Functional Skills Reform

Findings from the Survey of Providers and Practitioners

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview of Functional Skills Reform

Functional Skills standards and qualifications have been in existence since 2010/2011. Although the education sector, employers and learners themselves are generally pleased with their experiences of Functional Skills qualifications, a number of potential weaknesses were highlighted by the Education and Training Foundation's 2015 research *Making maths and English work for all (MMEW)* [1]. The review found that Functional Skills were not broken, but that work could be done to improve their relevance and content, as well as improve their recognition and credibility.

The Government wants to ensure everyone has an appropriate opportunity to improve their maths and English skills and achieve a credible qualification, at the appropriate level, for life and work. It is therefore keen to ensure that Functional Skills standards and qualifications are fit-for-purpose for the next decade and more.

The Education and Training Foundation (the Foundation) has been tasked by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to reform Functional Skills qualifications in maths and English to ensure these are better recognised and valued by employers.

1.2 What are Functional Skills?

Functional Skills (available in English, maths and ICT) provide young people and adults with essential knowledge, skills and practical problem solving ability to enable them to operate confidently and effectively in life and work. They are components within apprenticeships and study programmes, as part of the Condition of Funding (supporting progression towards GCSE A* - C) and as free-standing qualifications widely within adult education provision.

Functional Skills qualifications are currently available at five "levels" - Entry Level (which is sub-divided into three), and Levels 1 and 2. Assessment availability is flexible and awarding organisations can offer paper-based assessments, on-line assessments, or a mixture of the two.

1.3 The Functional Skills Reform Consultation

Based on detailed consultations and research conducted in 2015, the Foundation, with its delivery partner – Pye Tait Consulting (in association with Learning and Work Institute) – has embarked upon a set of consultations designed to inform the process of updating a set of National Literacy and Numeracy Standards, and Functional Skills subject content. By 2018, these will form the basis of revised Functional Maths and Functional English qualifications.

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[1] http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/making-maths-and-english-work-for-all/

Phase 1: This phase of the research is based on a two-stage process consisting of a detailed consultation with employers (early January to April 2016) followed by verification from the education and training sector, including providers and practitioners (May to June 2016) on aspects of the findings and outputs in development.

Alongside these two surveys, consultations have also taken place, through a variety of forms, with a range of stakeholders including subject bodies, literacy and numeracy experts, awarding organisations and learners. At every stage of the work, findings and outputs have been cross-checked with experts and major stakeholders.

Further activities took place with the purpose of verification, before a final period of analyses and reporting, culminating in revised Standards, subject content and a final report being delivered to the Foundation at the end of August 2016.

Phase 2 consisting of a series of different stages: The Foundation will move forward into the next phase of the Reform Programme to focus on the development of new core curricula, and building training materials and CPD for teachers and trainers.

This report summarises the findings from the second stage of phase 1 - the online survey of providers and practitioners.

1.4 More about the Survey of Providers/Practitioners

The provider/practitioner survey sought views from individuals and organisations involved with the delivery of Functional Skills qualifications. It covered their uses, aspects of current content, learner motivations and teacher confidence. It also asked important questions about digital skills, Guided Learning Hours (GLH) and levels.

The main evidence gathering tools was an online survey questionnaire which was open for responses from 18th May to 24th June 2016. **In total, this questionnaire received 755 responses.**

The report presents the findings for all respondents, as well as breakdowns/commentary for certain questions by job role, type of provider organisation and main area of subject expertise (i.e. maths, English or both). Further information about the profile of respondents can be found in section 10. Supplementary data tables and charts (including cross-tabulations) can be found in the Appendix.

2. Key Messages

All statements below refer to the providers and practitioners who responded to the survey (total 755).

1. **Providers and practitioners believe that Functional Skills in maths and English are relevant and useful** for a range of reasons, particularly improving skills and knowledge for life and for work, and crucially in developing confidence. This is true at all levels. With respect to Levels 1 and 2, examples were given of learners being better equipped to help their own children with homework, while at Entry Levels, the focus is around developing a sense of achievement and important life skills.

2. **Over three quarters of respondents think that the amount of Guided Learning Hours (GLH) should be increased for Levels 1 and 2** and four in ten believe GLH should be increased for all five current levels of Functional Skills. Most believe that the current 45 GLH is insufficient, with requests for between 80 and 100 (or thereabouts) at Entry Level and 90-120 at Level 1 and Level 2.

3. **A strong majority support the renaming of the entry qualifications**. The survey tested out a concern that use of the word 'level' in two different ways across these qualifications can be confusing, i.e. calling the Entry qualifications 'Levels' invites confusion with Levels 1 and 2 and risks making Entry level 3 sound like a higher qualification. The majority of respondents (85%) agree that the Entry Level qualifications should be renamed and also favour distinguishing more clearly between the content and teaching/delivery between Entry Levels and Levels 1 and 2.

4. **There were many calls, also, for the word "Entry" to be replaced by "Foundation".** The reasons given centred on the argument that "entry" made the qualifications look basic and low-level to candidates and that "Foundation" would give a more "professional" appearance.

5. **Practitioners strongly support the Reform giving greater clarity to the content and purpose**, as well as improving CPD to help boost teachers' confidence (in the delivery/teaching of Functional Skills maths in particular).

6. **With respect to English, almost three quarters (71%) believe that oral communication skills should be an integral part of the assessment for all levels**. Specifically, it was suggested that 'listening skills' and 'non-verbal skills' are a huge part of communication that require greater attention in the qualification and in a work-based context.

7. **A majority of practitioners (60%) agree that digital skills per se should NOT be included as part of Functional Skills qualifications in maths and English**, i.e. that the prime focus should be on the understanding and internalisation of knowledge and the manual application of skills through the appropriate medium, be it electronic or otherwise. Several highlighted that digital technologies could be challenging or prohibitive for learners who are not IT savvy or

may not need to use it in their line of work. Many argued that digital skills should be taught separately to maths and English skills.

8. **On the whole, the survey responses reveal comparable views and perceptions for maths and English,** and only slight differences when analysed by respondent job role. More prominent (albeit not substantial) differences emerge between different types of provider organisation.

3. Use of Functional Skills Qualifications

Respondents were asked to rate how relevant they consider a range of uses of Level 1 and Level 2 Functional Skills qualifications. Ratings were on a scale from 1 'not at all relevant' to 10 'highly relevant'.

The scoring dimension of 1 to 10 permits high levels of discrimination in the results. As with all 'scoring' type questions (and ranking questions, too) there is a degree of central tendency and experience shows that a score of 7 or over indicates 'good' levels of approval and that anything below 5 is generally poor. In the case of this survey, scores of over 8 indicate high levels of relevance for Functional Skills.

On average the top four most highly rated uses are improving maths and English skills and knowledge for life and work. Specifically:

- Improving a learner's maths and/or English skills (8.6);
- Applying maths and/or English knowledge and skills to life (8.5);
- Improving a learner's maths and/or English knowledge (8.4)
- Applying maths and/or English knowledge and skills to work (8.4) – Figure 1.

These are also the highest scoring uses when analysed by respondent job role, type of provider organisation and area of subject interest/expertise (i.e. maths, English or both).

Adult and community learning (ACL) organisations responding to the survey have returned the most favourable average ratings overall, followed by private training providers and Further Education Colleges (FECs), although the differences are very small. For example, ACL organisations returned an average score of 9.1 that Functional Skills qualifications are relevant for improving a learner's maths and/or English skills, compared with scores of 8.6 among private providers and 8.3 among FECs.

Figure 1 Relevance of different uses for Level 1 and Level 2 Functional Skills qualifications

Use	Score
Improving a learner's maths/English skills	8.6
Applying maths/English knowledge and skills to life	8.5
Improving a learner's maths/English knowledge	8.4
Applying maths/English knowledge and skills to work	8.4
An alternative to GCSE for vocational/adult learners	8.1
To help with a learner's employability	8.1
As part of an Apprenticeship/Study programme	8.0
As a standalone qualification	8.0
Stepping-stone qualification to GCSE	6.7
Alternative qualification to ESOL qualifications	4.4
Supplementary qualification to be taken after GCSE	3.6

Base range: 684-744 respondents

Respondents were asked if there are any other uses of Level 1 and Level 2 Functional Skills qualifications not included in the list. The majority focused on life improvement and there were more than 50 responses which mentioned the word 'confidence' as a common hook. It was often associated with other uses and benefits (many mentioned being able to help children with homework or studies).

> *"Functional Skills help with family learning, such as building self-esteem and helping their own children with their school work."*
>
> Maths tutor, ACL provider

> *"Improve learners self-esteem, confidence, social understanding and social inclusion."*
>
> Functional Skills tutor, FEC

The next most common response was that Functional Skills offer an important alternative to GCSE, although several comments inferred that Functional Skills could effectively be a useful stepping stone.

"Functional Skills qualifications provide encouragement and a feeling of achievement and progression and should be put in place for learners who are not yet ready for GCSE."

Subject leader, FEC

"I mainly teach AAT accountancy and whilst the students are able to complete Functional Skills it is not really enough to prepare them for AAT calculations and being in a finance/ business role. It should be a stepping stone to a full GCSE not a stand-alone qualification. They think they have enough to progress but the reality is they still struggle with the basics."

Subject tutor (other than maths and English), FEC

On the same 1 to 10 scale, respondents were asked to rate how relevant they consider various uses of Entry Level Functional Skills qualifications. On average the top three rated uses are:

- Improving a learner's maths and/or English skills (8.3);
- Improving a learner's maths and/or English knowledge (8.1)
- Applying maths and/or English knowledge and skills to life (7.9) – Figure 2.

The results are similar by area of job role and area of subject interest/expertise. Once again, ACL providers are slightly more favourable than private providers and FECs.

Figure 2 Relevance of different uses for Entry level Functional Skills qualifications

Use	Rating
Improving a learner's maths/English skills	8.3
Improving a learner's maths/English knowledge	8.1
Applying maths/English knowledge and skills to life	7.9
Applying maths/English knowledge and skills to work	7.5
To help with a learner's employability	7.2
As a standalone qualification	7.0
Alternative qualification to ESOL qualifications	5.0

Base range: 692-728 respondents
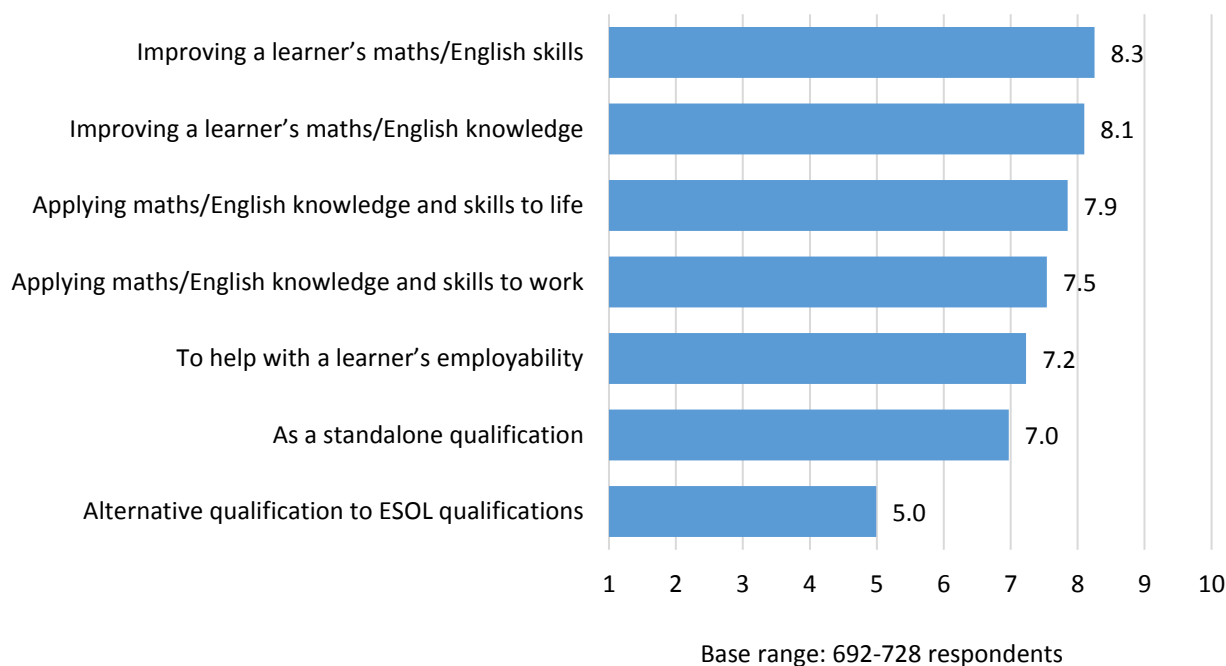
Respondents were asked if there are any other uses of Entry level Functional Skills qualifications not included in the list. The most common answers here concerned using Entry level as a stepping stone to higher levels, developing confidence, developing vocational ability and improving life skills.

> *"Again it's about confidence building. Many learners have been told for years that they are not good at these subjects and Entry levels help them to reconnect with the subjects."*
>
> Training Director, private training provider

> *"Entry level qualifications are VERY important for learners, whether they will ultimately be able to achieve Level 2 or not. The qualifications are highly valued by lower level learners and create a considerable sense of achievement and confidence."*
>
> Subject leader, ACL provider

4. Qualification Size and Levels

4.1 Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

As one of the objectives set for Phase 1 of the reform was around size of qualifications, we asked for views about potentially increasing the number of guided learning hours, or if these should stay as they are.

Over three quarters of respondents (77%) think that the GLH should be increased for Levels 1 and 2 and four in ten believe it should be increased for all five current levels of Functional Skills (Figure 3).

