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# Prior Qualifications of Adult Learners in Further Education 2006/7

September 2007

Of interest to National, Regional and  
Local Learning and Skills Colleagues

Prior Qualifications of Adult Learners in  
Further Education 2006/7

Research Report prepared for  
Learning and Skills Council by  
IFF Research Ltd

September 2007



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# Prior Qualifications of Adult Learners in Further Education 2006/7

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## 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of the 2006/7 Prior Qualifications of Adult Learners in Further Education survey conducted by IFF Research on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The survey involved 3,007 telephone interviews carried out in July 2007 amongst adult learners (aged 19 plus) undertaking LSC-funded Further Education (FE) courses in November 2006.
- 1.2 The aim of the survey was to inform, develop and monitor current and future initiatives supporting the national target of increasing the number of adults qualified to (full) level 2. In particular, the survey sought to measure the proportion of adult learners on provision in November 2006 undertaking their *first* full level 2 qualification.
- 1.3 The survey sought closely to replicate three earlier studies carried out by IFF Research: two LSC funded studies<sup>1</sup> among adult learners on FE or work-based learning (WBL) provision in November 2005 and November 2004 and an earlier study for the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) among adult learners on LSC-funded FE provision in November 2003<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.4 Throughout the report it should be noted that we use the term 'first full level 2 qualification' to refer to any learning at full level 2 *or above* where the learner's highest prior qualification was below full level 2. That is, it refers not only to those learners studying at full level 2 whose prior highest qualification was below this level, but also to learners studying level 3 qualifications with no prior qualification at full level 2.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Prior Qualifications of Adult Learners in Further Education and Work Based Learning', LSC <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/LSC/2006/research/commissioned/nat-priorqualificationsofadultlearnersinfeandwbl-re-mar2006.pdf>  
And 'Prior Qualifications of Adult Learners in Further Education 2005/06', LSC [http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/Prior\\_Qualifications.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/Prior_Qualifications.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Prior Qualifications of Adult Learners in Further Education, by IFF Research, DfES research report 677  
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR677.pdf>

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### **'Thin' and 'Full' 2 learning**

- 1.5 FE providers offer very many different courses, beyond the familiar NVQs, that are notionally at levels 1 to 5 (and beyond the more general and detailed nine NQF levels, introduced in September 2004). Often courses are only short and require relatively few guided learning hours compared with other qualifications of the same level, and these are labelled within this report as **thin**.
- 1.6 Additionally, classification as a **full** level 2 requires the course to have met various criteria agreed by LSC, DfES (prior to the department's reorganisation) and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and this definition is employed both when publishing statistics on **full** level 2 learners<sup>3</sup>, and in determining eligibility for fee remission as part of the Level 2 Entitlement (L2E).

### **Determining the level of prior qualifications**

- 1.7 The survey obtained information on the prior qualifications of full level 2 and full/thin level 3 learners by asking them about all the qualifications they had attained before starting the course which they were on in November 2006. This included qualifications obtained at school, college or through work or training. Respondents were read a list of qualifications and asked which from this list they had, and which other qualifications, if any, they had achieved.
- 1.8 From this list of qualifications achieved and answers to supplementary questions regarding the number and level attained, a highest level was assigned to each respondent. Slightly different figures result depending on how 'other qualifications' are dealt with. The method which most closely reflects the Labour Force Survey (LFS), and used as the default approach in this report, is as follows: other qualifications are ignored for determining highest prior qualification level if the respondent has achieved any of the (precoded) list of qualifications read out to them.
- 1.9 If 'other' qualifications are the only qualifications an individual says they have, then it is assigned to a level in a pre-determined manner as follows:
- λ 55% are assigned to level 1
  - λ 35% are assigned to level 2
  - λ 10% are assigned to level 3

- 1.10 These proportions are based on analysis undertaken on the 1991/1992 General Household Survey. Although these assignments have been reviewed<sup>4</sup>, the LFS continues to use these proportions and the same approach is taken here.
- 1.11 The current survey also provided the opportunity to ask much more detailed questions about the other qualifications than is possible within the time constraints of the LFS. The impact of assigning a level to these other qualifications taking into account such information as the length of time it took to achieve, what entry requirements there were to undertake the learning for this other qualification etc is discussed in Appendix E - results presented in the main body of the report do not take into account this additional, more detailed information.

### **First full level 2 learning**

- 1.12 The survey examined three distinct learner groups to examine the instance of first full level 2 learning: adult FE learners undertaking full level 2, thin level 3 and full level 3 qualifications.
- 1.13 The survey estimates that among the 287,958 such learners on provision in November 2006 **28% were studying for their first full level 2 qualification. This represents approximately 81,500 learners, who if successful, would pass the level 2 threshold.**
- 1.14 The following table summarises results by learner type. It also shows comparisons with results from the earlier surveys of learners.

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<sup>3</sup> Further Education, Work-based Learning for Young People and Adult and Community Learning - Learner Numbers in England: 2003/2004 (Prepared and published by the Learning and Skills Council in consultation with DfES statisticians)

<sup>4</sup> Improving The Collection of Qualifications Data, DfES Research Report no. 715.<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR715.pdf>

**Table 1.1: First level 2 learning**

	2006/7			2005/6	2004/5	2003/4
	<i>Number of interviews</i>	No. of first full level 2 learners (weighted)	Proportion undertaking their first full level 2	Proportion undertaking their first full level 2		
FE Full 2	1,600	53,605	<b>38%</b>	38%	38%	39%
FE Full 3	1,203	24,487	<b>20%</b>	22%	22%	21%
FE Thin 3	204	3,368	<b>16%</b>	15%	9%	N/A

1.15 Learners on full level 2 provision are the most likely to be undertaking their first full level 2 qualification (38%), those on thin level 3 provision the least likely (16%).

1.16 When results of the present study are compared with those undertaken in 2003/4, 2004/5 and 2005/6, there has been no statistically significant change in the likelihood that FE learners are undertaking their first full level 2 qualification.



