



National Qualifications 2023–24 Research: Senior appointee and Qualifications Development colleague experiences

Colin Moore, Laura Wilson, Nevil Hopley, Rachel Whitford and Maggie Mroczkowski

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The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DQ

Lowden, 24 Wester Shawfair, Dalkeith, EH22 1FD

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Executive summary

Introduction

Between 2021–23, SQA conducted annual evaluations of the modified assessment approach for Graded National Courses which was implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic, to understand its effectiveness and gather insights from a variety of stakeholders. Now, SQA's research needs have shifted and we have developed a wave-based quantitative research approach to track evolving perceptions of National Qualifications over time. This is inspired by Ofqual's annual survey but limited to those with recent, lived experience. We intend this research to continue annually unless significant changes necessitate adjustments.

Furthermore, we note that these findings were gathered during a period of intense external scrutiny of the consistency of standards across years.

Method

This piece of research aimed to capture the perceptions of colleagues in SQA's Qualifications Development (QD) Directorate and the senior appointees (SAs) who supported National Qualifications (NQ) in 2023–24 regarding a range of topics related to NQs. These included:

- National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher
- assessment and awarding
- the legacy of COVID-19's impact on learning and teaching standards

The research also sought to understand how QD and SA colleagues with different characteristics experienced several aspects of NQs in 2023–24. These characteristics were SQA appointee role, length of time in SQA appointee role, and subject responsibility.

QD colleagues and those who had been SAs for NQ in 2023–24 were invited to take part in an online survey on these topics in September and October 2024. The survey

received 105 full responses. The data were then analysed by applying a mixture of descriptive statistics and Kruskal-Wallis tests to assess statistically significant differences in the responses between different groups in the sample.

Within SQA, QD and SA colleagues have different responsibilities. The role of colleagues in QD is to develop, manage and maintain SQA's portfolio of qualifications, ensuring compliance with SQA's auditable framework of standards. The role of SA colleagues, on the other hand, is to cover all aspects of the examination process. This includes the development and quality assurance of all assessments, invigilating the exams, and marking candidates' assessments. A broad range of team members were included in this research. From QD, participants included a head of service, qualifications manager, qualifications co-ordinator, qualifications officer, qualification implementation manager, subject implementation manager, and qualification development specialist. In terms of the SA colleagues, this included principal assessors, depute principal assessors, principal verifiers, and depute principal verifiers.

A detailed explanation of the methods used can be found in the methodology chapter and the technical appendix.

Results

National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher

Respondents agreed that National 5s, Highers and Advanced Highers provide learners with good skills and knowledge, prepare them well for future destinations, and are well regarded by the general public. However, perceptions of National 4 qualifications were notably poorer.

Respondents were asked whether they agreed that various NQs were 'trusted qualifications'. There was a high level of agreement with this statement for National 5s (91%), Highers (99%), and Advanced Higher (92%). However, the percentage of agreement dropped to 39% for National 4s. Similarly, respondents broadly agreed that National 5s (90%), Highers (95%), and Advanced Highers (98%) were 'good preparation for further study'. This percentage dropped to 48% for National 4s. There was similarly

strong agreement when respondents were asked whether they felt different NQs were 'good preparation for work': for Advanced Highers (78%), Highers (74%), and National 5s (68%). However, this percentage dropped again for National 4s to 38%.

There were also high levels of agreement with the statement that NQ 'standards are maintained year on year' for Advanced Highers (93%), Highers (93%), and National 5s (97%). In comparison, the proportion who agreed or strongly agreed with this statement when it came to National 4 fell to 48%.

The general level of agreement with the statement that National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications developed 'a broad range of skills for learners' reduced slightly, while still maintaining a substantial majority. The proportion who agreed or strongly agreed was 88% for National 5s, 86% for Highers and 89% for Advanced Highers. The proportion who agreed or strongly agreed with this statement for National 4s was again the lowest, but was higher than for previous statements, at 67%.

When asked whether the NQs were 'well understood by the public', the proportion who agreed or strongly agreed varied by qualification. The vast majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Higher (84%) and National 5 (72%) were well understood by the public. For Advanced Higher, the proportion of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed was still strong at 61%. However, a minority of respondents agreed to this statement for National 4s, with 10% of respondents agreeing that they were well understood by the public.

Legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic impact on learning and teaching

The majority of respondents expressed agreement that learning and teaching continued to be impacted by the pandemic.

The proportion of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that the pandemic continued to have an impact on learning and teaching in centres was 72%. For the statement 'In your subject area there was evidence of recovery from the pandemic in 2023–24 compared to 2022–23', 66% agreed or strongly agreed and 66% also agreed

or strongly agreed that due to the pandemic, aspects of skills development in their subject area continued to be affected.

There was evidence that fewer respondents in 2024 felt the pandemic continued to impact learning and teaching than in 2023. When asked whether they believed that there was evidence of recovery from the pandemic compared to the previous academic year, 54% of respondents in 2023 agreed or strongly agreed, and this rose to 66% of respondents in 2024. In 2023, 74% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the skills development in their subject area continued to be impacted by the pandemic. In 2024, this figure dropped to 66%.

Perceptions of standards

Respondents expressed high levels of agreement with the statement 'The national standard is articulated clearly in the course specification and other documentation (course reports and marking instructions)', with 89% agreeing or strongly agreeing. Similarly, 85% agreed or strongly agreed that 'Understanding Standards generally provides educators with the resources they need to understand the national standard'.

However, a lower proportion agreed or strongly agreed that 'Educators understand Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) assessment requirements' (60%), and that 'the national standard was consistently understood and interpreted by educators in 2023–24' (50%). Over the past few years, this figure has declined. In previous iterations of this NQ research, respondents were asked how much they agreed with the statement 'The national standard was consistently understood and interpreted by educators'. When asked this in 2021–22, 59% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, and in 2022–23, 51% agreed or strongly agreed.

Differences in perceptions of NQs by sub-group

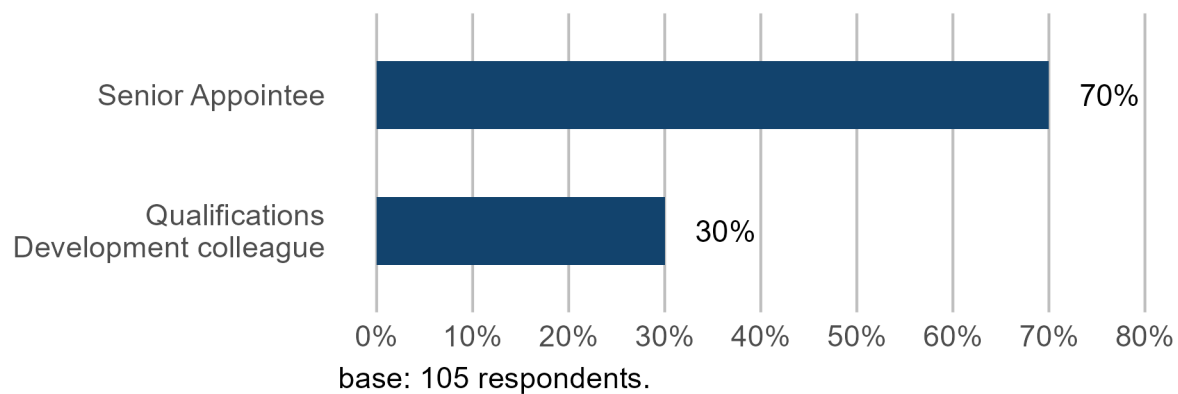
QD respondents were less satisfied than SA respondents with the communications from SQA about the NQ in 2023–24.

Respondent profile

This report provides key information pertaining to the profile of the respondents. However, a more detailed description of the respondent profile can be found in the technical appendix.

Respondents were asked whether they worked for SQA as a SA or within the QD team in 2024 (Figure 1).

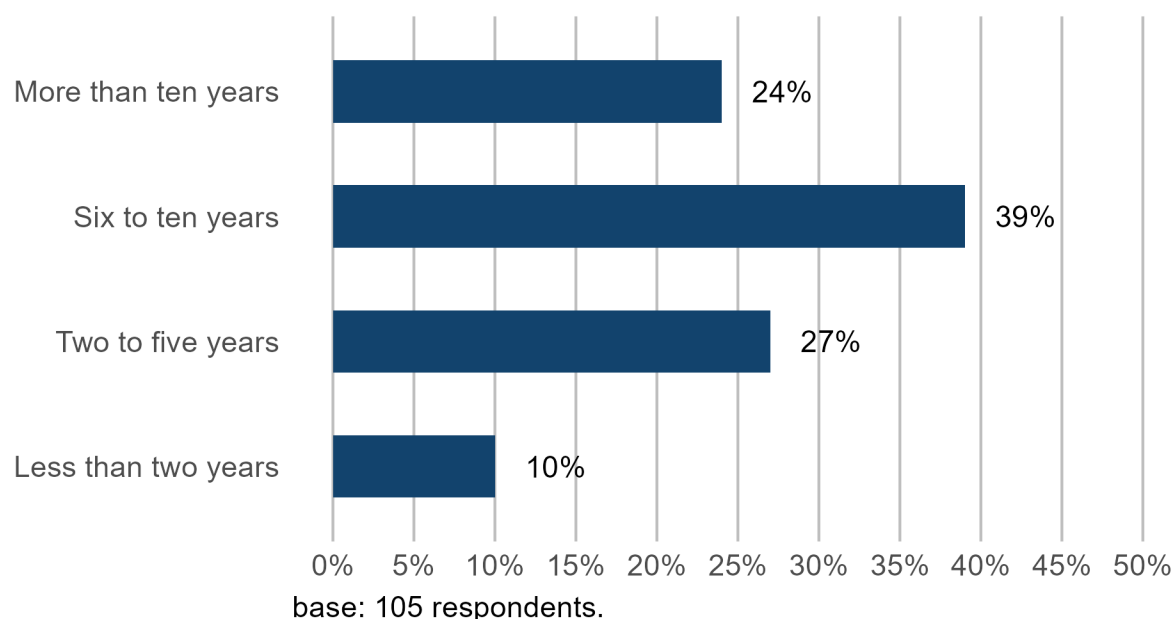
Figure 1: Were you a senior appointee or qualifications development colleague in 2024?



Of those who provided a response, 70% of respondents worked as SAs and 30% worked within the QD team last year. This is shown in the figure above.

When respondents were asked to indicate how long they have been in their role, 105 individuals responded (Figure 2).

Figure 2: How long have you been in this role?

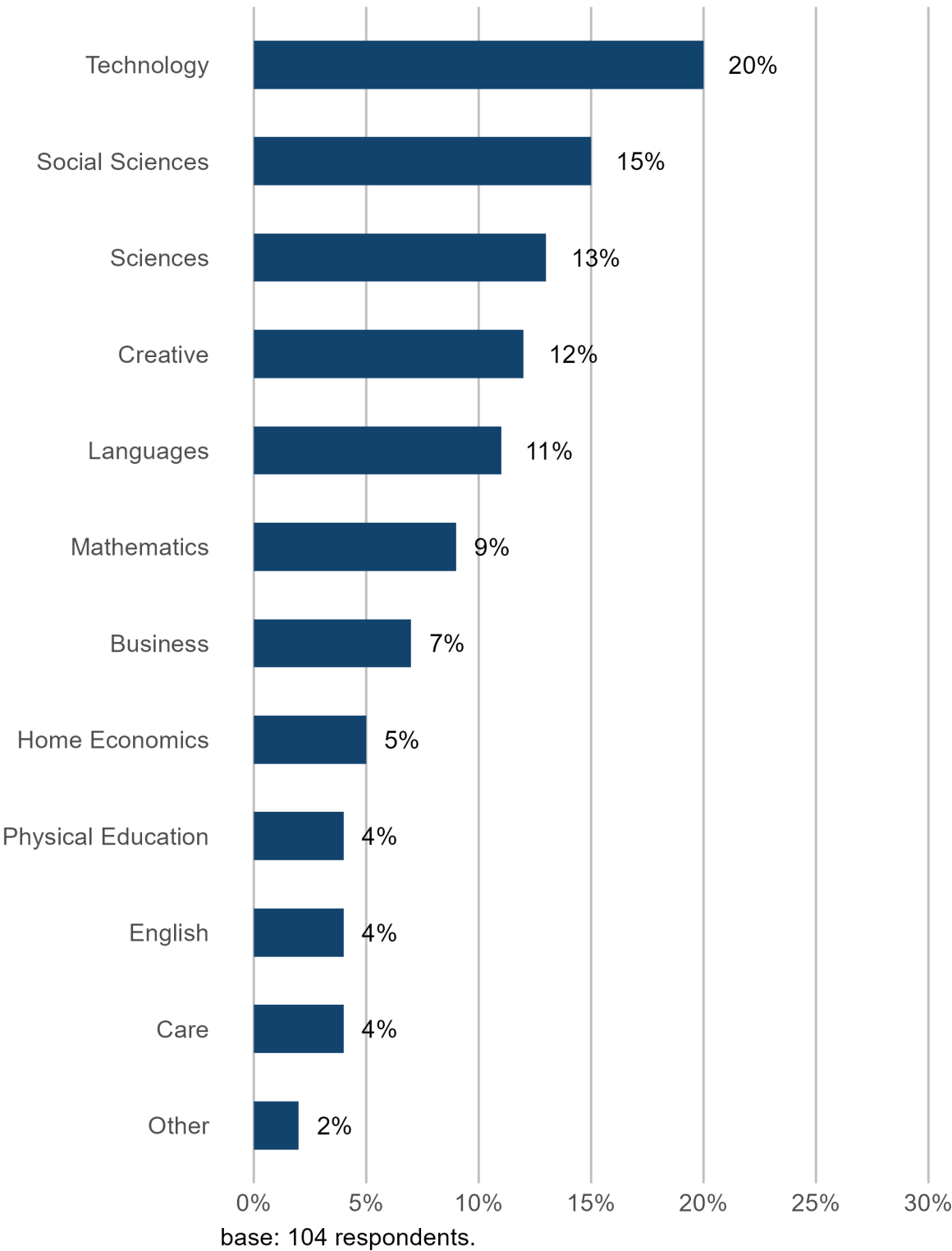


The results of the survey showed that almost two thirds of respondents (63%) have been in their position for at least six years. The highest proportion of respondents (39%) have been in their role for between six and ten years. A further 24% had been in the role for more than ten years and 37% of respondents had been in their role for less than six years. In addition, 27% of respondents have been in their role for between two and five years, and a further 10% have been in their role for less than two years.

Subsequently, respondents were asked which subject areas they represented in 2024, and 104 individuals provided an answer (Figure 3).

