

GCSEs and A levels: the experiences of teachers, students, parents and the general public

Research Study Conducted for
The Qualifications & Curriculum Authority



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Introduction

In October 2005 MORI was commissioned by the Qualifications & Curriculum Authority (QCA) to carry out a fourth wave of research to assess teachers', parents', students' and the general public's perceptions of the A level and GCSE exam system.

This report presents the findings from the 2005 survey and compares it, where possible, with the findings from the three waves of research conducted in March and November 2003 and November 2004. In addition, the 2005 survey includes some new questions which will act as benchmarks for any future surveys that track changes in perceptions towards A level and GCSE examinations.

Background to the research

In the summer of 2002, it was widely reported that a number of students had not received the A level grades they deserved. The subsequent independent investigation recognised that there was a need to be much clearer about communicating how papers are marked and graded, as well as ensuring students, parents and teachers have the right level of information about the examinations system. In addition, it was also thought likely that confidence in the A level system had been adversely affected by the events of summer 2002.

MORI was commissioned to conduct the first wave of this research in March 2003 in order to provide a baseline measure of the public's, parents', students' and teachers' perceptions of the A level system. The findings from the initial survey indicated that events of summer 2002 had indeed damaged the standing of the A level exam, although there was next to no support for abandoning the qualification. The good news for QCA was that it appeared to be a trusted and credible source of information on exams.

Between the first and second waves of the research, QCA undertook an awareness-raising exercise in relation to the A level. This consisted of, among other initiatives, the publication of 'On the Level: the official guide to A levels' and the 'A level of Pride' campaign, launched in May 2003. Wave 2 of the research was commissioned in Autumn 2003 on conclusion of this awareness-raising exercise. Results from this second wave indicated that some confidence had been restored in the A level exam, and that the A level was widely believed to be an important qualification to obtain.

The 2004 A level examinations session was generally thought to be a successful one, and generated relatively little media attention. However, by September 2004 Mike Tomlinson's forthcoming review of the 14-19 curriculum had attracted media attention, particularly in the education press. Also in 2004, QCA undertook further work to increase understanding of, and confidence in, the A level system among students and teachers. This included publication of a straightforward information guide for students, made available via schools and colleges. The third wave of the research was conducted in the autumn term of 2004 and showed support for the continuation of the A level exam.

The 2005 survey, which this report focuses on, was also conducted in the autumn term. In 2005 the publication of the white paper on 14-19 Education and Skills led to increased attention on the ability of A levels to differentiate between students with the highest grades. In addition the A level guide and an additional guide to GCSEs were made available, although these were less well-publicised than in 2004. Also in 2005, A level results were made available to the media on the same day that students received their results, whereas in previous years the media received the results the day before they were given to students. This contributed to reduced media coverage of A level results.

Objectives of the research

The aim of all four waves of the research was to gain a greater insight into how teachers, students, parents and the general public perceive the A level examination system. In particular, the research looks at:

- the relevance of the information received on the A level examination and system;
- perceptions of the A level qualification;
- confidence in the exam system – both in its implementation and regulation; and
- teachers' awareness and ratings of the QCA's official guide to AS and A levels.

In addition, Wave 4 looked at:

- teachers' and the general public's awareness and attitudes to the GCSE examinations system.

It is important to bear in mind that most of the general public interviewed as part of this research has had no direct, *recent* experience of either the GCSE or A level exam. In addition, parents and students could only draw upon their own experience, which typically only related to one period in time. The majority of teachers, however, were able to reflect on their own experience of teaching with GCSE or A level exams over a period of some years; hence the following report focuses on this audience in the main.

Methodology

All four waves of the research were carried out using MORI's general public omnibus and a telephone survey amongst teachers. Details of the methodology used are as follows:

Wave 1

Representative samples of the following groups were interviewed between 20th February and 14th March 2003, specifically:

- 500 **teachers** of AS level, A level or Vocational A level in England; and
- 1,714 **members of the general public aged 15+** in England.

As there was a need within the scope of the general public research to examine the views of those directly involved in the A level system, the general public sample was boosted with extra interviews among:

- 92 **students** in England who are just about to take, are currently taking, or have recently taken, A levels; and
- 293 **parents** of children in England who are just about to take, are currently taking, or have recently taken, A levels.

Wave 2

A representative sample of teachers, the general public, parents and students were interviewed between 23rd October and 14th November 2003, specifically:

- 250 **teachers** of AS level, A level or Vocational A level in England;
- 1,766 **members of the general public aged 15+** in England;
- 119 **students** who are just about to take, are currently taking, or have recently taken, A levels; and
- 315 **parents** of children who are just about to take, are currently taking, or have recently taken, A levels.

Wave 3

A representative sample of teachers, the general public parents and students were interviewed between 13th September and 12th October 2004, specifically:

- 250 **teachers** of AS level, A level or Vocational A level in England;
- 1,720 **members of the general public aged 15+** in England;
- 80 **students** who are just about to take, are currently taking, or have recently taken, A levels; and
- 303 **parents** of children who are just about to take, are currently taking, or have recently taken, A levels.

Wave 4

A representative sample of teachers, the general public, parents and students were interviewed between 3rd and 25th November 2005, specifically:

- 504 **teachers** of AS level, A level or Vocational A level, GCSEs or Vocational GCSEs in England;
- 1,974 **members of the general public aged 15+** in England;
- 137 **students** who are just about to take, are currently taking, or have recently taken, A levels and/or GCSEs; and
- 346 **parents** of children who are just about to take, are currently taking, or have recently taken, A levels and/or GCSEs.

The questionnaire

Questionnaires for both the teachers' and the omnibus surveys were designed by MORI in consultation with the QCA.

The Wave 4 survey repeated many, but not all, of the questions asked in the previous three waves. One question was modified in Wave 4 in order to facilitate comparisons in the future (Q4 in the omnibus questionnaire). In addition, for the first time both the teachers and omnibus questionnaires included new questions on the GCSE examination system.

Fieldwork

Omnibus research

Fieldwork for the general public research was conducted face-to-face, in-home, using CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) on MORI's fortnightly Omnibus survey.

All data have been weighted to match the known population profile.

Teachers research

A telephone survey was conducted among teachers in schools and colleges across England. In Wave 1, 500 interviews were conducted, in Waves 2 and 3, 250 interviews were conducted and in Wave 4, 504 interviews were conducted.

For Wave 4 a fresh sample of 1,340 schools and 149 further education colleges were contacted. QCA provided the sample of schools, while the sample of further education colleges was provided by the Schools Government Publishing Company.

For the first three waves the interviews were carried out by MORI Telephone Surveys (MTS) using CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing). For Wave 4, the interviews were carried out by Facts International (a subcontractor to MTS), again using CATI.

All data entry, editing, validation and analysis was carried out by MTS' data processing unit according to specifications provided by MORI for Waves 1-3, while Facts International carried this out for Wave 4.

The data were weighted at the analysis stage to match the known regional profile of teachers in England.

Profile of respondents and timing of the survey

In any study where changes in opinion are being measured over time, it is important to ensure the research methodology is replicated (as has been the case for this study) and that the demographic profile of respondents does not alter significantly.

Looking at the sample of teachers who participated in the research, overall the profiles between Wave 1, Wave 2, Wave 3 and Wave 4 are similar, with the following exceptions:

- more teachers of GCSE, in addition to AS or A2 level, took part in Wave 2, in comparison to Wave 1;
- fewer Heads of Year or Course Leaders took part in the Wave 2 and 3 surveys than in the Wave 1 survey, but more classroom/ subject teachers/lecturers and members took part;
- more heads of department and heads/deputy heads of sixth form took part in the Wave 3 survey than in Waves 1 or 2;
- Fewer teachers who had been in teaching 1-5 years took part in the Wave 4 survey than in Wave 3;
- Fewer teachers from mainstream schools and more teachers from independent schools took part in the Wave 4 survey than in Wave 3.

With few exceptions the same schools/colleges participated in Waves 1 and 2 of the research. However, a 'fresh' sample of schools was used for Wave 3 and a fresh sample again was drawn for Wave 4.

The Omnibus respondent profiles are consistent across all four waves. A detailed profile of respondents can be found in the Appendices.

It is also important to bear in mind the timings of each wave of research when interpreting the results. The conditions for a tracking survey should be replicated as closely as possible in order for changes in data to be due to a real shift in opinion, and not due to differences in season, questionnaire content/wording, methodology or survey population. Wave 1 took place during the 2002/2003 academic year, well before the exam period started for 2003, and at a time when the problems of the previous summer were still in people's minds. The Wave 2 survey fieldwork was conducted in October, three months after the 2003 exam season, during the start of the 2003/2004 academic year. Wave 3 of the survey fieldwork took place shortly after the exam period had ended in September and Wave 4 took place later in the autumn term in November. As such respondents

to Wave 3 are likely to have a better recollection of the events of the exam period, and the associated media coverage, than respondents to the first two waves and Wave 4.

Interpretation of the data

When interpreting the findings, it is important to remember that the results are based on a sample of, rather than the entire total population of teachers, parents and students in England. Consequently, results are subject to sampling tolerances and not all differences between sub-groups are statistically significant. At the same time, it should be noted that statistically significant data need to be interpreted to see whether they make reasonable sense.

An approximate guide to the difference required between samples in Wave 1, Wave 2, Wave 3 and Wave 4 of the research to show significant changes in perceptions or attitudes is provided below:

- **For teachers:** a difference of between $\pm 6\%$ and $\pm 9\%$ is required between waves;
- **For the students:** a difference of between $\pm 12\%$ and $\pm 15\%$ is required between waves;
- **For parents:** a difference of up to $\pm 8\%$ is required between waves; and
- **For the general public:** a difference of up to $\pm 3\%$ is required between waves.

A more detailed table for statistical reliability is included in the Appendices.

Please note that caution should be exercised when comparing percentages derived from base sizes of 99 respondents or fewer, and particularly when comparing percentages derived from base sizes of 50 respondents or fewer. Therefore, much of the reporting that follows should be regarded as indicative.