## 2 Introduction

- 2.1 In June 2003 the Department for Education & Skills (DfES) published a Skills Strategy White Paper called '21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills – Realising our Potential' which specified a number of policies designed to increase skills including the introduction of a new entitlement to free learning for adults studying their first full level 2 qualification. Following the reorganisation of Does into the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and the Department for Children Schools and Families, new Public Service Agreement performance targets are due to be published this autumn to replace existing ones relating to level 2 qualifications. Current thinking, however is that cross-departmental target will be for 79% of adults to be qualified to at least level 2 by 2011<sup>5</sup>. By 2020, as part of the government's ambition to become a 'world skills leader', the target is for 90% to be qualified to this level or above<sup>6</sup>.
- 2.2 Clearly then a key measure in policy terms is the number of learners undertaking their first full level 2 qualification – an issue that is increasingly important for skills policy given the introduction of the Train To Gain programme and the Level 2 Entitlement, providing fee remission for those studying towards their first full level 2 qualification. While good management information is available on the levels towards which current learners are studying (via the Individual Learner Record database), information sources do not currently provide adequate information for adult learners linking the level being studied with the prior qualification levels achieved.
- 2.3 This led the Does to commission the 'Prior Qualifications of Adult Learners in Further Education' study, the report of which was published in 2005<sup>7</sup>. This investigated the prior learning levels of some 9,000 individuals studying in FE in November 2003.
- 2.4 Following on from this the LSC National Office commissioned a similar study in 2004/5 using the same methodology to establish comparable figures for the cohort of adult learners beginning or already undertaking LSC funded courses in November 2004. The scope of this study was expanded to cover Work Based Learning (WBL) courses as well as FE courses but the range of courses investigated was narrowed – only

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<sup>5</sup> Word Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England (DIUS)  
<http://www.dius.gov.uk/worldclassskills.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Prior Qualifications of Adult Learners in Further Education, DfES Research Report No. 677.  
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR677.pdf>

those on level 2 or level 3 provision were interviewed. The results of the 2004/5 study were published by the LSC in March 2006<sup>8</sup>.

- 2.5 A further study was commissioned by the National LSC in 2005/6 investigating the intake of adult learners on provision in November 2005. The scope of the study returned to FE-based courses only and did not cover WBL, but retains the 2004/5 study's focus on those on level 2 and level 3 courses only.
- 2.6 This report presents results from the fourth survey in this series. This covered FE learners only. The learners taking part in this 2006/7 study were adult learners on level 2 and level 3 provision in November 2006.
- 2.7 As in previous years, the aims and objectives of the study were to provide robust and reliable information on the number of adult learners in the 2006/7 academic year undertaking their first level 2 qualification. This was investigated across the following groups of learners:
- λ Adult FE learners undertaking a full level 2 qualification
  - λ Adult FE learners undertaking a part level 3 qualification
  - λ Adult FE learners undertaking a full level 3 qualification
- 2.8 Level 3 qualifications were included within the scope of the study since learners undertaking a qualification at this level can be undertaking their first level 2 (or higher) qualification, and will hence contribute towards the level 2 target. More broadly, including level 3 learners helps develop an understanding of progression – the proportion of learners at particular levels who are undertaking a qualification at a higher level than they had previously attained, and the extent to which lower level learning may lead on to further study at a higher level.
- 2.9 As a note the survey has assessed the proportion of adult learners working towards their first full level 2 qualification, whereas the level 2 target relates to the actual achievement of first full level 2 qualifications. Clearly this distinction between first level 2 learning among participants and first level 2 learning among those who end up achieving their learning aim needs to be borne in mind.

## **Methodology**

- 2.10 The main study involved 3,007 telephone interviews with adult learners aged 19 plus undertaking LSC-funded FE provision in November 2006.

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<sup>8</sup> Prior Qualifications of Adult Learners in Further Education and Work Based Learning', LSC <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/LSC/2006/research/commissioned/nat-priorqualificationsofadultlearnersinfeandwbl-re-mar2006.pdf>

- 2.11 The sample of learners was drawn from the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and covered:
- λ FE learners enrolled on provision at level 2 or 3 in November 2006
  - λ Who had not indicated that they were unwilling to be re-contacted for survey work
  - λ For whom a telephone number was available.
- 2.12 Interviews were conducted by telephone, using Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI), from IFF's telephone centre at its offices in London. Fieldwork took place from 2<sup>nd</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> July 2007.
- 2.13 Interviews took an average of 10 minutes to complete. The questionnaire used for the study is appended.
- 2.14 Quotas were set for the fieldwork to ensure a distribution of interviews by learner type that would maximise the reliability of the data analysis. The quotas for the main portion of the survey were set on an interlocked age by learning type matrix. The targets for learning type (full level 2, full level 3 and thin level 3) were set using Neyman allocation whereby targets are allocated in proportion to where the key variable (here first level 2 learning) is expected to occur based on previous survey data and management information. The distribution by age reflected the proportions of each learner group falling within the age categories shown in table 2.1 based on ILR information.
- 2.15 Further details on the quotas are appended (appendix A).
- 2.16 Because the sampling process intentionally oversampled some groups and undersampled others, the main survey results were weighted to ensure they were representative of the adult level 2 / level 3 FE learner population. To this end, at the analysis stage results were grossed up to the full profile of adult learners by age within each learning type enrolled in FE on the ILR in November 2006, some 290,000 learners in total.
- 2.17 The overall response rate for the survey was 72%. Further details of the response rate, including how this varied by learner type, can be found in Appendix B.

#### **'Thin' and 'Full' and first full level 2 learning**

- 2.18 FE colleges providers offer very many different courses, beyond the familiar NVQs, that are notionally at levels 1 to 5 (and beyond the more general and detailed nine NQF levels, introduced in September 2004).
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Often courses are only short and require relatively few guided learning hours compared with other qualifications of the same level, and these are labelled within this report as **thin**.

- 2.19 Additionally, classification as a **full** level 2 requires the course to have met various criteria agreed by LSC, Does and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and this definition is employed both when publishing statistics on **full** level 2 learners<sup>9</sup>, and in determining eligibility for fee remission as part of the Level 2 Entitlement (L2E).

### Profile of the achieved sample

- 2.20 The following table shows the number of interviews achieved in the main portion of the survey by the variables on which quotas were set, the proportion this number represents of the final (unweighted) sample, and then the proportion this represents once the grossing up process was undertaken. Equivalent tables are presented for the boost regions in their respective chapters.