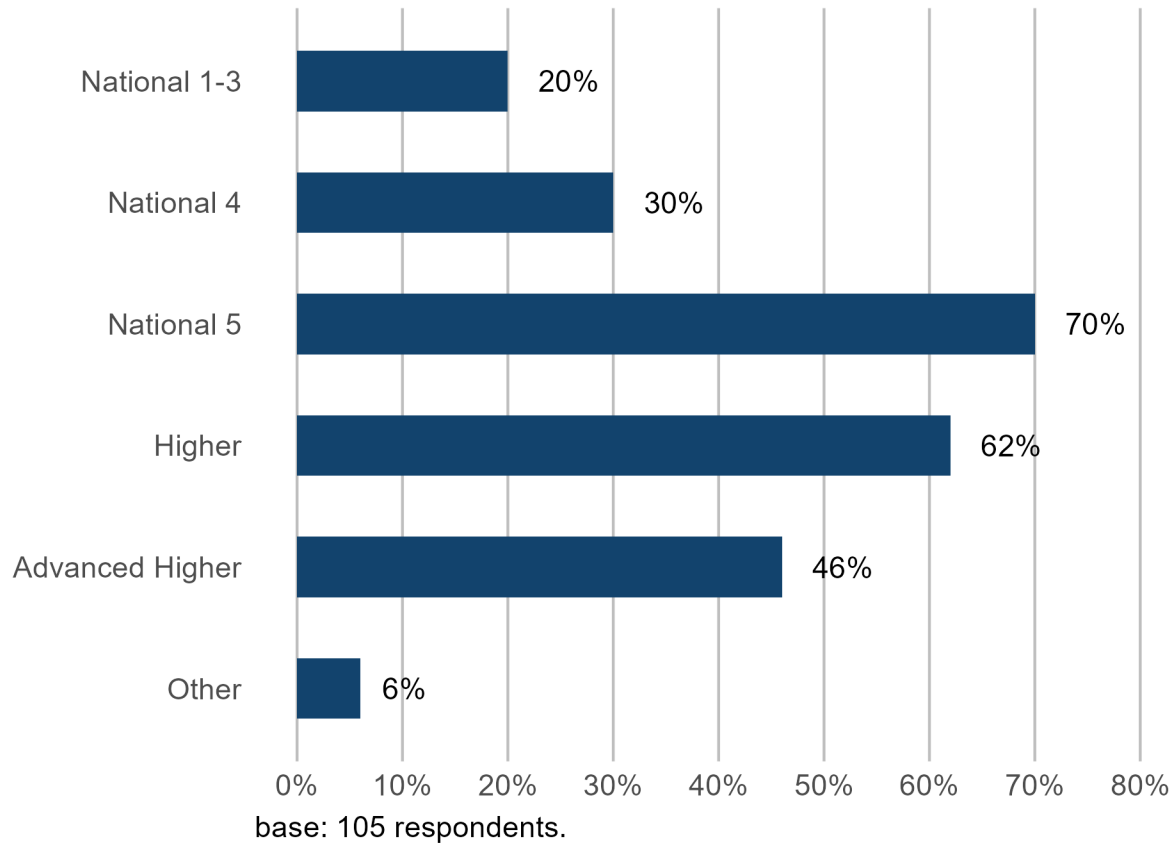
There was a broad range of subjects represented in the findings. The greatest percentage of respondents (20%) represented the Technology subject area, while the Physical Education, English and Care subject areas were the least represented, with each having only 4% of respondents.

Figure 3: What subject area(s) did you represent in 2024?



Respondents were then asked the qualification level that they represented in 2024, and 105 individuals provided an answer (Figure 4).

Figure 4: What qualification level(s) did you represent in 2024?



Most of the respondents represented either National 5 (70%) or Higher (62%) qualification level. There was also a high number of respondents (46%) who represented the Advanced Higher qualification level. The fewest number of respondents represented either National 1–3 (20%) or National 4 (30%).

National Qualifications

SA and QD colleague respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the same set of six statements for each National Qualification. Respondents' answers to these six statements for National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher are discussed in detail in the following section.

The number of respondents who were either SAs or QD colleagues was substantially lower than other stakeholder research with learners and educators. This is partially due to the total number of QD and SA colleagues being lower. Given the fewer responses, the data collected from these questions should be treated with some caution and may not be as reliable as the research on NQ with learners and educators. See the technical appendix for comparisons.

National 4

There were 31 respondents who indicated that they represented a National 4 qualification who were asked how much they agree with several statements pertaining to National 4s (Figures 5a and 5b).

Figure 5a: Perceptions of National 4 qualifications

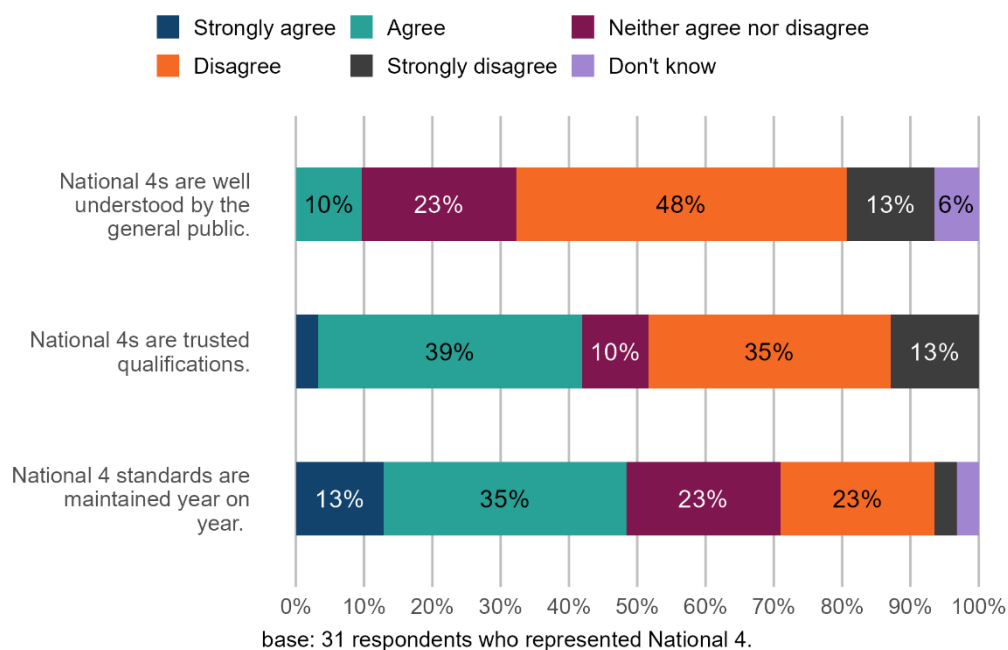
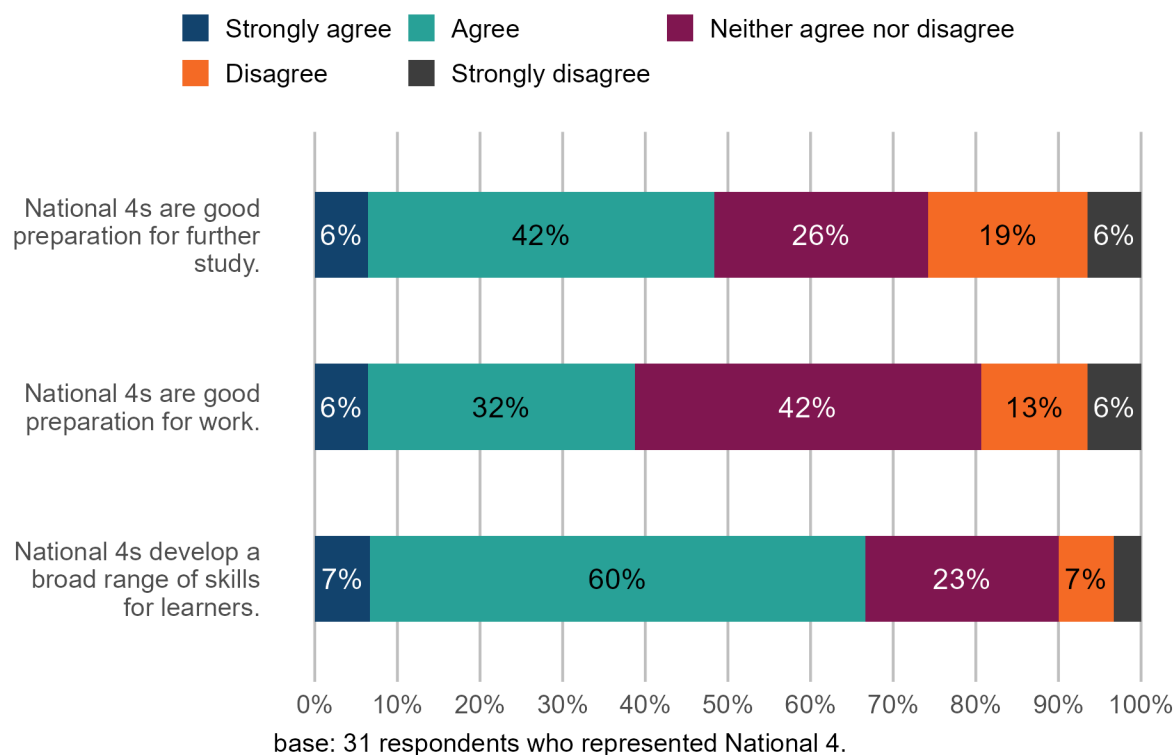


Figure 5b: Perceptions of National 4 qualifications



Among SAs and QD colleagues, the statement ‘National 4s develop a broad range of skills for learners’ had the highest level of agreement. Sixty-seven per cent (67%) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement.

In addition, there was high levels of agreement with the statements that National 4s were ‘good preparation for further study’ (48%), and that ‘standards are maintained year on year’ (48%).

The highest levels of disagreement from respondents were for the statements ‘National 4s are understood by the general public’ (61%) and ‘National 4s are trusted qualifications’ (48%).

National 5

The 72 respondents who indicated that they represented a National 5 qualification were asked how much they agree with the group of statements pertaining to National 5s (Figures 6a and 6b).

Figure 6a: Perceptions of National 5 qualifications

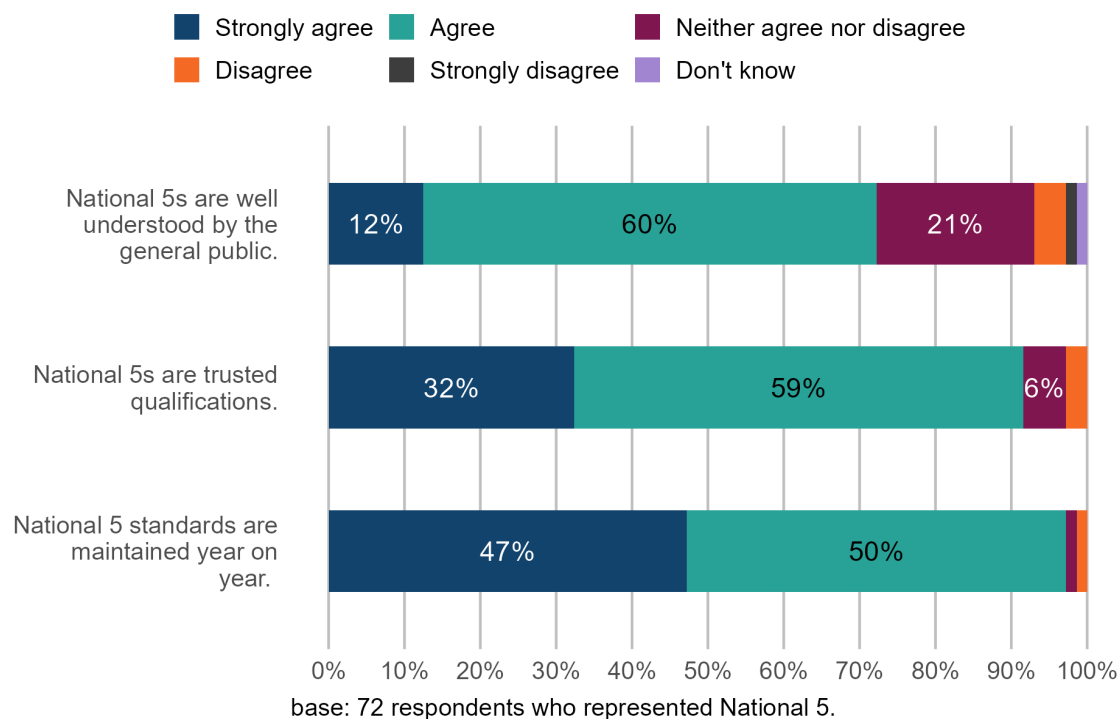
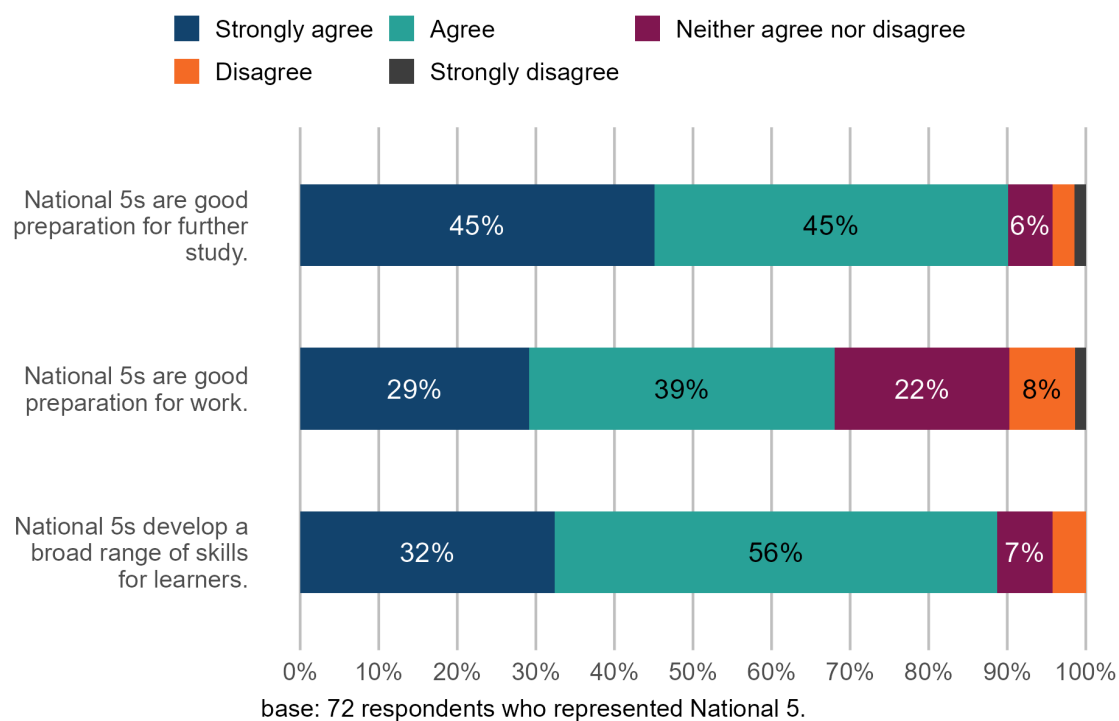


Figure 6b: Perceptions of National 5 qualifications



Among those who represented National 5s, there was a high level of agreement with all of the statements. However, the highest level of agreement was with the statements 'National 5 standards are maintained year on year' (97%), 'National 5s are trusted qualifications' (91%), and 'National 5s are good preparation for further study' (90%).