*It should be noted that **not all questions included in the general public research were asked of all respondents.** Indeed most of the questions were asked **only** of parents and/or students.*

This report makes regular reference to the views of ‘students’ and ‘parents’. Unless otherwise indicated, these terms refer to students who are currently taking, have just taken or are about to take A levels and/or GCSEs, and parents of students in this position. Where ‘teachers of A levels’ or ‘teachers of GCSEs’ are referred to, this includes teachers in mainstream and independent schools, and lecturers in college, who are currently teaching AS or A2 level qualifications or vocational A levels or GCSEs and Vocational GCSEs.

Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is due to computer rounding, the exclusion of “don’t know” categories, or multiple responses. An asterisk (*) denotes a value of less than 0.5% but greater than zero.

Publication of the data

As with all our studies, these findings are subject to MORI’s standard Terms and Conditions of Contract. Any press release or publication of the findings of this research requires the advance approval of MORI. Such approval will only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misinterpretation of the findings.

Acknowledgements

MORI would like to thank Gillian Dyer and Jane Clarkson at QCA for all their assistance with this project. We would also like to thank members of the public, parents, students and teachers who gave up their time to participate in the research.

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Summary of Findings

- The level of support for the A level qualification remains high and unchanged since March 2003, despite frequent debates regarding the future of the A level exam and the potential impact of the 14-19 Specialised Diploma. Indeed, among A level students, there has been a significant decline in the proportion who believe A levels should be abolished (falling from 14% in 2004 to just three percent now).
- Confidence among teachers in the quality of the marking and grading of A level exams has also risen, now standing at its highest level since this survey began in March 2003. When teachers of A level exams are asked whether they have any concerns about the A level examination system, half as many A level teachers now say they are concerned about the marking and grading of A level exams this year. This mirrors findings in 2004. The *consistency* of marking and grading/changing standards has, however, emerged as an issue of concern among A level teachers this year.
- A level teachers' overall confidence in the A level system remains high (68%) and there is some indication that their confidence is strengthening. The proportion who *strongly* agree that they have confidence in the A level system has risen to almost a quarter this year (23%) after remaining stable year-on-year since the first survey in March 2003 (between 12% and 19%). However, when asked directly whether their confidence in the A level system has changed over the past year, the majority of A level teachers say it has remained the same. There has also been some growth in the public's confidence in the A level system in the last year. Sixteen percent of the general public, 20% of parents and 31% of students agree that they have more confidence in the A level system now than they had a year ago.
- As has been the case since the first wave of the survey, A level teachers continue to be highly critical of media coverage of the annual announcement of A level results. There is a high level of support among GCSE and A level teachers for releasing A level results to the media on the same day as students find out their grades, as happened for the first time this year. A level students themselves are, perhaps surprisingly, much less critical of the media's coverage than A level teachers.
- There has been an increase in confidence in the GCSE system over the past year among a small proportion of the general public (19%) and parents of GCSE students (26%), but more so among GCSE students (37%). Among GCSE teachers confidence in the GCSE system is high and significantly higher than the confidence of A level teachers in the A level system.

- The concerns of GCSE teachers in regards to exams are similar to those voiced by A level teachers. However, GCSE teachers do express a greater degree of concern about coursework allowing pupils to cheat. On the other hand, parents of GCSE students are less worried about the marking and grading of GCSE exams than parents of A level students and are instead more concerned about the amount of coursework.
- The QCA continues to be regarded as one of the most trusted sources of information about exams among teachers, parents and students. More teachers trust the QCA than the Department for Education and Skills or Local Education Authorities. A higher proportion of parents and students trust the QCA than the Government or the media as a source of information on exams.
- More than one third of GCSE and A level teachers have seen the official guides to GCSEs and A levels and both publications are viewed positively. However fewer than half of A level teachers say they have received information on a number of topics relating to A levels, including how to appeal and how the A level standard is set and maintained year-on-year. There has also been a significant drop in the proportion of A level teachers who say they have received information on how A levels are marked and graded. And while significant progress has been made since 2004 in increasing students' access to information about how A levels are marked and graded, the majority of parents continue to feel that they do not get sufficient information on this issue.

Perceptions of the A Level System

Continuing support for the A level qualification

The survey findings show that support for the A level as an important qualification to obtain is high and remains unchanged since the first wave of the research in 2003.

Looking first at the views of teachers of A levels, nearly all are in agreement that the A level is an important qualification to obtain (91%) and more than three-quarters (77%) believe it is more important now than ever that students get a higher level qualification such as an A level (as shown in Table A below)¹.

Table A: Teachers' perceptions of the A level

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	W4 vs. W1
	%	%	%	%	±%
<i>Overall, the A level is an important qualification for people to obtain</i>					
Agree	94	95	95	91	-3
Disagree	2	2	3	2	=
<i>It is more important now than ever that students get a higher level of educational qualification such as an A level</i>					
Agree	80	76	78	77	-3
Disagree	12	16	12	10	-2
<i>Base: All A Level Teachers</i>	(500)	(250)	(250)	(281)	

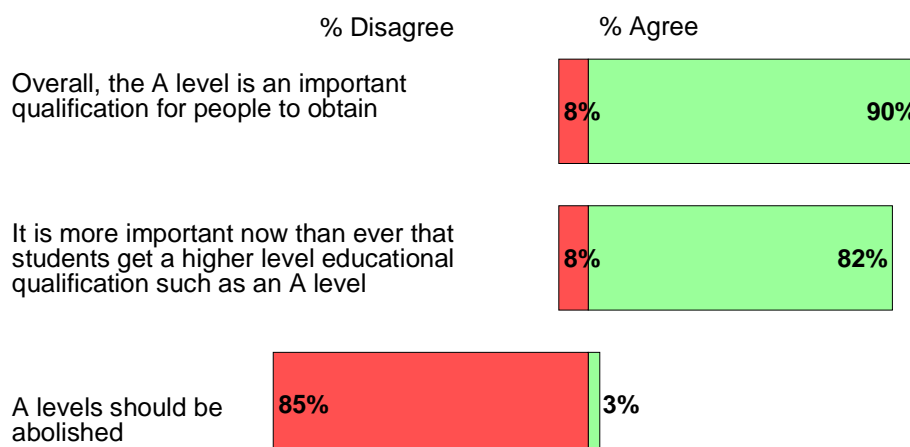
Source: MORI

Support is also very high amongst A level students: nearly all agree that the A level is an important qualification to obtain (90%), and four in five (82%) believe that it is more important now than ever that students get a higher educational qualification such as an A level. Furthermore, there has been a significant drop in the proportion of A level students who believe A levels should be abolished (falling from 14% in 2004 to three percent in 2005). This represents a significant shift in opinion following the steady rise in support for the abolition of A levels since 2003.

¹ The three percentage point drop in the levels of agreement over time is not statistically significant.

Students' perceptions of the A level

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Base: All A level students (73), November 2005

Source: MORI

Table B: Students' perceptions of the A level

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	W4 vs. W1
	%	%	%	%	±%
<i>Overall the A level is an important qualification for people to obtain</i>					
Agree	85	82	88	90	+5
Disagree	8	4	5	8	=
<i>It is more important now than ever that students get a higher level of educational qualification such as an A level</i>					
Agree	82	80	80	82	=
Disagree	4	9	6	8	+4
<i>A levels should be abolished</i>					
Agree	4	11	14	3	-1
Disagree	76	74	75	85	+9 ²
<i>Base: All A level Students</i>	(92)	(119)	(80)	(73)	

Source: MORI

It is interesting to note here that some media commentary since publication of the report by the working group on 14-19 reform in 2004 has presented the

² This increase is not statistically significant. Please refer to Page 7 of this report and the Appendices for more information on the percentage difference required to show significant changes in opinion.

development of diplomas as signalling the end of A levels, but this clearly conflicts with the views of both teachers and students.

The impact of the 14–19 Specialised Diploma

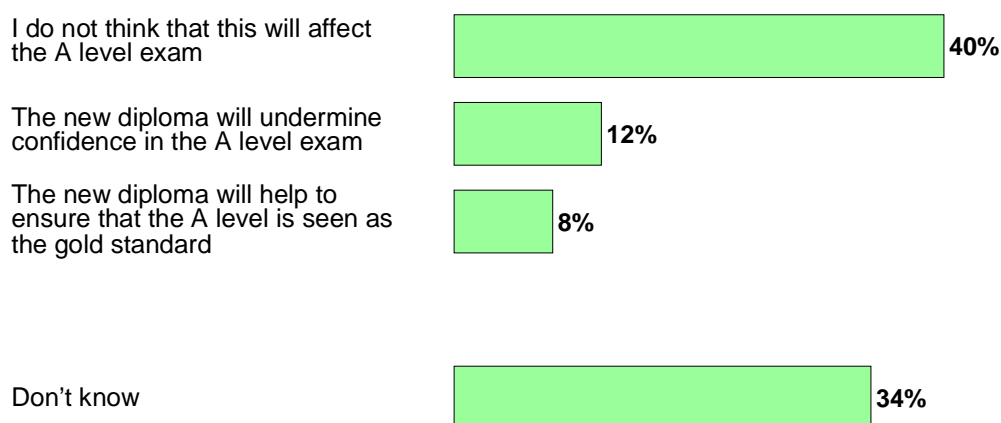
The Government's plans for delivery of 14-19 education were published in February 2005. The biggest change proposed in the White Paper was the introduction of specialised diplomas. QCA was therefore keen to ask teachers, via this survey, about their views on these plans and specifically the Specialised Diploma.

It is clear that many teachers are unsure about the potential impact of the Specialised Diploma on the A level exam: more than one third (34%) express uncertainty in this regard. However, the majority do give a response, with two-fifths (40%) saying that this new qualification will not have any effect on the A level exam.

Only one in ten (12%) believe the Specialised Diploma will undermine confidence in the A level. A view that is more commonly held by teachers from independent schools and lecturers from further education institutions (20% and 17%), than by teachers from secondary maintained schools (6%).

Impact of the 14-19 Specialised Diploma

Q How do you think the introduction of this Specialised Diploma will affect the status of the A level exam, if at all?



* Answers over 5% shown

Base: All teachers (504), November 2005

Source: MORI

Are A level students hard-working?

The view of teachers

As shown in Table C below, three-quarters of A level teachers (75%) believe that most A level students are hard-working. Only 13% disagree with this statement, although this figure rises to 17% of lecturers who work in further education colleges.

