

SURVEY-SPECIFIC REPORT (FINAL DRAFT)
REFORM TRACKING RESEARCH:
SCHOOL LEARNERS – FEBRUARY/MARCH 2026
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PREPARED FOR: Qualifications Scotland

**Reform Tracking Research:
School Learners – Survey-Specific Report for
February/March 2026**

Ashbrook Research & Consultancy Ltd

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report details findings to emerge from the second phase of a programme of Reform Tracking Research being undertaken amongst Learners in S4 to S6 in Scotland on behalf of Qualifications Scotland by Ashbrook Research & Consultancy Ltd.

The purpose of the research is to elicit a range of views amongst School Learners in S4 to S6 with regard to the reform of qualifications and assessment, together with a range of other issues.

This second phase of the Tracking Research was undertaken during February/March 2026.

A total of 1,040 questionnaires were returned in the second phase of the research, 310 from Learners in S4, 319 from Learners in S5 and 411 from Learners in S6.

During the analysis process, weightings were applied to the data in order to provide equal weighting for Learners in each of the three year groups.

The questionnaire administered in February/March 2026 sought information in relation to the following issues:

- The Scottish Government's plans for qualifications and assessment reform
- Attitudes about qualifications and assessment
- Views relating to Qualifications Scotland

This survey-specific report provides the following outcomes:

- Graphics for each question asked during this survey

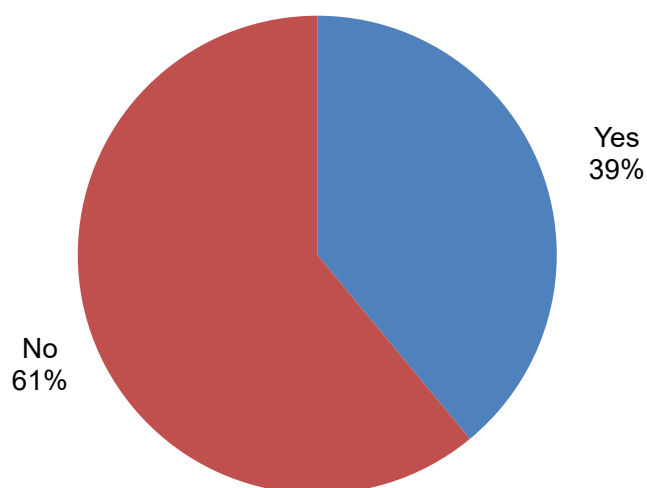
- The highlighting of key changes which were apparent for questions which were asked in the latest survey and that undertaken in September/October 2025

Finally, it should be noted that all variances referred to in this report are statistically significant but that not all statistically significant variances between the latest and the last survey phases are referred to in order to promote the precise nature of the reporting outputs, as requested by Qualifications Scotland.

2.0 THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT’S PLANS FOR QUALIFICATIONS AND ASSESSMENT REFORM

*“Are you aware of the Scottish Government’s plans for qualifications
and assessment reform?”*

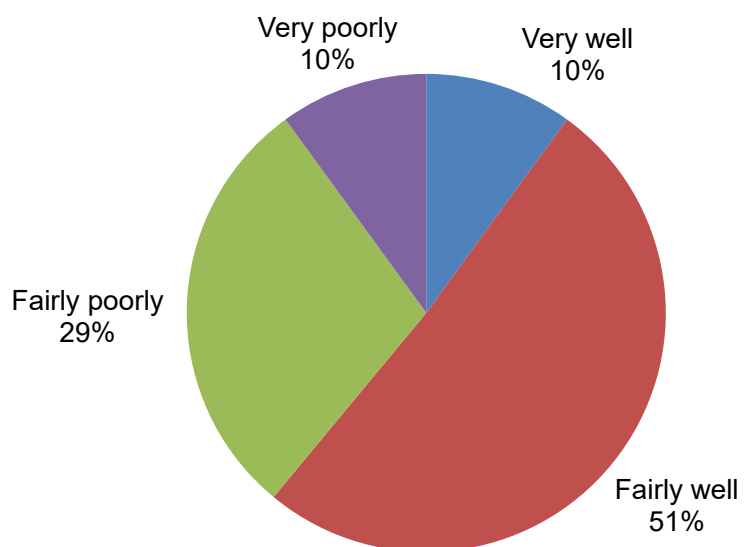
**Figure 1: Aware of the Scottish Government's Plans
for Qualifications and Assessment Reform?**



Base: All Respondents

“How well do you understand qualifications and assessment reform?”