There was also a high level of agreement with the statements 'National 5s develop a broad range of skills for learners' (88%) and 'National 5s are understood by the general public' (72%).

The highest level of disagreement was with regards to the statement 'National 5s are good preparation for work', which 8% of respondents disagreed with. This statement also received the lowest level of agreement, which was 68%.

Higher

From the broader sample of SAs and QD colleagues, 64 indicated that they represented a Higher qualification. These respondents were asked how much they agree with the statements about Highers (Figures 7a and 7b)

Figure 7a: Perceptions of Higher qualifications

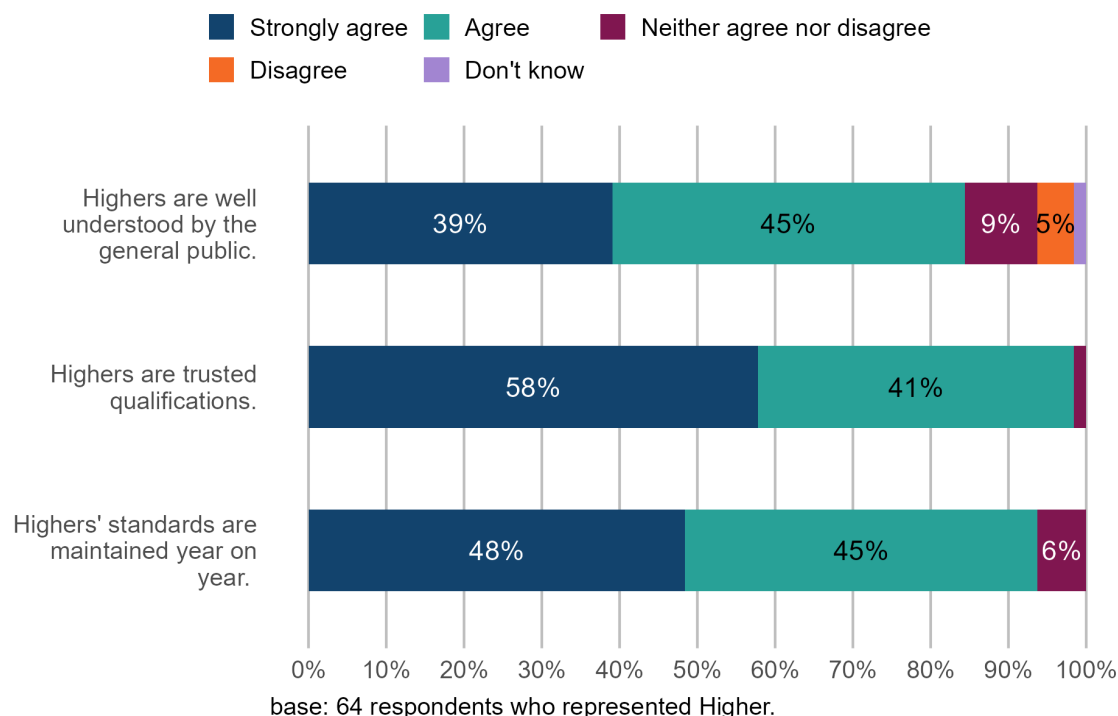
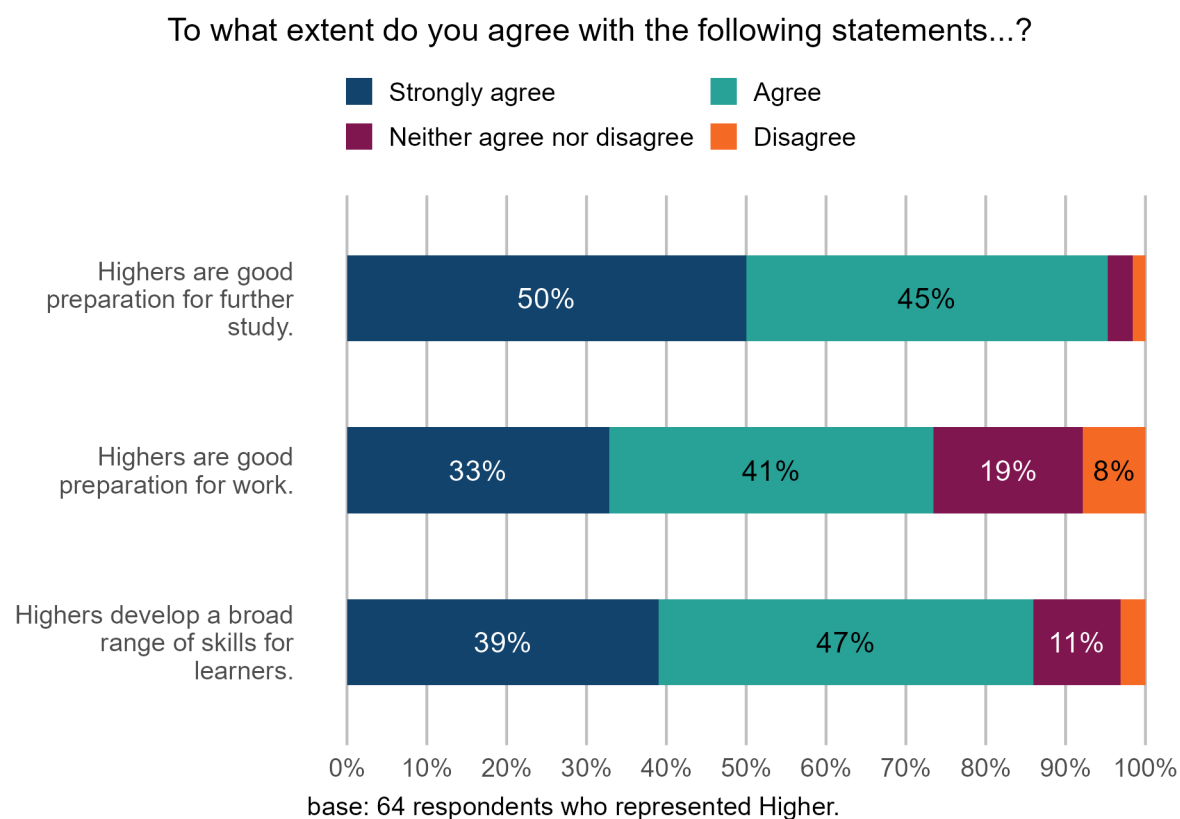


Figure 7b: Perceptions of Higher qualifications



Broadly, there was a high level of agreement with the statements regarding Highers. The highest level of agreement was with the statements 'Highers are trusted qualifications' (99%), 'Highers are good preparation for further study' (95%), and 'Higher standards are maintained year on year' (93%).

There was also a good level of agreement with several other statements, including 'Highers develop a broad range of skills for learners' (86%) and 'Highers are well understood by the general public' (84%).

For the statement 'Highers are good preparation for work', there was somewhat more of a mixed response as 74% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, 19% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 8% disagreed.

Advanced Higher

In terms of Advanced Higher, 45 respondents indicated that they represented that qualification level. These respondents were asked how much they agree with the statements about Advanced Highers (Figures 8a and 8b).

Figure 8a: Perceptions of Advanced Higher qualifications

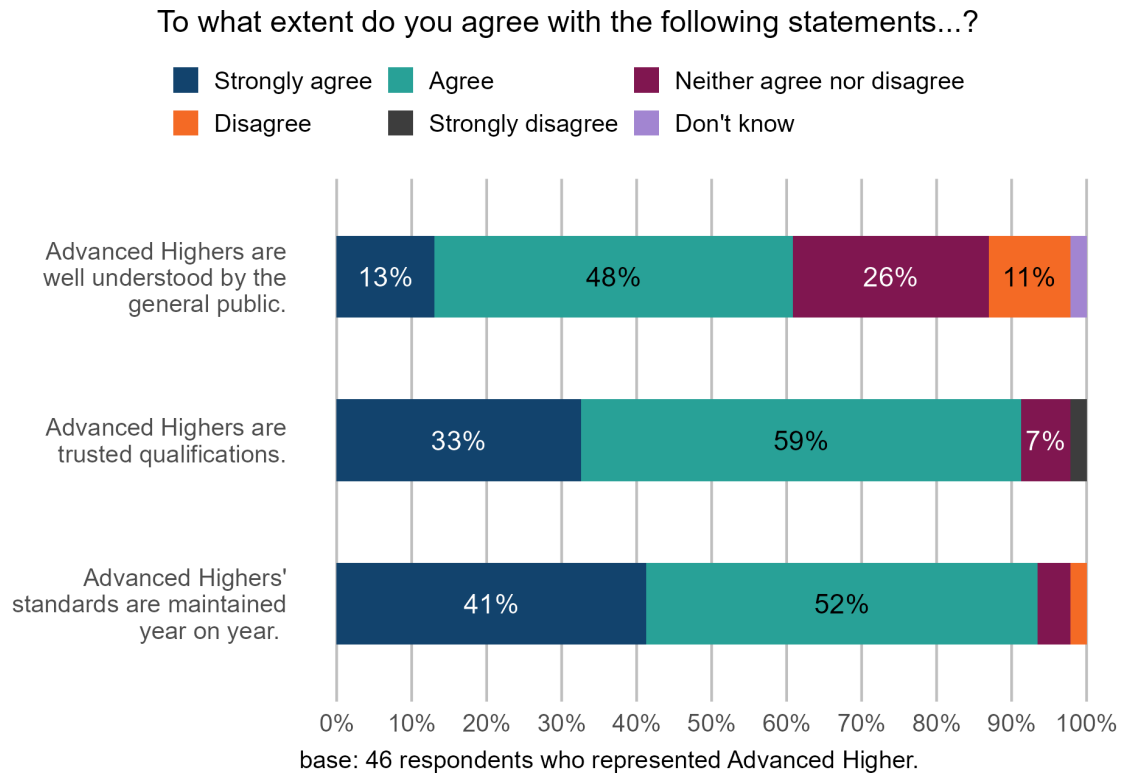
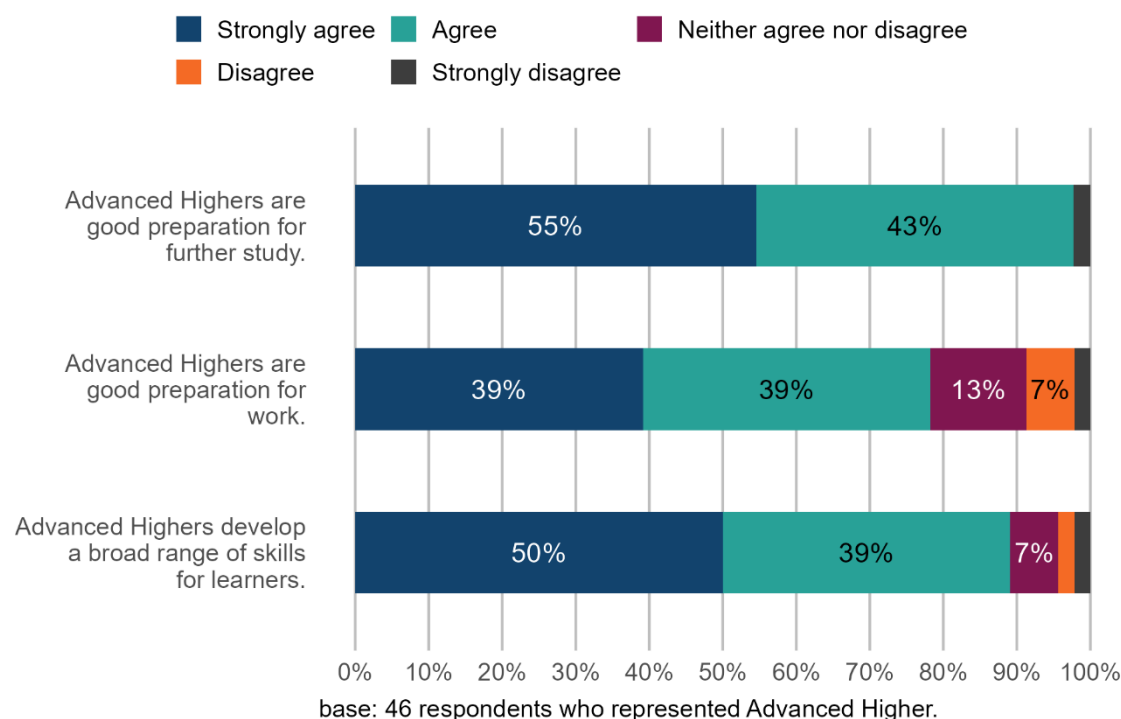


Figure 8b: Perceptions of Advanced Higher qualifications



The statements that produced the highest level of agreement were ‘Advanced Highers are good preparation for further study’ (98%), ‘Advanced Higher standards are maintained year on year’ (93%), and ‘Advanced Highers are trusted qualifications’ (92%).

There was also a good level of agreement with the statements ‘Advanced Highers develop a broad range of skills for learners’ (89%), and ‘Advanced Highers are good preparation for work’ (78%).

The lowest level of agreement and highest level of disagreement was with the statement ‘Advanced Highers are understood by the general public’, as 61% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, 26% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 11% disagreed.

National Qualifications conclusion

Overall, respondents suggested that National 5s, Highers and Advanced Highers provide learners with good skills and knowledge, prepare them well for future

destinations, and are well regarded by the general public. Perceptions of National 4 qualifications were notably poorer.

Across the NQs examined, there were generally high levels of agreement with the statement that National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications developed 'a broad range of skills for learners'. This is particularly the case for National 5s (88%), Highers (86%) and Advanced Highers (89%). The agreement figure drops for National 4s (67%).

When asked whether the NQs were 'well understood by the public', there were some mixed results. Both Higher (84%) and National 5 (72%) were seen to be very well understood by the public and had low levels of disagreement. For Advanced Higher, there was a strong level of agreement (61%). By far, National 4s had the lowest levels of agreement, with only 10% agreeing and none strongly agreeing. A further 23% neither agreed nor disagreed, 61% disagreed or disagreed strongly and 6% responded 'don't know'.

Respondents were asked whether they agreed that various NQs were 'trusted qualifications'. There was a high level of agreement with this statement for National 5s (91%), Highers (99%), and Advanced Highers (92%). However, the percentage of agreement dropped for National 4s (39%).

There was a mixed response when respondents were asked whether the NQs were 'good preparation for work'. Specifically, there was a high level of agreement for National 5s (68%), Highers (74%), and Advanced Highers (78%). Once again, this figure was lower for National 4s (38%).