**Table 2.1: Sample profile**

	Number of interviews	Proportion of final achieved sample %	Proportion of the weighted sample (i.e. once results grossed up) %
<i>Qualification level of current / recent course:</i>			
FE full level 2	1,600	53	49
FE full level 3	1,203	40	44
FE thin level 3	204	7	8
<i>Age:</i>			
19-24	1,040	35	35
25-44	1,522	51	50
45 – retirement	412	14	13
Over retirement age	33	1	1
<i>Base:</i>	<i>3,007</i>	<i>3,007</i>	<i>287,958</i>

<sup>9</sup> Further Education, Work-based Learning for Young People and Adult and Community Learning - Learner Numbers in England: 2003/2004 (Prepared and published by the Learning and Skills Council in consultation with DfES statisticians)

2.21 These figures show the relative over-sampling of full level 2 learners and under-sampling of full level 3 learners.

### 3 The profile of learners

- 3.1 In this short chapter we describe the demographic profile of the level 2 and level 3 learners covered by the main portion of the survey (i.e. excluding boost interviews conducted in specific regions). This provides context for later findings, and also allows a comparison of how the different FE learner groups (full level 2, full level 3 and thin level 3) vary demographically.
- 3.2 The age, gender and ethnicity of learners is shown in table 3.1 overall and by learner type. Also shown is economic activity summarised into economically inactive (consisting of learners who are retired, unemployed but not looking or not available for work, or those placing themselves in the “none of the above” category) and economically active (all other learners). This definition is based on that used in the LFS<sup>10</sup>.
- 3.3 Across all three learner types, there is a majority of female learners. This is most marked amongst full level 3 learners where female learners form 71% of the cohort. This proportion is a little lower at 58% and 56% respectively for full level 2 and thin level 3 learners.
- 3.4 Overall, learners aged 25-44 form half of adult learners on full level 2, full level 3 and thin level 3 courses. Learners on full level 3 and thin level 3 courses tend to be younger (around two fifths are 19-24 compared with a little over a quarter of full level 2 learners).
- 3.5 There is little variation in the ethnicity of the intake for different types of course, with white learners the most populous across all three learner types, forming around four fifths of the population. The largest concentration of non-white learners is found on full level 3 courses (20%).
- 3.6 The majority of students are economically active (88% overall), most commonly being employed full time (40%) or part time (29%). Full time work is most common amongst full level 2 learners (who have an older age profile than average); part time work is most common amongst those on full level 3 courses.

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<sup>10</sup> The LFS definition of "economically active" is given in the LFS Concepts and Definitions document:  
[http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme\\_labour/Concepts\\_Definitions\\_HQS.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_labour/Concepts_Definitions_HQS.pdf)

**Table 3.1: Demographic profile of adult learners**

	All learners	Level of current course		
		FE Full 2	FE Full 3	FE Thin 3
<i>Base: all</i>	3,007	1,600	1,203	204
	%	%	%	%
Male	36	42	29	34
Female	64	58	71	56
<b>Age</b>				
19-24	35	28	42	37
25-44	50	55	47	41
45 – retirement	13	16	10	17
Over retirement age	1	1	*	3
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
White	80	82	78	82
Asian	6	6	6	7
Black	7	6	10	4
Mixed / other	4	4	4	3
Not stated	2	2	2	3
<b>Employment</b>				
<b>Economically active</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>84</b>
Employed full time	40	44	36	37
Employed part time	29	24	34	27
Self-employed	4	5	2	3
On a government-supported training and employment programme	*	*	*	-
Unemployed though looking and available for work	12	13	12	12
Doing unpaid family work	3	2	3	5
<b>Economically inactive</b>				
<b>Economically inactive</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>
Retired	1	1	*	3
Unemployed but not looking or not available for work	6	5	8	7
None of the above	5	5	5	6

## 4 Prior qualification level of learners

- 4.1 In this chapter we present findings on, the prior qualification level of adult learners, focusing on the number and proportion of learners undertaking their first full level 2 qualification. This is examined overall and by learner type, as well as by demographic variables.
- 4.2 Throughout the report it should be noted that we use the term ‘first full level 2 qualification’ to mean any learning at level 2 *or above* where the learner’s highest prior qualification was below full level 2. That is, it refers not only to those learners studying at full level 2 whose prior highest qualification was below this level, but also to learners studying level 3 qualifications with no prior qualification at full level 2.
- 4.3 First we briefly discuss the method of determining highest prior qualification.

### Determining the level of highest prior qualification

- 4.4 Information on the qualifications that people had attained prior to their current learning was gathered in the survey in the following way: survey respondents who indicated that they had any qualifications from school, college or university, through work or through any other sources (question 2 in the questionnaire appended) were read a list of qualifications and asked which they had attained (see question 5). For most individual qualifications ‘follow-up’ questions were asked about the number of qualifications attained and their level. This approach is somewhat different to that used in the LFS, where respondents are asked to list all the qualifications they have, starting with the highest, with the interviewer assigning them to relevant codes and then asking follow up questions where appropriate about the number and level attained.
- 4.5 However, based on the range, number and level of the qualifications respondents had attained, findings in this chapter have sought to replicate the LFS approach to determining the level of highest prior qualification. The ranking used to determine which of a respondents’ prior qualifications is highest is shown in appendix C. One key element of this is the treatment of qualifications which do not appear on the set list of qualifications read out during the interview. The approach taken is a closer replication of the LFS approach. These ‘other qualifications’ are ignored if any from the list read out to respondents have been obtained.



- 4.6 If 'other qualifications' are the only ones mentioned then they are randomly assigned to a level in a pre-determined manner as follows: 55% are assumed to be level 1, 35% level 2 and 10% level 3. These proportions are based on analysis undertaken on the 1991/1992 General Household Survey<sup>11</sup>.
- 4.7 In addition, the questionnaire used for the study allows much more detail to be collected about the other qualification than is available in the LFS. This includes details on the age when the other qualification was achieved, whether there were entry requirements and what these were, how long it took to achieve and whether this was full time or part time. (This additional information was collected about the other qualification either where the respondent had only other qualifications or where the respondent identified an 'other' qualification over one of the pre-coded qualifications read out to them as their highest). Results when using this information to estimate the level of these other qualifications (rather than assigning them in the pre-determined way as done by the LFS) are presented in Appendix E.