Figure 2: How Well Qualifications and Assessment Reform is Understood?

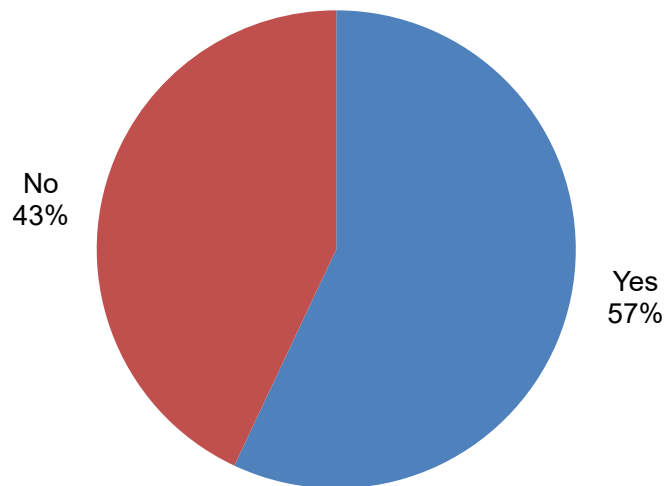


Base: 'Yes' in Figure 1

“Scotland is making important changes to its curriculum, qualifications and assessment system to better support children and young people from ages 3 to 18. This will help ensure every learner is recognised for the knowledge, skills and achievements they develop during their learning journey”.

“Would you like to know more about qualifications and assessment reform?”

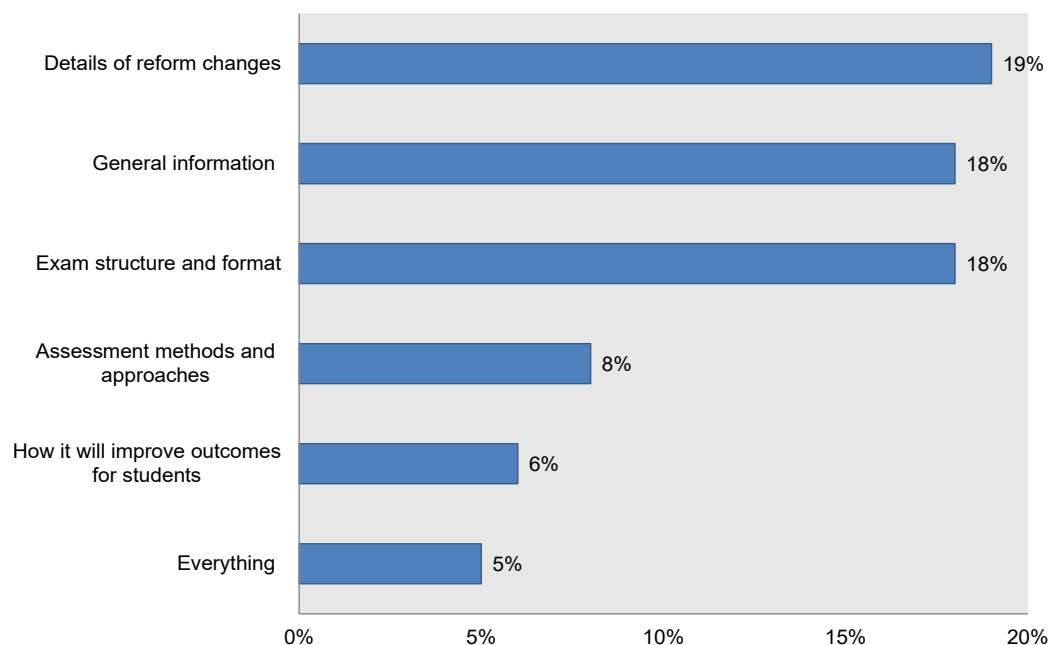
Figure 3: Like to Know More About Qualifications and Assessment Reform?