Respondents broadly agreed that National 5s (90%), Highers (95%), and Advanced Highers (98%) were 'good preparation for further study'. This percentage dropped to 48% for National 4s.

There were high levels of agreement with the statement that NQ 'standards are maintained year on year' for Advanced Highers (93%), Highers (93%) and National 5s (97%). Comparatively, there was a low level of agreement for National 4s (48%).

Assessment and awarding

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed with statements about assessment, awarding and results in the 2023–24 academic year (Figures 9a and 9b). Ninety-eight respondents answered these questions.

Figure 9a: Perceptions of assessment and awarding

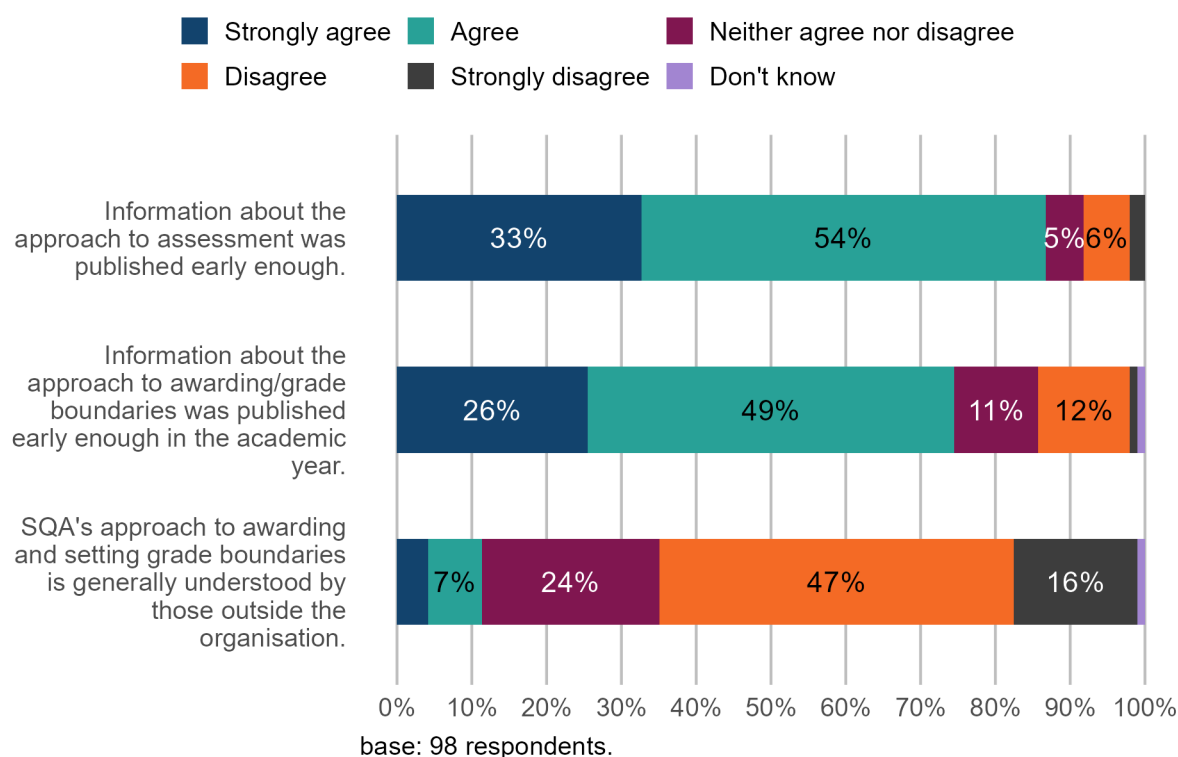
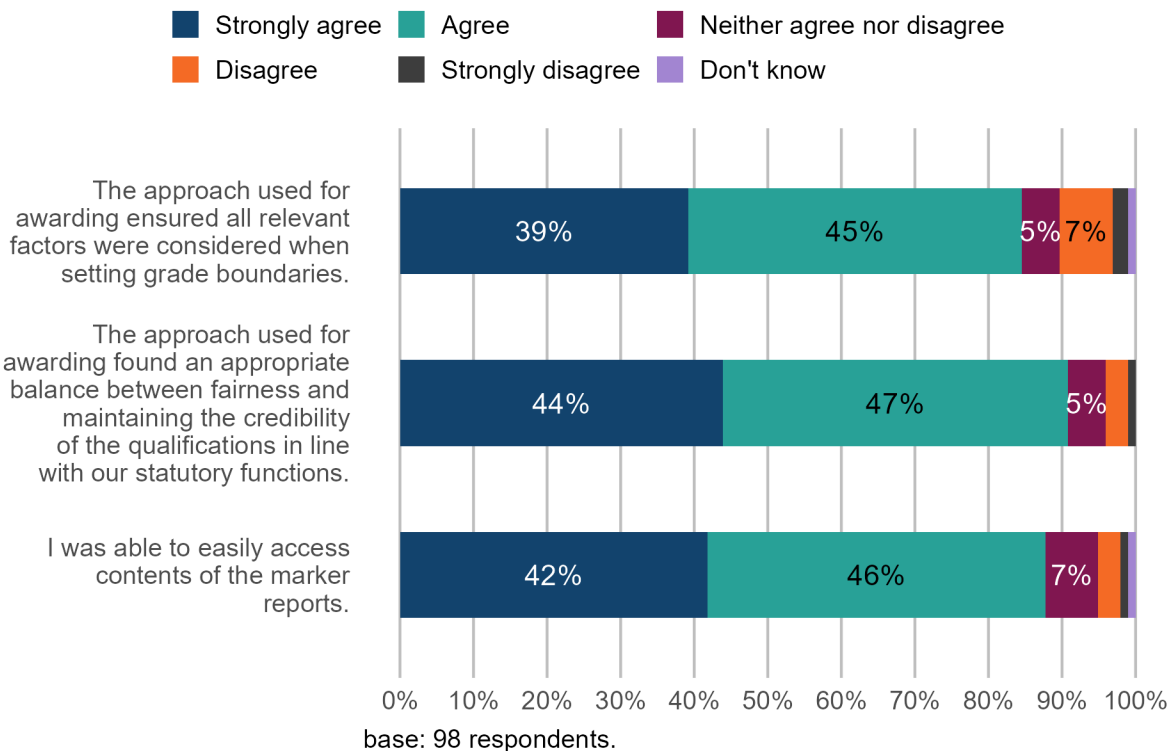


Figure 9b: Perceptions of assessment and awarding



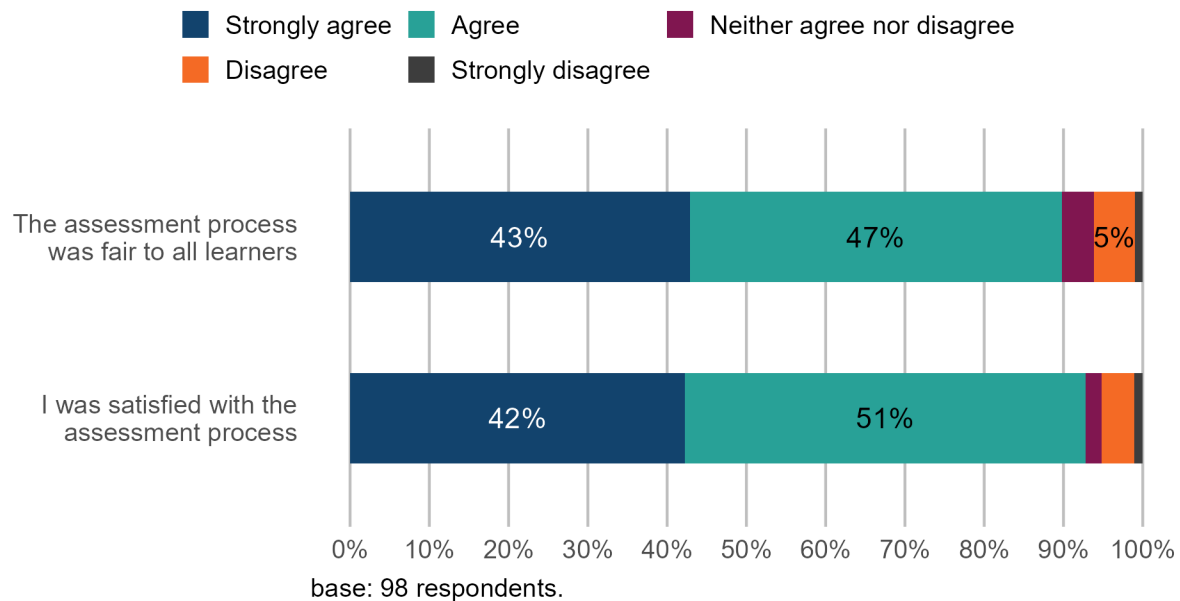
The majority of respondents agreed with the following statements, 'the approach to awarding found an appropriate balance between fairness and maintaining the credibility of the qualifications in line with our statutory awarding function' (91%), 'I was able to easily access contents of marker reports' (88%), 'Information about the approach to assessment was published early enough' (87%), and 'The approach used for awarding ensured all relevant factors were considered when setting grade boundaries' (84%).

There was also a good level of agreement with the statement 'information about the approach to awarding/grade boundaries was published early enough in the academic year', with 74% of respondents agreeing.

By far, the statement with the highest level of disagreement was 'SQA's approach to awarding and setting grade boundaries is generally understood by those outside the organisation' with 63% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing and a further 24% neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

98 respondents were asked about the extent to which they agreed with statements about assessment (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Perceptions of the assessment process



Both statements had high levels of agreement with 93% of respondents agreeing that that they were 'satisfied with the assessment process' and 90% agreeing that 'the assessment process was fair to learners.

Legacy of COVID-19 on learning and teaching

A total of 99 respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed with several statements about education since the COVID-19 pandemic (Figures 11a and 11b).

Figure 11a: Perceptions of the impact of the pandemic on learning and teaching

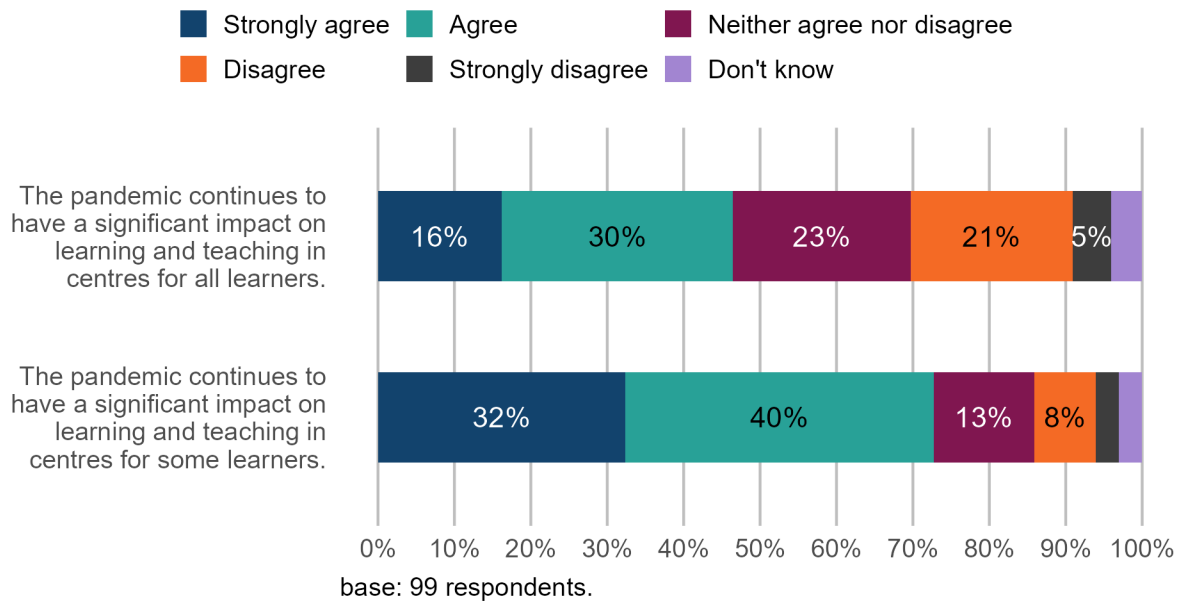
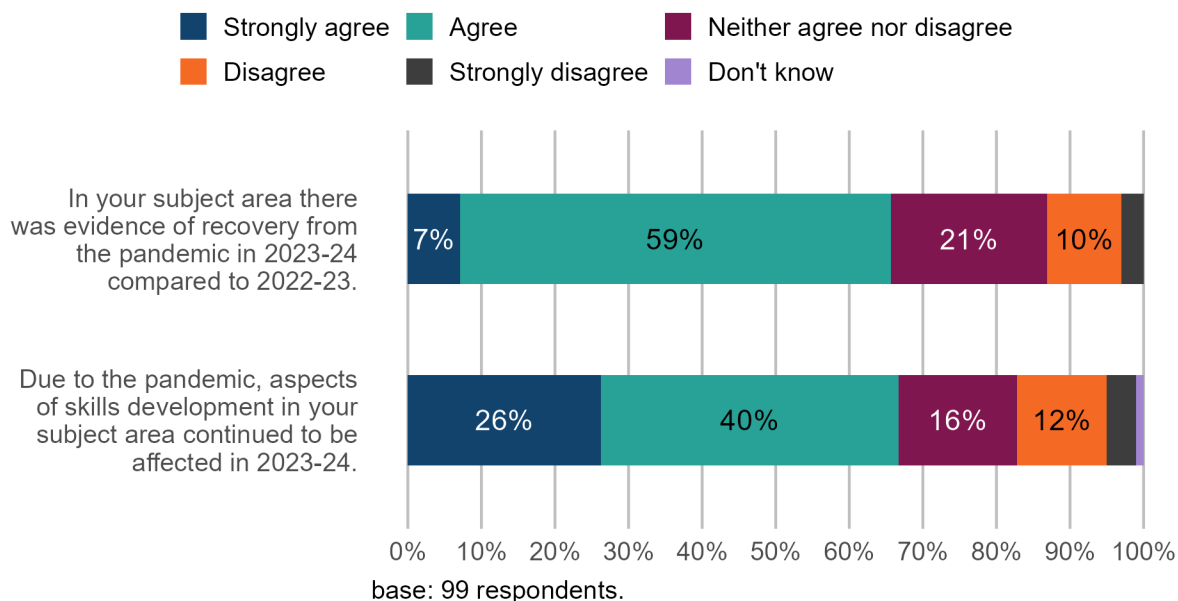


Figure 11b: Perceptions of the impact of the pandemic on learning and teaching



There was a mixture of opinions in relation to learning and teaching since the pandemic. However, there were high levels of agreement with the statements that 'The pandemic continues to have an impact on learning and teaching in centres for some learners' (72%), 'In your subject area there was evidence of recovery from the pandemic in 2023-24 compared to 2022-23.' (66%), and 'Due to the pandemic, aspects of skills development in your subject area continued to be affected in 2023-24' (66%).