#### **Incidence of first full level 2 learning**

- 4.8 The survey estimates that among the 287,958 adult learners enrolled on a full level 2, full level 3 or thin level 3 in FE in November 2006, **28% were studying for their first full level 2 qualification. This represents approximately 81,500 learners, who if successful, would pass the level 2 threshold.**
- 4.9 The following table summarises results by learner type. It also shows comparisons with the two previous LSC prior qualifications surveys (2004/5 and 2005/6) as well as results from the Does survey 'Qualifications of Adult Learners in Further Education' (Does research report 677) which examined the situation of some 9,000 FE learners on provision in November 2003.

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<sup>11</sup> Further work has been undertaken by DfES to review these assignments, and is discussed, along with further general information on the LFS in appendix D, but the LFS still uses the 55/35/10 split.

**Table 4.1: First level 2 learning**

	2006/7			2005/6	2004/5	2003/4
	<i>Number of interviews</i>	No. of first full level 2 learners (weighted)	Proportion undertaking their first full level 2	Proportion undertaking their first full level 2		
FE Full 2	1,600	53,605	<b>38%</b>	38%	38%	39%
FE Full 3	1,203	24,487	<b>20%</b>	22%	22%	21%
FE Thin 3	204	3,368	<b>16%</b>	15%	9%	N/A

Note: level of prior qualification calculated using LFS method (see appendices C and D)

4.10 Numerically, the bulk of learners working towards their first full level 2 qualification come from those undertaking a full level 2 course – approximately 53,500 of the 81,500 learners working towards their first full level 2 qualification (66%). Moreover, this learner type is the most likely to be undertaking their first full level 2 qualification - 38% were doing so, as compared with 20% of those on a full level 3 course in November 2006 and 16% of those on a thin level 3 course.

4.11 There has been no statistically significant change in the likelihood of FE learners undertaking full level 2, full level 3 or thin level 3 provision to be undertaking their *first* full level 2 when results of the study (among learners enrolled in November 2006) are compared with the previous years’.

### **Profile of learners undertaking their first full level 2**

4.12 The following table compares the profile of learners undertaking their first full level 2 with learners in general and does this amongst full level 2, full level 3 and thin level 3 groups.

**Table 4.2: Profile of learners doing their first full level 2**

	FE Full 2		FE Full 3		FE Thin 3	
	All	1 <sup>st</sup> full L2	All	1 <sup>st</sup> full L2	All	1 <sup>st</sup> full L2
<i>Base: All learners</i>	1,600	553	1,203	213	204	31
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Age</b>						
19-24	28	24	42	31	37	27
25-44	55	56	47	60	41	57
45 – retirement	16	18	10	8	17	15
Over retirement age	1	2	*	*	3	1
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	42	41	29	19	34	39
Female	58	59	71	81	56	65
<b>Ethnicity</b>						
White	82	85	78	83	82	84
Non-white	16	13	20	16	15	14
Not stated	2	3	2	1	3	2
<b>Mode of study</b>						
Full-time	23	25	43	39	23	36
Part-time	77	75	57	61	77	64
<b>Economic Activity</b>						
Economically active	89	86	87	84	84	88
Economically inactive	11	14	13	16	16	12

4.13 The gender profile of learners on full level 2 and thin level 3 courses studying towards their first full level 2 qualification is not statistically different from the profile of learners on these courses as a whole. Female learners form the bulk of those working towards their first full level 2 amongst these learner groups in numeric terms however.

4.14 Full level 3 learners not already qualified to level 2 or above, however, are significantly more likely to be female than full level 3 learners in general.

- 4.15 A similar pattern emerges by age. There is no significant interaction between age and firstness for those on full level 2 courses. Despite larger differences, indicative of those working towards a first full level 2 qualification being older, the lower base size means the same is true of thin level 3 learners too. However learners on full level 3 courses for whom the course is leading towards a first full level 2 (or above) qualification are significantly more likely to be in the 25-44 age range than full level 3 learners generally and less likely to be in the age bands either side. In other words, full level 3 learners aged 25-44 are especially likely to be undertaking their first full level 2 qualification.
- 4.16 Learners in the 25-44 age band form the largest share of first full level 2 learners across all three learner type groups.
- 4.17 Ethnicity has a limited impact on firstness. Although there is some indication that a larger proportion of those studying for a first full level 2 on all three course types are white than would be expected on the basis of their share of the overall learner populations, variations are small and not statistically significant.
- 4.18 Across all three groups, the profiles of first full level 2 learners by mode of attendance and economic activity does not vary significantly from those of learners generally

#### Detailed highest prior qualification level

- 4.19 The analysis to date has examined the number and proportion of first full level 2 learners. The following table gives a more detailed breakdown of the actual prior qualification level for each learner type. Results are presented on table 4.3 as horizontal percentages.

**Table 4.3: Prior qualification level by learner type**

<i>Horizontal %'s</i>	<i>Base</i>	<i>Level of highest prior qualification</i>					
		<i>None</i>	<i>Below 2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4/5</i>	
<i>Current level:</i>							
FE full level 2	1,600	%	11	27	26	18	18
FE full level 3	1,203	%	3	16	35	25	20
FE thin level 3	204	%	3	12	24	30	30

- 4.20 Almost half of those undertaking full level 3 courses already had a qualification at level 3 or higher (46%), and as many as 60% of those undertaking a thin level 3 course were already qualified at level 3 or

above (30% were already qualified to level 4/5, making them the most highly qualified of the three groups). Those currently undertaking a full level 2 course were the most likely to have no prior qualifications (11%), a figure which compares with 3% among full and thin level 3 learners.

4.21 The following table shows the specific qualifications previously attained by those already qualified to level 2.

**Table 4.4: Prior level 2 qualifications of those already qualified to level 2 or above**

<i>Base: all with prior qualification at level 2 or above</i>	1961
<i>Academic:</i>	%
5+ O level, GCSE grade A*-C or equivalent	53
AS level or equivalent	6
SCE higher or equivalent (1 or 2 SCE highs)	*
<i>Vocational:</i>	
NVQ level 2	20
GNVQ intermediate	8
City & Guilds craft	7
BTEC, SCOTVEC first or general diploma	4
Modern Apprenticeship	2
RSA diploma	2
Any academic	54
Any vocational	36
Both	12
No qualification at level 2 (‘jumpers’ with a prior level 3, 4 or 5 but no prior level 2)	22

4.22 The most common level 2 qualification already attained are GCSEs or equivalent on the academic side (53%) and NVQ level 2 on the vocational side (20%).