Base: All Respondents

“What types of information would you like about qualifications and assessment reform?”

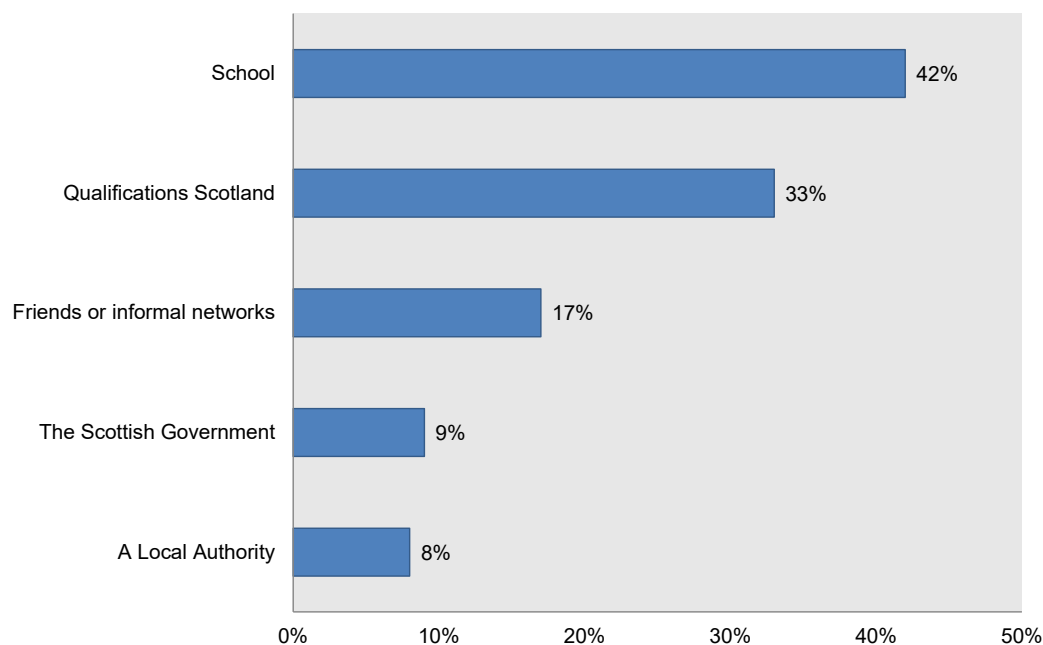
**Figure 4: Information Desires re Qualifications and Assessment Reform
(Unprompted)**



Base: 'Yes' in Figure 3

“Who would you go to in order to find out more about qualifications and assessment reform?”

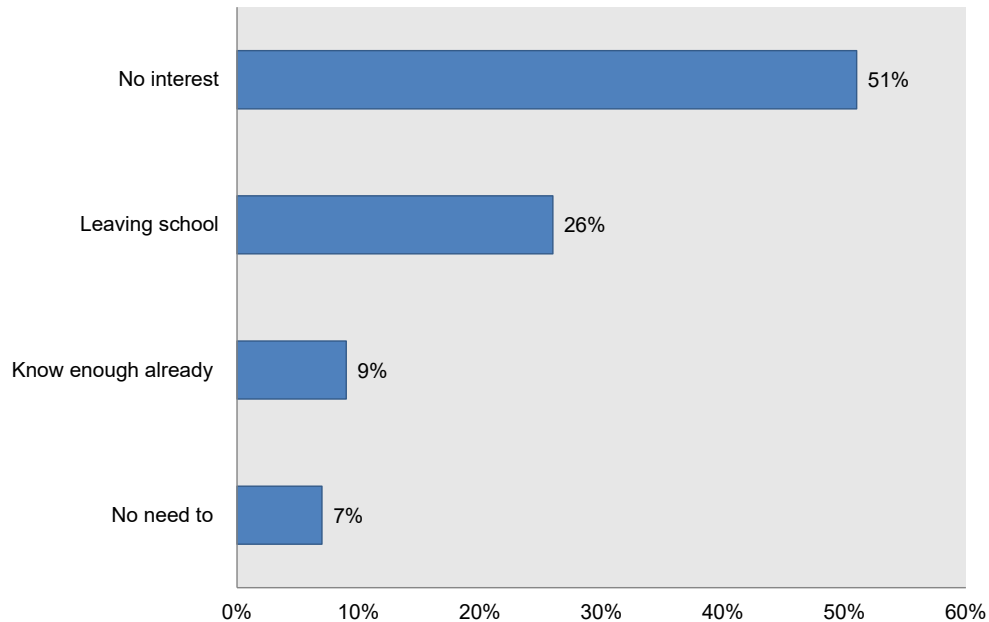
**Figure 5: Who Would be Approached to Find Out More About
Qualifications and Assessment Reform**