There were moderate levels of disagreement with the statements that 'In your subject area there was evidence of recovery from the pandemic in 2023-24 compared to 2022-23' (31%) and 'The pandemic continues to have a significant impact on learning and teaching in centres for all learners' (26%).

During the 2023 iteration of this research, respondents were asked similar questions regarding the impact of the pandemic on learning and teaching. While these questions are not exactly the same, they were very similar and can thus be compared with the results from the 2024 NQ Research. Overall, it appears that respondents who were SAs and QD colleagues believed that there were positive changes over the past year.

In 2023, most respondents (84%) indicated that the pandemic continued to have an impact on learning and teaching in centres for some learners, and almost half of respondents (49%) indicated that this was the case for all learners. In 2024, 72% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the pandemic continues to have an impact on learning and teaching in centres for some learners.

When asked whether they believed that there was evidence of recovery from the pandemic compared to the previous academic year, 54% of respondents from the 2023 research agreed compared to 66% of respondents in the 2024 research.

In 2023, 74% of respondents agreed that skills development in their subject area continued to be impacted by the pandemic. The following year, in 2024, this figure dropped to 66%.

Standards

A total of 98 respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed with statements about standards (Figures 12a and 12b).

Figure 12a: Perceptions of National Qualifications standards

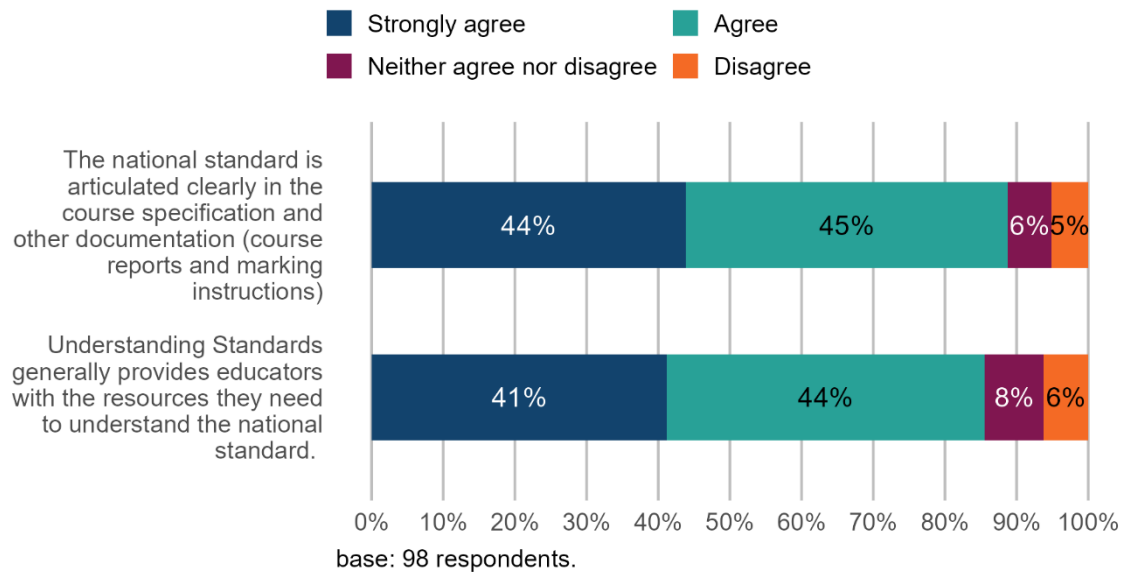
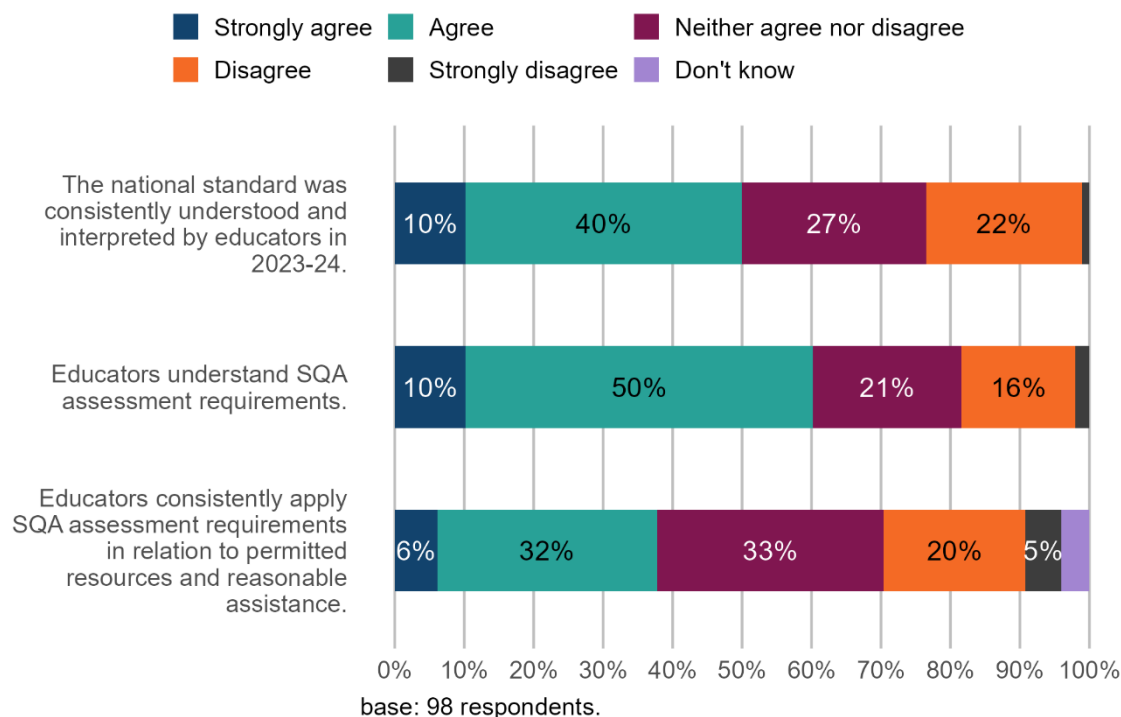


Figure 12b: Perceptions of National Qualifications standards



There was a high level of agreement for two statements, 'The national standard is articulated clearly in the course specification and other documentation (course reports and marking instructions)' (89%) and 'Understanding Standards generally provides educators with the resources they need to understand the national standard' (85%).

A large proportion of respondents agreed that 'Educators understand SQA assessment requirements' (60%) and 'The national standard was consistently understood and interpreted by educators in 2023-24' (50%). However, both of these statements had a moderate level of neither agree nor disagrees (21% and 27% respectively) and disagreement or strong disagreement (18% and 23% respectively).

There was a mixed response in relation to the statement 'Educators consistently apply SQA assessment requirements in relation to permitted resources and reasonable assistance'. While 38% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, a further 33% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 25% disagreed.

Composite analysis

Communications satisfaction

The communications satisfaction composite examined how SAs and QD respondents felt about NQ communications overall in 2023–24 by taking an average of their response to the following three statements about communication:

- Information about the approach to assessment was published early enough.
- Information about the approach to awarding / grade boundaries was published early enough in the academic year.
- SQA's approach to awarding and setting grade boundaries is generally understood by those outside the organisation.

In designing the communications satisfaction composite, researchers interpreted higher levels of agreement with the three statements as indicating higher levels of satisfaction with SQA's communications about NQ in 2023–24. Therefore, low mean scores indicated less satisfaction with SQA's communications in 2023–24, while high scores indicated more satisfaction.

Respondents who answered all three questions had a communications satisfaction score calculated. The composite had an overall average score of 3.4 for all respondents, indicating an above mid-range level of satisfaction. Translated back to the original Likert scale responses, this would place the respondents with an average response above 'neither agree nor disagree' and below 'agree'.

The communication satisfaction score was compared against three different factors: the SQA appointee role, the length of time in the SQA appointee role, and the subject responsibility. Statistical analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between satisfaction scores based on the length of time in an SQA appointee role or subject responsibility.

SQA role

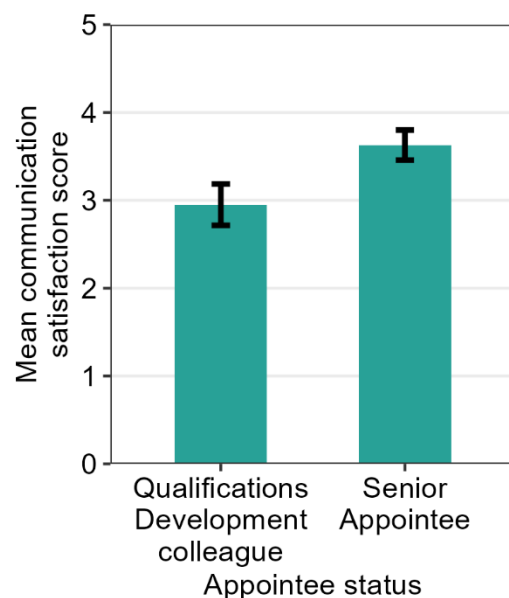
QD colleagues within the sample had a mean composite score of 3.0, compared to 3.6 for SAs (Figure 1 and Table 1).

Table 1: Communication score composite Information

Appointee status	Number of respondents	Mean communication satisfaction score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
QD colleague	25	3	2.7	3.2
Senior Appointee	70	3.6	3.5	3.8

There was a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.01$) in the composite scores between the SAs and the QD respondents. This may indicate that QD colleagues within the sample were less satisfied than SAs with the communications from SQA about the NQ in 2023–24.

Figure 13: Mean communications satisfaction score



Qualifications satisfaction

National 4

The National 4 satisfaction composite score examines how SA and QD respondents felt about National 4s overall in 2023–24 by taking an average of their response to the following six statements about National 4s:

- National 4s are well understood by the general public.
- National 4s are trusted qualifications.
- National 4 standards are maintained year on year.
- National 4s are good preparation for further study.
- National 4s are good preparation for work.
- National 4s develop a broad range of skills for learners.

In designing the National 4 satisfaction composite, researchers interpreted that higher levels of agreement with the six statements indicated higher levels of satisfaction with National 4s in 2023–24. Therefore, low mean scores indicate less satisfaction with National 4s in 2023–24, while high scores indicate more satisfaction.

Respondents who answered all six questions had a National 4 satisfaction score calculated. The composite had an overall average score of 3.1 for all respondents, indicating a slightly above mid-range level of satisfaction with National 4s. Translated back to the original Likert scale responses, this would place the respondents with an average response of ‘neither agree nor disagree’.

The National 4 satisfaction score was compared against three different factors: the SQA appointee role, the length of time in the SQA appointee role, and the subject responsibility. Statistical analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between satisfaction scores based on the SQA appointee role, length of time in an SQA appointee role, or subject responsibility.

National 5

The National 5 satisfaction composite score examines how learner respondents felt about National 5s overall in 2023–24 by taking an average of their response to the following six statements about National 5s:

- National 5s are well understood by the general public.
- National 5s are trusted qualifications.
- National 5 standards are maintained year on year.
- National 5s are good preparation for further study.
- National 5s are good preparation for work.
- National 5s develop a broad range of skills for learners.

In designing the National 5 satisfaction composite, researchers interpreted that higher levels of agreement with the six statements indicated higher levels of satisfaction with National 5s in 2023–24. Therefore, low mean scores indicate less satisfaction with National 5s in 2023–24, while high scores indicate more satisfaction.

Respondents who answered all six questions had a National 5 satisfaction score calculated. The composite had an overall average score of 4.1 for all respondents, indicating a higher level of satisfaction with National 5s. Translated back to the original Likert scale responses, this would place the respondents with an average response of 'agree'.

The National 5 satisfaction score was compared against three different factors: the SQA appointee role, the length of time in the SQA appointee role, and the subject responsibility. Statistical analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between satisfaction scores based on the SQA appointee role, length of time in an SQA appointee role, or subject responsibility.

Higher

The Higher satisfaction composite score examines how respondents felt about Highers overall in 2023–24 by taking an average of their response to the following six statements about Highers:

- Highers are well understood by the general public.
- Highers are trusted qualifications.
- Higher standards are maintained year on year.
- Highers are good preparation for further study.
- Highers are good preparation for work.
- Highers develop a broad range of skills for learners.

In designing the Higher satisfaction composite, researchers interpreted higher levels of agreement with the six statements as indicating higher levels of satisfaction with Highers in 2023–24. Therefore, low mean scores indicated less satisfaction with Highers in 2023–24, while high scores indicated more satisfaction.

Respondents who answered all six questions had a Higher satisfaction score calculated. The composite had an overall average score of 4.3 for all respondents, indicating a higher level of satisfaction with Highers. Translated back to the original Likert scale responses, this would place the respondents with an average response of 'agree'.

The Higher satisfaction score was compared against three different factors: the SQA appointee role, the length of time in the SQA appointee role and the subject responsibility. Statistical analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between satisfaction scores based on the SQA appointee role, length of time in a SQA appointee role, or subject responsibility.

Advanced Higher

The Advanced Higher satisfaction composite score examines how learner respondents felt about Advanced Highers overall in 2023–24 by taking an average of their response to the following six statements about Advanced Highers:

- Advanced Highers are well understood by the general public.
- Advanced Highers are trusted qualifications.
- Advanced Higher standards are maintained year on year.
- Advanced Highers are good preparation for further study.
- Advanced Highers are good preparation for work.
- Advanced Highers develop a broad range of skills for learners.

In designing the Advanced Higher satisfaction composite, researchers interpreted higher levels of agreement with the six statements as indicating higher levels of satisfaction with Advanced Highers in 2023–24. Therefore, low mean scores indicate less satisfaction with Advanced Highers in 2023–24, while high scores indicate more satisfaction.

Respondents who answered all six questions had an Advanced Higher satisfaction score calculated. The composite had an overall average score of 4.2 for all respondents, indicating a higher level of satisfaction with Advanced Highers. Translated back to the original Likert scale responses, this would place the respondents with an average response of 'agree'.

The Advanced Higher satisfaction score was compared against three different factors: the SQA appointee role, the length of time in the SQA appointee role, and the subject responsibility. Statistical analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between satisfaction scores based on the SQA appointee role, length of time in an SQA appointee role, or subject responsibility.

Legacy of COVID-19 on learning and teaching

The learning and teaching satisfaction composite examined how SAs and QD colleagues felt about teaching and learning overall in 2023–24 by taking an average of their response to the following five statements:

- The pandemic continues to have a significant impact on learning and teaching in centres for all learners.
- The pandemic continues to have a significant impact on learning and teaching in centres for some learners.
- In your subject area there was evidence of recovery from the pandemic in 2023–24 compared to 2022–23.
- Due to the pandemic, aspects of skills development in your subject area continued to be affected in 2023–24.
- The pandemic continues to have a significant impact on learning and teaching in centres.

