



Pearson

Policy Watch

Your guide to what's happening in the world of education



The week in a nutshell

Ofqual's annual qualifications perceptions survey was out this week, showing consistent support across all groups surveyed for GCSEs, and in the main for A levels – though there was a drop in those believing they are a good preparation for work. For Applied General qualifications there was no change year on year. This survey provides interest evidence against the backdrop of various reports and research into whether education is preparing students well for future. One such group doing just that are peers on the [Education for 11-16 Year Olds Committee](#) who continued their investigation this week, with a focus on creative subjects and vocational education.

We also saw research from EPI showing the long shadow of the pandemic, especially in relation to maths attainment and a report from Education Support into the expanding role of teachers.

In Parliament, the [Higher Education \(Freedom of Speech\) Bill](#) completed its passage through Parliament and received Royal Assent. And the [Industry and Regulators Committee](#) met this week for an evidence session on the work of the Office for Students (OfS). Peers questioned OfS Chief Executive Susan Lapworth, and Chair, Lord Wharton, on the role of OfS and its responsibilities towards students and the sector in general, as well as on its relationship with the Government. We also had two debates in Westminster Hall, one covering funding in the Midlands, and the other on reasonable adjustments for exams in cases of severe illness.

Top stories

Ofqual publishes results of its annual qualifications perceptions survey

- Ofqual has [published the results of its annual survey](#) of heads, teachers, general public, parents, students, employers and HE institutions, looking at perceptions of A Levels, GCSEs and other qualifications in England. Key findings include:
 - Overall, perceptions of GCSEs generally remained consistent with wave 20 across all measures - including that they are generally well understood (70%), trusted (74%), 'good preparation for work' (34%), 'good preparation for further study' (70%), 'develop a broad range of skills for students' (59%) and are qualifications for which standards are maintained year-on-year (42%).
 - Perceptions of A Levels generally remained in line with previous waves, including that they are trusted (83%), 'good preparation for further study' (80%), and 'develop a broad range of skills for students' (47%).
 - However, there were also some shifts in perceptions. Despite consistent agreement that A levels are good preparation for further study with previous waves, there was a decline in perceptions that 'A Levels are good preparation for work' (35%, down from 39% in wave 20).
 - There were no changes in overall agreement regarding general perceptions of Applied General qualifications in comparison with wave 20.

Ofqual launches new consultation on qualifications system resilience

- The regulator Ofqual has [opened a new consultation](#) on ensuring resilience across all regulated qualifications.
- For GCSEs, AS and A Levels, Project Qualifications, and AEA in maths, they propose the provision of guidance for schools, colleges and other exam centres on the collection and retention of evidence of student performance.
- For VTQs used alongside or instead of GCSEs, AS and A levels for progression to further or higher study, they propose that similar arrangements should be put in place, but these would need to be set by awarding organisations to allow the arrangements to reflect the design of their qualifications.

Ofsted publishes interim findings on review of teachers' professional development

- Ofsted has [published its interim findings](#) of an independent review of teachers' and leaders' professional development, focusing on the experiences of training and development engaged in by teachers since April 2021.
- The report suggests that professional development is a work in progress – teachers want development opportunities, but poor-quality training and increasing workloads are slowing improvements brought about by recent reforms.
- The full findings report is available [here](#).

Education Support publishes report on teachers' responsibilities

- The teachers' charity Education Support has [published a report](#) which looks at the role of teachers and their expanding responsibilities in modern education. The research, carried out with YouGov, shows that as the roles of teachers and education staff expand, the added responsibilities affect their mental health and wellbeing, which ultimately has an impact on children and young people's education.
- Key findings include:
 - 62% reported offering increased amounts of emotional support to pupils or students since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic
 - 62% report that pupil and student behaviour takes up more time
 - 50% reported being more likely to be supporting staff and colleagues with their emotional wellbeing
 - 48% reported increased pastoral duties to support the welfare of pupils
 - The full report and recommendations are available [here](#).

QAA publishes advice on AI usage in HE settings

- The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) has [published its latest advice](#) for providers on how to manage the rapidly increasing use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in HE settings.
- The advice builds upon its initial briefing paper on the rise of AI software and potential risks for academic integrity [published in January](#), and reflects on the sector and technological developments in Generative AI.
- This new guidance specifically aims to support providers in considering how Generative AI tools can be used to positive effect in academic programmes, while also maintaining academic standards. The paper notes this approach is preferable to banning the use of Generative AI tools outright.

EPI and Renaissance Learning publish new education recovery report

- The Education Policy Institute (EPI), in partnership with Renaissance Learning, has published its [latest report into education recovery](#), showing that the pandemic is still having an adverse effect on learning.

- Analysis finds that primary aged pupils' outcomes in maths remain well below pre-pandemic norms (with outcomes broadly equivalent to a loss of just under 1.5 months of learning), whilst outcomes in reading have largely recovered.