Table C: Teachers' perceptions of students³

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	W4 vs. W1
	%	%	%	%	±%
<i>Most students taking A levels work hard</i>					
Strongly agree	20	24	27	29	+9
Tend to agree	53	49	49	45	-8
Neither agree nor disagree	9	15	11	12	+3
Tend to disagree	15	10	12	11	-4
Strongly disagree	2	2	2	3	+1
Agree	73	73	76	75	+2
Disagree	17	12	14	13	-4
<i>Base: All A Level Teachers</i>	(500)	(250)	(250)	(281)	

Source: MORI

Fewer, however, believe that A level students work harder today than ever before (45%), as shown in Table D below. A finding that is not new to 2005, but has been consistent since the research was first conducted in 2003. However, the proportion of teachers who are 'sitting on the fence' in regards to whether A level students now work harder than ever before has increased since 2003, from 12% to 24%.

³ Significant differences are shown in bold.

Table D: Teachers' perceptions of students⁴

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	W4 vs. W1
	%	%	%	%	±%
<i>A level students work harder today than ever before</i>					
Strongly agree	20	18	16	21	+1
Tend to agree	29	25	28	23	-6
Neither agree nor disagree	12	19	24	24	+12
Tend to disagree	27	26	21	23	-4
Strongly disagree	9	9	10	7	-2
Don't know	3	3	2	2	-1
Agree	49	43	44	45	-4
Disagree	36	35	31	30	-6
<i>Base: All A Level Teachers</i>	(500)	(250)	(250)	(281)	

Source: MORI

The view of the general public, parents and students

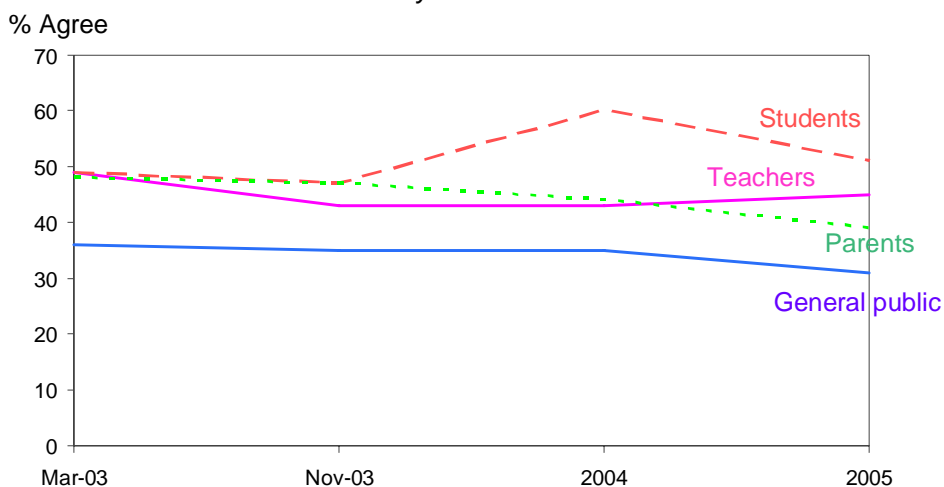
In 2005 the general public appeared less likely to believe that A level students work hard than when asked this question in previous years; dropping from 36% in 2004 to 31% in 2005. Indeed the general public have always been less likely than parents, students or teachers to perceive A level students as hard-working. However, it is important to remember that the general public on the whole are less likely to have had recent experience, or in-depth knowledge, of A level exams compared with A level teachers, A level students or parents of A level students.

A level students and parents of A level students, as in previous years, are more likely to feel that A level students are working harder today than ever before (51% and 39% respectively). The downward trend since 2004 in the proportion of students and parents who agree with this statement (as shown in the chart below) does not represent a statistically significant decrease due to the small number of each group who were interviewed in the survey.

⁴ Significant differences are shown in bold.

Perceptions of how hard A level students are working

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
'A level students work harder today than ever before'



Base: Wave 4, All general public (1,974), A level parents (273), students (73) and teachers (281), November 2005
Wave 3, All general public (1,720), A level parents (303), students (80) and teachers (250), September 2004
Wave 2, All general public (1,766), A level parents (315), students (119) and teachers (250), November 2003
Wave 1, All general public (1,714), A level parents (293), students (92) and teachers (500), March 2003 Source: MORI

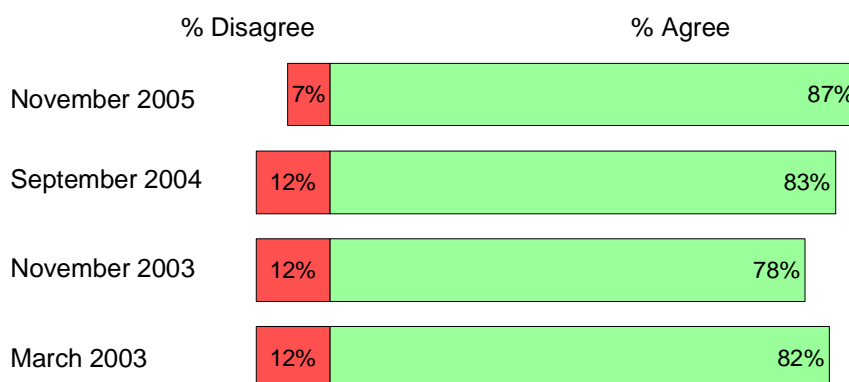
A level grading and performance

Increasing confidence in A level grading among teachers

Confidence among A level teachers in the quality of A level examination grading has risen to its highest level since the survey began in March 2003. Now almost nine in ten A level teachers (87%) say that students get the grade their performance deserves, which represents a significant increase since November 2003 when just three-quarters of A level teachers (78%) believed this to be the case.

A level grading and performance

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
'Most students taking A levels get the grade their performance deserves'



Base: All A level teachers (Nov 2005 = 281, Sept 2004 = 250, Nov 2003 = 250, March 2003 = 500)

Source: MORI

However there are notable differences between school type: A level teachers in maintained secondary schools are more likely to feel that students get the grades their performance deserves (92%) than those in independent schools (79%).

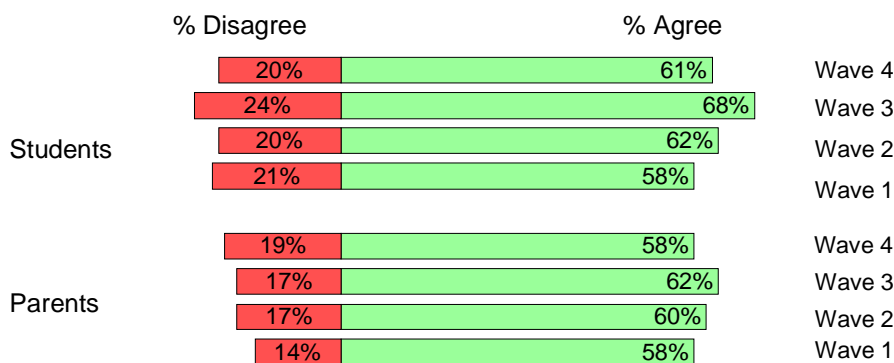
Public confidence in quality of A level grading unchanged

Half of the general public (49%) believe that A level students get the grade their performance deserves, which is in line with 2004 (52%). However, 33% are unable to give an opinion either way (19% say they neither agree nor disagree and 14% say they simply do not know). This probably reflects their low level of awareness and experience of A levels, compared to teachers, students and parents.

Confidence in the quality of A level examination grading is higher among parents and students, but is also unchanged since 2004 (58% and 61% respectively) as shown in the chart below.

A level grading and performance

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
'Most students taking A levels get the grade their performance deserves'



Base: Wave 4, All parents (346) and students (137), November 2005
Wave 3, All parents (303) and students (80), September 2004
Wave 2, All parents (315) and students (119), November 2003
Wave 1, All parents (293) and students (92), March 2003

Source: MORI

A level teachers' concerns

A quarter of A level teachers (25%) say that they *do not* have any concerns about the current A level exam system, thereby suggesting that concern about the entire A level system has reduced since the first wave of the research in 2003. However, it should be noted that this drop in concern is just indicative and not a statistically significant difference.

Of the three-quarters (74%) of A level teachers who do have concerns, worries about the number of exams (13%) has replaced incorrect grading (11%) as the most frequently cited concern. Indeed, half as many teachers are concerned about the marking and grading of A level exams this year, as was the case in 2004 (21%). Teachers from independent schools are more likely to cite concerns about

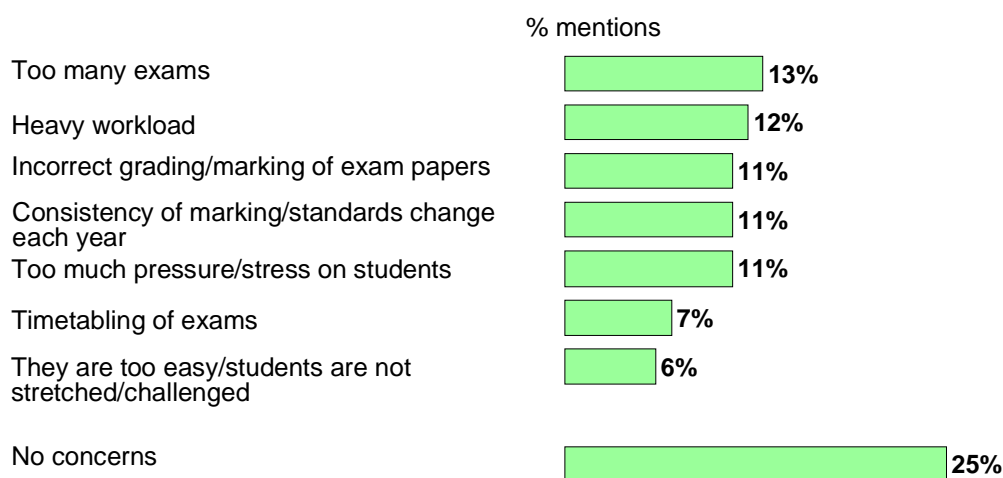
too many exams than their colleagues in further education institutions (19% compared with seven percent).

However, teachers are perhaps more concerned this year about the *consistency* of marking and changing standards year-on-year (cited by 11% of teachers in 2005), which was not mentioned as a concern in 2004.