Agreement with the third statement ('In your subject area there was evidence of recovery from the pandemic in 2023–24 compared to 2022–23') indicates an assessment that things are improving. Agreement with any of the other four statements indicates a more negative view (the pandemic legacy remains an issue). The Likert scale scores for the third statement were therefore flipped when combined with the scores for the other statements, so that they matched the overall trend of what agreement or disagreement means. As a result, a low mean composite score from all five questions would indicate greater satisfaction with teaching and training in 2023–24, while a high score would indicate low satisfaction. Further information on this can be found in the technical appendix.

Respondents who answered all five questions had a learning and teaching satisfaction score calculated. The composite had an overall average score of 3.4 for all respondents, indicating an above mid-range level of satisfaction. Translated back to the original Likert scale responses, this would place the respondents with an average

response above 'neither agree nor disagree' and below 'agree'. This indicates that respondents were slightly less satisfied with teaching and training in 2023–24.

The teaching and training satisfaction score was compared against three different factors: the SQA appointee role, the length of time in the SQA appointee role, and the subject responsibility. Statistical analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between satisfaction scores based on SQA appointee role, length of time in an SQA appointee role, or subject responsibility

Standards

The standards satisfaction composite examined how SAs and QD colleagues felt about standards overall in 2023–24 by taking an average of their response to the following five statements about standards:

- The national standard is articulated clearly in the course specification and other documentation (course reports and marking instructions).
- Understanding Standards generally provides educators with the resources they need to understand the national standard.
- The national standard was consistently understood and interpreted by educators in 2023–24.
- Educators understand SQA assessment requirements.
- Educators consistently apply SQA assessment requirements in relation to permitted resources and reasonable assistance.

In designing the standards composite, researchers interpreted that higher levels of agreement with the five statements indicated higher levels of satisfaction with standards in 2023–24. Therefore, low mean scores indicate less satisfaction with standards in 2023–24, while high scores indicate more satisfaction.

Respondents who answered all five questions had a standards satisfaction score calculated. The composite had an overall average score of 3.7 for all respondents, indicating an above mid-range level of satisfaction. Translated back to the original Likert

scale responses, this would place the respondents with an average response above 'neither agree nor disagree' and below 'agree'.

The standards satisfaction score was compared against three different factors: the SQA appointee role, the length of time in the SQA appointee role, and the subject responsibility. Statistical analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between satisfaction scores based on SQA appointee role, length of time in an SQA appointee role, or subject responsibility

Appendix C – SA / QD satisfaction composite analysis

Communication satisfaction score

Figure 14: Communication satisfaction score by appointee status

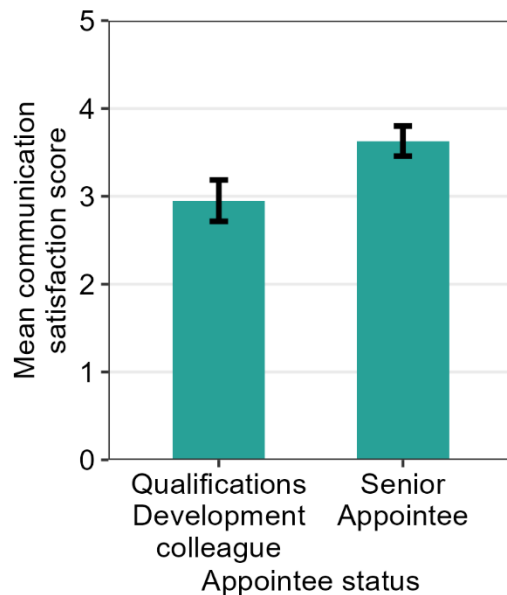


Table 2: Communication satisfaction score by appointee status

Appointee status	Number of respondents	Mean communication satisfaction score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
QD colleague	25	3	2.7	3.2
Senior appointee	70	3.6	3.5	3.8

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0

Evidence to suggest that at least one of the appointee status groupings has a different median score.

Figure 15: Communication satisfaction score by appointment duration

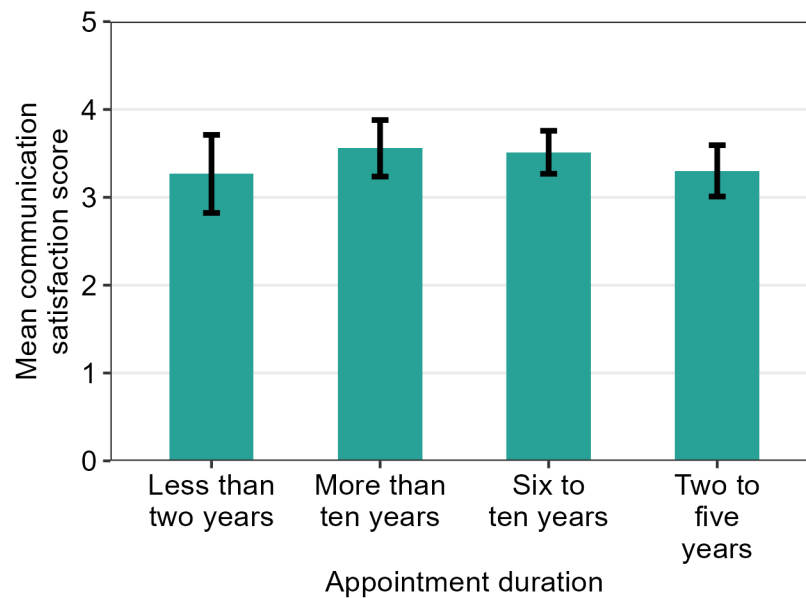


Table 3: Communication satisfaction score by appointment duration

Appointment duration	Number of respondents	Mean communication satisfaction score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Less than two years	10	3.3	2.8	3.7
More than ten years	25	3.6	3.2	3.9
Six to ten years	40	3.5	3.3	3.8
Two to five years	25	3.3	3	3.6

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.5789

No evidence to suggest that any of the appointment duration groupings have a different median score.

Figure 16: Communication satisfaction by subject responsibility

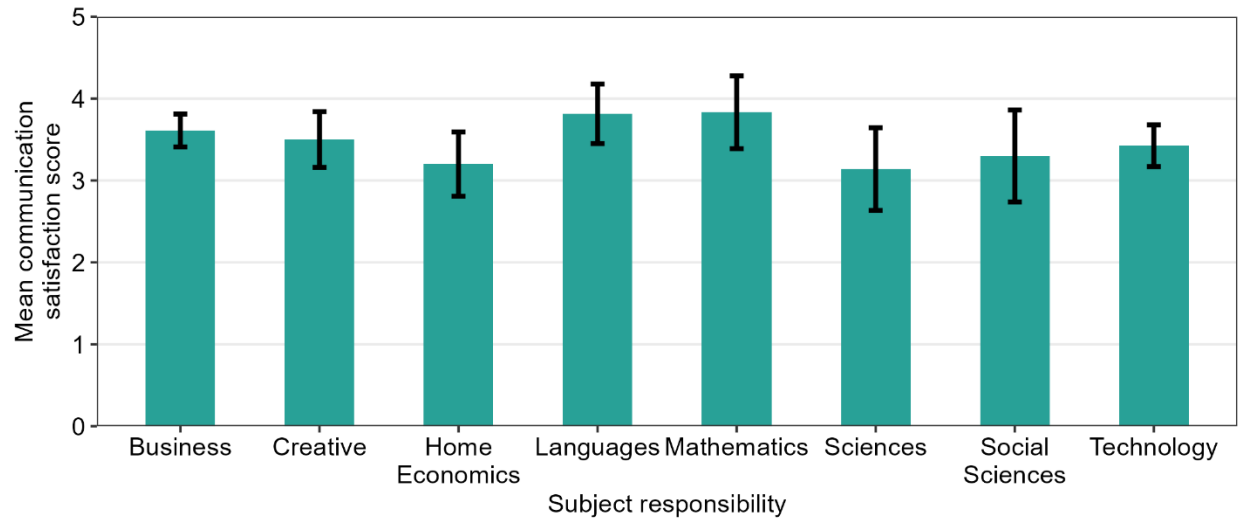


Table 4: Communication satisfaction by subject responsibility

Subject responsibility	Number of respondents	Mean communication satisfaction score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Business	5	3.6	3.4	3.8
Care	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Creative	10	3.5	3.2	3.8
Creative, Technology	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
English	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Home Economics	5	3.2	2.8	3.6
Languages	10	3.8	3.5	4.2
Languages, Other	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Mathematics	10	3.8	3.4	4.3
Mathematics, Sciences	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Physical Education	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]

Subject responsibility	Number of respondents	Mean communication satisfaction score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Sciences	10	3.1	2.6	3.6
Social Sciences	15	3.3	2.7	3.9
Technology	20	3.4	3.2	3.7

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.4051

The figures in categories with less than five respondents have been suppressed to maintain anonymity. These figures have been replaced with '[c]' in the table.

No evidence to suggest that any of the subject responsibility groupings have a different median score.

National 4 satisfaction

Figure 17: National 4 satisfaction by appointee status

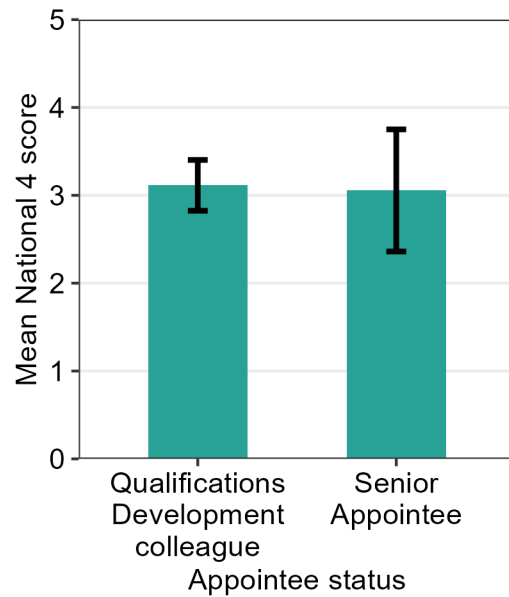


Table 5: National 4 satisfaction by appointee status

Appointee status	Number of respondents	Mean National 4 score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
QD colleague	20	3.1	2.8	3.4
Senior appointee	10	3.1	2.4	3.8

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.6151

No evidence to suggest that any of the appointee status groupings have a different median score.

Figure 18: National 4 satisfaction by appointee duration

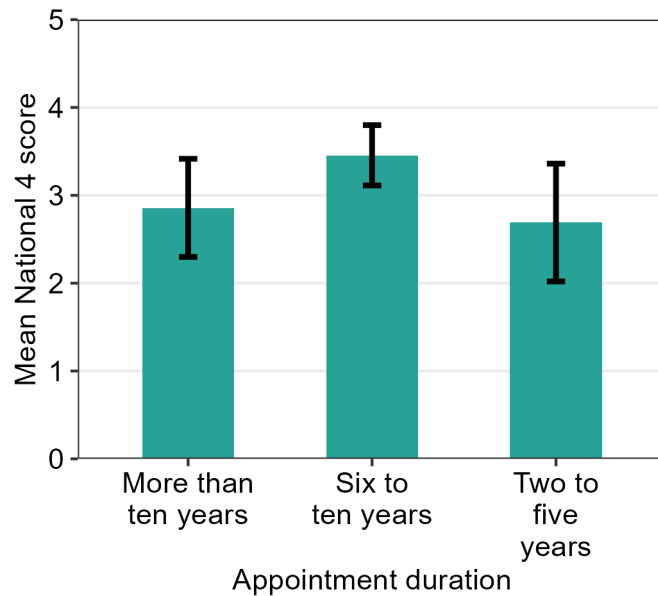


Table 6: National 4 satisfaction by appointee duration

Appointment duration	Number of respondents	Mean National 4 score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Less than two years	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
More than ten years	5	2.9	2.3	3.4
Six to ten years	15	3.5	3.1	3.8
Two to five years	5	2.7	2	3.4

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.0884

No evidence to suggest that any of the appointment duration groupings have a different median score.

Figure 19: National 4 satisfaction by subject responsibility

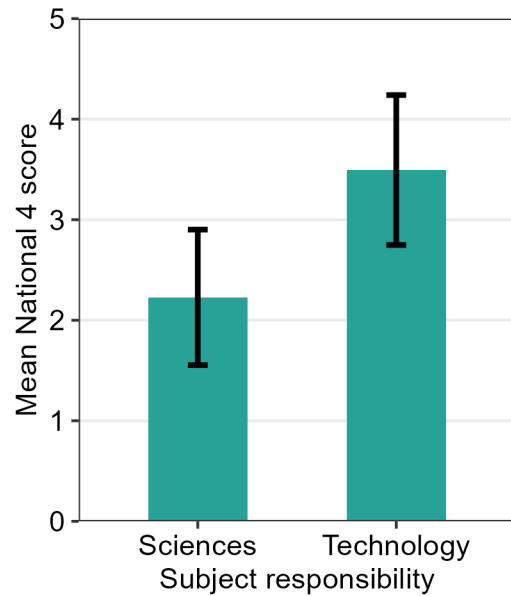


Table 7: National 4 satisfaction by subject responsibility

Subject responsibility	Number of respondents	Mean National 4 score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Business	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Care, Social Sciences	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Creative	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Creative, Technology	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
English	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Home Economics	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Languages	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Languages, Other	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Mathematics	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Mathematics, Sciences	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]

Subject responsibility	Number of respondents	Mean National 4 score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Physical Education	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Sciences	5	2.2	1.6	2.9
Social Sciences	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Technology	5	3.5	2.7	4.2

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.025

No evidence to suggest that any of the subject responsibility groupings have a different median score.

National 5 satisfaction

Figure 20: National 5 satisfaction by appointee status

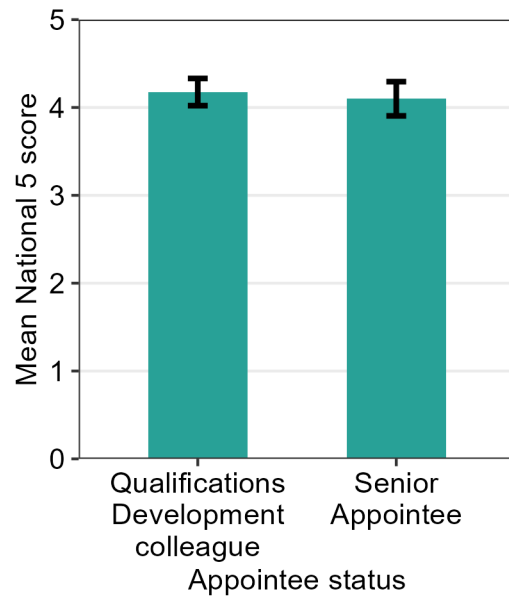


Table 8: National 5 satisfaction by appointee status

Appointee status	Number of respondents	Mean National 5 score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
QD colleague	30	4.2	4	4.3
Senior appointee	40	4.1	3.9	4.3

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.648

No evidence to suggest that any of the appointee status groupings have a different median score.