Base: 'Yes' in Figure 3

“What are the main reasons you would prefer not to know more about qualifications and assessment reform?”

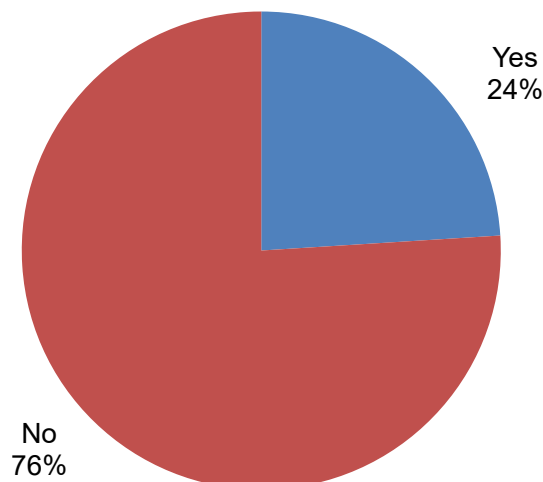
Figure 6: Main Reasons for Preferring Not to Know More About Qualifications and Assessment Reform (Unprompted)



Base: 'No' in Figure 3

“Before taking part in this survey, have you personally taken part in any SQA or Qualifications Scotland consultation, engagement or research relating to qualifications and assessment reform?”

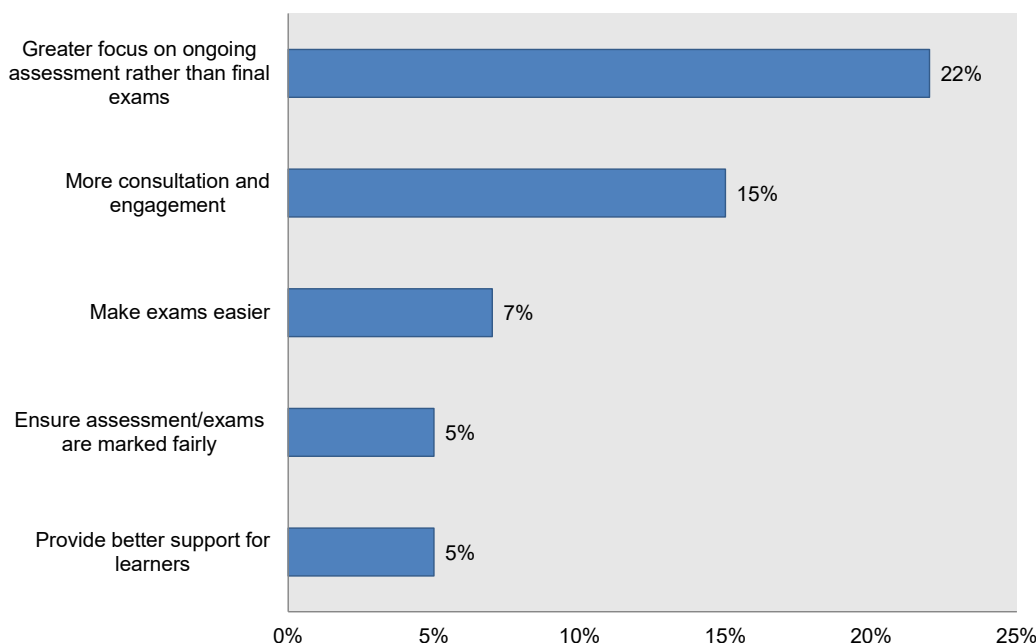
Figure 7: Previously Taken Part in Consultation, Engagement or Research Relating to Qualifications and Assessment Reform?