The poor continuity between GCSE and A/AS level is less of a concern to A level teachers this year (mentioned by two percent) than in 2004 (mentioned by 10%) as is declining standards (cited by just one percent in 2005, compared with nine percent in 2004).

Teachers' concerns about the A level system

Q Do you have any concerns about the current A level examinations system?



* Only answers 5% or over shown

Base: All A level teachers (281), November 2005

Source: MORI

Looking at school type, some further interesting differences emerge:

- teachers from secondary maintained schools are four times more likely to be concerned about *too much pressure/stress on students* than their counterparts in further education institutions (15% compared with four percent); and
- teachers from independent schools are seven times more likely to say that the *exams are too easy/students are not tested or challenged* than their colleagues in secondary maintained schools (15% compared with two percent).

Parents' concerns, according to teachers

More than half of A level teachers (57%) say parents have *never* voiced concerns to them about the A level system, which is unchanged from last year. However, this represents a significant - and very encouraging - increase since the first wave

of the survey in March 2003 when only around a quarter of teachers (28%) reported that parents had *never* voiced concerns to them.

Those parents who do have concerns, however, voice concerns that are largely the same now as in 2004. The marking and grading of A level exams is still the most frequently mentioned worry (13%), although this is mentioned by significantly fewer parents this year than in March 2003 (32%). Other parental concerns include the time-consuming nature of the work (11%) and the pressure/stress on students (six percent), as shown in the table below.

Table E: Parents' concerns, according to teachers

NB: Table shows concerns mentioned by 3% or more in W4	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4
	%	%	%	%
Problems about how exams are graded and marked	32	19	12	13
How time-consuming the work is for students	10	12	14	11
Too much pressure/stress on children	5	10	-	6
Don't understand the format/how the system works	-	5	4	4
A levels being unfair	5	1	*	4
Too many exams	8	22	-	4
Dealing with their children's concerns about whether they will get good results or not	4	1	4	3
Negative publicity/affected by media interest/they read in the press that standards are slipping	2	-	2	3
Other	8	5	4	4
No, never voice concerns	28	35	57	57
Don't know	*	*	*	-
<i>Base: All A level Teachers</i>	(500)	(250)	(250)	(281)

Source: MORI

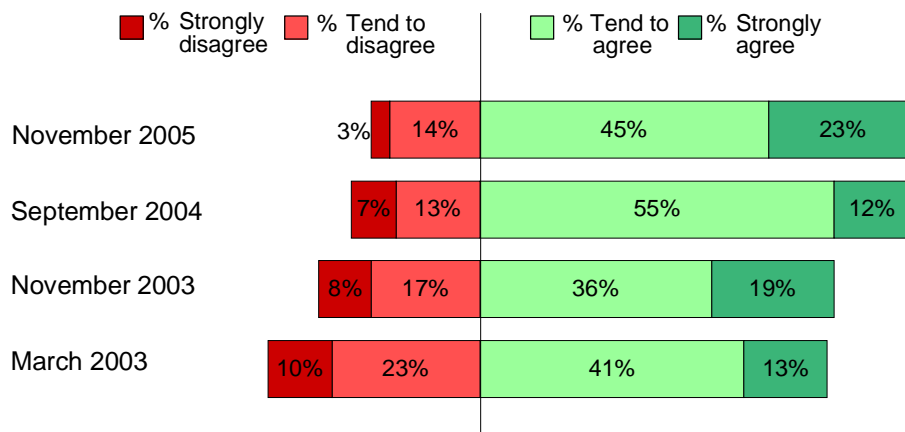
Teachers' confidence in the A level system

A level teachers' confidence in the A level system is as high this year (68%) as it was in 2004 (67%), as shown in the chart below. However, this overall 'agree' figure of 68% does not provide the full picture: looking back at previous waves of the research we can see that the proportion of A level teachers who "strongly agree" that they have confidence in the A level system remained consistent between March 2003 and September 2004. This year, however, the proportion of A level teachers who "strongly agree" has increased to almost a quarter (23%), suggesting that A level teachers' confidence in the A level system may have strengthened over the past year.

However, A level teachers working in independent schools (49%) are less likely to agree that they have confidence in the A level system compared to their colleagues in maintained schools (72%) or further education institutions (79%).

Teachers' confidence in the A level system

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? 'I have confidence in the A level system'



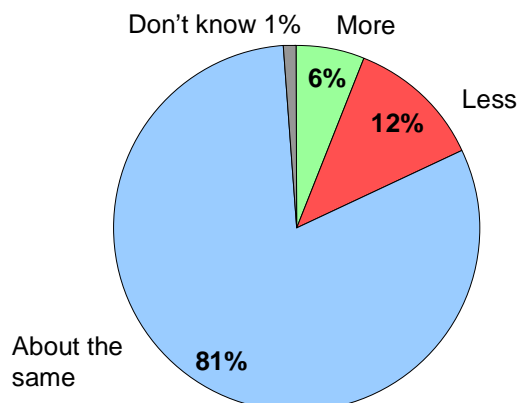
Base: All A level teachers (Nov 2005 = 281, Sept 2004 = 250, Nov 2003 = 250, March 2003 = 500)

Source: MORI

When asked directly whether their confidence in the A level system has grown over the last year, for a small proportion of A level teachers it has (six percent). However, for the majority of teachers it has remained the same (81%), suggesting that A levels teachers' confidence in the A level system is largely unchanged in 2005.

Teachers' confidence in the A level system compared to last year

Q Compared to last year, would you say that currently you have more confidence in the A level system, less confidence in the A level system or about the same level of confidence?



Base: All A level teachers (281), November 2005

Source: MORI

Public confidence in the A level system

There has been some growth in public confidence in the A level system in the last year, with one in six members of the general public (16%) saying they have more confidence in the A level system than they had a year ago. However, the majority of people have no opinion either way (36%) or say they disagree (32%)⁵.

As shown in the table below, students⁶ (31%) and parents⁷ (20%) are more likely to agree that their confidence in the A level system has grown over the past year than the general public (16%). However, as is the case among the general public, the proportion of A level students⁸ and parents of A level students⁹ who say they have more confidence in the A level system is the same as in 2004, suggesting that confidence has grown at a similar rate as in the previous year¹⁰.

⁵ People who say they disagree when asked whether they have more confidence in the A level system now than a year ago, are not necessarily saying that they have *less* confidence now. What it does mean is that, for most people, confidence in the A level system has not increased over the past year.

⁶ Where references are made to 'students' this includes all students who are taking, have taken in the last two years, or intend to take, GCSEs or A level exams.

⁷ Where references are made to 'parents' this includes all parents of students who are taking, have taken in the last two years, or intend to take, GCSEs or A level exams.

⁸ Where references are made to 'A level students' this includes all students who are taking, have taken in the last two years, or intend to take, A level exams.

⁹ Where references are made to 'parents of A level students' this includes all parents of students who are taking, have taken in the last two years, or intend to take, A level exams.

¹⁰ Waves 1 and 2 of this research project, in March and November 2003 respectively, asked whether people had *less* confidence in the A level system than they did one year ago, whereas the third and current waves ask whether people have *more* confidence now in the A level system than they did one year ago. This change in question wording was perceived beneficial with a view to future tracking of perceptions of A levels, as interpretation of a positive statement is more straightforward than that of a negative statement.

Table F: Confidence in the A level system

	A level and GCSE students	A level and GCSE parents	General public
	%	%	%
<i>I have more confidence in the A level system now than I did have one year ago</i>			
Strongly agree	6	4	2
Tend to agree	25	17	14
Neither agree nor disagree	29	38	36
Tend to disagree	23	23	24
Strongly disagree	6	9	8
Don't know	11	10	16
Agree	31	20	16
Disagree	29	32	32
<i>Base:</i>	<i>(137)</i>	<i>(346)</i>	<i>(1,974)</i>

Source: MORI

The media's reporting of A level results

A level teachers are highly critical of the media's coverage of the announcement of A level results, with more than four in five stating that they find it unhelpful (86%). This has been the case since 2003, although the strength of agreement appears to have grown since the first wave of the survey; 58% 'strongly agreed' in March 2003 compared with 70% in 2005, as show in the table below.

Table G: Teachers' perceptions of media coverage¹¹

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	W4 vs. W1
	%	%	%	%	±%
<i>I find the media's coverage of the announcement of the A level results each year unhelpful</i>					
Strongly agree	58	65	70	70	+12
Tend to agree	26	23	19	16	-10
Neither agree nor disagree	6	5	4	5	-1
Tend to disagree	8	3	4	5	-3
Strongly disagree	2	2	2	3	+1
Don't know	1	*	*	*	_*
Agree	84	88	89	86	+2
Disagree	10	5	6	8	-2
<i>Base: All A Level Teachers</i>	<i>(500)</i>	<i>(250)</i>	<i>(250)</i>	<i>(281)</i>	

Source: MORI

More experienced teachers are more likely to argue the media's coverage is unhelpful than their less experienced colleagues (89% of teachers with more than 25 years experience agree it is unhelpful, compared with 71% of those with less than five years experience).

Students are perhaps surprisingly much less likely to be critical with only just over a quarter (27%) saying they find the media's coverage upsetting, although more than a third have no opinion either way (36%). The pattern of opinion has remained unchanged over the four waves of the research, as show in Table H below.

¹¹ Significant differences are shown in bold.

Table H: Students' perceptions of media coverage

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	W4 vs. W1
	%	%	%	%	±%
<i>I find the media's coverage of the announcement of the A level results each year upsetting</i>					
Strongly agree	10	7	15	8	-2
Tend to agree	30	29	21	19	-11 ¹²
Neither agree nor disagree	29	32	35	36	+7
Tend to disagree	23	24	21	27	+4
Strongly disagree	4	3	4	8	+4
Don't know	3	6	4	1	-2
Agree	40	36	36	27	-13 ¹²
Disagree	27	27	25	36	+9 ¹²
<i>Base: All A Level Students</i>	<i>(92)</i>	<i>(119)</i>	<i>(80)</i>	<i>(73)</i>	

Source: MORI

When should the media get information on A level results?