Figure 21: National 5 satisfaction by appointment duration

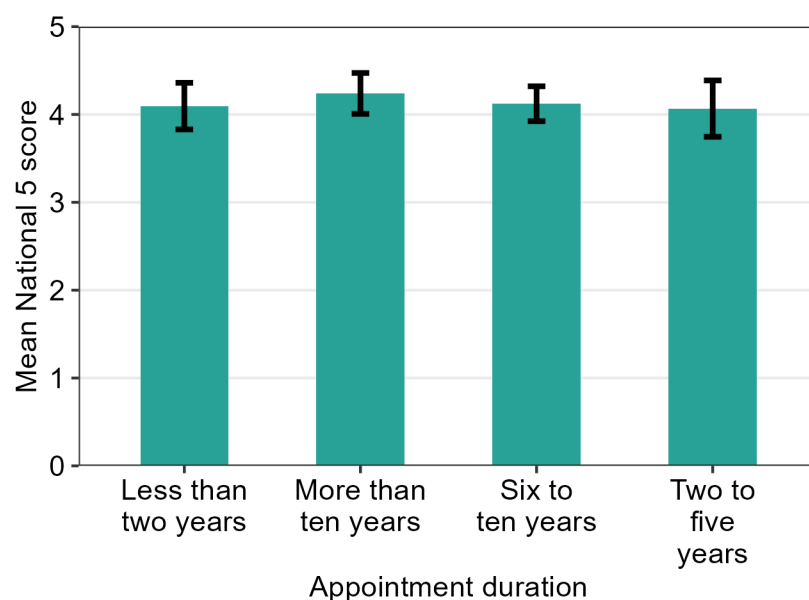


Table 9: National 5 satisfaction by appointment duration

Appointment duration	Number of respondents	Mean National 5 score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Less than two years	5	4.1	3.8	4.4
More than ten years	15	4.2	4	4.5
Six to ten years	30	4.1	3.9	4.3
Two to five years	20	4.1	3.7	4.4

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.893

No evidence to suggest that any of the appointment duration groupings have a different median score.

Figure 22: National 5 satisfaction by subject responsibility

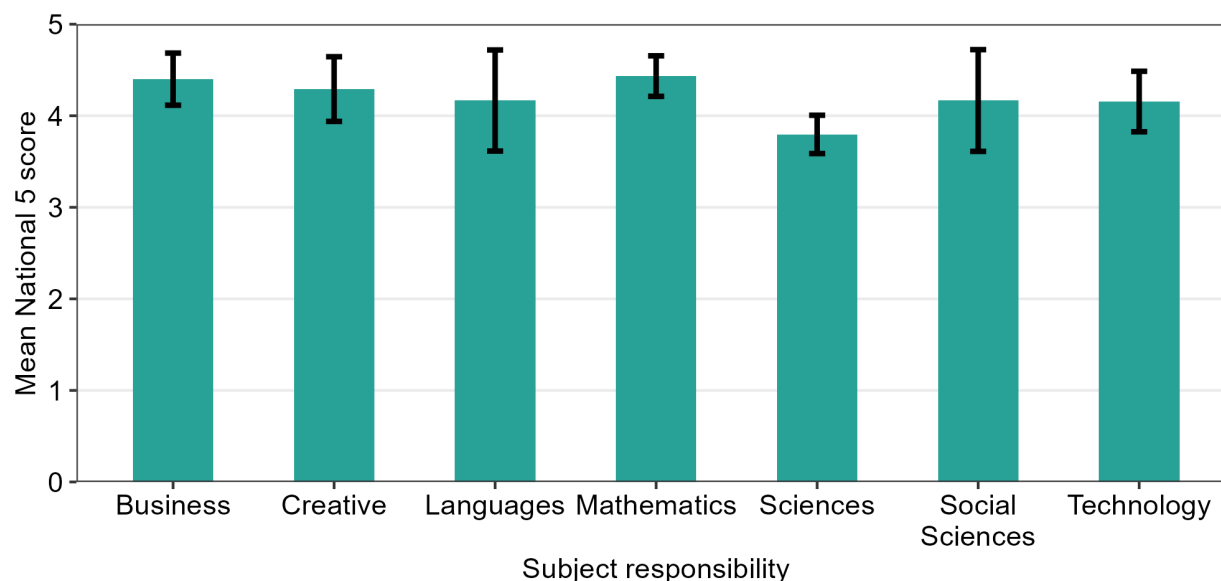


Table 10: National 5 satisfaction by subject responsibility

Subject responsibility	Number of respondents	Mean National 5 score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Business	5	4.4	4.1	4.7
Care	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Care, Social Sciences	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Creative	10	4.3	3.9	4.6
Creative, Technology	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
English	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Home Economics	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Languages	5	4.2	3.6	4.7
Languages, Other	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Mathematics	5	4.4	4.2	4.7
Mathematics, Sciences	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Physical Education	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]

Subject responsibility	Number of respondents	Mean National 5 score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Sciences	10	3.8	3.6	4
Social Sciences	10	4.2	3.6	4.7
Technology	15	4.2	3.8	4.5

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.2878

No evidence to suggest that any of the subject responsibility groupings have a different median score.

Higher satisfaction

Figure 23: Higher satisfaction by appointee status

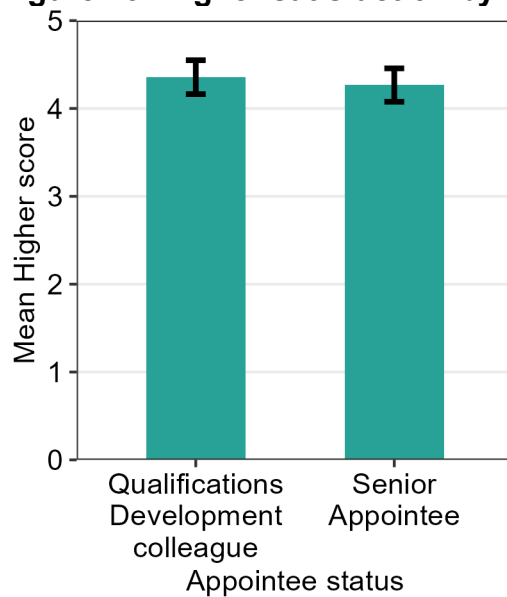


Table 11: Higher satisfaction by appointee status

Appointee status	Number of respondents	Mean Higher score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
QD colleague	30	4.4	4.2	4.5
Senior appointee	35	4.3	4.1	4.5

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.5086

No evidence to suggest that any of the appointee status groupings have a different median score.

Figure 24: Higher by appointment duration

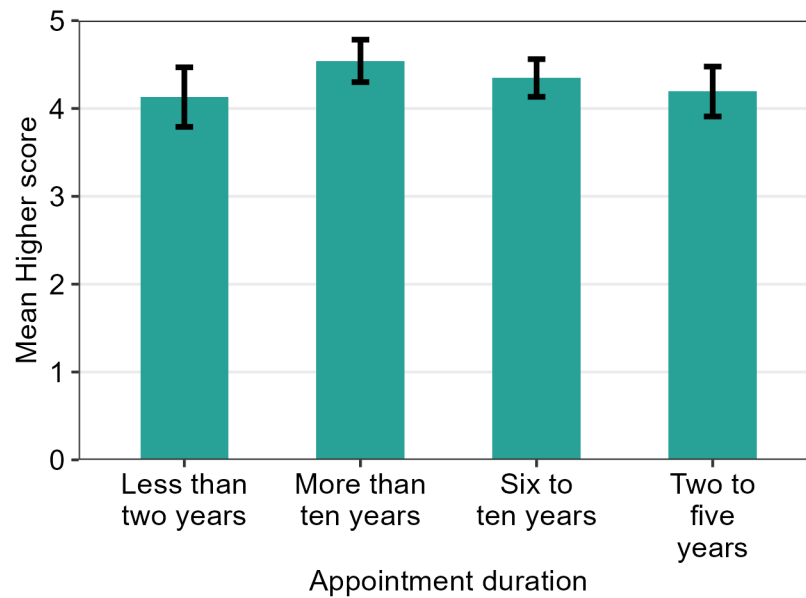


Table 12: Higher by appointment duration

Appointment duration	Number of respondents	Mean Higher score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Less than two years	10	4.1	3.8	4.5
More than ten years	10	4.5	4.3	4.8
Six to ten years	25	4.3	4.1	4.6
Two to five years	20	4.2	3.9	4.5

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.4207

No evidence to suggest that any of the appointment duration groupings have a different median score.

Figure 25: Higher by subject responsibility

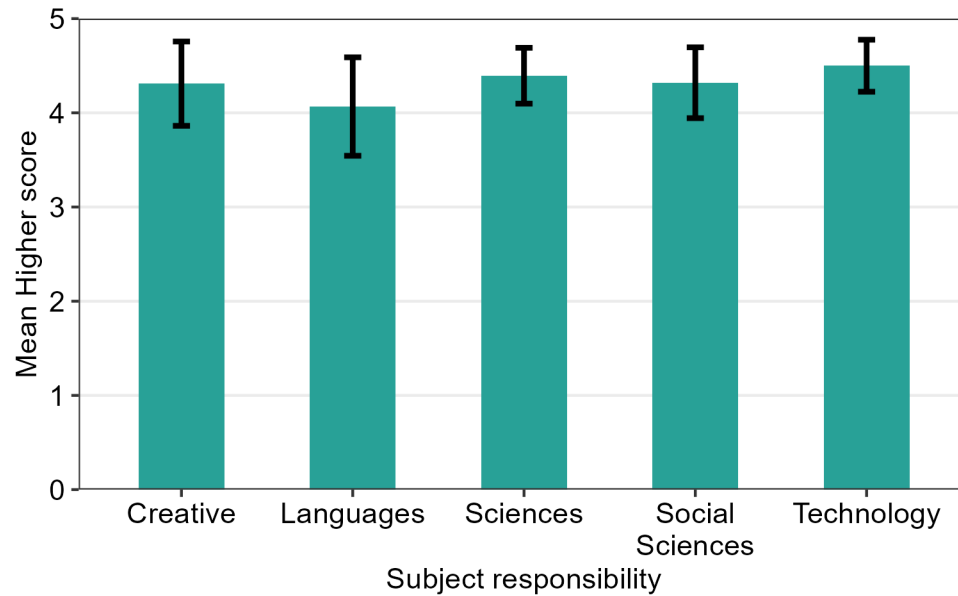


Table 13: Higher by subject responsibility

Subject responsibility	Number of respondents	Mean Higher score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Business	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Care	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Creative	5	4.3	3.9	4.8
Creative, Technology	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
English	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Home Economics	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Languages	5	4.1	3.5	4.6
Languages, Other	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Mathematics	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Mathematics, Sciences	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]

Subject responsibility	Number of respondents	Mean Higher score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Physical Education	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Sciences	10	4.4	4.1	4.7
Social Sciences	10	4.3	3.9	4.7
Technology	10	4.5	4.2	4.8

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.6136

No evidence to suggest that any of the subject responsibility groupings have a different median score.

Advanced Higher satisfaction

Figure 26: Advanced Higher by appointee status

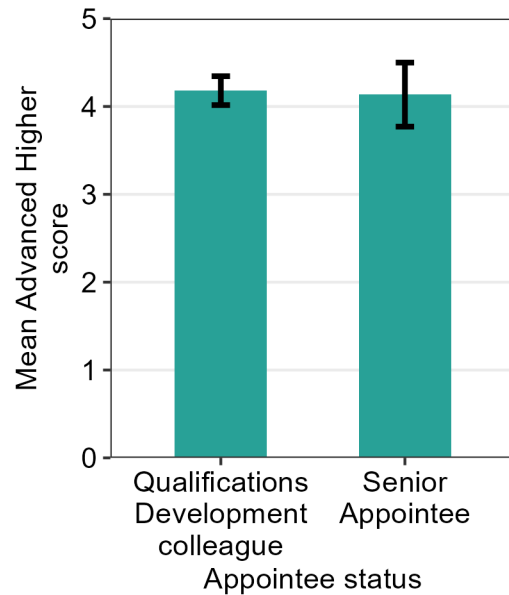


Table 14: Advanced Higher by appointee status

Appointee status	Number of respondents	Mean Advanced Higher score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
QD colleague	25	4.2	4	4.3
Senior appointee	20	4.1	3.8	4.5

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.6855

No evidence to suggest that any of the appointee status groupings have a different median score.

Figure 27: Advanced Higher by appointee duration

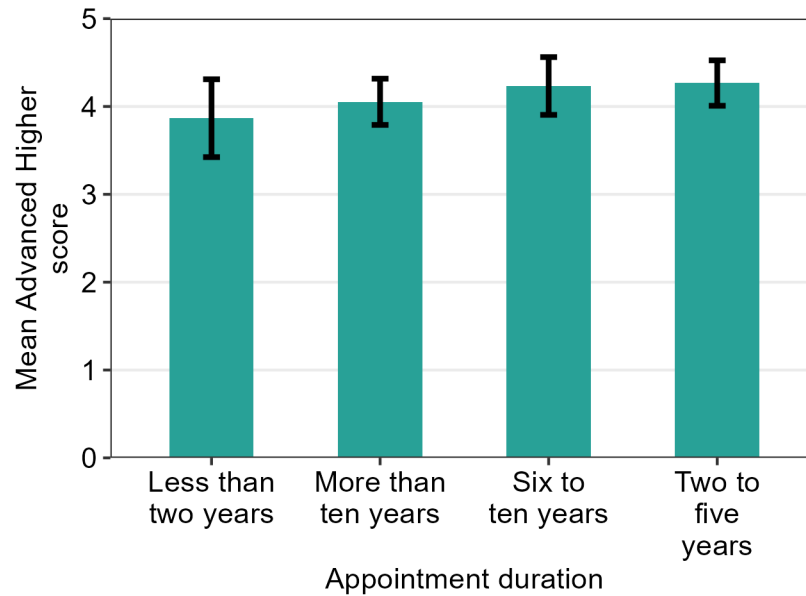


Table 15: Advanced Higher by appointee duration

Appointment duration	Number of respondents	Mean Advanced Higher score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Less than two years	5	3.9	3.4	4.3
More than ten years	10	4.1	3.8	4.3
Six to ten years	20	4.2	3.9	4.6
Two to five years	10	4.3	4	4.5

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.2706

No evidence to suggest that any of the appointment duration groupings have a different median score.