4.23 In total, 54% of those qualified to level 2 or above reported at least one academic qualifications at level 2 and 36% reported at least one vocational qualification at level 2. Just under one in eight reported having both academic and vocational qualifications at level 2 suggesting only limited numbers of learners have followed both academic and vocational paths.

## Comparison of prior achievement level compared to the ILR

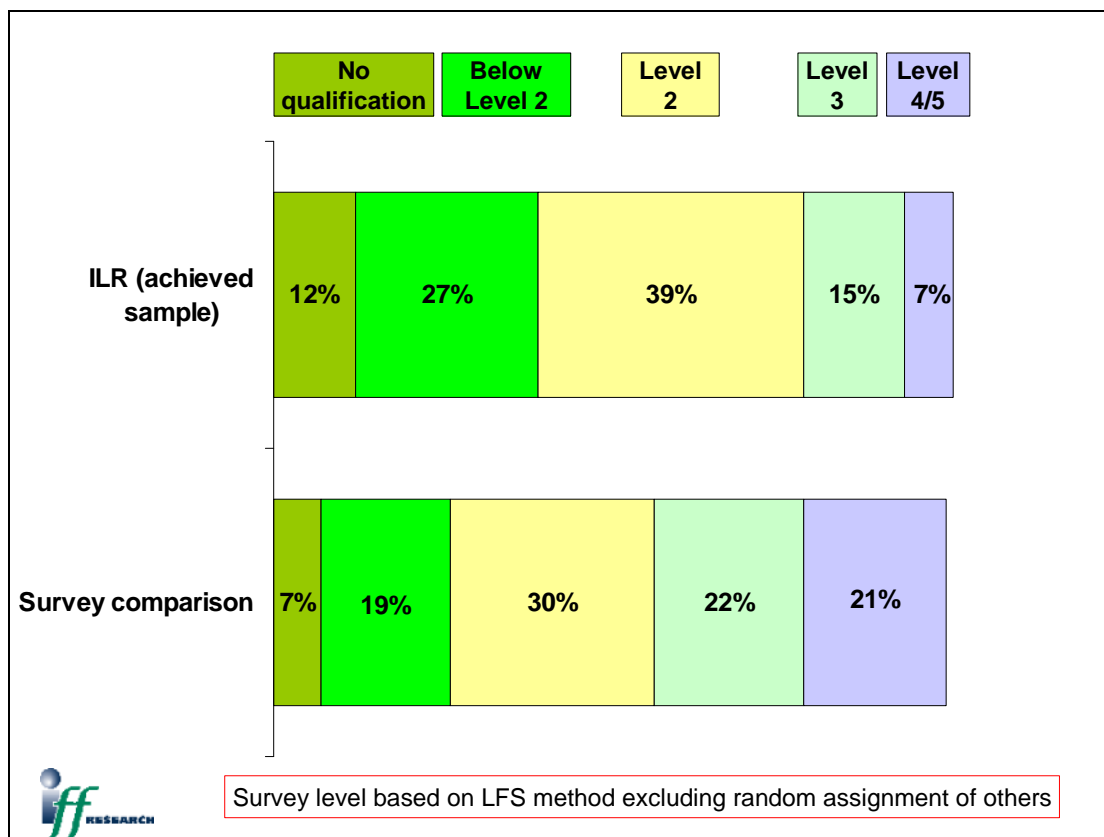
- 4.24 The ILR contains information on some learners about their prior achievement level which is collected by providers. This section compares the level recorded on the ILR with that collected from the survey.
- 4.25 In the initial sample supplied by the LSC of learners falling within the scope of the main survey (those enrolled on full level 2, full level 3 or thin level 3 qualifications in November 2006), a little under two fifths (38%) had no prior qualification level information provided. For the 2005/6 survey this figure was 56% suggesting that FE colleges are increasing their recording of prior attainment on the ILR.
- 4.26 The level of prior qualification where this information was available is shown on the following table, both for all sample provided that fell within the scope of the survey and among those where an interview was achieved in the main portion of the survey. The profile of the achieved sample and of the total sample supplied was very similar.

**Table 4.5: ILR information on prior achievement**

	ILR (all supplied sample in scope)	ILR (achieved sample)
	%	%
No qualifications	9	7
Entry Level and below level 1	1	1
Level 1	14	15
Level 2	22	23
Level 3	8	9
Level 4/5	4	4
Other qualification, level not known	3	1
Not known	38	38

- 4.27 Of key interest is how prior qualification levels compare on the ILR to those collected in the survey. This is summarised on the following chart, showing, for the achieved sample where a prior qualification level was recorded on the ILR the level on the ILR and the level as recorded by the survey questioning.

**Figure 4.1: Comparison of ILR and survey level of prior achievement for those with prior level recorded on the ILR**



Base: Learners with definite prior achievement level from both the ILR and from the survey (LFS measure) (1,644)

- 4.28 Compared to the survey findings, the ILR suggests a higher proportion with no qualifications (12% v 7%), and a much lower proportion with high level qualifications, both those with at least level 3 (22% v 43%) and at level 4 or 5 (7% v 21%).
- 4.29 Of the 1,644 interviews undertaken where a prior level was recorded on the ILR *and* the survey gave a definite level (i.e. without the need for random assignment), the survey agreed with the ILR level in 43% of cases (unweighted); in a further 43% of cases, the ILR indicated a lower level of prior achievement; in 15% of cases, the ILR indicated a higher prior achievement than suggested by respondent information provided during the interview.
- 4.30 As well as a comparison of the levels recorded on the ILR and by the survey, as presented in figure 4.1, it is also possible to assess the specific prior qualifications recorded by the survey against the level indicated in the ILR. An analysis is presented in the following table for learners with a prior qualification at level 2 or level 3, where information

on qualification level was recorded on the ILR as level 1 or no qualification. Data are unweighted.