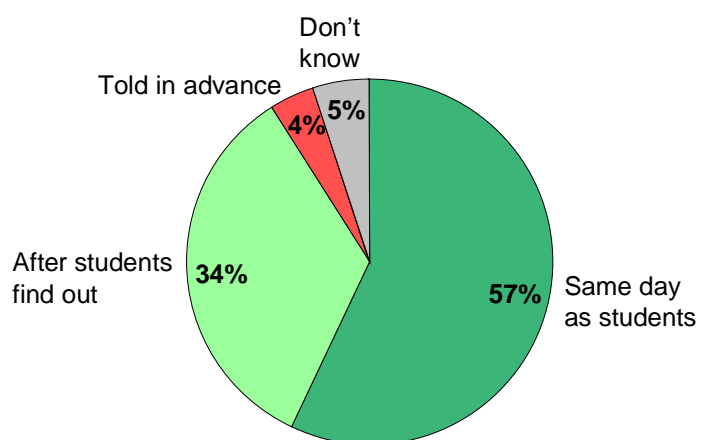
The majority of teachers (57%) are in favour of the releasing A level results to the media on the same day as students find out their grades, as happened for the first time this year. Those in secondary maintained schools or further education institutions are more likely to prefer this option than their colleagues in independent schools (60% and 62% respectively, compared with 48%).

That said it is important to note that a third (34%) think the media should be told *after* students get their results. Just four percent of teachers would like to see a return to the old system of informing the media of A level results before students find out their results, as shown in the chart overleaf.

¹² These changes are not statistically significant. Please refer to Page 7 of this report and the appendices for more information on the percentage difference required to show significant changes in opinion.

When should the media get information on A level results?

Q In your view do you think that the media should be pre-warned about A level results or should they be told on the same day as the results are available to students?



Base: All teachers (504), November 2005

Source: MORI

Perceptions of the GCSE System

For the first time this year, we asked teachers and the general public about their awareness of and attitudes towards the GCSE examinations system.

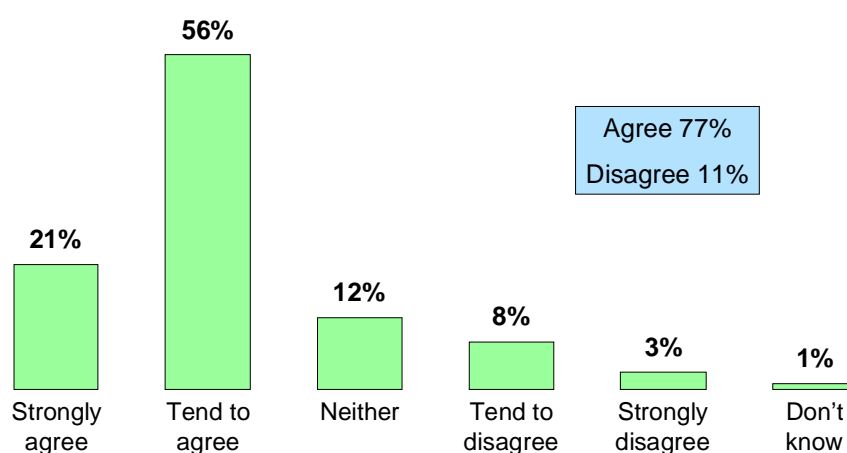
Teachers' confidence in the GCSE system

Confidence in the GCSE system among GCSE teachers is high (77%) and significantly higher than A level teachers' confidence in the A level system (68%). This difference may be explained by the fact that there has recently been a lot of debate around the future of the A level, more so than the GCSE exam.

Teachers from secondary maintained schools are more likely to have confidence in the system than their counterparts in independent schools (80%, compared with 70%). Just one in ten teachers do not have confidence in the GCSE system (11%) with those teachers with up to 15 years in the profession more likely not to have confidence than those with over 25 years experience (15% compared with six percent).

Teachers' confidence in GCSE system

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
'I have confidence in the GCSE system'



Base: All GCSE teachers (414), November 2005

Source: MORI

Public confidence in the GCSE system

As the chart below shows, GCSE students¹³ (37%) and parents of GCSE students¹⁴ (26%) are more likely to say their confidence in the GCSE system has grown over the last year, than the general public as a whole. Only one in five members of the general public (19%) agrees that they now have more confidence

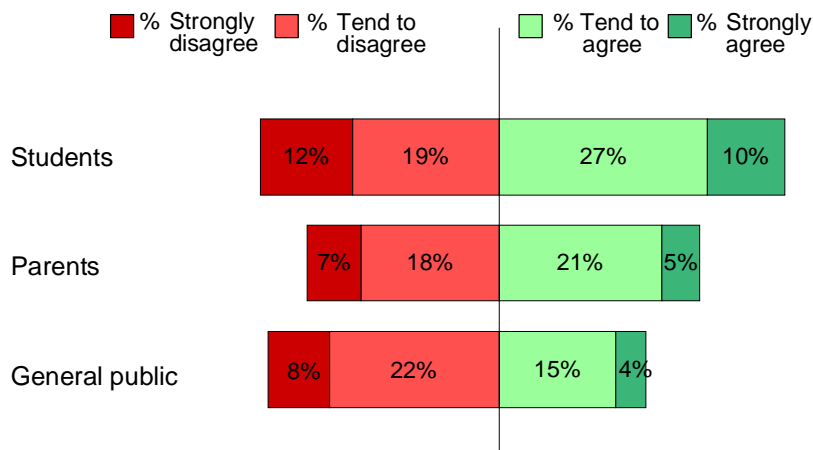
¹³ Where references are made to 'GCSE students' this includes all students who are currently taking or have taken a GCSE exam in the last two years.

¹⁴ Where references are made to 'parents of GCSE students' this includes all parents of students who are currently taking or have taken a GCSE exam in the last two years.

in the GCSE system than a year ago. However, for the majority their views have either not changed (30% disagree), or they are unsure either way (37% neither agree nor disagree).

Confidence in GCSE system

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
 'I have more confidence in the GCSE system now than I did have one year ago'



Base: All general public (1,974), GCSE parents (262) and GCSE students (84), November 2005

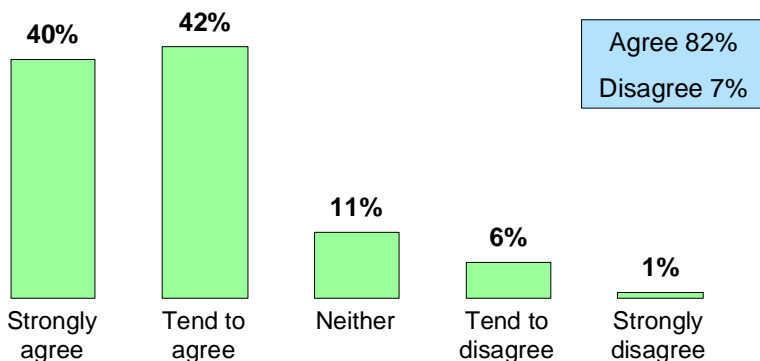
Source: MORI

Support for GCSEs among students

Support for the GCSE qualification among GCSE students is high; over four in five (82%) agree that the GCSE is an important qualification to obtain.

Students' perception of the GCSE

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
 'Overall, the GCSE is an important qualification for people to obtain'



Base: All GCSE students (84), November 2005

Source: MORI

Teachers' concerns about GCSE exams

While confidence in the GCSE system is higher than in the A level system, more than two-thirds of GCSE teachers (69%) have concerns about the GCSE

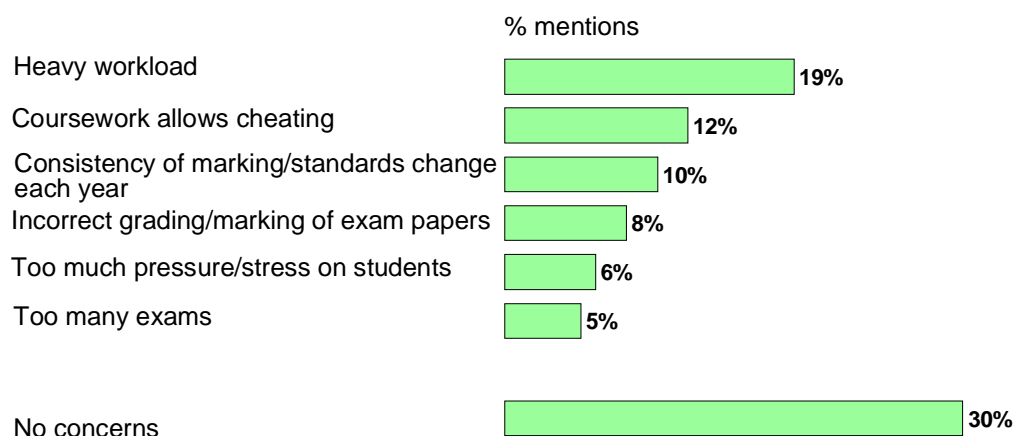
examinations system. This is similar to the proportion of A level teachers who have concerns about the A level system (74%).

The most frequently mentioned concerns about the GCSE system are the heavy workload (19%), the worry that coursework allows cheating (12%) and the consistency of marking and changing standards year-on-year (10%).

The most frequently cited concerns are similar to those mentioned by A level teachers, although interestingly, GCSE teachers are more concerned that coursework allows cheating (mentioned by 12%) than their A level counterparts (mentioned by just four percent). GCSE teachers are also as likely to be concerned about incorrect grading and marking of exams (cited by eight percent) as A level teachers (cited by 11%).

Teachers' concerns about the GCSE system

Q Do you have any concerns about the current GCSE examinations system?



* Only answers 5% or over shown

Base: All GCSE teachers (414), November 2005

Source: MORI

Teachers with up to 15 years of teaching experience are less likely than those with over 25 years experience to cite both *heavy workload* (14% compared with 26%) and that *coursework allows cheating* (8% compared with 17%) as concerns. In addition, teachers from further education institutions are more likely than GCSE teachers overall to feel concerned over a *heavy workload* for students (7% compared with 19%).