Figure 3 GLH for Functional Skills qualifications (by job role)

Base: 744 respondents

- ■ All five qualifications should increase
- ■ Levels 1 and 2 only should increase (entry levels stay the same)
- ■ All five qualifications should stay the same
- ■ Entry levels only should increase (levels 1 and 2 should stay the same)
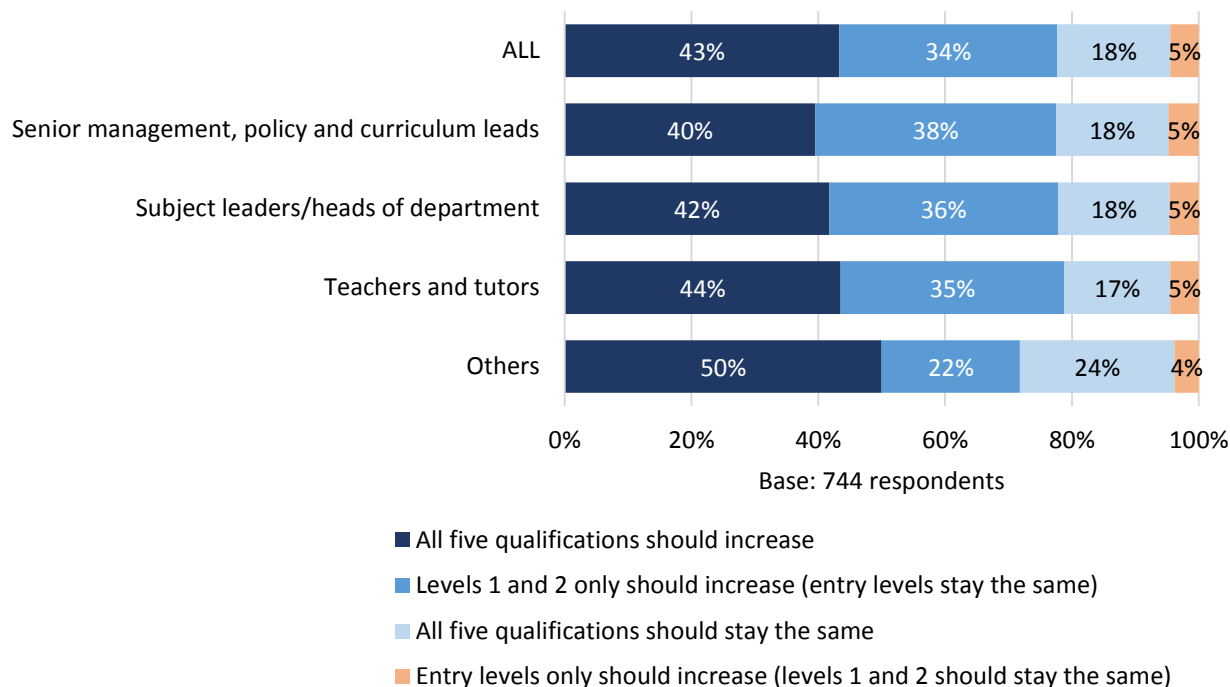
Analysis by type of provider organisation reveals that there is a majority view across all types that GLH for Levels 1 and 2 should increase. Private providers seem more cautious about the idea of increasing GLH across all five levels, with a comparatively larger proportion (32%) of the view that all five qualifications should remain the same (Figure 4).

Figure 4 GLH for Functional Skills qualifications (by provider organisation)

Base: 744 respondents

- ■ All five qualifications should increase
- ■ Levels 1 and 2 only should increase (entry levels stay the same)
- ■ All five qualifications should stay the same
- ■ Entry levels only should increase (levels 1 and 2 should stay the same)
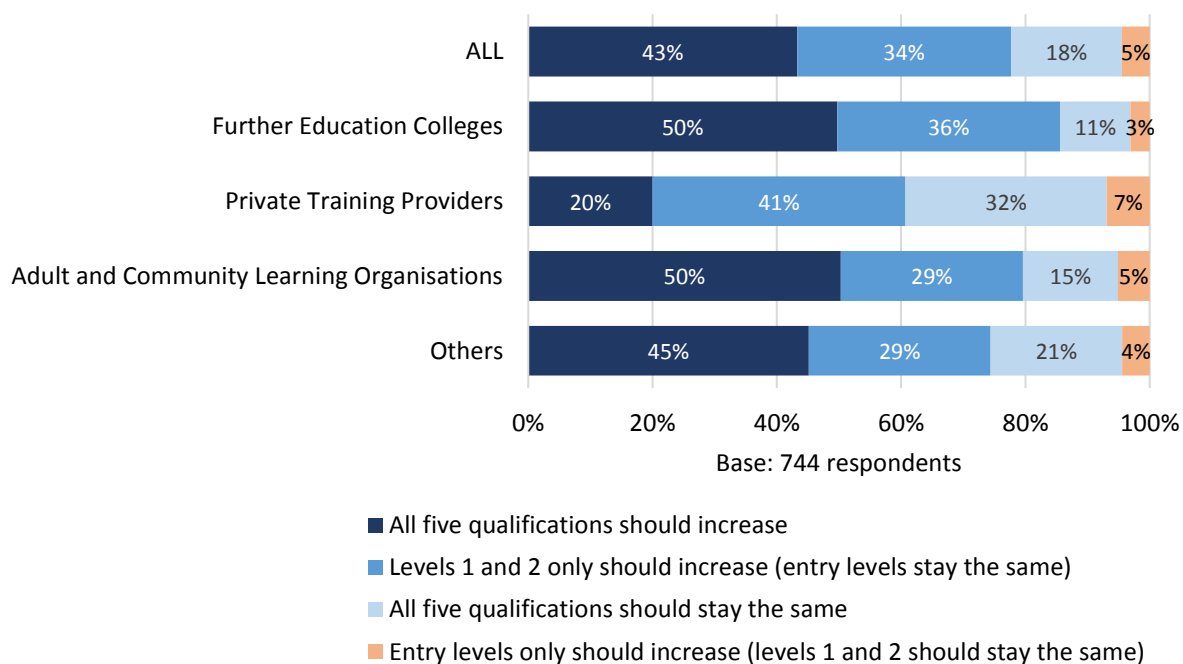
Respondents were asked to explain their choice and indicate by how much they would increase GLH and at what level. The vast majority believe that 45 GLH is insufficient and a good number feel that between 80 and 100 (or thereabouts) at Entry Level and 90-120 at Level 1 and Level 2 would be desirable. One major issue seems to be that the time taken is very much dependent on the type of learner, suggesting that GLH needs to be flexible in some way.

> *"Many providers already deliver above 45 hours so this should be recognised in the official GLH. Currently we deliver a marginally higher number of hours at 52."*
>
> *Subject leader, FEC*

> *"Functional Skills includes underpinning knowledge and applying that in different contexts. Both of these skills are key but to do them both in 45 hours is for the majority of learners is too difficult."*
>
> *Manager, Offender learning organisation*

> *"I believe all five levels should increase because entry level learners take time to acclimatise when entering into a learning environment, especially when they haven't succeeded at school or have specific learning difficulties and disabilities. For Level 1 and Level 2 I also think that the GLH should increase because the standards have been raised."*
>
> *Subject leader, ACL provider*

4.2 The Naming of 'Entry Level'

The survey tested out a concern that use of the word 'level' in two different ways can be confusing, i.e. calling the Entry qualifications 'Levels' – as in Entry Level 1, etc. – invites confusion with the national level framework Levels 1 and 2. In a reflection of the employer results, practitioners and providers feel that there is a very real risk of Entry Level 2 being confused with Level 2 and of making Entry Level 3 sound like a comparatively higher qualification. A potential solution tested out by the survey would be to change the word "level" for the Entry qualifications to reduce this potential confusion and mitigate any devaluing that this might prompt (Stage was mentioned as an alternative).

The majority of respondents (85%) agree that the Entry Level qualifications should be renamed, with the same sentiment shared by different job roles, types of provider organisation and by area of subject interest/expertise. Most agree that the term 'Level' should not be used as it confuses employers and learners as to the relationships with Functional Skills Level 1 and Functional Skills Level 2 (Figure 5).

Figure 5 Scope for renaming Entry levels (by job role)

Base:: 751 respondents

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree
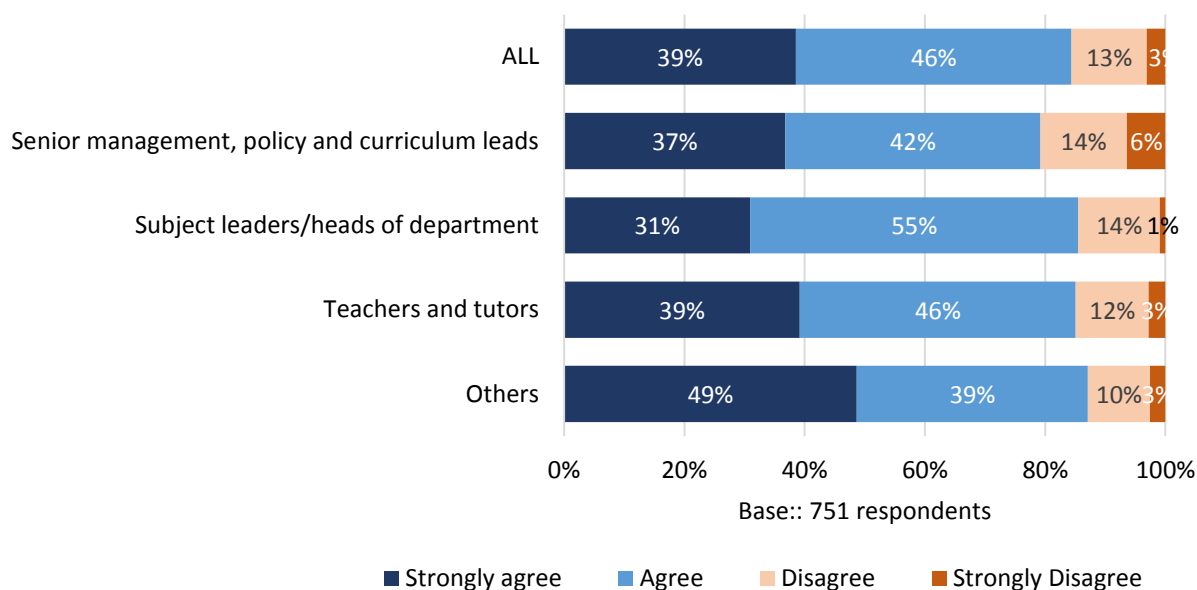
Respondents were asked to outline positive and/or negative implications of renaming the Entry Level qualifications.

The vast majority affirmed that renaming the Entry Levels would help to avoid confusion. The word 'Entry' came in for attention with many respondents requesting that it be changed to prevent candidates getting the impression that these were extremely low level qualifications. The Word 'Foundation' was most commonly mentioned as a possible replacement.

These changes – if approved – would mean that what are currently Entry Level qualifications could be renamed:

- Foundation Stage 1
- Foundation Stage 2, and
- Foundation Stage 3.

Although not tested out in the survey, an addition of the qualifier 'Stage' provides that extra clarity that these are below Level 1. One small downside of the use of the word Foundation is that the two words – 'Foundation' and 'Functional' – are similar and there still remains, with this suggestion, the possibility of confusion.

"Renaming them would reduce the instances of learners stating that they have 'level 2 and level 3' in maths and English, when they are in fact Entry Level."

Functional skills teacher, FEC

"There needs to be a clearer name such as 'Foundation maths' which covers E1-3. It's not entry for most learners as most have studied at GCSE in FE colleges so it's not completely new to them."

Curriculum planning lead, FEC

"Removal of the term 'Entry' would help de-stigmatise some learners feeling less able than their peers."

Curriculum planning lead, ACL provider

Among the minority identifying negative implications of renaming the Entry Level qualifications, most think that this would simply create even more confusion for the sector, learners and employers.

4.3 Distinguishing more explicitly between Levels

The current suite of qualifications from Entry Levels 1 to 3, through to Levels 1 and 2, cover a wide range of skill levels and, arguably, different levels have different uses. Entry levels are often an aid to learners wishing to reinforce and progress their learning maths and English skills from a relatively elementary position, whereas Levels 1 and 2 emphasise the application of more developed skills. The Reform may be an opportunity to focus on those different uses more explicitly within the content and teaching/delivery. While the five qualifications would all remain regulated qualifications and align to the levels identified on the National Qualifications Framework or Regulated Qualifications Framework, they would, effectively, remain as two closely related sets of qualifications, with the Levels 1 and 2 attracting additional regulatory conditions of assessment.

Some 85% of respondents agree with using the current opportunity to separate and distinguish between Entry level and Levels 1 and 2 (Figure 6). Views are similar by job role and by area of subject interest/expertise. ACL providers are slightly more critical of this approach with 20% disagreeing compared to 14% of FECs and 12% of private providers.

Figure 6 Scope for distinguishing more explicitly between the levels (by job role)
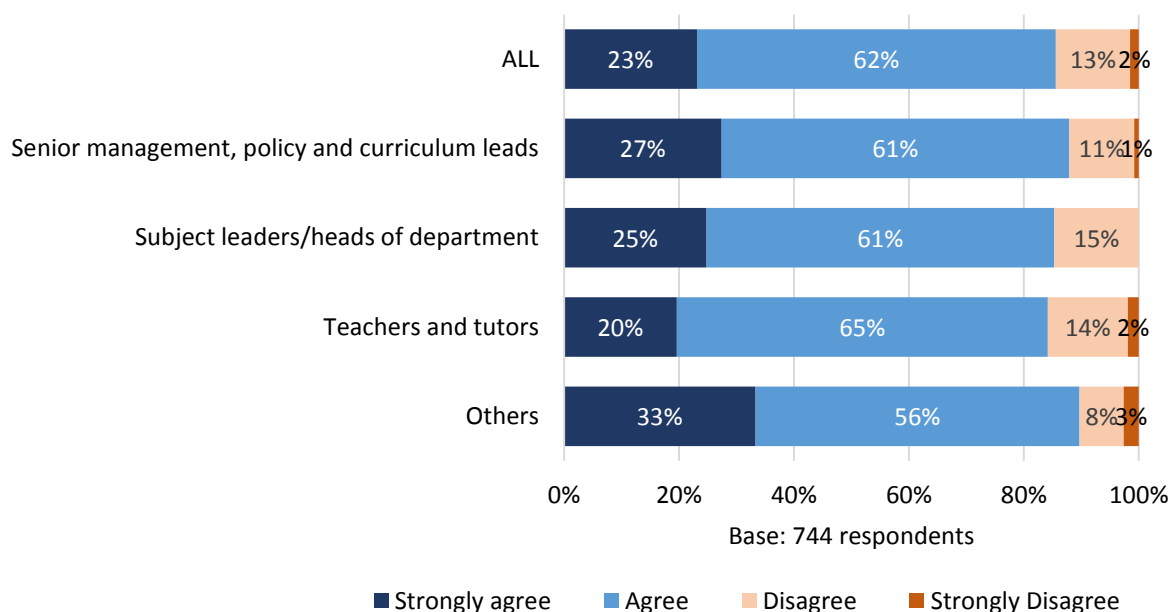
There was a clear message from respondents that Entry Level should be about the underlying maths and English skills and that Level 1 and Level 2 should introduce more of the context and application.

5. Maths in Detail

The Foundation's 2015 '*Making Maths and English work for all*' review suggested that Functional Skills qualifications need more rigour and to be more robust, and the recent employer survey (carried out as part of the 2016 reform programme) indicated that new recruits and junior staff need better basic skills in maths for life and work. Examples of commonly mentioned maths skills that could be better developed in the workforce are:

- Percentages, fractions and ratios;
- Arithmetical calculations (e.g. working out VAT);
- Mental arithmetic (estimation, conversion, space, weight);
- Time (coordination, dates, journeys, deliveries, estimation); and
- Metric systems (full understanding and conversions).

