory rating of SQA in terms of its consultation and engagement with them (with the most positive scores here being provided by Learners and those in Management roles).

Between February/March 2023 and November/December 2023, there was a slight – but statistically significant – increase in the rating of how well SQA consults or engages, with improvements in this regard being most notable amongst Learners. It should also be noted that, since the last survey, there was a notable fall in the rating of SQA's consultation and engagement amongst Lecturers.

## 7.5 SQA Values Profile

Although half of College Audiences believe that SQA can be trusted, this is to a lesser extent in terms of it being an enabling and a progressive organisation, with those in Management roles tending to be most positive in each of these regards.

Since the last survey, there has been an increasing extent to which those in Management roles and Learners believe that SQA exhibits each of the values noted above. However, Lecturers are less likely than in the last survey to believe that SQA can be trusted and is an enabling organisation.