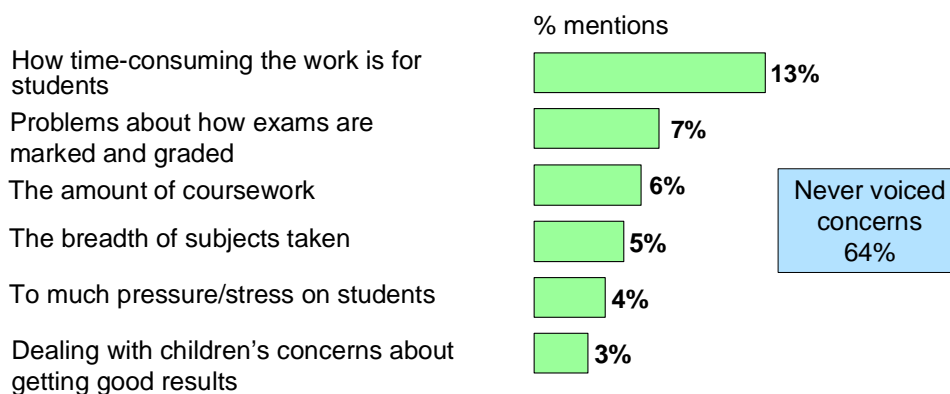
Parents' concerns according to teachers

Just over a third of teachers (35%) say that parents have voiced concerns to them about the GCSE exam system. The most frequently cited parental concerns are how time-consuming the work is for students (13%), problems about how exams are marked and graded (seven percent) and the amount of coursework (six percent).

Whilst how time-consuming exam work is for students is also the most frequently cited parental concern by A level teachers, there are some differences in the concerns of parents of GCSE students, compared with parents of A level students. Parents of GCSE students are less likely to be worried about how exams are marked and graded (mentioned by seven percent), than parents of A level students (13%). On the other hand, parents of GCSE students are more worried about the amount of coursework (mentioned by six percent) than parents of A level students (mentioned by two percent).

Parents' concerns about the GCSE system

Q Have parents ever voiced concerns about the GCSE system to you, and if so, what are their main concerns?



*Only answers 3% or over shown

Base: All GCSE teachers (414), November 2005

Source: MORI

Information

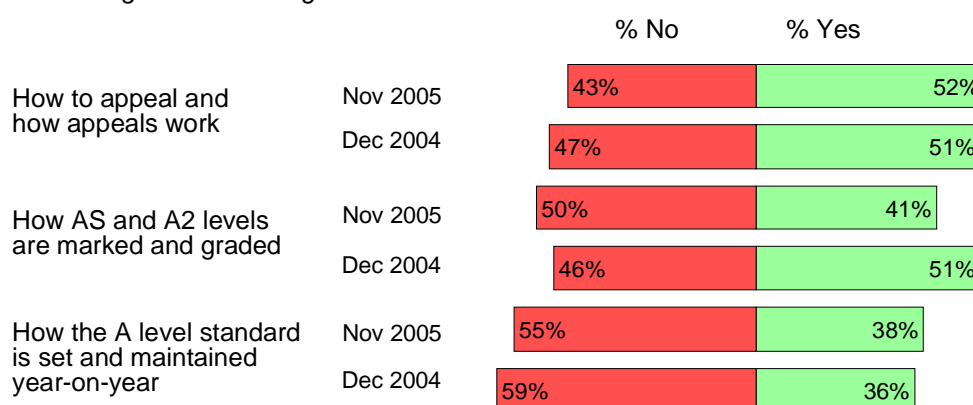
Information on exams for teachers

Half of all teachers (52%) have received information on how to appeal and how appeals work, and two-fifths (38%) have received information on how the A level standard is set and maintained year-on-year, both in line with 2004.

However, there has been a fall in the number of teachers who recollect receiving information on how AS and A2 levels are marked and graded (41%), compared with last year (51%).

Information from the QCA

Q Can you tell me whether you have ever received information from the QCA relating to the following issues?



Base: All A level teachers (281), November 2005

Source: MORI

As was found last year, teachers who are new to the profession appear less likely to receive any of these sources of information than their more experienced colleagues, as shown in Table I below. Similarly, teachers in further education institutions are also less likely to recall receiving this information from the QCA, as shown in the Table J below.

Table I: Information from QCA by years' teaching experience

<i>Base: All A Level Teachers (281)</i>	<5 yrs	6-15 yrs	16-25 yrs	25+ yrs
	%	%	%	%
<i>How to appeal and how appeals work</i>				
Yes	29	51	52	60
No	69	47	36	35
<i>How AS and A2 levels are marked and graded</i>				
Yes	22	33	54	44
No	72	60	30	49
<i>How the A level standard is set and maintained year-on-year</i>				
Yes	22	38	41	42
No	78	58	44	53

*Source: MORI***Table J: Information from QCA by institution type**

<i>Base: All A Level Teachers (281)</i>	Secondary maintained	Independent	FE/FHE
	%	%	%
<i>How to appeal and how appeals work</i>			
Yes	54	66	32
No	42	28	60
<i>How AS and A2 levels are marked and graded</i>			
Yes	44	48	27
No	49	42	60
<i>How the A level standard is set and maintained year-on-year</i>			
Yes	42	41	28
No	54	44	67

Source: MORI

The official guides to A levels and GCSEs

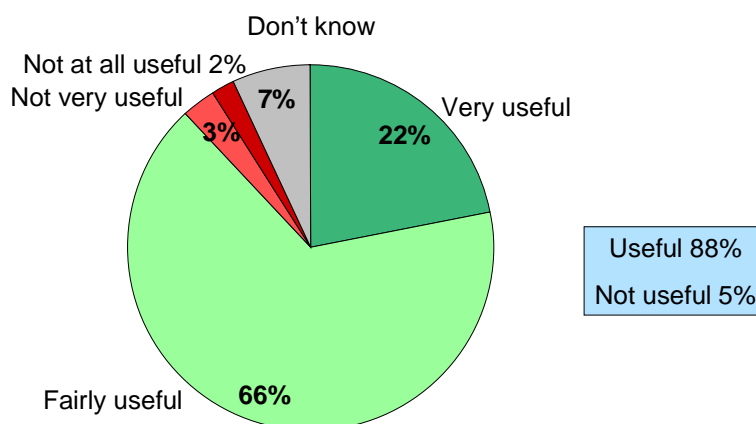
A third of A level teachers have seen the official guide to A levels (34%), which is the same proportion as in 2004 (37%). Classroom or subject teachers/lecturers are, however, less likely to have seen the publication (70%, say they have not seen

it, compared with 59% of teachers overall) suggesting that the guide is not being passed down to more junior members of staff.

However, among teachers who have actually seen the publication, the majority (88%) find it useful, although just one in five (22%) find it *very* useful.

Usefulness of official guide to AS and A levels

Q Having seen the official guide to AS and A levels, would you say that it is very useful, fairly useful, not very useful or not at all useful?



Base: All A level teachers who have seen the official guide to AS and A levels (93), November 2005

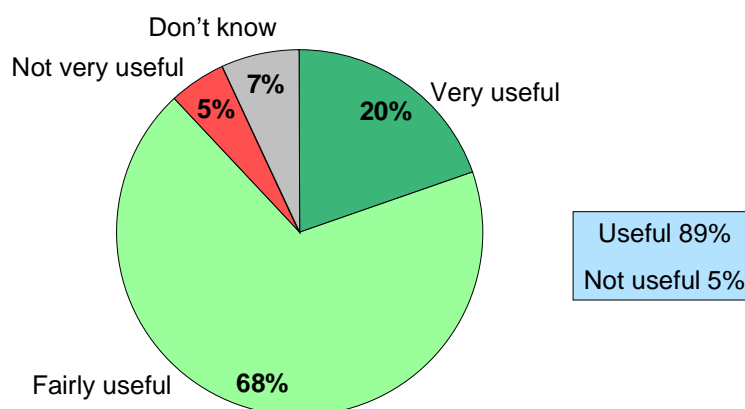
Source: MORI

Fewer than a third of GCSE teachers (30%) have seen the official guide to GCSEs. Interestingly, teachers who have confidence in the GCSE system are almost three times more likely to have seen the publication than teachers who do not have confidence in the GCSE system (33% compared with 12%).

As with the A level guide, the vast majority of GCSE teachers who have seen the guide rate it highly. Almost all find it useful (89%), although the proportion who find it *very* useful is comparatively low (20%).

Usefulness of official guide to GCSEs

Q Having seen the official guide to GCSEs, would you say that it is very useful, fairly useful, not very useful or not at all useful?



Base: All GCSE teachers who have seen the official guide to GCSEs (125), November 2005

Source: MORI

Information on exams for parents and students

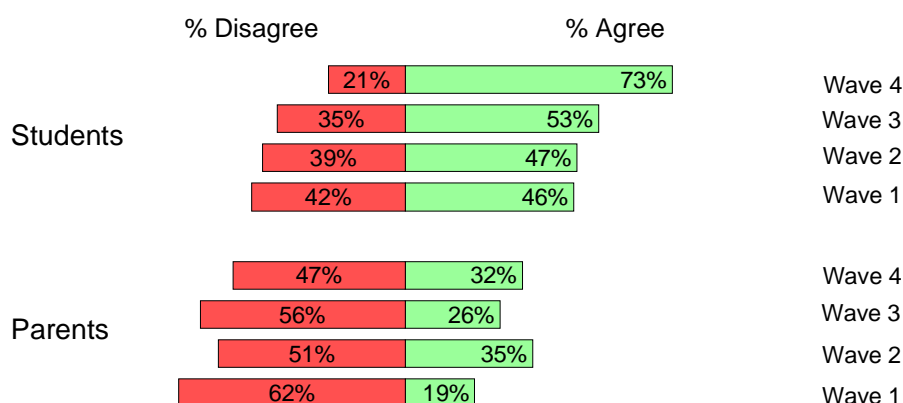
The findings indicate that progress has been made since 2004 in increasing students' access to information on A levels. Whereas just over half of A level students in 2004 (53%) felt they had enough information on the marking and grading of A levels, now almost three-quarters feel sufficiently informed (73%).¹⁵

A third of parents (32%) agree that they have all the information they need about how A levels are marked and graded, which demonstrates significant progress since 2003 when just one in five parents felt sufficiently informed (19%).

¹⁵ Please note that in 2005 the wording of this question was changed from "I have **all** the information I need about how A levels are marked and graded" to "I have the information I need about how A levels are marked and graded", so any comparison between 2005 data and previous years should be treated with caution.