Following this, providers/practitioners were asked to rate a number of potential actions on a scale from 1 'not at all useful' to 10 'highly useful'. All potential actions returned an average score of at least 8 out of 10, with the top two being:

- Ensure users of the qualifications (including employers, teachers and learners) are clear on the content and purpose of the Functional Skills maths qualification (8.6); and

- CPD support to help boost teachers' confidence in the delivery/teaching of Functional Skills maths (8.2) – Figure 7.

Ratings are generally similar by job role and type of provider organisation.

Figure 7 Maths – what could be done?

Category	Rating
Ensure users are clear on the content and purpose	8.6
CPD support to help boost teachers' confidence	8.2
Amend the subject content to ensure inclusion of all maths skills within FS maths	8.0
Emphasise these skills more strongly through assessment of FS maths	8.0
Help for teachers/tutors to embed FS maths skills in the wider curriculum	8.0
Increase GLH to allow more time for teaching of FS maths	8.0
Increase focus on work-related assessment scenarios	7.6

Base range: 430-434 respondents

Respondents were asked to what extent they believe the coverage and range of subject content for Functional Skills maths at Level 2 could be improved. Most wanted to ensure it relates to 'real life', including realistic work-based scenarios, however the practical challenges this would bring for assessment were not generally mentioned.

A number of respondents voiced concern about drawing on contexts and scenarios that learners might not be familiar with. It was argued this makes assessment questions seem obscure and requires a great deal of skill (and potential maturity) from learners to interpret the context before beginning to formulate an answer. One respondent noted that Level 2 Functional Skills maths has increased in complexity (possibly as a result of the 2015 Ofqual Thematic Review), to bring it in line with the GCSE foundation syllabus, but that the *nature* of the questions in GCSE Maths makes it somewhat easier for learners to access and therefore achieve the qualification.

Their reasoning was that the questions in GCSE Maths, in their opinion, were less context-orientated and therefore easier to express and interpret in language terms.

"Personally I think it is more valuable working out the interest you would pay on a loan rather than whether you pick a red ball out of a bag."

Functional Skills teacher/tutor, private training provider

"I think statistical measures and probabilities are underrepresented - it plays a huge part in employment, business, marketing, news and social life and the content needs to reflect just how much statistics are used."

FE Specialist College

"Geometry and Trigonometry should be included as these are practical life skills that are frequently used in the workplace."

Functional Skills teacher/tutor, FEC

6. English in Detail

The recent employer survey indicated that new recruits and junior staff need better basic skills in English for life and work. Examples of commonly mentioned English skills which could be better developed, are:

- communicating confidently and clearly (written and oral);
- grammar;
- writing;
- spelling;
- punctuation;
- summarising ;
- business vocabulary;
- hand-writing skills; and
- telephone skills.

Providers/practitioners were asked to rate a number of potential actions on a scale from 1 'not at all useful' to 10 'highly useful'.

Almost all potential actions returned an average score of at least 8 out of 10 and the same two actions (as with maths) received the highest average ratings:

- Ensure users of the qualifications (including employers, teachers and learners) are clear on the content and purpose of the Functional Skills maths qualification; and

- CPD support to help boost teachers' confidence in the delivery/teaching of Functional Skills maths – Figure 8.

Whilst ratings are generally comparable when analysed by subsets of respondents, private providers returned a below average score of 7.2 for the usefulness of increasing GLH. This is perhaps unsurprising given this cohort is generally less favourable than other types of providers to changing the GLH within Functional Skills qualifications, as noted above.

Figure 8 English – what could be done?

Base range: 504-510 respondents
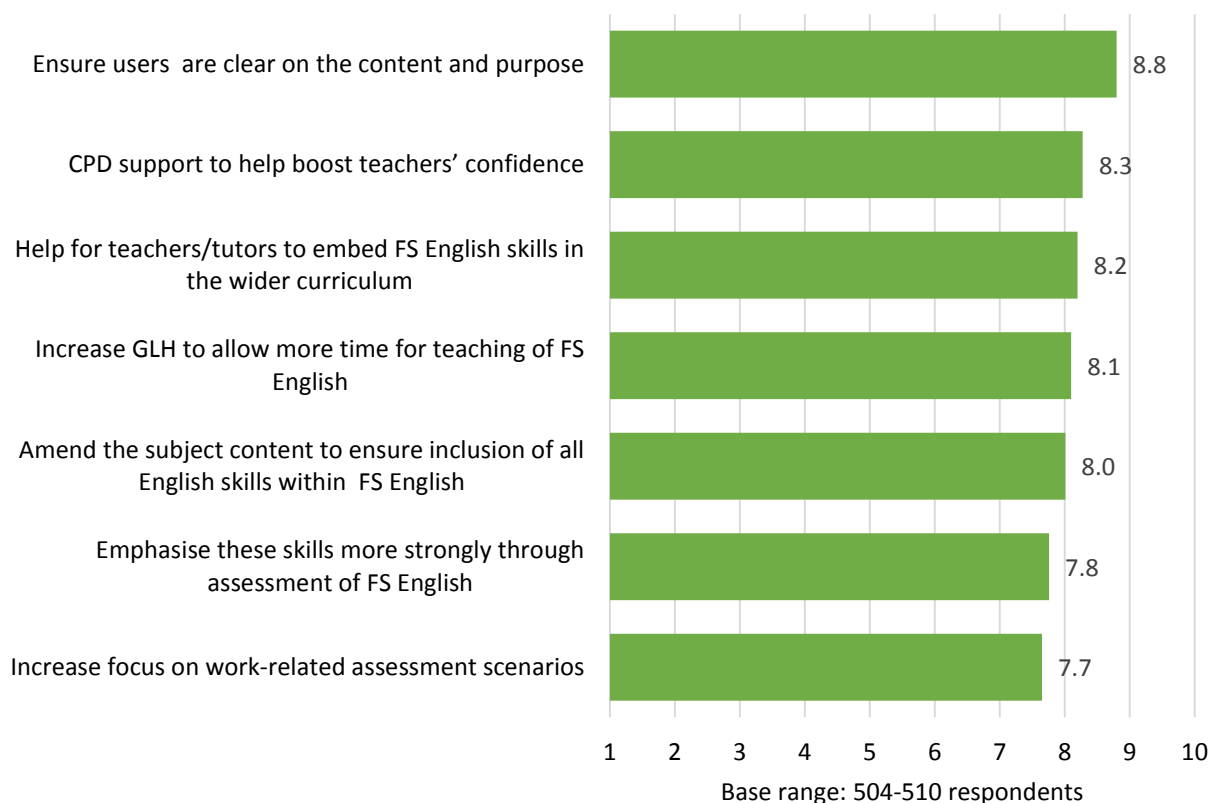
As part of the previous stage, employers rated effective oral communication skills as a high priority. Providers/practitioners were subsequently asked how oral skills should be best assessed within Functional Skills English qualifications. Almost three quarters (71%) feel this should be an integral part of the assessment for all levels (Figure 9). This majority opinion is shared by all types of provider organisations.

Figure 9 How oral communication skills should be best assessed within Functional Skills English (by job role)

Base: 519 respondents

- As an integral part of the assessment for all levels
- As an optional unit that is tested separately
- As an integral part of the assessment for some of the five levels
- Other
- None of the above
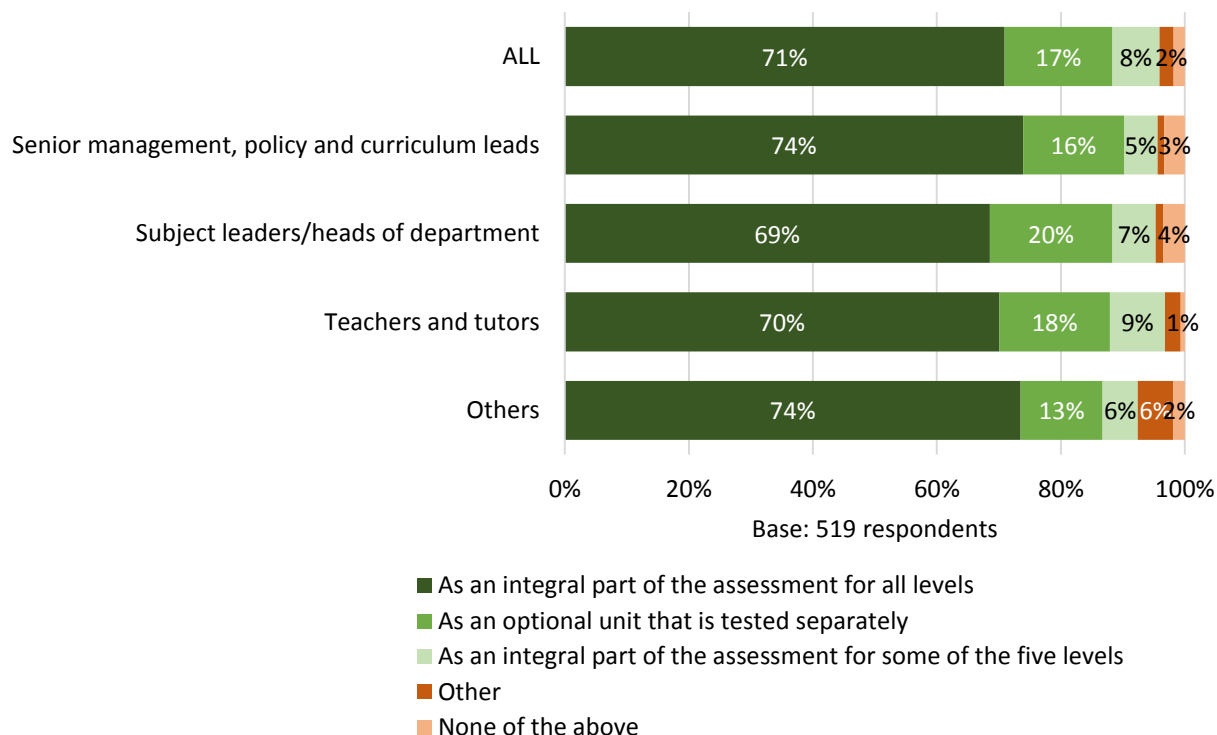
Respondents were asked to what extent they believe the coverage and range of subject content for Functional Skills English could be improved. As with maths, most wanted to ensure it relates to 'real life', drawing on familiar contexts and scenarios. However, there was no apparent consideration of the costs of doing so. Respondents recognised that speaking and listening can be harder to assess than other skills, but whatever happens it needs to be more vocationally relevant for example demonstrating customer service skills or practising interviewing skills.

On a more specific point, it was suggested that 'listening skills' and 'non-verbal skills' are a huge part of communication that require greater attention in the qualification, and that these skills should be linked more explicitly to employability skills and communications skills in in the workplace.

"The reading exam must reflect what L2 English learners can be expected to know and utilise in the work place and in life in general, more realism is required, not 'GCSE lite'!"

Functional Skills teacher/tutor, private training provider

> *"The writing needs to have more focus on the use of 'persuasive techniques' such as use of questions, rhetorical, emotive language, direct address, rule of three, statistics and facts. There is a tendency for learners to produce writing that is still rather unconvincing."*
>
> Functional Skills teacher/tutor, ACL provider

> *"I strongly believe that critical thinking skills should be developed throughout Functional Skills but mainly at levels 1 and 2. It's important that learners are able to question the political structures in which they live- literacy is the perfect opportunity to do this."*
>
> Functional Skills teacher/tutor, FEC

> *"Debating is important as these skills will teach learners to respect other peoples' views and be able to discuss more controversial issues with professionalism."*
>
> Curriculum planning lead, private training provider

7. Digital Skills

The question of the inclusion or exclusion of so-called 'digital' or 'ICT' skills within the Functional Skills framework has been a long-standing discussion point among practitioners and other educational experts.

The survey took the opportunity to put the matter to a wider group of practitioners, as follows:

"The digital application of maths and English should be regarded simply as different ways in which fundamental maths and English skills can be applied. Without a sound knowledge and skill-base for maths and English, the effective use of digital technology is impossible. Digital skills, per se, should NOT therefore be included in Functional Maths and Functional English."

Some 60% of respondents agree that digital skills per se should not be included in Functional Skills (Figure 10). Note, this does not mean that digital equipment will be excluded, only that the prime focus will be upon the understanding and internalisation of knowledge and the manual application of skills. This view is shared by different job roles, types of provider organisation and area of subject interest/expertise (maths/English).

Figure 10 Digital skills per se should not be included in Functional Skills qualifications (by job role)

Base: 745 respondents

Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Job role	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
ALL	24%	36%	29%	11%
Senior management, policy and curriculum leads	32%	28%	32%	8%
Subject leaders/heads of department	21%	41%	31%	7%
Teachers and tutors	23%	37%	28%	13%
Others	24%	34%	29%	13%
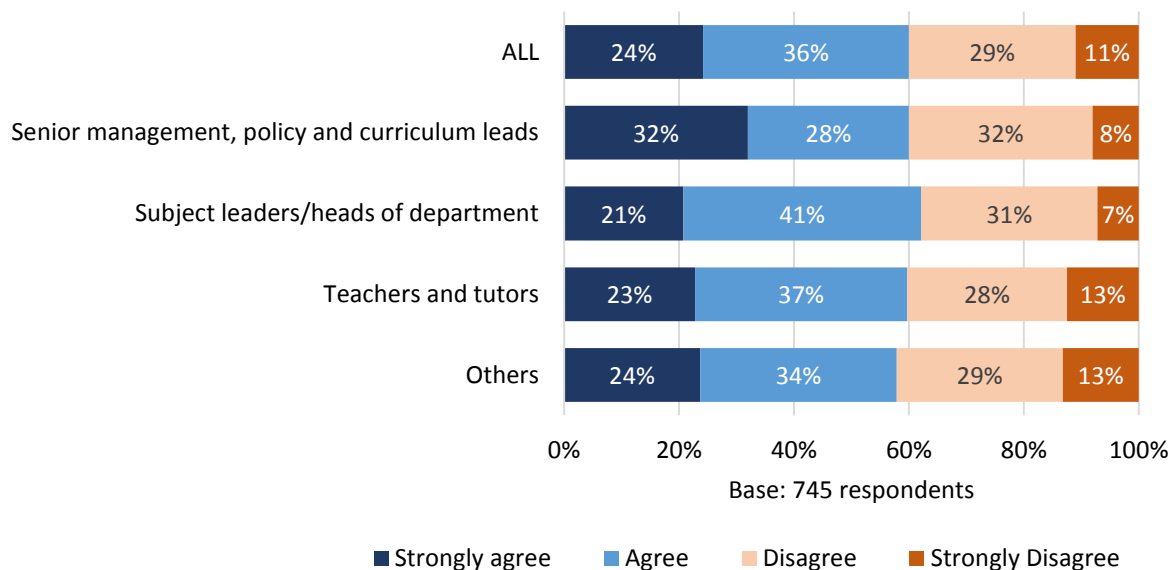
Comments from those disagreeing with the above statement focused on digital skills being important in modern life and for work (not directly relevant to the way maths and English are taught/examined). But some of the 'negative' comments were actually positive in that they were saying that digital skills should be assessed separately.