**Table 4.6: Highest prior qualification of learners with a prior level 2 or 3, where ILR stated prior qualification as below level 2**

<i>Data unweighted</i>	ILR stated highest prior	
	No qualifications	L1
<i>Base: All with prior level 2 or 3 where ILR stated prior as below level 2 (Learners with definite prior achievement level from both ILR and survey (LFS measure) only)</i>	98	237
	%	%
NVQ level 2	23	13
O level, GCSE grade A-C or equivalent (L2)	9	20
A level or equivalent	12	14
NVQ level 3	7	7
Trade apprenticeship	7	5
OND,ONC,BTEC etc, national	2	8
GNVQ intermediate	4	6
Diploma in higher education	3	6
Degree	5	3
Other HE below degree	2	3
HNC,HND,BTEC etc higher	4	2
City & Guilds advanced craft	4	2
City & Guilds craft	3	2
BTEC,SCOTVEC first or general diploma	3	2
Access to HE	1	2
Scottish CSYS	2	1
GNVQ advanced	3	1
NVQ level 4	1	1
A,S level or equivalent (L2)	1	1
Teaching	-	1
International Baccalaureate	1	*
RSA diploma	-	*
A levels - unknown level	-	*
Nursing etc	1	-



- 4.31 Learners indicating during the survey that they had qualifications at level 2 or level 3, but recorded on the ILR as having no qualifications or qualifications at level 1, reported a wide range of qualifications in the survey. Most commonly mentioned were five or more O levels, GCSE grade A\*-C or equivalent, NVQ level 2 qualifications and A level(s) or equivalent. Some respondents recorded on the ILR as below level 2 even reported higher level qualifications such as NVQ level 4 qualifications, teaching qualifications and degrees.
- 4.32 The differences evident between ILR information and that collected by the survey are of a similar order and type as those seen in previous surveys but as was the case previously, the reason for these differences can only be hypothesised. The ILR prior qualification level comes from information recorded by the college / provider, and the range of methods used and questions asked to collect this information is not known.
- 4.33 Clearly few colleges / providers will be able to spend the time taken during this survey to collect information on prior qualifications, but one would expect that any question aimed at collecting highest qualification would capture the kind of qualifications listed in the previous table and that few individuals would rate a level 1 qualification as higher than qualifications such as an NVQ level 2 or an A level.
- 4.34 In addition to cases where the ILR may record the wrong level due to incomplete or inaccurate data collection, it may also be the case that where the prior qualification is not known or not available, providers may be assigning prior qualifications to learners on the assumption that most of those studying at this level will not have a level 2 qualification already.

### **Concluding remarks**

- 4.35 The survey has highlighted:
- λ Adult As in 2003/4, 2004/5 and 2005/6 a minority of level 2 and level 3 learners are undertaking their first full level 2 qualification;
  - λ The proportion undertaking their first full level 2 qualification is very little changed from 2003/4 and 2004/5, displaying no statistically significant shifts (see table 4.1);
  - λ Learners undertaking full level 2 courses are the most likely to be working towards their *first* qualification at full level 2 or above (38%);

- λ In total, 20% of learners on full level 3 courses were undertaking their first full level 2 qualification (slightly but not significantly down on 2005/6);
- λ Those training at thin level 3 are the least likely to be engaged in their first level 2 qualification at 16% (a slight but not statistically significant rise from 15% in 2005/6);
- λ Survey findings suggest that where the ILR records hold prior qualification information (it did so for only around half the sample supplied), it overstates the proportion with no prior qualifications or qualifications below level 2, and underestimates the proportion with prior qualifications at level 2, level 3 and at level 4 or above;
- λ While adult learners have a wide range of prior qualifications, and the complexity and time involved in gaining full, accurate and detailed information on the extent of their prior qualifications is significant, information on the ILR as to whether learners have a prior full level 2 qualification or above could be improved by concentrating on a number of the main qualifications which contribute to learners having a prior full level 2. These are particularly: five or more O levels, GCSE or equivalents at grade A-C; NVQs at level 2 or level 3; A levels; GNVQ Intermediate or Advanced; and degrees and qualifications at level 4 and 5.

## 5 Motivations for adult learning

- 5.1 In addition to establishing the prior qualification level of learners, the survey also sought to understand some of the motivating factors behind respondents' decision to undertake their current course.

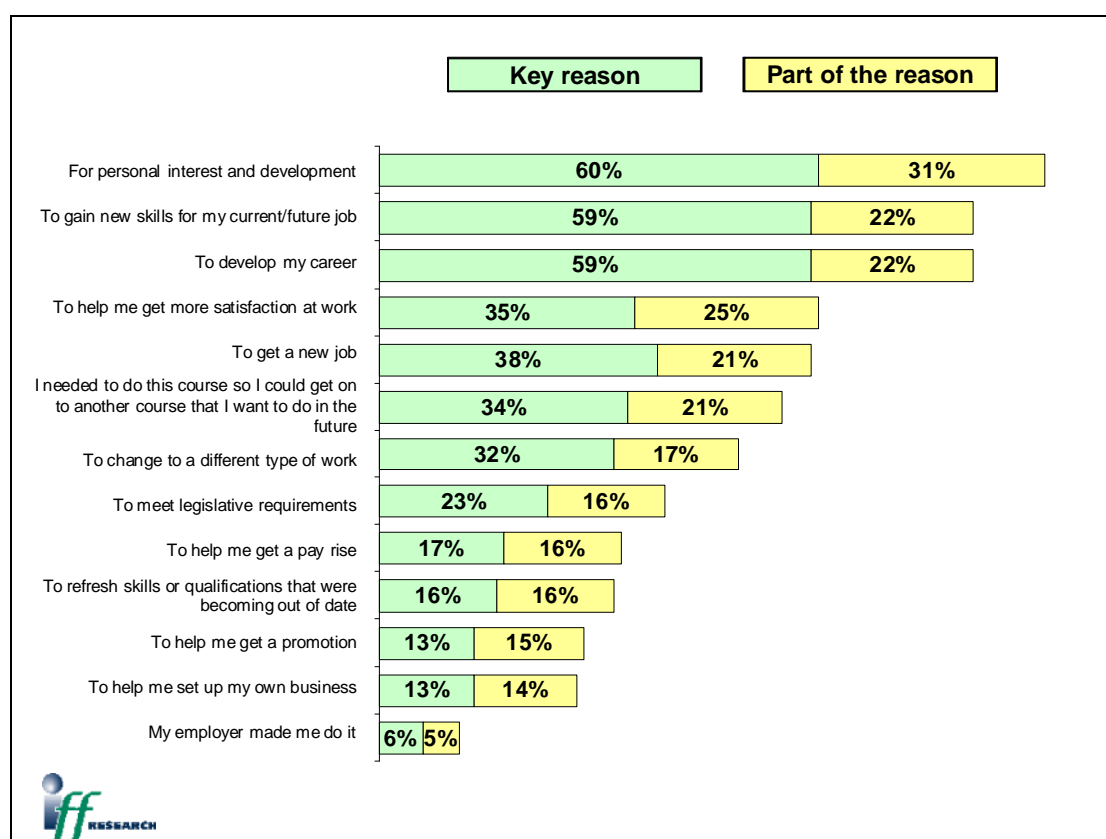
### Helping with work as a motivating factor