Pearson news

Ask the expert series In the latest edition of our “ask the expert series”, Keya Lamba (Co-founder of Earth Warriors) looks at how can schools teach climate change without causing eco-anxiety and offers practical advice. [Click for more.](#)



Pearson tweets of the week



Other news

Parliamentary

- Westminster Hall: School and College Funding: The Midlands
- Westminster Hall: Centre-assessed Grades
- Lords: Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill
- Lords: Horizon Europe
- Education Committee: Support for childcare and the early years (oral evidence)
- Science, Innovation and Technology Committee: Reproducibility and Research Integrity (report)
- Industry and Regulators Committee: The work of the Office for Students (oral evidence)
- Education for 11-16 Year Olds Committee (oral evidence)

Regulatory and funding bodies

- Ofsted: Teachers' professional development in schools: phase 1 findings
- ESFA Update: 10 May 2023
- Ofqual: Perceptions of A levels, GCSEs and other qualifications: wave 21
- Ofqual: Letter to schools and colleges May 2023
- Ofqual: Ensuring the resilience of the qualifications system (open consultation)
- Ofqual: Infographic: Level 3 VTQ results 2023: top tips for May 2023

Policy Watch

Week ending Friday 12 May 2023

- QAA publishes additional advice on Generative Artificial Intelligence tools
- QAA: Complete collection of academic integrity resource from Collaborative Enhancement Project
- STA: 2022 maladministration report
- OfS appoints new Director of Regulation
- OSR: Ed Humpherson to Graham Archer: Schools' Costs Funding

Schools

- Monthly statistics on initial teacher training recruitment: 2023 to 2024 (latest)
- School capital funding: Funding allocations for the 2023 to 2024 financial year (final)
- How to manage early career teacher training
- How to set up training for early career teachers
- Ofsted: Teachers' professional development remains a work in progress
- EPI: Recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic: Analysis of Star Assessments
- CPAG: The minimum cost of education
- Education Support: new report examines the expanding responsibilities of teachers in modern education

Further Education & Skills

- Education Secretary addresses the Education World Forum
- FE Commissioner intervention: Ruskin College 2023
- IPPR: Apprenticeship support hit by postcode lottery
- CPP: Manufacturing revival in towns & rural & coastal economies could unlock £70bn in economic output

Higher Education

- Science Committee: MPs call for research sector reforms to address concerns with reproducibility of science
- HEPI/OU: Does the Lifelong Loan Entitlement meet its own objectives?
- Exeter/UPP Foundation: University-led tutoring should be used nationwide to help narrow widening school attainment gaps, experts urge

Scotland

- School counselling in holidays crucial for children's mental health, says Commissioner's new report
- Education Scotland announces support for National Numeracy Day 2023

Wales

- Written Statement: Criteria for the accreditation of initial teacher education programmes in Wales
- Refresh of the 'Criteria for accreditation of initial teacher education in Wales' (consultation outcome)
- Initial teacher education (ITE): work to support the refreshing of the criteria for accreditation 2022 to 2023
- Estyn: Pandemic negatively affects pupils' reading skills, but standards improving
- QW: Pob Lwc to all learners taking exams and assessments
- QW: Join the national conversation on Essential Skills Wales Qualifications
- QW: The 'Full Offer' – re-thinking qualifications for 14-16-year olds in Wales

Consultation Watch

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New consultations

- [Ensuring the resilience of the qualifications system](#) Closes: 2 August 2023
- [Qualifications Wales: The Full 14 to 16 Qualifications Offer in Wales](#) Closes: 14 June 2023
- [Qualifications Wales: Essential Skills Wales Qualifications Review Survey](#) Closes: 7 July 2023

Closing consultations

- [Ofqual: Updating Qualification Level Conditions for T Level Technical Qualifications](#) Closes: 15 May 2023

Ongoing consultations

- [Ofqual: Regulating level 2 and below qualifications supporting progression to higher levels of study](#) Closes: 25 May 2023
- [Office for Students: Consultation on the approach to publication of results of the National Student Survey](#) Closes: 26 May 2023
- [Chinese and Japanese AS and A levels: proposed subject content](#) Closes: 31 May 2023
- [Ofqual: Proposed amendment to the assessment of Chinese and Japanese AS and A levels](#) Closes: 31 May 2023
- [Teachers' Pension Scheme \(TPS\): transitional protection remedy](#) Closes: 4 June 2023
- [Scottish Government: Review of the National Outcomes](#) Closes: 5 June 2023
- [Scottish Government: Prescribing the minimum annual number of learning hours](#) Closes 13 June 2023
- [Welsh Government: Welsh Language Education: white paper](#) Closes: 16 June 2023

What's happening in Parliament next week

Monday 15 May

All-Party Parliamentary Groups

- APPG on Dyslexia and Specific Learning Difficulties

Tuesday 16 May

Commons Committees

- Education Committee: Persistent absence and support for disadvantaged pupils
- Petitions Committee: A statutory duty of care for higher education students (Non-inquiry session)

Lords Committees

- Industry and Regulators Committee: The work of the Office for Students

All-Party Parliamentary Groups

- APPG on Apprenticeships
- APPG for Youth Affairs (Skills and Youth Employment Evidence Session)
- APPG on Literacy (AGM and inaugural meeting)

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- APPG for Childcare and Early Education
- APPG on Speech and Language Difficulties

Wednesday 17 May

All-Party Parliamentary Groups

- APG for the Child of the North
- APPG on the Future of Employability

Thursday 18 May

Commons Committees

- Public Accounts Committee: Child Trust Funds

Lords Committees

- Education for 11–16 Year Olds Committee