Of those respondents agreeing with the above statement, most focused on the need to focus closely on maths and English skills, while some others commented that digital technologies could be challenging or prohibitive for learners who are not IT savvy or may not need to use it in their line of work.

"There's a danger of assessing someone's digital skills and not their English or maths skills."

Subject leader/head of department, FEC

"Digital skills are already partially assessed although not explicitly. For example, knowing how to align text is imperative to achieving the marks for letter layout in an onscreen writing exam."

Subject leader/head of department, Academy/school

"Digital technology is merely a means to an end. Without mastering the skills inherent in Functional English and maths an individual is incapable of accessing opportunities in life and work, irrespective of whether they are 'digital' or not."

Education consultant

,

"Many of my learners are not confident with technology and do not have access to it at home. Whilst it is good to help them develop their IT skills, it should not be part of the exam which would hinder those who are not IT savvy."

Functional skills teacher/tutor, ACL provider

8. Learner Motivations and Confidence

8.1 Learner Motivations

In response to the survey, providers/practitioners were asked to indicate the main motivations for learners undertaking Functional Skills qualifications in maths/English. A range of reasons were given, with the most common (accounting for just under a quarter of all responses) being that Functional Skills are required as part of an apprenticeships, study programme of other education programme (Figure 11). The results follow a similar pattern by job role, provider organisation and area of subject interest/expertise.

Figure 11 Main motivations for learners undertaking Functional Skills qualifications

Motivation	Percentage
Requirement as part of an Apprenticeship/other programme	24%
To gain a level 2 in maths and English to qualify for higher level study	19%
To gain a qualification to enhance employment opportunities	19%
Requirement as part of the Condition of Funding	13%
Has completed ESOL qualifications and wishes to progress	8%
FS are a natural progression from previous learning/experience	8%
Is an ESOL learner and has been advised to complete FS instead of ESOL qualifications	6%
Other	2%

Base: 2,586 responses

The main perceived benefits to learners of obtaining Functional Skills qualifications are that they help to develop maths/English skills respectively (accounting for 37% of responses). This is followed by helping to improve confidence for life and work and progress to higher level learning (Figure 12). Again the results are very similar by job role, type of provider organisation and area of subject expertise.

Figure 12 Main benefits to learners of obtaining Functional Skills qualifications

Base: 3,309 responses
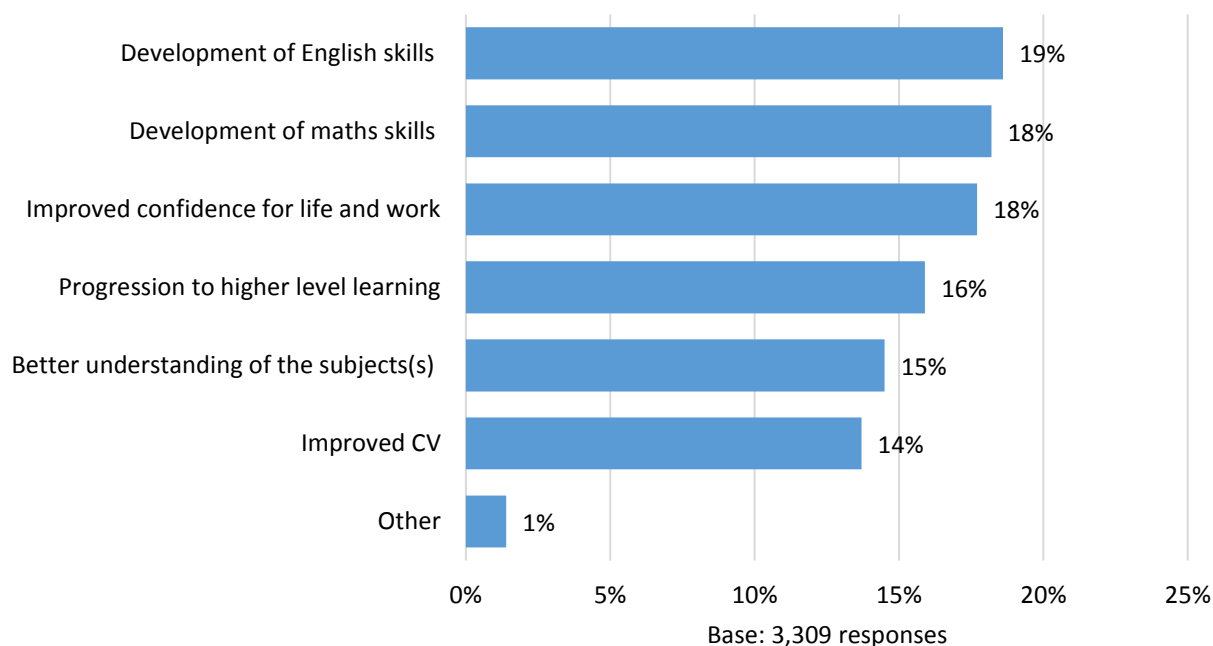
With respect to any disadvantages of Functional Skills qualifications for learners, a variety of responses can be summarised as follows:

- Awarding body requirements differ vastly plus some do not accept parts achieved from other bodies to make a complete certificate (in English);

- Connotations that Functional Skills are not as highly valued as a GCSE;

- Functional Skills do not provide adequate preparation for progression onto GCSE;

- Their status is not recognised/understood by colleges or employers as being anything more than 'not a GCSE', meaning that work needs to be done to raise their status and show how they are supporting learners to progress, to get work, and to lead better lives;

- Some universities do not accept Functional Skills as part of their entry requirements;

- Learners are not given enough time to undertake Functional Skills during their apprenticeship which can be damaging;

- Learners are not prepared for the contexts of the Functional Skills assessments and they struggle with the variety of knowledge that they need to have about the real world in order to continue;

- Learners who have not been exposed to the types of scenarios asked in the exam are disadvantaged (granted, the skills learned should be helpful but if learners have low confidence then an unfamiliar scenario panics them);

- Very able maths students also doubt themselves as do not believe 5-1=4 could possibly be the answer for a level 2 paper but it can;

- Some learners mistakenly think they can access A level maths after Functional Skills Level 2 (FS maths is not a pathway to GCSE Maths as there is an over-reliance on calculator skills.

"Level 2 was supposed to be an equivalent to GSCE C grade giving students the option of an alternative route if academic study was not their strength. The government has now demanded that students take GCSE as well thus de-valuing the level 2 qualification."

Functional Skills teacher/tutor, FEC

8.2 Learner Confidence

On a scale from 1 'not at all' to 10 'very well', respondents were asked how well current Functional Skills qualifications are perceived to help develop learner confidence in these subjects. With respect to both maths and English, scores average 7 out of 10, with very little difference by job role (Figure 13).

Figure 13 How well Functional Skills develop learner confidence in these subjects (by job role)

Base respondents: 659 (maths) and 675 (English)
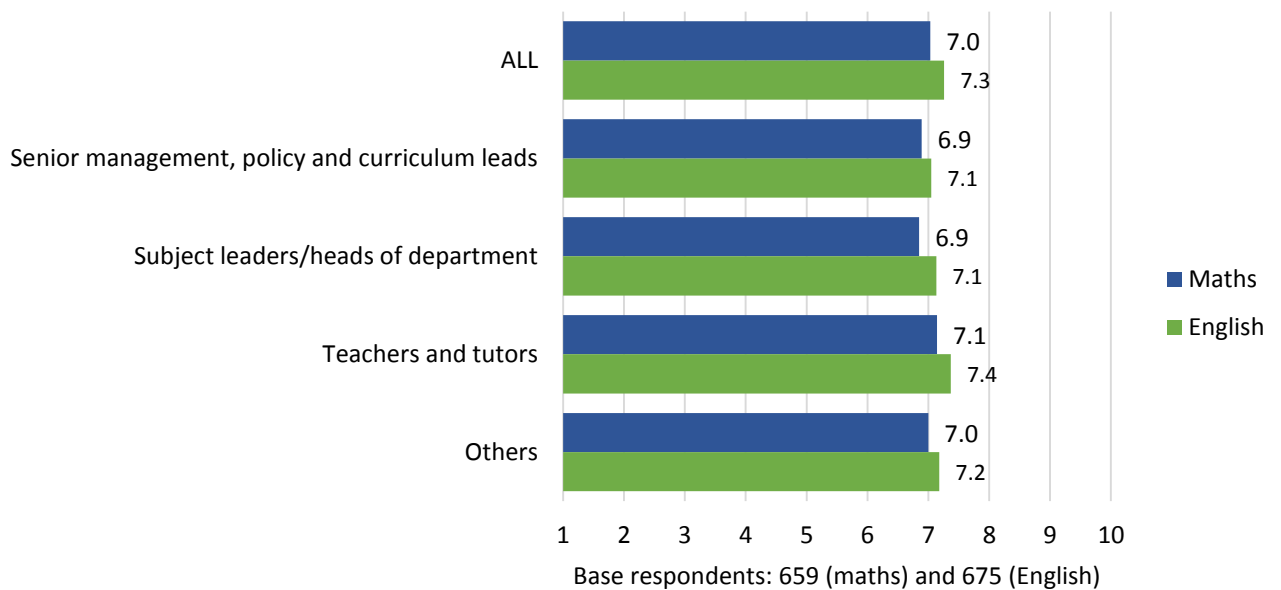
Analysis of the same findings by type of provider organisation shows that ACL providers appear to be slightly more confident than private providers and FECs respectively that these qualifications develop learner confidence (Figure 14).

Figure 14 How well Functional Skills develop learner confidence in these subjects (by provider organisation)

Base respondents: 659 (maths) and 675 (English)
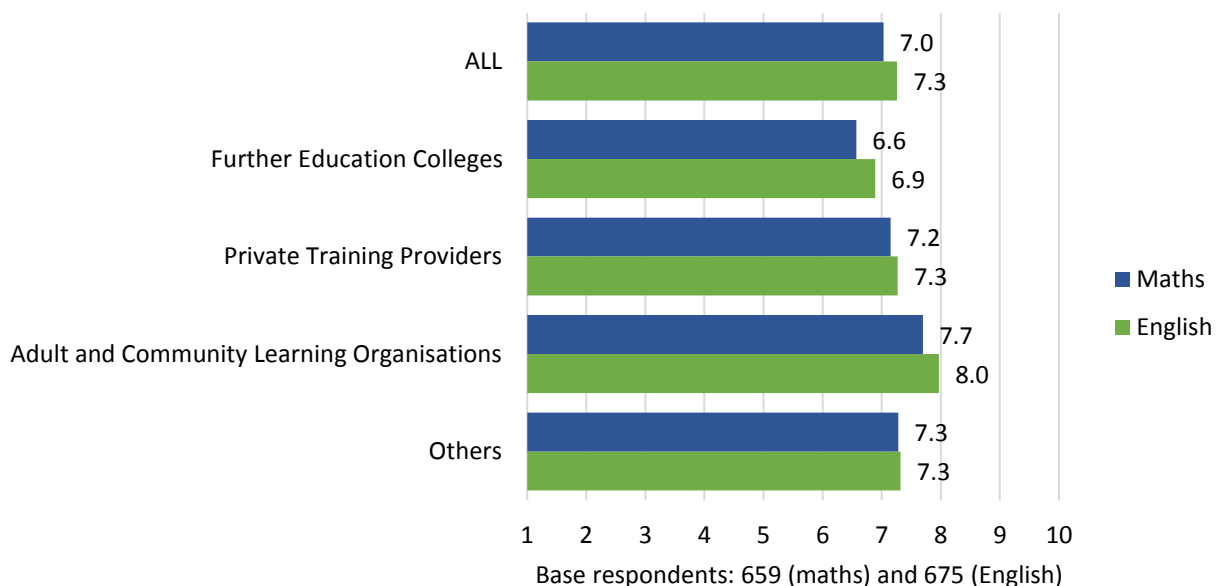
The biggest barrier to learner confidence in maths appears to be the English required to understand the question, but the suggestion that they are tested only in maths runs against the need for contextualised questions and contexts.

"Throughout a course a learner may well demonstrate competence in the application of a maths skill/content, however when presented with a different unseen scenario, with lots of words and a rather prescriptive way of developing a solution, they may well panic."

Independent practitioner

"In maths, it would be helpful to word scenarios using a level of English at or below the level of Maths being tested."

Functional skills teacher/tutor, ACL provider

"A relatively high level of literacy is also required for Functional Maths, particularly at level 2, which makes questions inaccessible for learners."

Functional skills teacher/tutor, FEC

"Scrap Functional Skills and develop more vocational GCSE maths/ English."

Functional skills teacher/tutor, FEC

9. Teacher Competence

For the levels and subjects they teach, and using a scale from 1 'not at all competent' to 10 'very competent', respondents were asked to rate their own competence (or that of teachers for whom they are responsible) in Functional Skills maths/English. The responses are set out in Figures 15 (maths) and 16 (English) below.

With respect to subject knowledge, practitioners rate themselves extremely competent – at least 9 out of 10 across all levels and across both subjects. Scores are only slightly lower for understanding how to apply (current) Functional Skills Criteria alongside that subject knowledge, followed by contextualising Functional Skills to vocational learning or the workplace. Scores are still high (at least 8 out of 10) and similar across all levels.

Further analysis by type of provider organisation reveals that surveyed private providers are marginally less confident of their competence in subject knowledge (scores below 9 out of 10 across all levels and for both subjects), while ACL providers are slightly more confident than private in relation to contextualising Functional Skills.