Information on A level exams

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
 'I have the information I need about how A level exams are marked and graded'



Base: Wave 4, A level parents (273) and A level students (73), November 2005
 Wave 3, A level parents (303) and A level students (80), September 2004
 Wave 2, A level parents (315) and A level students (119), November 2003
 Wave 1, A level parents (293) and A level students (92), March 2003

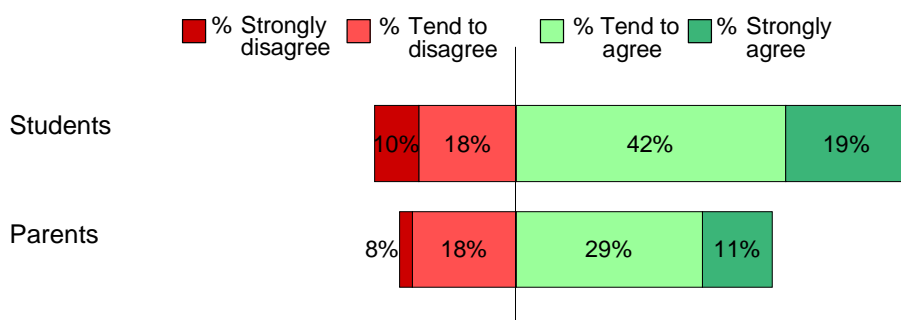
Source: MORI

Parents of GCSE students feel more informed than parents of A level students regarding the marking and grading of exams. Two in five parents of GCSE students (40%) feel they have enough information about how GCSEs are marked and graded, compared with a third of A level parents (32%) who feel the same about A levels exams.

GCSE students feel as informed about how GCSE exams are marked and graded as A level students do about A level marking and grading (61% and 73% respectively, agree they feel informed).

Information on GCSE exams

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
 'I have the information I need about how GCSE exams are marked and graded'



Base: All GCSE parents (262) and GCSE students (84), November 2005

Source: MORI

Trusted sources of information

Teachers' views

Teachers place most trust in their schools and other teachers when it comes to information about exams. More than nine in ten (94%) say they trust schools/teachers as a source of information on exams, which is in line with the previous waves of the survey. Those from secondary maintained schools are more likely to say this than their colleagues working in independent schools (96% compared with 91%).

The QCA has always been one of the most trusted sources of information for teachers. This year more than nine in ten teachers say they trust the QCA (92%), which is significantly higher than in March 2003 (87%). Heads of year are more likely to trust QCA as a source of information than classroom or subject teachers (96% compared with 86%).

Trust in awarding bodies is also high (93%) and has increased significantly this year, after a dip in trust in 2004 (88%). The level of trust has now returned to the same level found in November 2003 (94%). Those with over 25 years of teaching experience are more likely than those with five years or less to trust awarding bodies as a source of information (95%, compared with 87%).

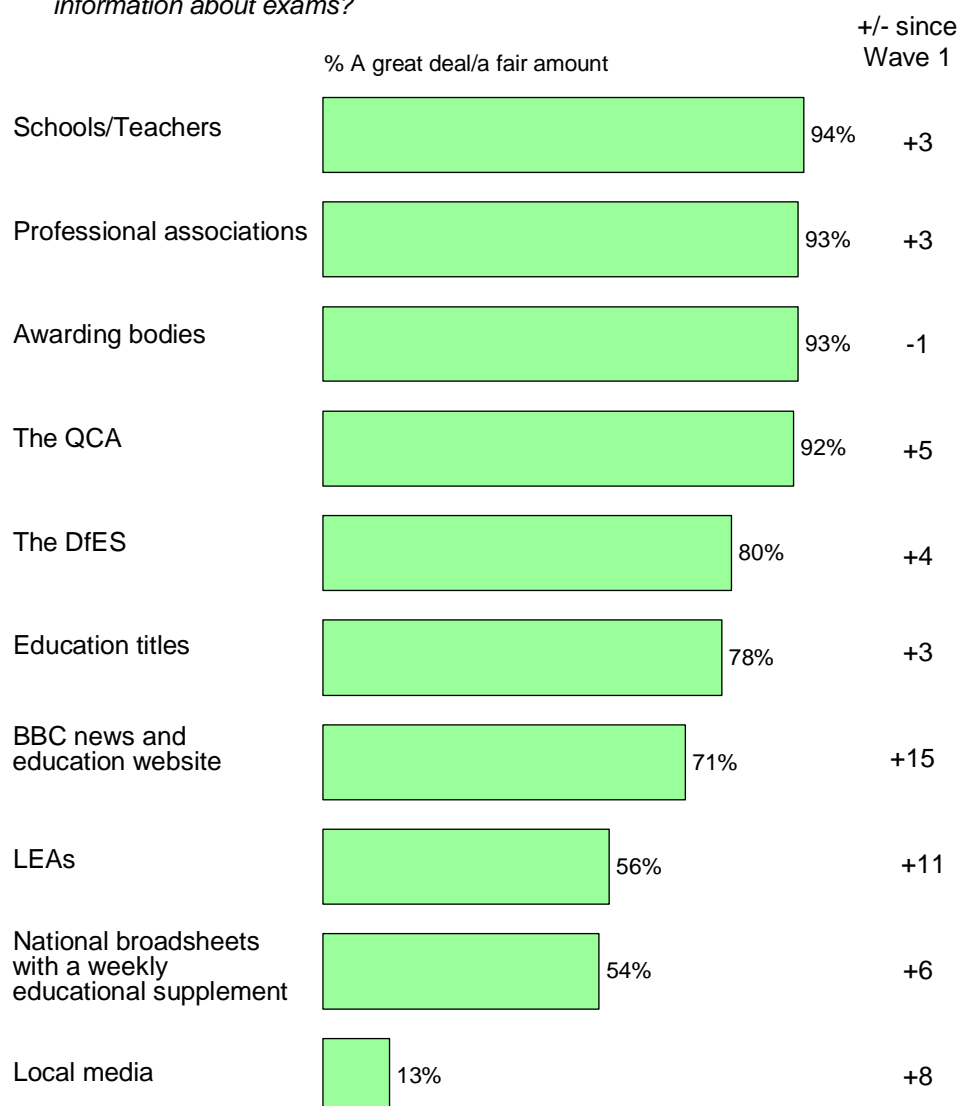
The media is regarded poorly by teachers, as it is by parents and students, as a source of information about how exams are marked and graded. Trust in local media, such as radio, TV and newspapers is low and has declined this year from 20% in 2004 to just 13% now. Trust in national broadsheets with a weekly education section, such as the Guardian and Independent, whilst higher than trust in local media, has also fallen this year from 63% in 2004 to 54% now.

There are interesting differences by subgroups in terms of trust in LEAs as a source of information:

- GCSE teachers are more likely to trust them than A level teachers (59% compared with 49%); as are
- Teachers with up to five years of teaching experience, compared to those with over 25 years of experience (64% compared with 49%); and
- Teachers from secondary maintained schools are more likely to say they trust LEAs than teachers overall (66% compared with 56%).

Trusted sources of information - teachers

Q How much, if at all, do you trust each of the following as a source of information about exams?



Base: All teachers (Nov 2005 = 504, March 2003 = 500)

Source: MORI

Only five percent of teachers distrust the QCA as a source of information about exams. Reasons mentioned for this lack of trust are similar to previous waves and include the following¹⁶:

- The QCA is too involved in all aspects of the curriculum to have expertise in one area (n=6);
- The QCA has a hidden agenda/is not honest (n=5);
- Information is not relevant (n=3);

¹⁶ Caution, very low base size (28). Findings are given as numbers rather than percentages and should be treated as indicative only.

- The QCA is not independent of the Government (n=3); and
- Information is not accurate (n=2).

Parents' and students' views

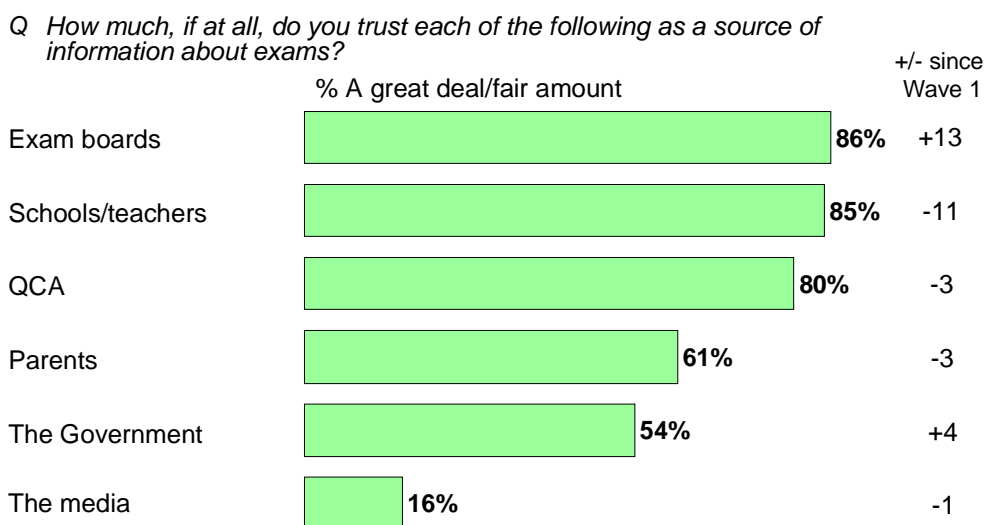
Overall, students and parents have similar levels of trust in sources of information on how exams are marked and graded. The QCA continues to be regarded as one of the most trusted sources of information and is trusted by 70% of parents and 80% of students. However schools and teachers are trusted by the highest proportion of students and parents (85% and 84% respectively), which has remained consistent year-on-year.

The level of trust in exam boards is also high (trusted by 86% of students and 74% of parents). Whilst the level of trust among students has risen since Wave 1 in March 2003, parents' trust in exams boards remains unchanged since the first wave of the survey.

Although young people are less likely to trust their parents (61%) as a source of information about exams than the sources mentioned above - most probably because they feel their parents are less informed about exam marking and grading than other sources such as teachers and exam boards - parents continue to trust their children as a source of information (75%).