Figure 28: Advanced Higher by subject responsibility

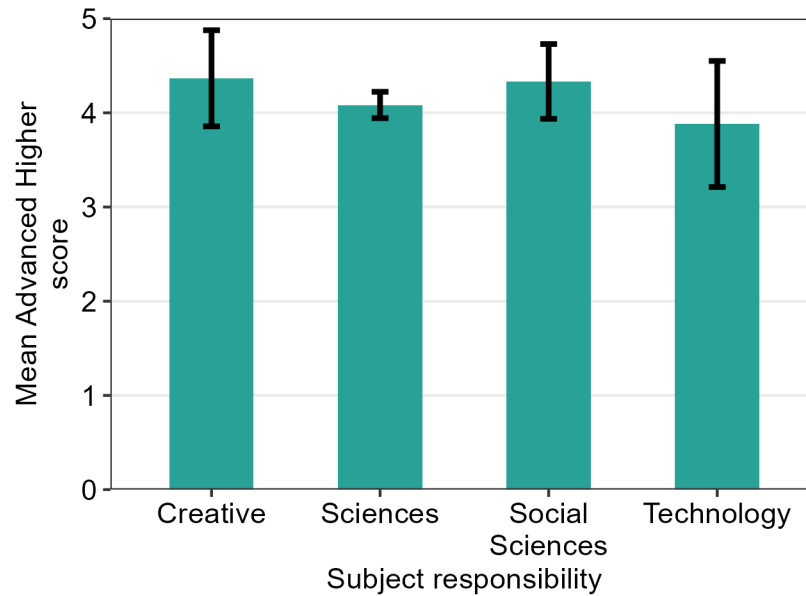


Table 16: Advanced Higher by subject responsibility

Subject responsibility	Number of respondents	Mean Advanced Higher score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Business	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Creative	5	4.4	3.9	4.9
Creative, Technology	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
English	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Home Economics	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Languages	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Languages, Other	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Mathematics	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Mathematics, Sciences	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Physical Education	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]

Subject responsibility	Number of respondents	Mean Advanced Higher score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Sciences	5	4.1	3.9	4.2
Social Sciences	5	4.3	3.9	4.7
Technology	10	3.9	3.2	4.6

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.841

No evidence to suggest that any of the subject responsibility groupings have a different median score.

Standards satisfaction

Figure 29: Standards satisfaction by appointee status

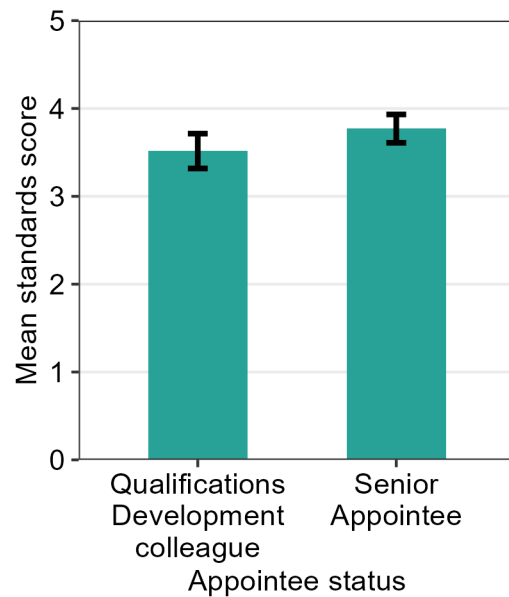


Table 17: Standards satisfaction by appointee status

Appointee status	Number of respondents	Mean standards score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
QD colleague	25	3.5	3.3	3.7
Senior appointee	70	3.8	3.6	3.9

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.0597

No evidence to suggest that any of the Appointee status groupings have a different median score.

Figure 30: Standards satisfaction by appointment duration

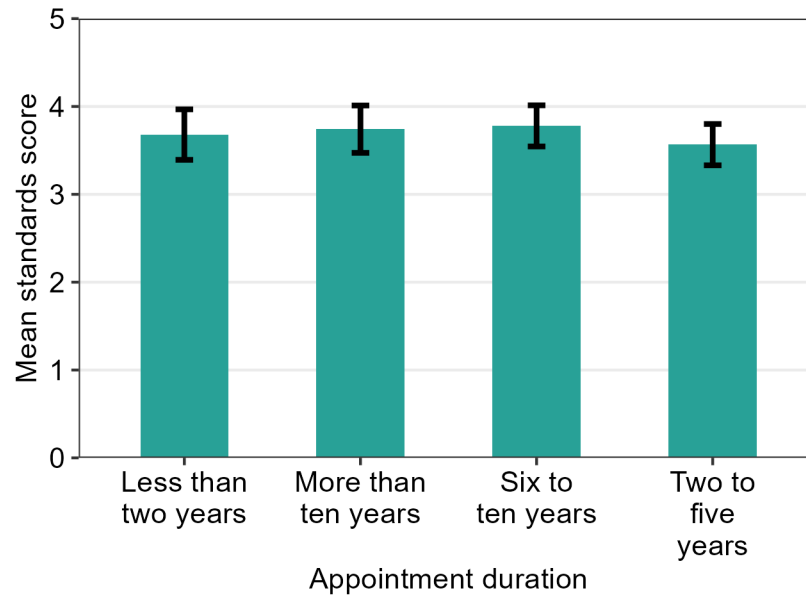


Table 18: Standards satisfaction by appointment duration

Appointment duration	Number of respondents	Mean standards score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Less than two years	10	3.7	3.4	4
More than ten years	25	3.7	3.5	4
Six to ten years	40	3.8	3.5	4
Two to five years	25	3.6	3.3	3.8

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.5897

No evidence to suggest that any of the appointment duration groupings have a different median score.

Figure 31: Standards satisfaction by subject responsibility

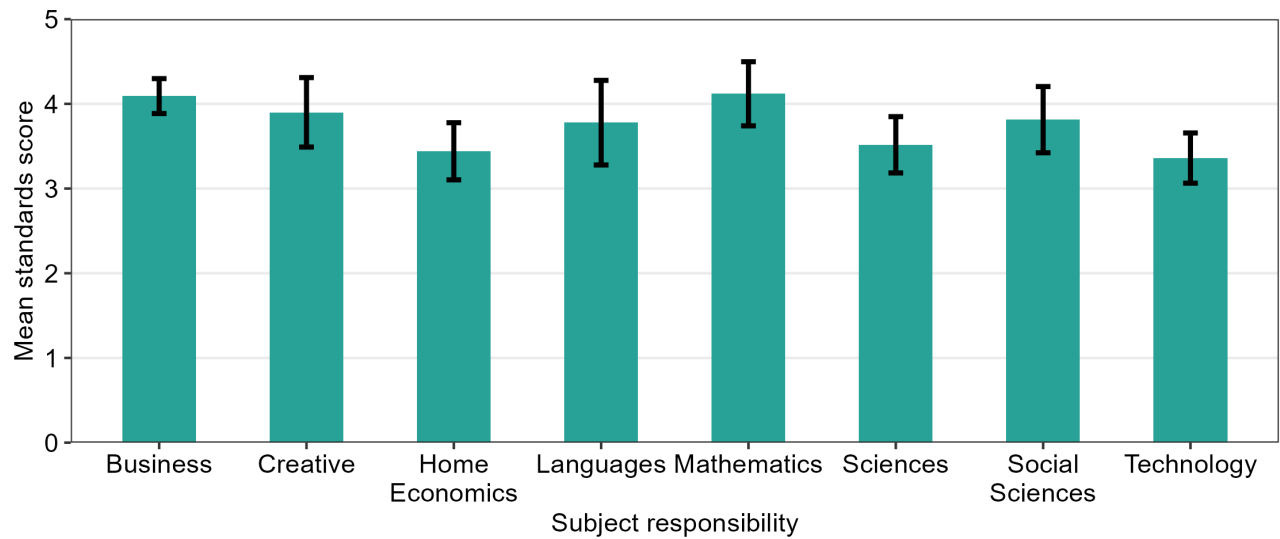


Table 19: Standards satisfaction by subject responsibility

Subject responsibility	Number of respondents	Mean standards score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Business	5	4.1	3.9	4.3
Care	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Creative	10	3.9	3.5	4.3
English	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Home Economics	5	3.4	3.1	3.8
Languages	10	3.8	3.3	4.3
Languages, Other	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Mathematics	10	4.1	3.7	4.5
Mathematics, Sciences	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Physical Education	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Sciences	10	3.5	3.2	3.8
Social Sciences	15	3.8	3.4	4.2
Technology	20	3.4	3.1	3.7

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.0481

No evidence to suggest that any of the subject responsibility groupings have a different median score.

Legacy of COVID-19 on learning and teaching satisfaction

Figure 32: COVID-19 impact on learning and teaching by appointee status

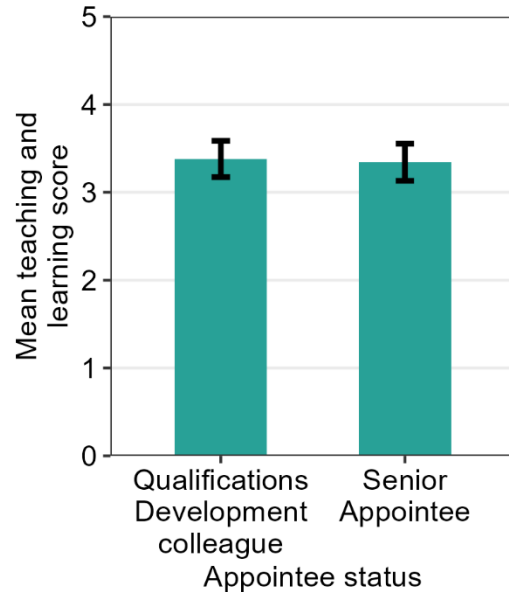


Table 20: COVID-19 impact on learning and teaching by appointee status

Appointee status	Number of respondents	Mean COVID-19 impact on learning and teaching score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
QD colleague	25	3.4	3.2	3.6
Senior appointee	70	3.3	3.1	3.6

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.934

No evidence to suggest that any of the appointee status groupings have a different median score.

Figure 33: COVID-19 impact on learning and teaching by appointment duration

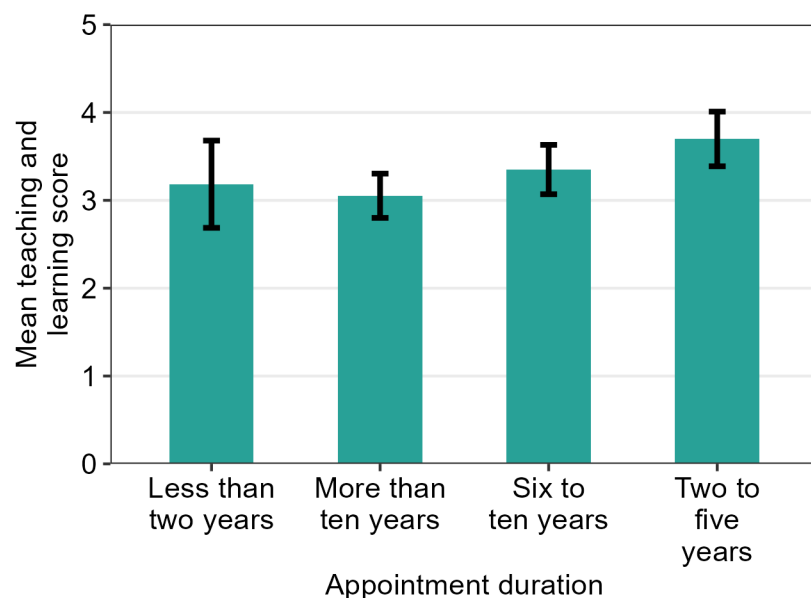


Table 21: COVID-19 Impact on learning and teaching by appointment duration

Appointment duration	Number of respondents	Mean COVID-19 impact on learning and teaching score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Less than two years	10	3.2	2.7	3.7
More than ten years	25	3.1	2.8	3.3
Six to ten years	40	3.4	3.1	3.6
Two to five years	25	3.7	3.4	4

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.0172

No evidence to suggest that any of the appointment duration groupings have a different median score.

Figure 34: COVID-19 impact on learning and teaching by subject responsibility

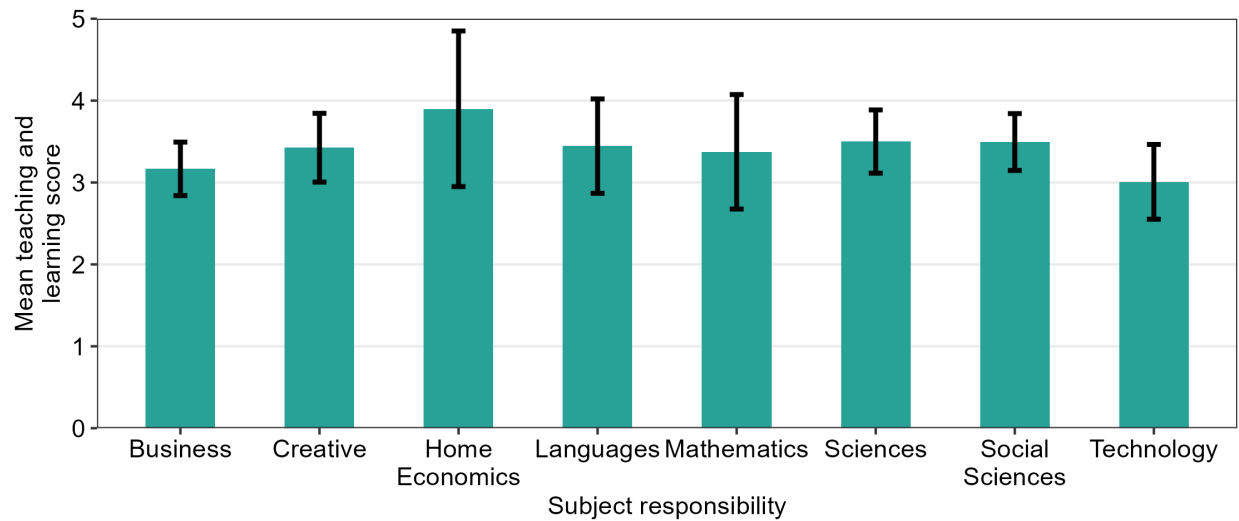


Table 22: COVID-19 impact on learning and teaching by subject responsibility

Subject responsibility	Number of respondents	Mean COVID-19 impact on learning and teaching score	Confidence interval lower bound	Confidence interval upper bound
Business	5	3.2	2.8	3.5
Care	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Creative	10	3.4	3	3.8
Creative, Technology	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
English	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Home Economics	5	3.9	2.9	4.9
Languages	10	3.4	2.9	4
Languages, Other	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Mathematics	10	3.4	2.7	4.1
Mathematics, Sciences	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Physical Education	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Sciences	10	3.5	3.1	3.9
Social Sciences	15	3.5	3.1	3.8
Technology	20	3	2.6	3.5

Kruskal-Wallis test p-value = 0.0481

No evidence to suggest that any of the subject responsibility groupings have a different median score.