Figure 15 Rating of own competence delivering Functional Skills maths

Base range: 389-416 repondents
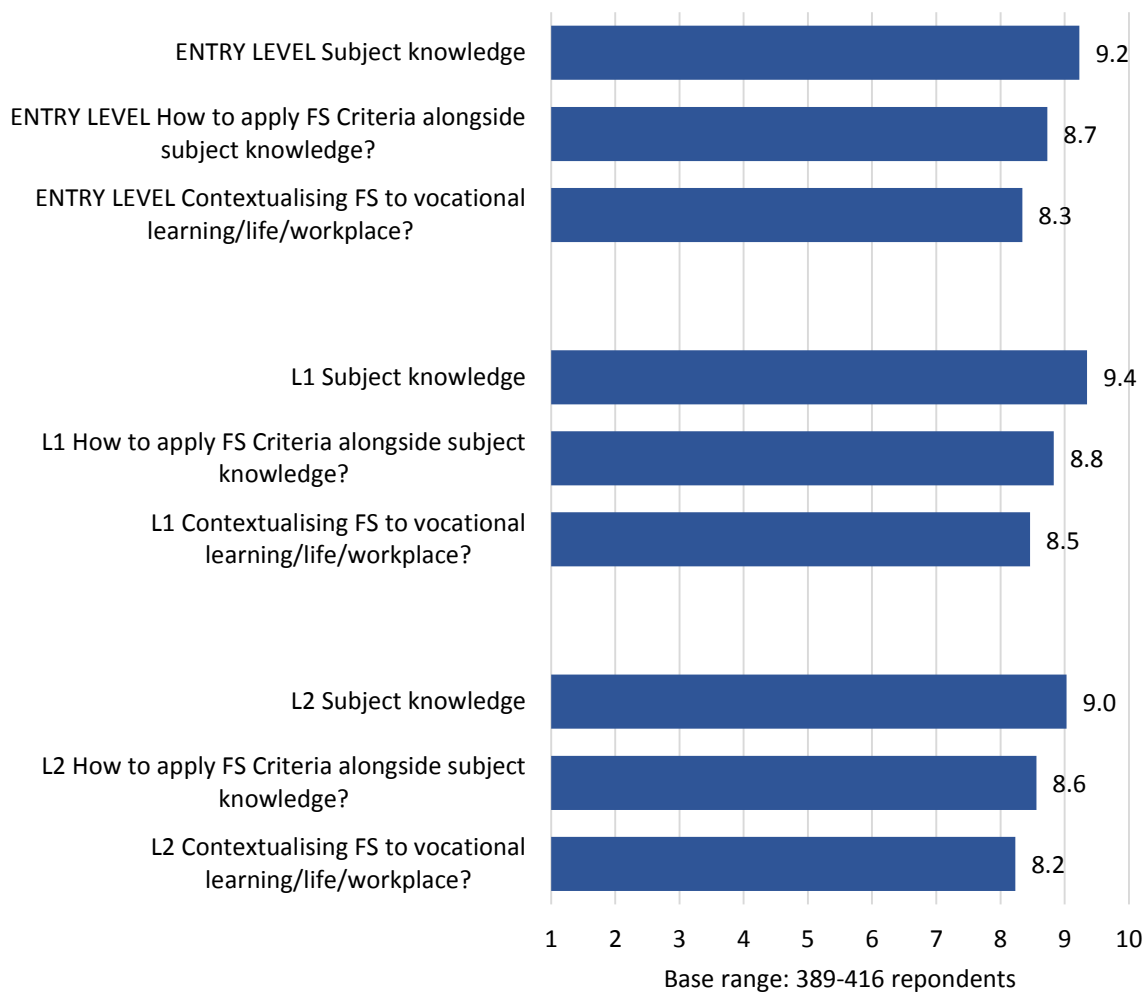
Figure 16 Rating of own competence delivering Functional Skills English

Competence	Rating
ENTRY LEVEL Subject knowledge	9.1
ENTRY LEVEL How to apply FS Criteria alongside subject knowledge?	8.7
ENTRY LEVEL Contextualising FS to vocational learning/life/workplace?	8.3
L1 Subject knowledge	9.2
L1 How to apply FS Criteria alongside subject knowledge?	8.7
L1 Contextualising FS to vocational learning/life/workplace?	8.5
L2 Subject knowledge	9.0
L2 How to apply FS Criteria alongside subject knowledge?	8.5
L2 Contextualising FS to vocational learning/life/workplace?	8.3

Base range: 467-488 respondents

Respondents were also asked in what ways, if any, teacher confidence could be improved in delivering Functional Skills maths and English. This largely comes down to making sure that the tutors are competent themselves in maths and English, with lots of calls for CPD and better teaching resources, as well as making sure that the tutors are already qualified to at least level 3 in the subjects.

"Great teaching usually happens when the teacher has deep knowledge and understanding of the subject they teach, has strong understanding of the material being taught and when he/she understands the way their students think about the content; therefore increasing English and Maths skills during teacher's training would improve the delivery."

Curriculum planning lead, ACL provider

"There is a need for more CPD to help teachers to gain confidence in subject knowledge and explore how best to deliver Functional Skills."

Independent practitioner

"Better resources should be available, online and paper based, to support vocational teachers in delivering specific aspects of these criteria, including one hour lesson plans and supported by delivery resources."

Functional skills teacher/tutor, private training provider

10. Respondent Profile

Of all 755 survey responses, 84% provided their own individual views and 17% responded on behalf of their organisation.

The remainder of this section sets out information about the respondents to the survey including breakdowns of job roles, type of organisation, area of subject interest/expertise and teaching experience.

Figure 17 Job role (clustered)
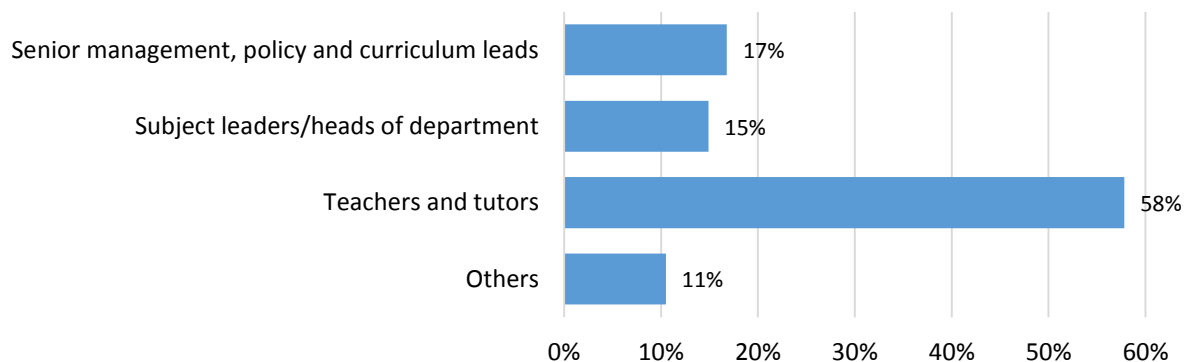
Base: 753 respondents

Table 1 Job role (all)

Functional Skills teacher/tutor (maths or English)	48%
Subject leader/ Head of Department	15%
Curriculum planning/lead	10%
Other	7%
ESOL tutor	4%
Vice Principal or Senior Manager	4%
Subject tutor (other than maths or English)	4%
Education consultant	3%
SEN or LLDD teacher or tutor	2%
Principal or Chief Executive	1%
Training/Education Policy Lead	1%
Union representative	1%
Employer engagement	0%
Teaching assistant	0%

Figure 18 Provider organisation type (clustered)
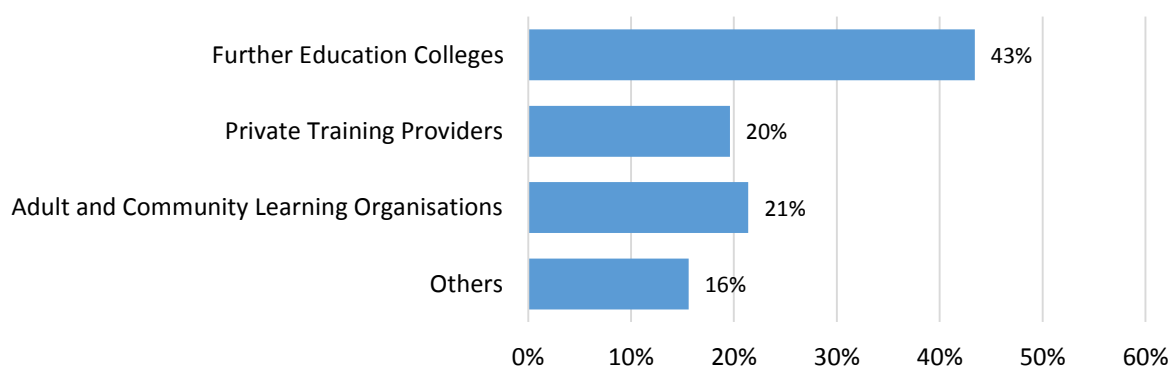
Base: 753 respondents

Table 2 Provider organisation type (all)

Further education college	43%
Adult and community learning organisation	21%
Private training provider	20%
Other (including Awarding Organisations)	5%
Employer/work-based learning	4%
Offender learning organisation	2%
Sixth form college	1%
Independent practitioner	1%
Academy/school	1%
Higher education institution	1%

Figure 19 Area of subject interest/expertise

Category	Percentage
Maths only	30%
English only	42%
Maths and English	28%

Base: 754 respondents
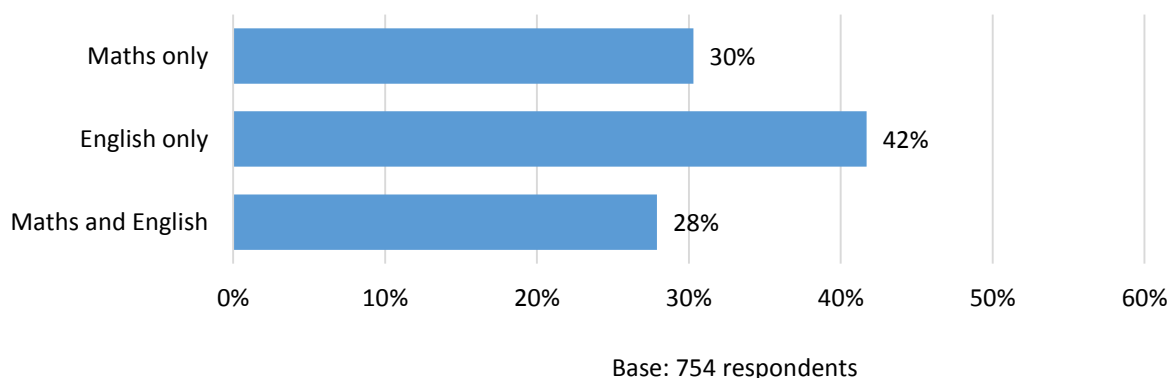
Figure 20 Functional skills taught by the respondent

Category	Percentage
Maths only	22%
English only	28%
Maths and English	50%

Base: 665 respondents
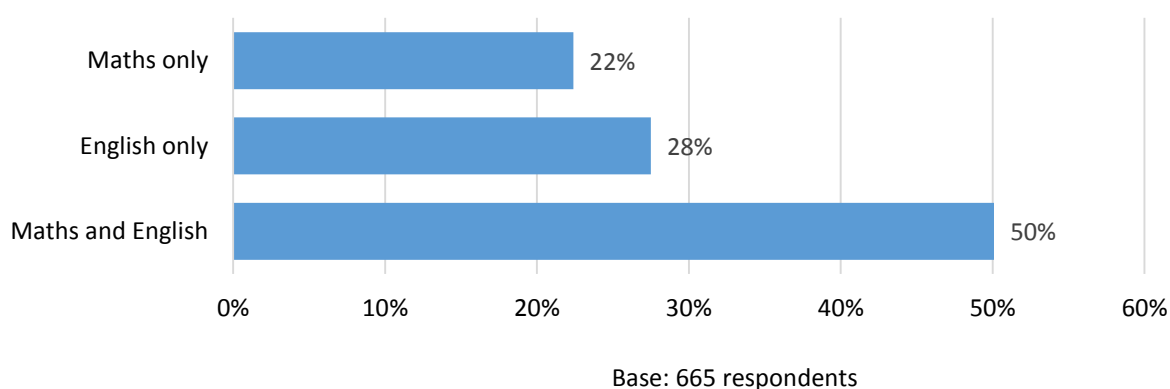
Figure 21 Number of years personally teaching Functional Skills maths (by job role)

Job role	Less than 1 year	1 to 3 years	4 + years
ALL	4%	30%	66%
Senior management, policy and curriculum leads	3%	25%	72%
Subject leaders/heads of department	2%	22%	76%
Teachers and tutors	4%	32%	64%
Others	15%	32%	53%

Base: 486 respondents

■ Less than 1 year   ■ 1 to 3 years   ■ 4 + years
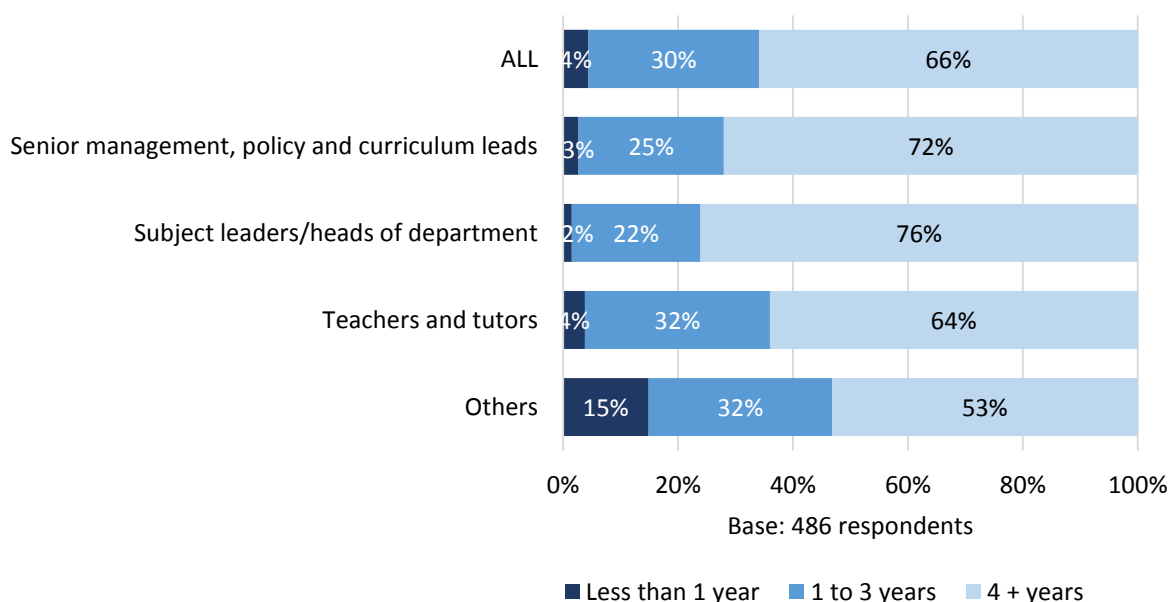
Figure 22 Number of years personally teaching Functional Skills maths (by provider organisation)