The least trusted sources of information on how exams are marked and graded are the media (trusted by only 16% of students and 25% of parents) and the Government (trusted by 54% of students and 41% of parents). Trust in the Government among parents has, however, recovered somewhat in recent years from the 32% low recorded in November 2003.

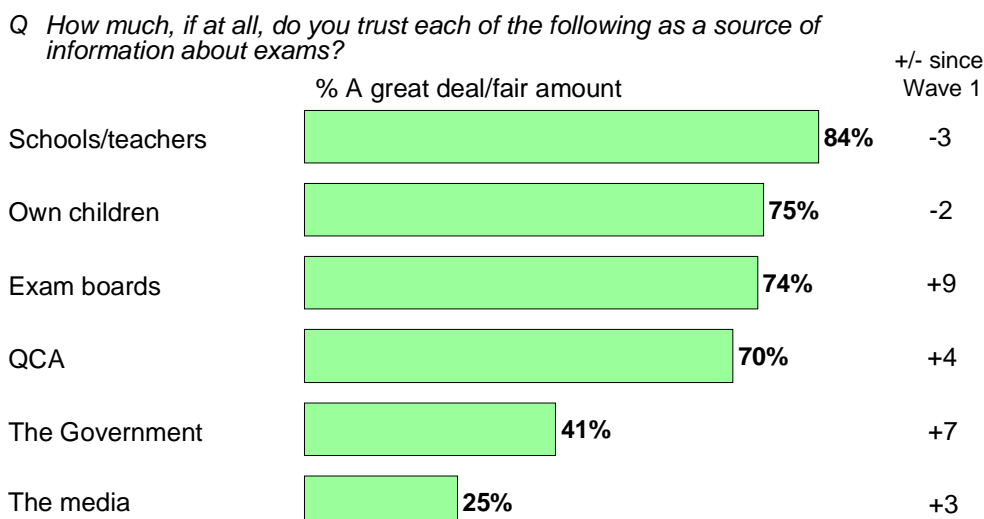
Trusted sources of information - students



Base: All students (Nov 2005 = 137, March 2003 = 92)

Source: MORI

Trusted sources of information - parents



Base: All parents (Nov 2005 = 346, March 2003 = 293)

Source: MORI

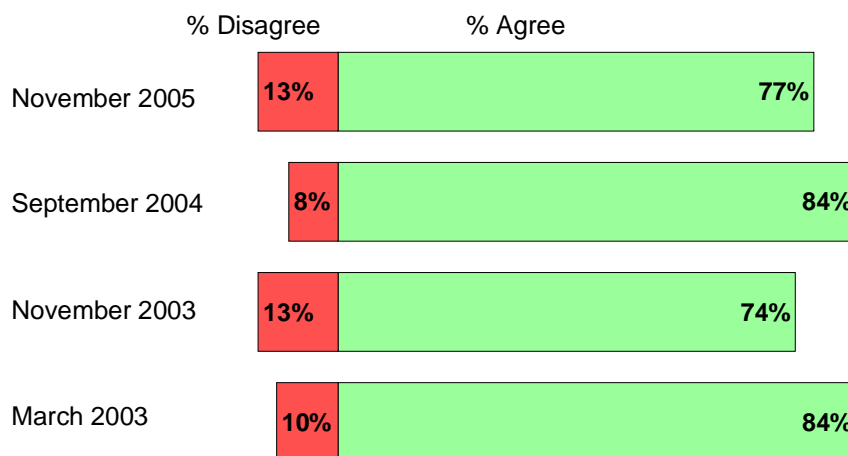
An independent regulator of exams

Fewer teachers are currently supportive of an independent regulator of exams compared to 2004, although the majority of teachers are still in favour of the idea. Three-quarters of A level and GCSE teachers (77%) agree that the exam system needs to be regulated and controlled by a body other than awarding bodies or the Department for Education and Skills, compared with 84% in 2004.

As shown in the chart below, support among teachers for a body that will independently regulate and control the exam system has fluctuated over the years.

Independent regulation

Q To what extent, if at all, do you agree that our exam system needs to be independently regulated and controlled by a body other than awarding bodies or the Department for Education and Skills?



Base: All teachers (Nov 2005 = 504, Sept 2004 = 250, Nov 2003 = 250, March 2003 = 500)

Source: MORI

Appendices

Sample Profile¹⁷

Sample profile – Omnibus General Public	Unweighted		Weighted
	N	%	%
Total	1974	100	100
Gender			
Male	906	46	48
Female	1068	54	52
Age			
15-24	273	14	17
25-34	266	13	15
35-44	424	21	21
45-54	315	16	17
55-64	293	15	13
65+	403	20	18
Social class			
AB	509	26	25
C1	556	28	28
C2	409	21	21
DE	500	25	26
Work status			
Working (full or part-time)	1005	51	55
Not working	969	49	45
Highest educational qualification			
GCSE or equiv.	405	21	22
Vocational quals (NVQ1+2)	134	7	7
A level or equiv.	289	15	15
Degree or equiv.	326	17	16
Postgraduate qualification	109	6	5
Still studying	102	5	7
No formal qualifications	480	24	23
GOR			
North East	97	5	5
Merseyside	83	4	4
North West	164	8	9
Yorks & Humber	198	10	10
East Midlands	148	7	9
West Midlands	207	10	10
South West	197	10	10
Eastern	208	11	11
London	333	17	16
South East	339	17	16

¹⁷ A detailed profile of respondents who participated in the March 2003, Wave 1 study, the November 2003, Wave 2 study and the September 2004, Wave 3 study can be found in the previous reports, provided in separate volumes.

Sample profile – Omnibus Parents	Unweighted Only	
	N	%
Total	346	100
Parental status		
Parent with child in yrs 10-11 and intends to take A level exams	203	59
Parent with child in their 1 st /2 nd year of A levels	86	25
Parent with child who has taken A levels in the last 2 years	49	14
Parent with child in yrs 10-11 and due to take GCSE exams	197	57
Parent with child who has taken GCSEs in the last 2 years	117	34

Sample profile – Omnibus 15-19 year olds	Unweighted Only	
	N	%
Total	177	100
Student status		
Currently in KS4 and intends to take A level exams	11	8
Currently studying for A levels	33	24
Completed A levels in the last 2 years	29	21
Currently in KS4 and will be taking GCSE exams	10	7
Completed GCSEs in the last 2 years	74	54

Sample profile - Teachers	Unweighted		Weighted
	N	%	%
Total	504	100	100
A level/GCSE teacher			
Teaches A level	281	56	56
Teaches GCSEs	414	82	82
Level of responsibility			
Classroom/ subject teacher/ lecturer	129	26	25
Subject manager/head of subject	87	17	18
Head of Year	90	18	18
Member of SMT/ leadership team	62	12	12
Curriculum Co-ordinator	38	8	8
Deputy/Assistant head teacher	36	7	7
Course leader	30	6	6
Examinations officer	16	3	3
Programme Manager	11	2	2
Other	5	1	1
Years in teaching			
NQT/1 st year in teaching	10	2	2
1-5 years	69	14	14
6-10 years	76	15	15
11-15 years	65	13	13
16-25 years	108	21	22
Over 25 years	176	35	34
School/ College status			
Mainstream school	289	57	57
Independent school	124	25	26
FE/ Sixth Form College	91	18	17
GOR			
North	136	27	24
Midlands	112	35	32
South	256	38	44

Statistical Reliability

Because a sample, rather than the entire population, was interviewed the percentage results are subject to sampling tolerances – which vary with the size of the sample and the percentage figure concerned. For example, for a question where 50% of the people in a (weighted) sample of 1,974 respond with a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that this result would not vary more than two percentage points, plus or minus, from the result that would have been obtained from a census of the entire population (using the same procedures). The tolerances that may apply in this report are given in the table below.

Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels (at the 95% confidence level)

Size of sample or sub-group on which survey result is based	10% or 90% ±	30% or 70% ±	50% ±
137 (i.e. all students)	5	8	8
346 (i.e. all parents)	3	5	5
504 (i.e. all teachers/ lecturers)	3	4	4
1,974 (i.e. respondents in England)	1	2	2

Source: MORI

Tolerances are also involved in the comparison of results between different elements of the sample. A difference must be of at least a certain size to be statistically significant. The following table is a guide to the sampling tolerances applicable to comparisons between sub-groups.

**Differences required for significance at the 95% confidence level
at or near these percentages**

Size of sample on which survey result is based		10% or 90% ±	30% or 70% ±	50% ±
Wave 1 v Wave 4	Wave 1 students (92) v Wave 4 students (137)	8	12	13
	Wave 1 teachers (500) v Wave 4 teachers (504)	4	6	6
	Wave 1 parents (293) v Wave 4 parents (346)	5	7	8
	Wave 1 members of the general public (1,714) v Wave 4 members of the general public (1,974)	2	3	3
Wave 2 v Wave 4	Wave 2 students (119) v Wave 4 students (137)	7	11	12
	Wave 2 teachers (250) v Wave 4 teachers (504)	5	7	8
	Wave 2 parents (315) v Wave 4 parents (346)	5	7	8
	Wave 2 members of the general public (1,766) v Wave 4 members of the general public (1,974)	2	3	3
Wave 3 v Wave 4	Wave 3 students (80) v Wave 4 students (137)	8	13	14
	Wave 3 teachers (250) v Wave 4 teachers (504)	5	7	8
	Wave 3 parents (303) v Wave 4 parents (346)	5	7	8
	Wave 3 members of the general public (1,720) v Wave 4 members of the general public (1,974)	2	3	3

Source: MORI

Definition of Social Grades

The grades detailed below are the social class definitions as used by the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising, and are standard on all surveys carried out by MORI (Market & Opinion Research International Limited).

Social Grades			
	Social Class	Occupation of Chief Income Earner	Percentage of Population
A	Upper Middle Class	Higher managerial, administrative or professional	2.9
B	Middle Class	Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional	18.9
C1	Lower Middle Class	Supervisor or clerical and junior managerial, administrative or professional	27.0
C2	Skilled Working Class	Skilled manual workers	22.6
D	Working Class	Semi and unskilled manual workers	16.9
E	Those at the lowest levels of subsistence	State pensioners, etc, with no other earnings	11.7

Marked-Up Omnibus Questionnaire

Marked-Up Teachers Questionnaire