- 5.2 Before being asked about motivating factors more generally, learners were first asked the role that employment (either current, future or both) had played in their decision to start their course.
- 5.3 Two fifths (40%) said that at least part of the reason for taking their current course was to help them in their current job. Employment was a more common motivation with regard to learners' aspirations, however: three quarters (74%) say that they were taking their current course, at least in part, to help in future jobs and to further their career.
- 5.4 Over a quarter (27%) cited both current and future employment as motivating factors and just 13% said that their decision to study their current course was related to neither current nor future work.
- 5.5 The proportion of learners studying for reasons unrelated to employment increases with age – a quarter of those aged 45 to retirement said their decision to study was unrelated to current or future work; this rises to 82% of those of retirement age and above.
- 5.6 Perhaps unsurprisingly, younger learners were particularly likely to cite help with a *future* job as a reason for studying their current course (81% amongst those aged 19 to 24).
- 5.7 Learners currently studying towards a full level 2 course are more likely than those on a full level 3 course to have been motivated to start their course to help with their current job (44% vs. 40%) and are less likely to have been motivated by a hope that it would help with future work (73% vs. 79%).
- 5.8 Those studying on a thin level 3 course were markedly less interested in their course's affect on their career – 48% said neither help with their current job nor with a future job was part of the reason for undertaking their current course.

## Motivating factors more generally

5.9 Respondents were also asked about reasons for studying their course more generally and how great an influence each had had on their decision (figure 5.1). This was a prompted question with each factor read out and respondents asked if this was a key reason, part of the reason or not part of the reason.

**Figure 5.1: Reasons for studying current course (prompted)**



Base: All learners (3,007)

5.10 Personal interest, gaining skills for a new or current job and career development more generally were all common reasons for adult learners studying their course and most were influenced by both interest *and* career issues.

5.11 Around three-fifths cited each of these reasons as a key motivating factor and over four in five said these were at least part of the reason for studying their course. It is worth noting that despite a large number of learners indicating that employment related factors influenced their decision, personal interest remains the single most common factor in learners' decision to start an FE course. These factors were also the most common in 2005/6, with little change to the overall hierarchy.

- 5.12 Increasing job satisfaction and getting a new job were also commonly cited reasons. In relatively few cases, however, were courses undertaken explicitly in order to secure a promotion or at the insistence of an employer suggesting that despite the importance learners attach to their course for their employment, employers themselves are not often directing their employees towards FE courses. The most common way in which current employment directly influences learners to start a course is through legislative requirements of the job – a factor for around two-fifths of learners.
- 5.13 Looking at these results by the level of course the learner is taking, personal interest remains the most common factor for learners across all three groups.
- 5.14 Those studying full level 3 courses were the most likely to say that they were studying their current course in order to progress to another course (62% vs. 50% amongst those studying for a full level 2 course and 52% amongst those studying a thin level 3 course). This suggests that these learners are particularly interested in increasing their level of qualification rather than studying a variety of subjects at the same level.
- 5.15 Predictably, older learners were significantly less likely to cite reasons relating to changing jobs and progressing to other courses, and more gave refreshing skills as a factor when undertaking their course (38% of those aged 45 to retirement age compared with around 30% amongst under 45s). The youngest learners – those aged 19 to 24 – were the most interested in progressing to other courses (62%), with this trailing off sharply with age to just 12% of those of retirement age or over.
- 5.16 There was little variation by gender in the majority of the reasons given for studying current courses. That said, factors relating to future career plans and aspirations were more likely to be mentioned by men, with men significantly more likely to mention changing to a different type of work (52% vs. 48% of women), getting a pay rise (41% vs. 29%), help in setting up a new business (35% vs. 23%) and help in getting a promotion (30% vs. 26%) as figuring amongst their motivations for starting the course.

### **Why did learners start their course *when* they did?**

- 5.17 As well as investigating the general reasons for learners undertaking their courses, the survey also asked the particular reasons why

learners started their course *when* they did. Table 5.1 below shows the most common reasons given to this spontaneous question.

**Table 5.1: Reasons for starting current course when learner did (spontaneous)**

	<i>All</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
<i>Base: All learners</i>	3,007	1,096	1,911
	%	%	%
Personal circumstances favourable e.g. children left home	31	18	38
Decided it was time to change career	14	17	12
Interest	13	16	12
Progression from a previous course	10	9	10
Enable me to progress in the job I was doing at the time	9	10	8
Employer suggested it	8	7	8
Course not available before	4	5	3
Wanted to learn more / to improve skills	4	4	3
Age - e.g. old enough now	3	3	2
That's when I got funding / that's when I could afford it	2	3	2
Availability of government initiatives to help with the costs	2	1	2

5.18 The most common reason for starting the course when they did is that the learners' circumstances are favourable, mentioned by about a third of learners (31%) as the reason for starting the course when they did. This spur for starting an FE course was most particularly common amongst female learners (38% vs. 18% of male learners). Learners aged between 25 and 44 (39%) and those of retirement age and above (also 39%) were also particularly likely to cite this as a factor.

5.19 Male learners, on the other hand, were again significantly more likely to mention career related reasons – in particular that it was time to change career.

5.20 Learners aged 19 to 24 are significantly more likely to have started their course when they did as a progression from a previous course (17%) or because they had decided it was time to change career. They were also more likely than all but those of retirement age or older to

cite general interest as a reason for starting the course when they did (19% vs. 31% amongst the oldest learners).

- 5.21 Reinforcing the tendency described above for those on thin level 3 courses to be less motivated by career-related factors, these learners were significantly more likely than others to mention favourable personal circumstances and interest in the subject matter as spurs to start their course when they did. Those on full level 2 courses were significantly more likely than others to mention deciding it was time to change career (17% vs. 13% for full level 3 and just 4% for those on thin level 3 courses). Those on thin and full level 3 courses are, perhaps unsurprisingly the more likely to be progressing from a previous course (each 14% vs. 5% amongst those on full level 2).