Base: 486 respondents

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 3 years
- 4 + years
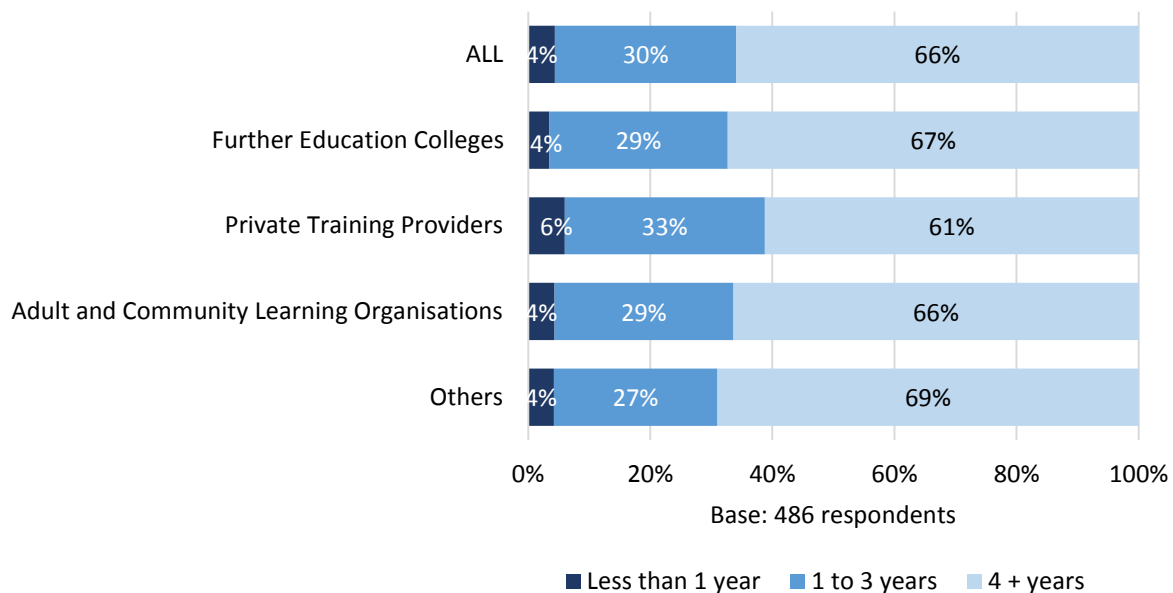
Figure 23 Number of years personally teaching Functional Skills English (by job role)

Base: 513 respondents

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 3 years
- 4 + years
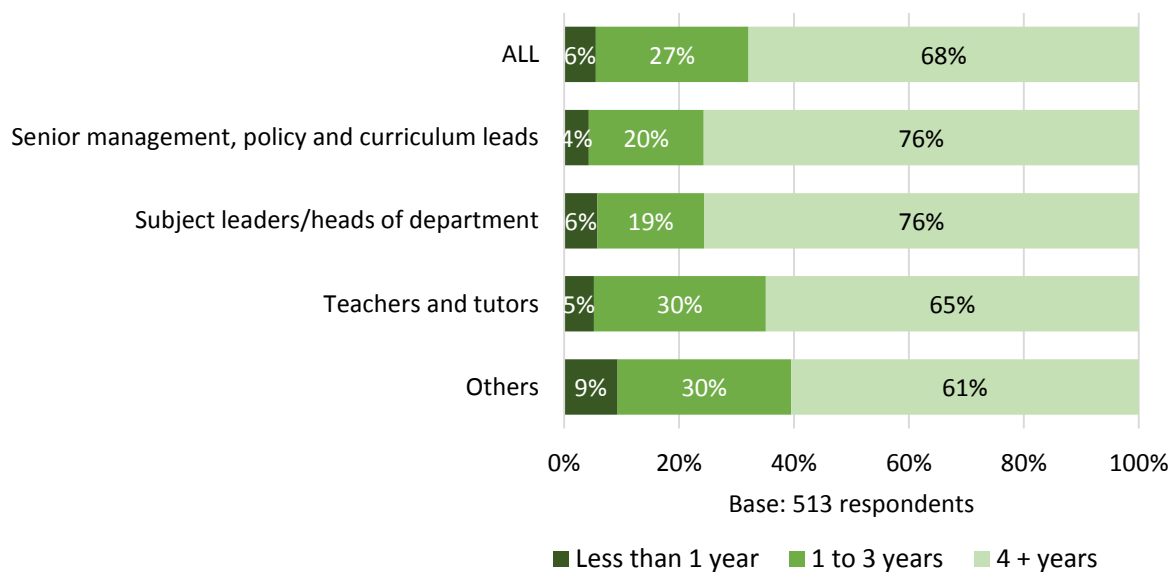
Figure 24 Number of years personally teaching Functional Skills English (by provider organisation)

Base: 513 respondents

■ Less than 1 year ■ 1 to 3 years ■ 4 + years
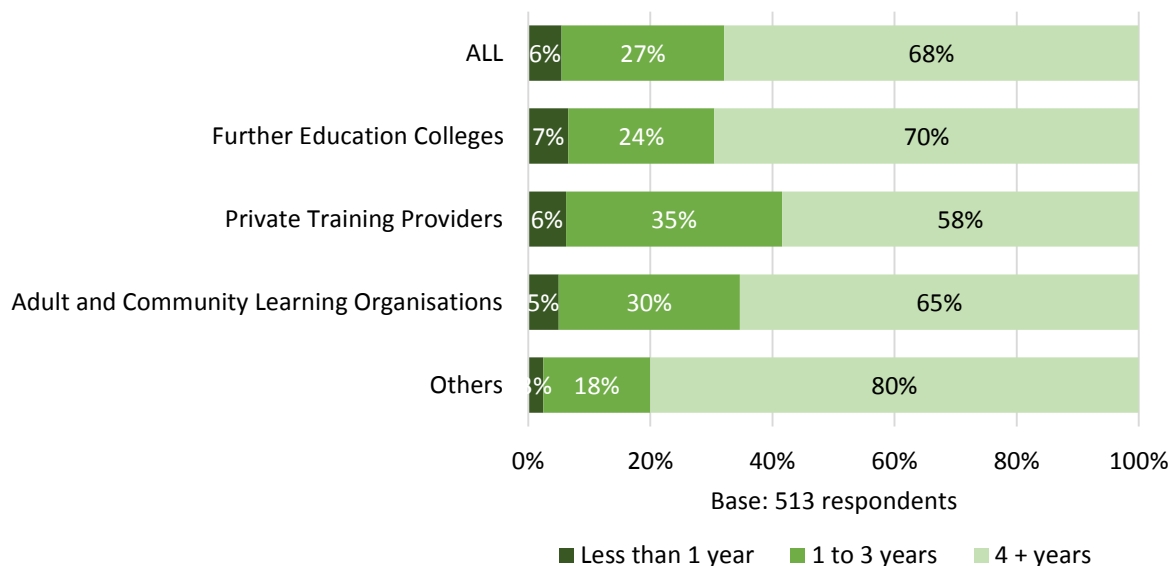
Tables 3 and 4 are based on 487 respondents who stated that they have experience of teaching Functional Skills maths. The tables show the percentage of respondents within each job role/type of organisation that have experience of teaching the qualification at each level.

The results indicate that there is more experience of teaching Functional Skills maths at Levels 1 and 2 compared with the Entry levels. For example, 92% of those respondents with experience of teaching Functional Skills maths have done so at Level 2, 94% at Level 1 and so on.

Table 3 Level of Functional Skills maths taught (by job role)

	ALL	Senior management, policy and curriculum leads	Subject leaders/heads of department	Teachers and tutors	Others
Entry level 1	**47%**	59%	46%	44%	47%
Entry level 2	**61%**	69%	63%	61%	49%
Entry level 3	**81%**	83%	79%	82%	68%
Level 1	**94%**	93%	94%	96%	83%
Level 2	**92%**	87%	88%	95%	87%

Base: 487 respondents

Table 4 Level of Functional Skills maths taught (by provider organisation)

	ALL	Further Education Colleges	Private Training Providers	Adult and Community Learning Organisations	Others
Entry level 1	**47%**	51%	31%	52%	54%
Entry level 2	**61%**	68%	39%	77%	61%
Entry level 3	**81%**	89%	66%	88%	70%
Level 1	**94%**	93%	98%	94%	89%
Level 2	**92%**	91%	97%	89%	90%

Base: 487 respondents

Tables 5 and 6 show the same information as Tables 3 and 4 but relate to those respondents with experience of teaching Functional Skills English.

Table 5 Level of Functional Skills English taught (by job role)

	ALL	Senior management, policy and curriculum leads	Subject leaders/heads of department	Teachers and tutors	Others
Entry level 1	**50%**	64%	55%	46%	44%
Entry level 2	**61%**	72%	69%	59%	44%
Entry level 3	**81%**	86%	80%	82%	70%
Level 1	**95%**	96%	93%	97%	84%
Level 2	**92%**	90%	93%	93%	79%

Base: 522 respondents

Table 6 Level of Functional Skills English taught (by provider organisation)

	ALL	Further Education Colleges	Private Training Providers	Adult and Community Learning Organisations	Others
Entry level 1	**50%**	55%	33%	61%	48%
Entry level 2	**61%**	72%	39%	67%	56%
Entry level 3	**81%**	91%	65%	87%	73%
Level 1	**95%**	96%	97%	95%	89%
Level 2	**92%**	90%	98%	89%	90%

Base: 522 respondents

Figure 25 Nature of role - specialist in maths/English or vocational teacher/tutor (by job role)

Base: 718 respondents

■ Specialist teacher/tutor in maths/English   ■ Vocational teacher/tutor
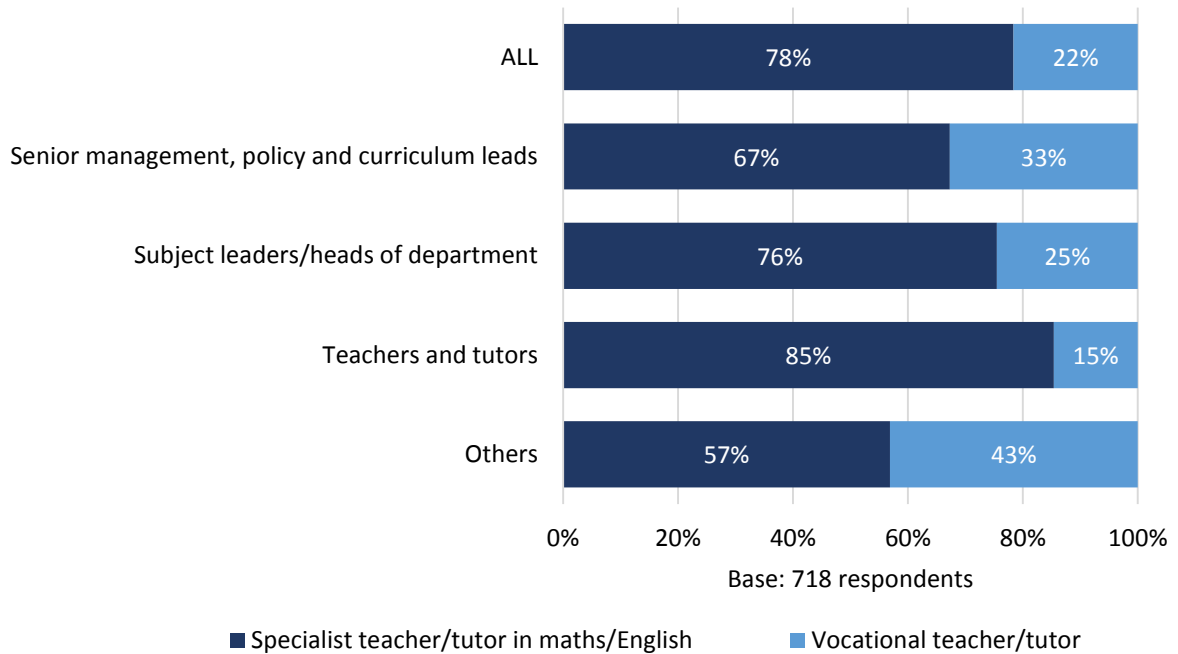
Figure 26 Nature of role - specialist in maths/English or vocational teacher/tutor (by provider organisation)

Base: 718 respondents

■ Specialist teacher/tutor in maths/English   ■ Vocational teacher/tutor
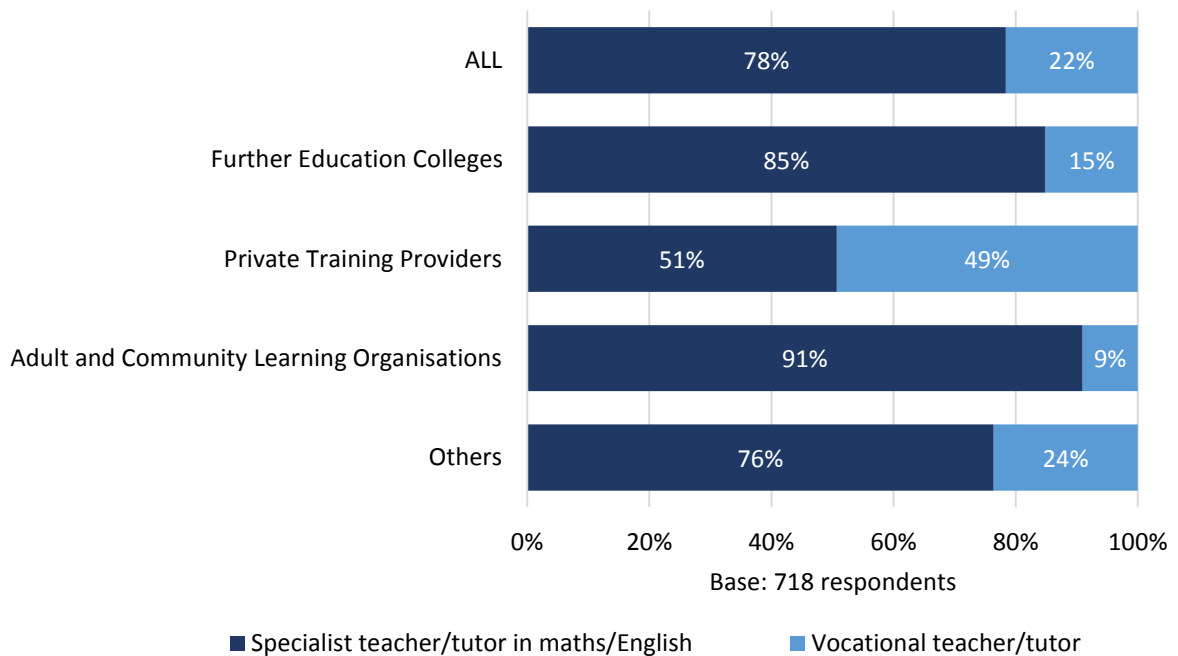
Appendix: Supplementary Tables

This section sets out supplementary tables and charts cross-tabulating the survey results by job role, type of provider organisations and area of subject interest/expertise (maths/English).