Base: All Respondents

*“What **one thing** should Qualifications Scotland focus on to make qualifications and assessment reform a success?”*

Figure 8: What Should Qualifications Scotland Focus on to Make Qualifications and Assessment Reform a Success (Unprompted)



Base: All Respondents

Between September/October 2025 and February/March 2026, there was an increasing extent to which learners made reference to information desires relating to qualifications and assessment reform in terms of ‘details of the reform changes’ and ‘exam structure and format’.

During that time, however, decreasing reference was made to information desires in this regard in relation to ‘general information’.

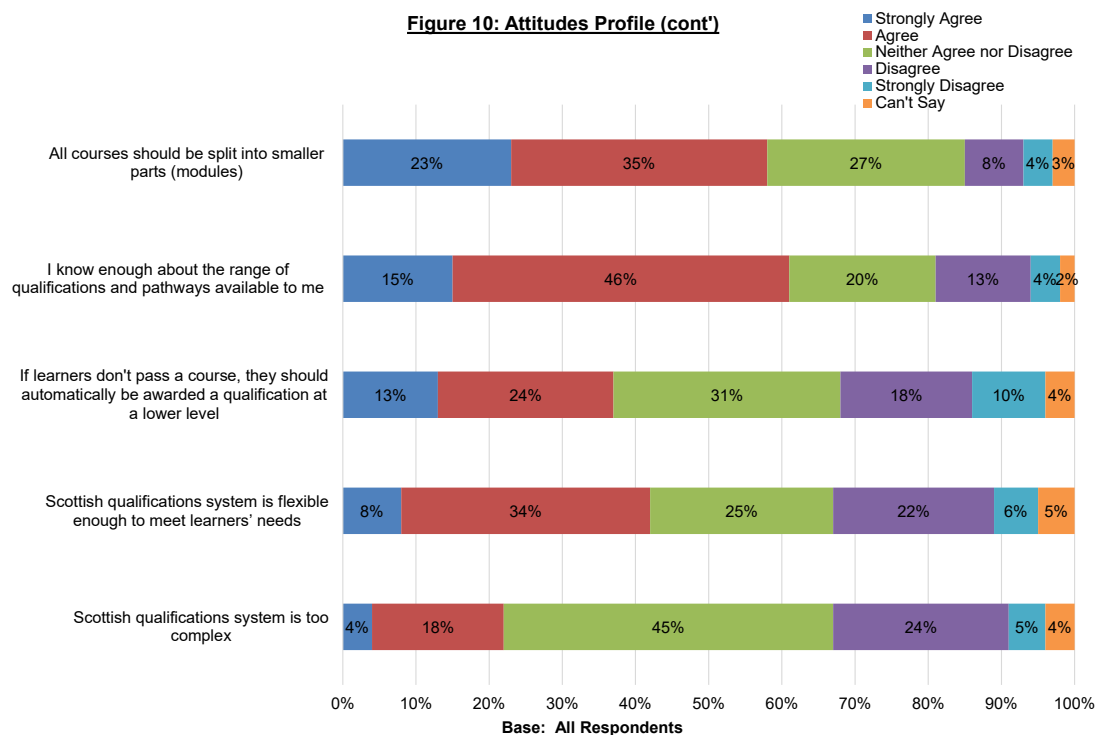
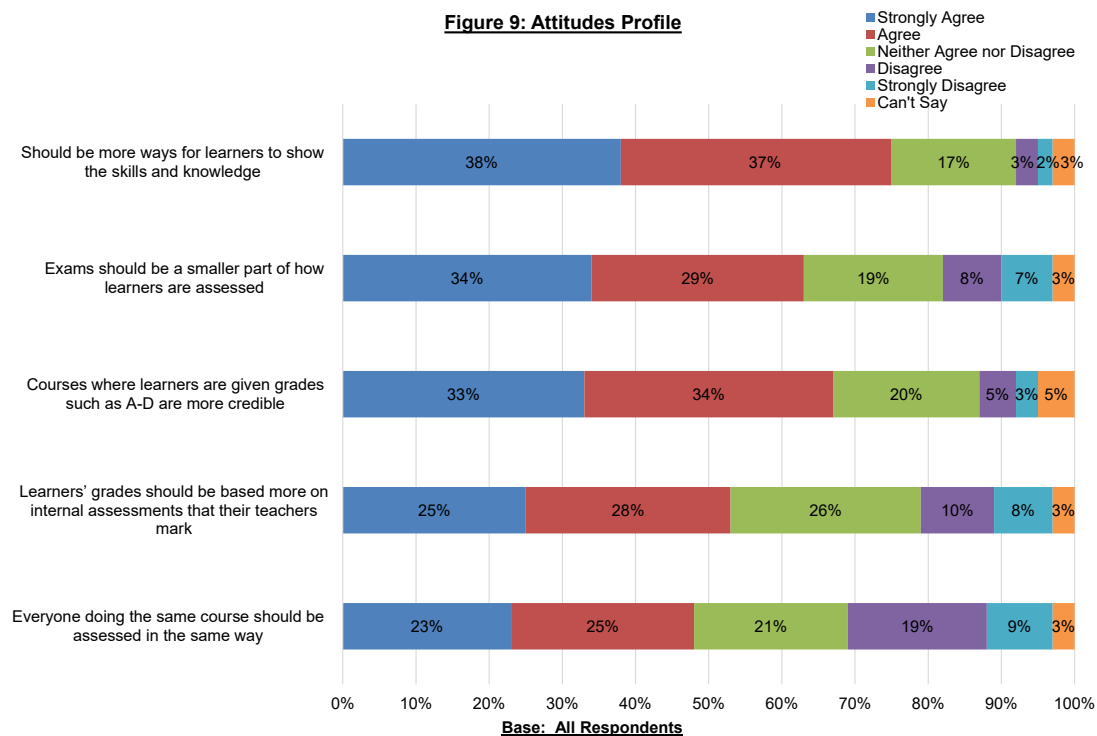
Since the last survey, increasing reference was made of learners approaching ‘friends or informal networks’ to find out more about qualifications and assessment reform, but decreasing reference to ‘Qualifications Scotland’, although in this regard, it should be noted that, in the previous survey, the option provided here to respondents was ‘SQA/Qualifications Scotland’.