Table 7 Relevance of different uses for Level 1 and Level 2 Functional Skills qualifications (by job role)

	ALL	Senior management, policy and curriculum leads	Subject leaders/heads of department	Teachers and tutors	Others
Improving a learner's maths and/or English skills	8.6	8.4	8.8	8.6	8.3
Applying maths and/or English knowledge and skills to life	8.5	8.4	8.6	8.4	8.7
Improving a learner's maths and/or English knowledge	8.4	8.2	8.6	8.4	8.0
Applying maths and/or English knowledge and skills to work	8.4	8.4	8.6	8.3	8.7
An alternative to GCSE for vocational/adult learners	8.1	8.0	8.3	8.1	8.1
To help with a learner's employability	8.1	7.9	8.1	8.1	8.1
As a component part of an Apprenticeship/Study programme	8.0	8.0	8.2	8.0	8.4
As a standalone qualification	8.0	7.9	8.1	7.9	8.4
Stepping-stone qualification to GCSE	6.7	6.4	6.5	6.9	6.0
Alternative qualification to ESOL qualifications	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.7
Supplementary qualification to be taken after GCSE	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.5	4.0

Table 8 Relevance of different uses for Level 1 and Level 2 Functional Skills qualifications (by provider organisation)

	ALL	Further Education Colleges	Private Training Providers	Adult and Community Learning Organisations	Others
Improving a learner's maths and/or English skills	8.6	8.3	8.6	9.1	8.5
Applying maths and/or English knowledge and skills to life	8.5	8.2	8.6	8.8	8.5
Improving a learner's maths and/or English knowledge	8.4	8.1	8.5	8.9	8.4
Applying maths and/or English knowledge and skills to work	8.4	8.1	8.5	8.7	8.5
An alternative to GCSE for vocational/adult learners	8.1	7.9	8.8	7.9	8.0
To help with a learner's employability	8.1	7.8	7.9	8.6	8.3
As a component part of an Apprenticeship/Study programme	8.0	8.0	8.2	8.1	8.0
As a standalone qualification	8.0	7.7	8.1	8.5	8.1
Stepping-stone qualification to GCSE	6.7	6.6	6.1	7.9	6.1
Alternative qualification to ESOL qualifications	4.4	4.5	4.2	4.8	4.0
Supplementary qualification to be taken after GCSE	3.6	3.4	4.1	3.3	3.8

Table 9 Relevance of different uses for Level 1 and Level 2 Functional Skills qualifications (maths/English specialists)

	ALL	Maths specialists	English specialists	Maths and English specialists
Improving a learner's maths and/or English skills	8.6	8.4	8.6	8.6
Applying maths and/or English knowledge and skills to life	8.5	8.4	8.5	8.5
Improving a learner's maths and/or English knowledge	8.4	8.3	8.4	8.5
Applying maths and/or English knowledge and skills to work	8.4	8.2	8.5	8.4
An alternative to GCSE for vocational/adult learners	8.1	7.9	8.1	8.4
To help with a learner's employability	8.1	7.8	8.2	8.2
As a component part of an Apprenticeship/Study programme	8.0	7.9	8.0	8.2
As a standalone qualification	8.0	7.8	8.1	8.1
Stepping-stone qualification to GCSE	6.7	6.6	7.0	6.3
Alternative qualification to ESOL qualifications	4.4	4.4	4.7	4.1
Supplementary qualification to be taken after GCSE	3.6	3.7	3.4	3.8

Table 10 Relevance of different uses for Entry level Functional Skills qualifications (by job role)

	ALL	Senior management, policy and curriculum leads	Subject leaders/heads of department	Teachers and tutors	Others
Improving a learner's maths and/or English skills	8.3	8.5	8.5	8.1	8.3
Improving a learner's maths and/or English knowledge	8.1	8.3	8.3	8.0	8.0
Applying maths and/or English knowledge and skills to life	7.9	8.0	7.9	7.8	8.1
Applying maths and/or English knowledge and skills to work	7.5	7.8	7.6	7.4	7.6
To help with a learner's employability	7.2	7.7	7.4	7.0	7.6
As a standalone qualification	7.0	7.5	7.5	6.6	7.5
Alternative qualification to ESOL qualifications	5.0	4.8	5.2	4.9	5.4

Table 11 Relevance of different uses for Entry level Functional Skills qualifications (by provider organisation)

	ALL	Further Education Colleges	Private Training Providers	Adult and Community Learning Organisations	Others
Improving a learner's maths and/or English skills	8.3	8.0	8.0	8.8	8.5
Improving a learner's maths and/or English knowledge	8.1	7.9	8.0	8.6	8.3
Applying maths and/or English knowledge and skills to life	7.9	7.6	7.7	8.4	8.0
Applying maths and/or English knowledge and skills to work	7.5	7.2	7.6	8.0	7.8
To help with a learner's employability	7.2	7.0	7.0	7.7	7.5
As a standalone qualification	7.0	6.7	6.8	7.5	7.2
Alternative qualification to ESOL qualifications	5.0	5.0	5.6	4.5	4.9

Table 12 Relevance of different uses for Entry level Functional Skills qualifications (maths/English specialists)

	ALL	Maths specialists	English specialists	Maths and English specialists
Improving a learner's maths and/or English skills	8.3	8.1	8.3	8.4
Improving a learner's maths and/or English knowledge	8.1	8.0	8.1	8.3
Applying maths and/or English knowledge and skills to life	7.9	7.7	8.0	7.9
Applying maths and/or English knowledge and skills to work	7.5	7.2	7.8	7.6
To help with a learner's employability	7.2	6.7	7.5	7.3
As a standalone qualification	7.0	6.7	7.2	6.9
Alternative qualification to ESOL qualifications	5.0	4.5	5.2	5.1

Table 13 GLH for Functional Skills qualifications (maths/English specialists)

	ALL	Maths specialists	English specialists	Maths and English specialists
All five qualifications should increase	43%	36%	48%	44%
Levels 1 and 2 only should increase (entry levels stay the same)	35%	44%	30%	31%
All five qualifications should stay the same	18%	17%	16%	22%
Entry levels only should increase (levels 1 and 2 should stay the same)	5%	4%	6%	3%

Figure 27 Scope for remaining Entry levels (by provider organisation)
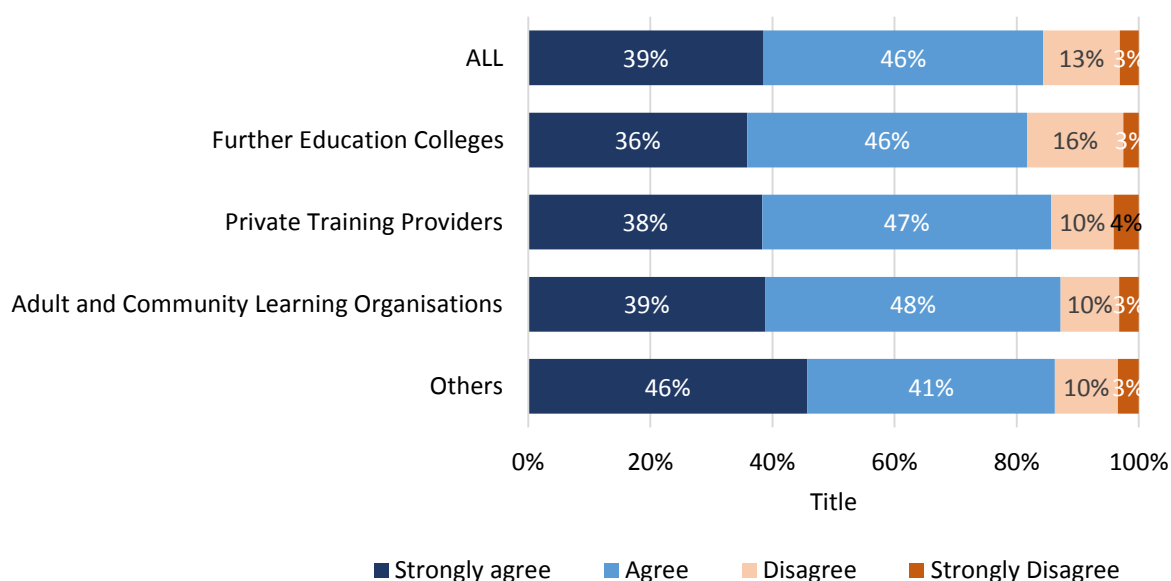
Table 14 Scope for remaining Entry levels (maths/English specialists)

	ALL	Maths specialists	English specialists	Maths and English specialists
Strongly agree	39%	43%	34%	41%
Agree	46%	45%	47%	44%
Disagree	13%	9%	16%	11%
Strongly Disagree	3%	3%	3%	4%

Figure 28 Scope for distinguishing more explicitly between the levels (by provider organisation)
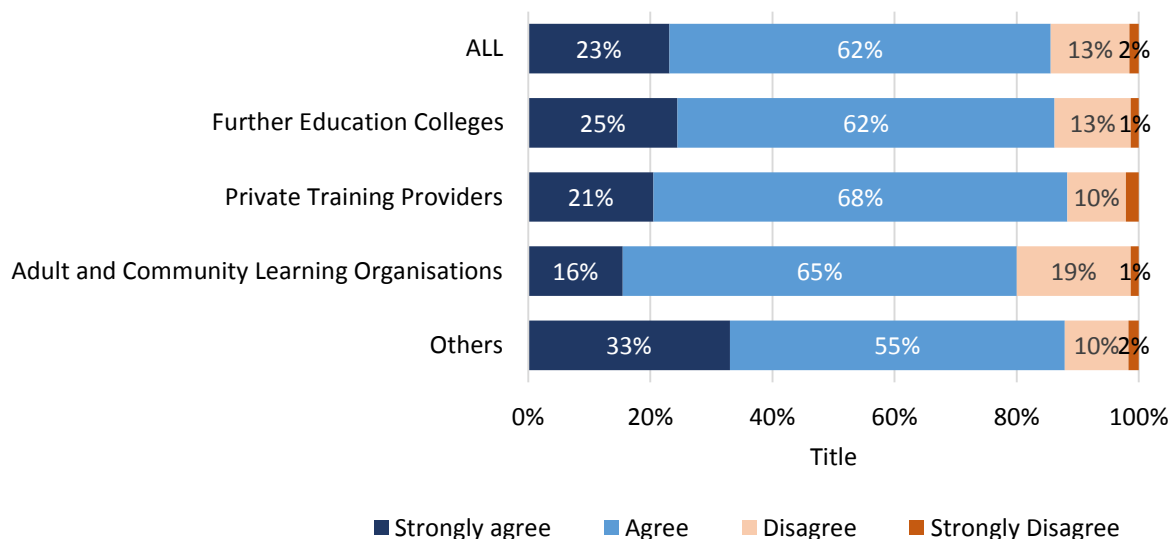
Table 15 Scope for distinguishing more explicitly between the levels (maths/English specialists)

	ALL	Maths specialists	English specialists	Maths and English specialists
Strongly agree	23%	21%	20%	30%
Agree	63%	62%	66%	58%
Disagree	13%	14%	13%	11%
Strongly Disagree	2%	2%	1%	2%

Figure 29 Digital skills per se should not be included in Functional Skills qualifications (by provider organisation)
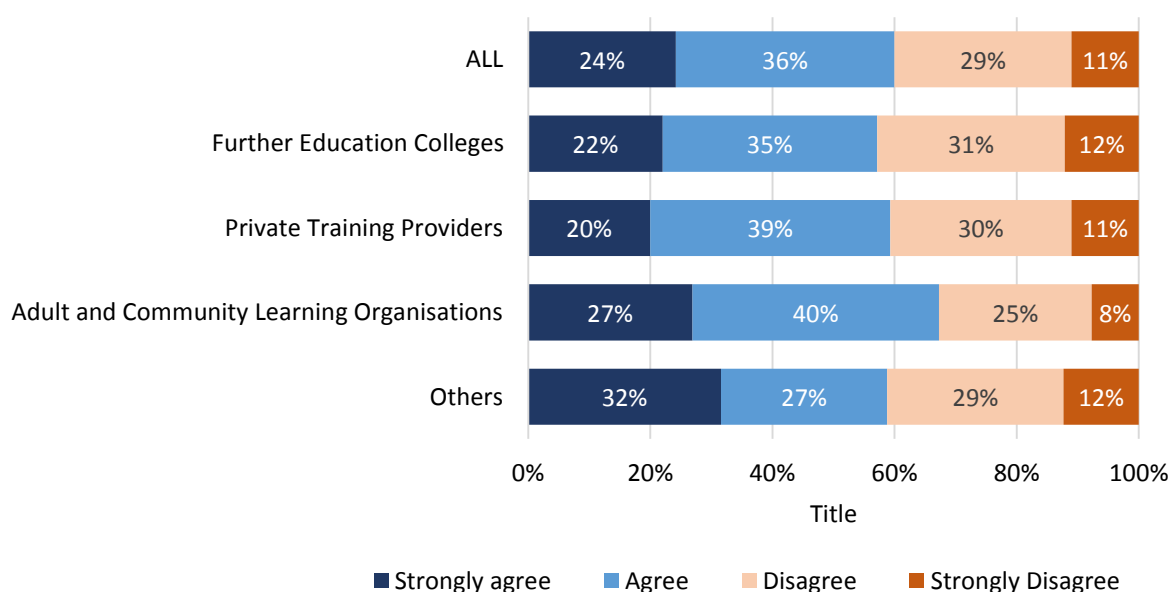
Table 16 Digital skills per se should not be included in Functional Skills qualifications (maths/English specialists)

	ALL	Maths specialists	English specialists	Maths and English specialists
Strongly agree	24%	24%	24%	25%
Agree	36%	32%	38%	37%
Disagree	29%	32%	29%	26%
Strongly Disagree	11%	13%	9%	13%

Table 17 Maths – what could be done? (by job role)

	ALL	Senior management, policy and curriculum leads	Subject leaders/ heads of department	Teachers and tutors	Others
Ensure users of the qualifications (including employers, teachers and learners) are clear on the content and purpose of the Functional Skills maths qualification	8.6	8.7	8.9	8.5	8.8
CPD support to help boost teachers' confidence in the delivery/teaching of Functional Skills Maths	8.2	8.5	8.7	8.0	8.6
Amend the current subject content to ensure inclusion of all of these maths skills within the Functional Skills maths qualifications	8.0	8.3	8.1	7.8	8.2
Ensure greater emphasis is made, through assessment, of these specific skills within the Functional Skills maths qualifications	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	7.9
Help for teachers/tutors to embed functional maths skills in the wider curriculum	8.0	8.3	8.5	7.7	8.5
Increase guided learning hours (GLH) to allow more time for teaching of Functional Skills maths	8.0	7.7	7.9	8.1	8.1
A greater focus on work-related assessment scenarios	7.6	7.9	8.0	7.4	8.1

Table 18 Maths – what could have been done? (by provider organisation)