Between September/October 2025 and February/March 2026, there was a decreasing extent to which learners stated that they had previously taken part in consultation, engagement or research relating to qualifications and assessment reform.

Since the last survey, increasing unprompted reference was made by learners to their belief that Qualifications Scotland should focus on two factors in order to make qualifications and assessment reform a success, namely 'having a priority for assessment rather than exams' and 'undertaking more consultation and engagement with learners'.

3.0 ATTITUDES ABOUT QUALIFICATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

“Please choose the option which most closely matches your views about each of the statements below”

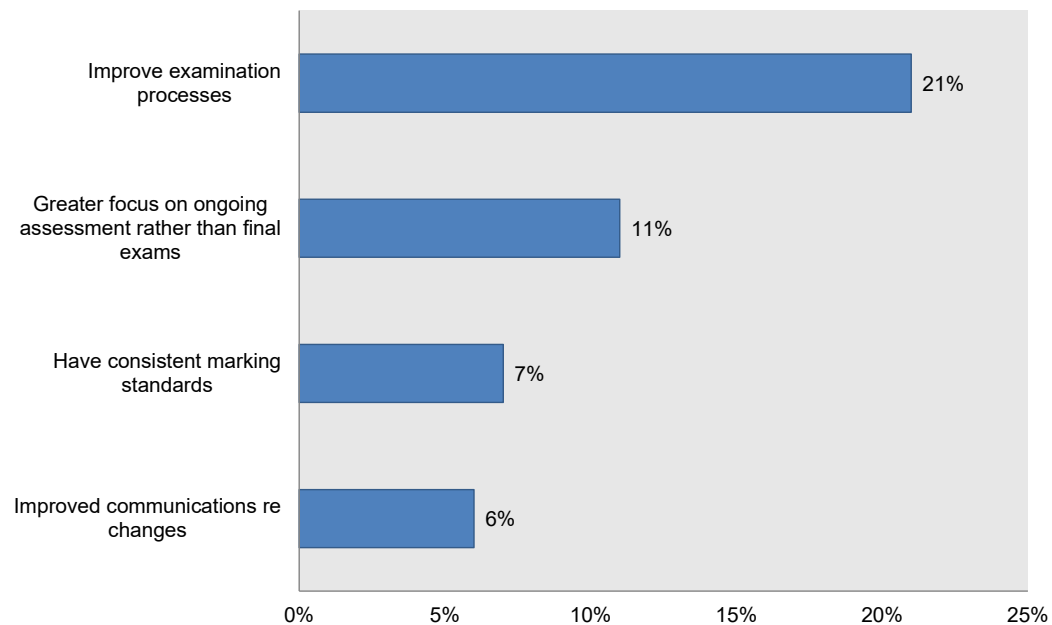


Between September/October 2025 and February/March 2026, there was increasing agreement that ‘Scottish qualifications have enough flexibility to meet learners’ needs’ **and** disagreement that this was the case (representing a polarisation of views in this regard).

4.0 VIEWS RELATING TO QUALIFICATIONS SCOTLAND

*“What **one thing** do you think Qualifications Scotland needs to do to improve how it works with you?”*

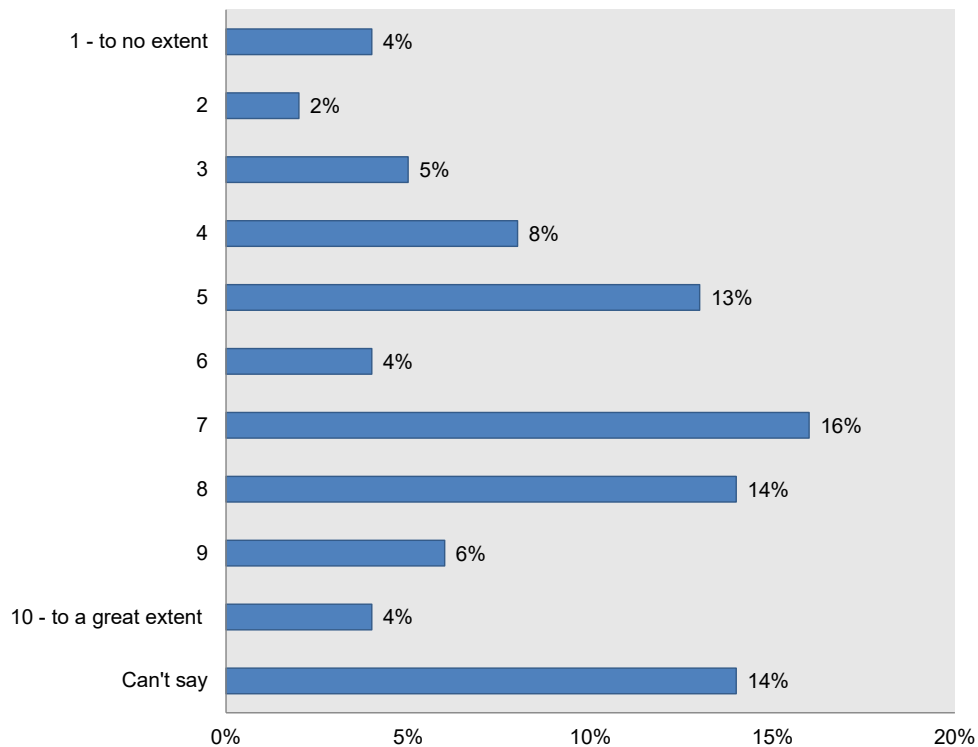
Figure 11: What Qualifications Scotland Needs to Do to Improve How It Works with Learners (Unprompted)



Base: All Respondents

“On a scale from 1 to 10, where ‘1’ is ‘to no extent’ and ‘10’ is ‘to a great extent’, to what extent do you trust Qualifications Scotland to consult and engage with learners, teachers, lecturers and other stakeholders to create new qualifications?”

Figure 12: Extent of Trust that Qualifications Scotland will Consult and Engage with Learners, Teachers, Lecturers and Other Stakeholders to Create New Qualifications



Base: All Respondents
Average = 6.1

Between September/October 2025 and February/March 2026, increasing unprompted reference was made by learners for Qualifications Scotland to ‘improve examination processes’ in order to improve how it works with learners.