	ALL	Further Education Colleges	Private Training Providers	Adult and Community Learning Organisations	Others
Ensure users of the qualifications (including employers, teachers and learners) are clear on the content and purpose of the Functional Skills maths qualification	8.6	8.5	8.8	8.6	8.7
CPD support to help boost teachers' confidence in the delivery/teaching of Functional Skills Maths	8.2	7.9	8.5	8.0	8.7
Amend the current subject content to ensure inclusion of all of these maths skills within the Functional Skills maths qualifications	8.0	7.9	7.7	8.0	8.4
Ensure greater emphasis is made, through assessment, of these specific skills within the Functional Skills maths qualifications	8.0	7.8	8.0	7.9	8.4
Help for teachers/tutors to embed functional maths skills in the wider curriculum	8.0	7.9	8.1	7.6	8.4
Increase guided learning hours (GLH) to allow more time for teaching of Functional Skills maths	8.0	8.2	7.4	8.2	7.9
A greater focus on work-related assessment scenarios	7.6	7.3	8.2	7.2	8.2

Table 19 English – what could be done? (by job role)

	ALL	Senior management, policy and curriculum leads	Subject leaders/ heads of department	Teachers and tutors	Others
Ensure users of the qualifications (including employers, teachers and learners) are clear on the content and purpose of the Functional Skills English qualification	8.8	8.6	8.9	8.8	9.1
CPD support to help boost teachers' confidence in the delivery/teaching of Functional Skills English	8.3	8.2	8.2	8.3	8.8
Help for teachers/tutors to embed functional English skills in the wider curriculum	8.2	8.2	8.5	8.1	8.4
Increase guided learning hours (GLH) to allow more time for teaching of Functional Skills English	8.1	7.9	8.1	8.3	7.6
Amend the current subject content to ensure inclusion of all of these English skills within the Functional Skills English qualifications	8.0	7.9	8.2	8.0	8.3
Ensure greater emphasis is made, through assessment, of these specific skills within the Functional Skills English qualifications	7.8	7.7	7.9	7.7	8.1
A greater focus on work-related assessment scenarios	7.7	7.7	7.9	7.5	8.1

Table 20 English – what could have been done? (by provider organisation)

	ALL	Further Education Colleges	Private Training Providers	Adult and Community Learning Organisations	Others
Ensure users of the qualifications (including employers, teachers and learners) are clear on the content and purpose of the Functional Skills English qualification	8.8	8.9	8.6	8.6	9.0
CPD support to help boost teachers' confidence in the delivery/teaching of Functional Skills English	8.3	8.2	8.7	8.0	8.3
Help for teachers/tutors to embed functional English skills in the wider curriculum	8.2	8.3	8.2	7.8	8.4
Increase guided learning hours (GLH) to allow more time for teaching of Functional Skills English	8.1	8.6	7.2	8.6	7.5
Amend the current subject content to ensure inclusion of all of these English skills within the Functional Skills English qualifications	8.0	8.1	7.7	8.1	8.0
Ensure greater emphasis is made, through assessment, of these specific skills within the Functional Skills English qualifications	7.8	7.8	7.6	7.9	7.7
A greater focus on work-related assessment scenarios	7.7	7.7	8.5	6.9	7.5

Figure 30 How oral communication skills should be best assessed within Functional Skills English (by provider organisation)
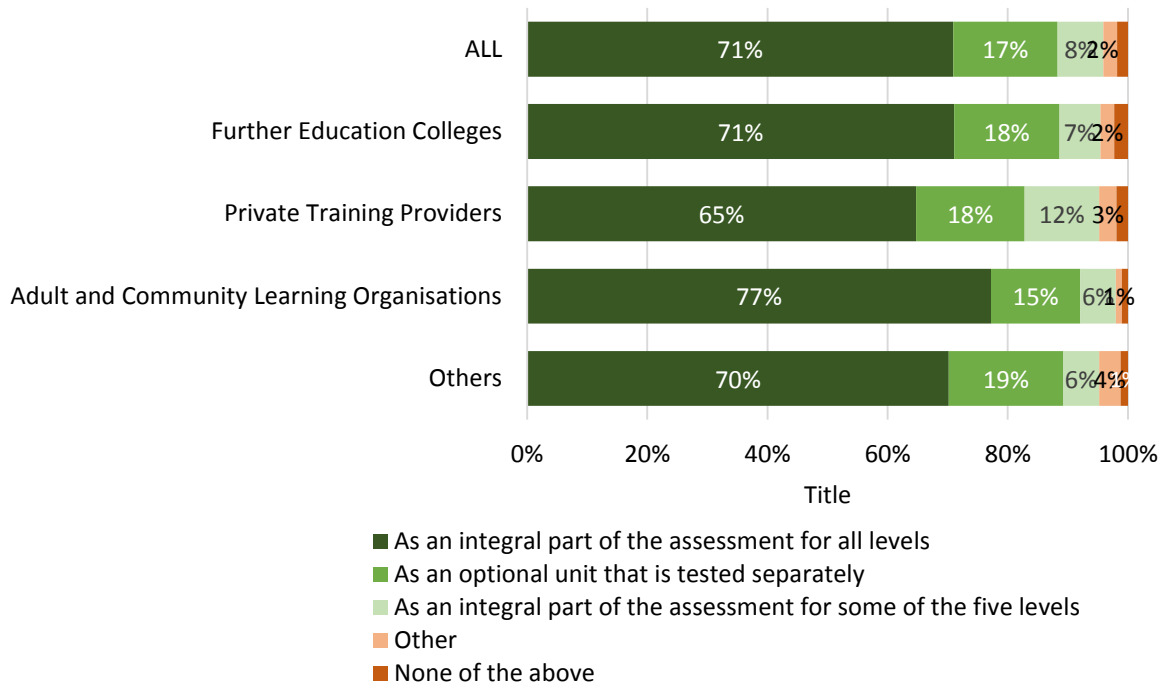
Table 21 Main motivations for learners undertaking Functional Skills qualifications (by job role)

	ALL	Senior management, policy and curriculum leads	Subject leaders/ heads of department	Teachers and tutors	Others
Requirement as part of an Apprenticeship, Study programme, or other education programme	24%	25%	24%	23%	28%
Requirement as part of the Condition of Funding (supporting progression towards GCSE A* - C)	13%	12%	16%	13%	13%
To gain a qualification to enhance employment opportunities	19%	18%	18%	19%	20%
To gain a level 2 in maths and English to qualify for higher level study, including level 3 Apprenticeships, Access to Higher Education or A levels	19%	19%	20%	20%	19%
Functional Skills are a natural progression from previous learning/experience	8%	10%	9%	8%	6%
Has completed ESOL qualifications and wishes to progress to further learning	8%	9%	8%	9%	5%
Is an ESOL learner and has been advised to complete Functional Skills instead of ESOL qualifications	6%	6%	6%	7%	6%
Other	2%	2%	1%	2%	4%

Table 22 Main motivations for learners undertaking Functional Skills qualifications (by provider organisation)

	ALL	Further Education Colleges	Private Training Providers	Adult and Community Learning Organisations	Others
Requirement as part of an Apprenticeship, Study programme, or other education programme	24%	24%	34%	16%	25%
To gain a level 2 in maths and English to qualify for higher level study, including level 3 Apprenticeships, Access to Higher Education or A levels	19%	19%	19%	19%	20%
To gain a qualification to enhance employment opportunities	19%	16%	21%	22%	20%
Requirement as part of the Condition of Funding (supporting progression towards GCSE A* - C)	13%	18%	13%	6%	11%
Has completed ESOL qualifications and wishes to progress to further learning	8%	8%	5%	12%	6%
Functional Skills are a natural progression from previous learning/experience	8%	7%	5%	12%	7%
Is an ESOL learner and has been advised to complete Functional Skills instead of ESOL qualifications	6%	6%	3%	9%	6%
Other	2%	1%	1%	3%	4%

Table 23 Main motivations for learners undertaking Functional Skills qualifications (maths/English specialists)

	ALL	Maths specialists	English specialists	Maths and English specialists
Requirement as part of an Apprenticeship, Study programme, or other education programme	24%	25%	22%	26%
To gain a level 2 in maths and English to qualify for higher level study, including level 3 Apprenticeships, Access to Higher Education or A levels	19%	21%	19%	18%
To gain a qualification to enhance employment opportunities	19%	20%	18%	19%
Requirement as part of the Condition of Funding (supporting progression towards GCSE A* - C)	13%	14%	12%	15%
Has completed ESOL qualifications and wishes to progress to further learning	8%	6%	10%	7%
Functional Skills are a natural progression from previous learning/experience	8%	8%	9%	8%
Is an ESOL learner and has been advised to complete Functional Skills instead of ESOL qualifications	6%	5%	8%	5%
Other	2%	3%	2%	2%

Table 24 Main benefits to learners of undertaking Functional Skills qualifications (by job role)

	ALL	Senior management, policy and curriculum leads	Subject leaders/ heads of department	Teachers and tutors	Others
Development of English skills	19%	19%	20%	18%	18%
Development of maths skills	18%	18%	20%	18%	19%
Improved confidence for life and work	18%	18%	17%	18%	17%
Progression to higher level learning	16%	17%	16%	16%	14%
Better understanding of the subjects(s)	15%	14%	14%	15%	13%
Improved CV	14%	13%	12%	14%	16%
Other	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%

Table 25 Main benefits to learners of undertaking Functional Skills qualifications (by provider organisation)

	ALL	Further Education Colleges	Private Training Providers	Adult and Community Learning Organisations	Others
Development of English skills	19%	19%	19%	18%	19%
Development of maths skills	18%	19%	19%	17%	18%
Improved confidence for life and work	18%	17%	18%	18%	18%
Progression to higher level learning	16%	18%	12%	17%	14%
Better understanding of the subjects(s)	15%	15%	16%	14%	14%
Improved CV	14%	13%	15%	14%	15%
Other	1%	1%	1%	2%	3%

Table 26 Main motivations for learners undertaking Functional Skills qualifications (maths/English specialists)

	ALL	Maths specialists	English specialists	Maths and English specialists
Development of English skills	19%	16%	20%	19%
Development of maths skills	18%	20%	16%	19%
Improved confidence for life and work	18%	17%	18%	18%
Progression to higher level learning	16%	16%	17%	15%
Better understanding of the subjects(s)	15%	16%	14%	14%
Improved CV	14%	14%	13%	14%
Other	1%	2%	1%	1%
Development of English skills	19%	16%	20%	19%

Table 27 Rating of own competence delivering Functional Skills maths (by job role)

	ALL	Senior management, policy and curriculum leads	Subject leaders/ heads of department	Teachers and tutors	Others
ENTRY LEVEL					
Subject knowledge	9.2	8.8	9.0	9.4	9.2
Understanding how to apply the (current) Functional Skills Criteria alongside subject knowledge?	8.7	8.3	8.5	8.9	9.0
Contextualising Functional Skills to vocational learning, life or the workplace?	8.3	7.8	8.2	8.5	8.7
LEVEL 1					
Subject knowledge	9.4	8.8	9.3	9.6	9.3
Understanding how to apply the (current) Functional Skills Criteria alongside subject knowledge?	8.8	8.3	8.6	9.0	9.0
Contextualising Functional Skills to vocational learning, life or the workplace?	8.5	7.8	8.5	8.6	8.9
LEVEL 2					
Subject knowledge	9.0	8.5	8.7	9.3	9.0
Understanding how to apply the (current) Functional Skills Criteria alongside subject knowledge?	8.6	8.0	8.1	8.8	8.9
Contextualising Functional Skills to vocational learning, life or the workplace?	8.3	7.5	7.9	8.5	8.7

Table 28 Rating of own competence delivering Functional Skills maths (by provider organisation)

	ALL	Further Education Colleges	Private Training Providers	Adult and Community Learning Organisations	Others
ENTRY LEVEL					
Subject knowledge	9.2	9.4	8.7	9.5	9.3
Understanding how to apply the (current) Functional Skills Criteria alongside subject knowledge?	8.7	8.3	8.5	8.9	9.0
Contextualising Functional Skills to vocational learning, life or the workplace?	8.3	7.8	8.2	8.5	8.7
LEVEL 1					
Subject knowledge	9.4	9.5	8.9	9.7	9.4
Understanding how to apply the (current) Functional Skills Criteria alongside subject knowledge?	8.8	8.9	8.6	8.9	8.8
Contextualising Functional Skills to vocational learning, life or the workplace?	8.5	8.4	8.4	8.7	8.5
LEVEL 2					
Subject knowledge	9.0	9.2	8.5	9.4	9.0
Understanding how to apply the (current) Functional Skills Criteria alongside subject knowledge?	8.6	8.7	8.2	8.7	8.6
Contextualising Functional Skills to vocational learning, life or the workplace?	8.3	8.2	8.1	8.6	8.3

Table 29 Rating of own competence delivering Functional Skills English (by job role)

	ALL	Senior management, policy and curriculum leads	Subject leaders/ heads of department	Teachers and tutors	Others
ENTRY LEVEL					
Subject knowledge	9.1	8.7	9.0	9.3	9.1
Understanding how to apply the (current) Functional Skills Criteria alongside subject knowledge?	8.7	8.3	8.5	8.9	9.0
Contextualising Functional Skills to vocational learning, life or the workplace?	8.3	7.8	8.2	8.5	8.7
LEVEL 1					
Subject knowledge	9.2	8.7	9.1	9.5	9.1
Understanding how to apply the (current) Functional Skills Criteria alongside subject knowledge?	8.7	8.3	8.8	8.9	9.0
Contextualising Functional Skills to vocational learning, life or the workplace?	8.5	7.9	8.7	8.6	8.8
LEVEL 2					
Subject knowledge	9.0	8.4	8.8	9.2	9.1
Understanding how to apply the (current) Functional Skills Criteria alongside subject knowledge?	8.5	7.9	8.4	8.6	8.8
Contextualising Functional Skills to vocational learning, life or the workplace?	8.4	7.6	8.6	8.5	8.7

Table 30 Rating of own competence delivering Functional Skills English (by provider organisation)

	ALL	Further Education Colleges	Private Training Providers	Adult and Community Learning Organisations	Others
ENTRY LEVEL					
Subject knowledge	9.1	9.3	8.5	9.2	9.2
Understanding how to apply the (current) Functional Skills Criteria alongside subject knowledge?	8.7	8.3	8.5	8.9	9.0
Contextualising Functional Skills to vocational learning, life or the workplace?	8.3	7.8	8.2	8.5	8.7
LEVEL 1					
Subject knowledge	9.2	9.4	8.9	9.3	9.2
Understanding how to apply the (current) Functional Skills Criteria alongside subject knowledge?	8.7	8.8	8.6	8.7	8.9
Contextualising Functional Skills to vocational learning, life or the workplace?	8.5	8.4	8.5	8.5	8.6
LEVEL 2					
Subject knowledge	9.0	9.1	8.7	9.0	9.1
Understanding how to apply the (current) Functional Skills Criteria alongside subject knowledge?	8.5	8.4	8.3	8.5	8.8
Contextualising Functional Skills to vocational learning, life or the workplace?	8.4	8.3	8.2	8.4	8.6