## Appendices

### A) Quotas

The quotas targets for the main section of the survey were set as follows. The setting of these is described in paragraph 2.16.

Main (non-boost) quota targets					
	19-24	25-44	45 to retirement age	Over retirement age	Total
<i>Learning type:</i>					
FE Full 2	450	868	253	19	<b>1,590</b>
FE Full 3	510	573	123	3	<b>1,209</b>
FE Thin 3	79	82	34	6	<b>201</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,039</b>	<b>1,523</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>3,000</b>

### B) Sample outcomes and response rate

In total, 20,411 learners were called at least once. The table below shows the final outcome of all these attempted contacts:

	Number of learners	% of sample called
		%
<b>'Definite' outcome at end of fieldwork</b>		
Completed interview	4,815	24%
Quit during interview	105	1%
Refused	1,524	7%
Other 'dead' outcome <sup>12</sup>	255	1%
No recollection of specified course or college	60	0%
Number not available / won't accept anonymous calls	3,611	18%
<b>'Live' sample at end of fieldwork</b>		
Live sample removed because quota targets were met	9,705	48%
Remaining live contacts	336	2%
<b>Base</b>	<b>20,411</b>	

<sup>12</sup> This includes learners who felt they could not do the interview because they had very poor spoken English, hearing problems or learning difficulties as well as cases where the respondent had recently moved house.



The valid response rate can be taken to be the number of completed interviews as a proportion of all definite outcomes in scope (i.e. excluding wrong numbers or those not mentioning the course detailed on the ILR). In effect, this is derived from the following calculation:

$$\text{Completed interviews} / (\text{Completed interviews} + \text{Quit during interview} + \text{Refused} + \text{Other dead outcome})$$

The valid response rate for this survey is therefore **72%**, a high rate for a survey of this nature. This response rate is an improvement on the 68% achieved amongst learners in the 2005/6 survey.

### C) Classification of level by qualifications

The classification system used in reporting the level of prior qualifications replicated the Labour Force Survey (LFS), and was as follows:

#### Labour Force Survey Spring 1997 onwards-Conversion to NVQ level equivalents

General qual level	LFS list	NVQ level equivalences				
		Level 5	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Below level 2
	Base					
	Higher degree	Yes				
Higher degree	NVQ level 5	Yes				
	First degree		Yes			
First degree	Other degree		Yes			
	NVQ level 4		Yes			
	Diploma in higher education		Yes			
	HNC,HND,BTEC etc higher		Yes			
	Teaching, further education		Yes			
Other HE	Teaching, secondary education		Yes			
	Teaching, primary education		Yes			
	Teaching, level not stated		Yes			
	Nursing etc		Yes			
	RSA higher diploma		Yes			
	Other HE below degree		Yes			
	NVQ level 3			Yes		
	GNVQ advanced			Yes		
	A level or equivalent			If 2+	If 1	
	RSA advanced diploma			Yes		
A-level or equiv	OND,ONC,BTEC etc, national			Yes		
	City & Guilds advanced craft			Yes		
	Scottish CSYS			67%	33%	
	SCE higher or equivalent			If 3+	If 1 or 2	
	A,S level or equivalent			If 4+	If 2 or 3	If 1
	Trade apprenticeship			50%	50%	
	NVQ level 2				Yes	
	GNVQ intermediate				Yes	
	RSA diploma				Yes	
	City & Guilds craft				Yes	
	BTEC,SCOTVEC first or general diploma				Yes	
	O level, GCSE grade A-C or equivalent				If 5+	If <5
	NVQ level 1					Yes
	GNVQ,GSVQ foundation level					Yes
	CSE below grade1,GCSE below grade C					Yes
	BTEC,SCOTVEC first or general certificate					Yes
Other qualification	SCOTVEC modules					Yes
	RSA other					Yes
	City & Guilds other					Yes
	YT,YTP certificate					Yes
	Other Qualifications			10%	35%	55%
No Qualifications	No Qualifications					

## D) The LFS classification system

The LFS is a large-scale survey of households living at private addresses in Great Britain and is based on a random sample of over 60,000 private addresses every quarter. Households are interviewed face-to-face when first included in the survey and by telephone thereafter. Its purpose is to provide information on the UK labour market that can then be used to develop, manage, evaluate and report on labour market policies.

Because it has a broad purpose (the questionnaire collects information about household, family structure, basic housing information and demographic details of individuals in the households, economic activity, education, health etc), a relatively small amount of the survey is dedicated to questions on education. In this area it covers qualifications attained and qualifications that are being studied for. This is within the following structure:

- λ “Do you have any qualifications from [School, college or university / connected with work / from government schemes / from a Modern Apprenticeship / from having been educated at home, when you were of school age / no qualifications / don't know”
- λ “Which qualifications do (you think) you have, starting with the highest qualifications?”

There are then follow up questions on grades / number of specific qualifications held. From this, highest qualification is then ‘determined’. Information is collected on when and they obtained their highest qualification.

This study provided the opportunity to collect more detailed information on qualifications held than is possible within the time constraints of the LFS. However, as the LFS is used for monitoring the PSA target on level 2 achievement it was felt more appropriate to use its classification system for determining the level of the highest prior qualification in this report. Key elements of this system are described in this appendix.

A relatively high proportion of respondents have their highest qualification identified either as unknown or ‘other’ (c 8%<sup>13</sup>). The system for classifying these into level of highest qualification is by assigning them a level in a pre-determined manner, as follows:

- λ 55% are assigned to level 1
- λ 35% are assigned to level 2

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<sup>13</sup> Figure quoted in Improving The Collection of Qualifications Data, DfES Research Report no. 715. <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR715.pdf>

λ 10% are assigned to level 3

Further work commissioned by Does<sup>14</sup> considered changes to the ratios used in this split for possible inclusion in future LFS qualifications calculations. This investigation recommended updating the split to better reflect current trends in learning. This work recommends a split as follows

λ 7% are assigned to level 1

λ 26% are assigned to level 2

λ 10% are assigned to level 3

λ 17% are assigned to level 4

The remaining 40% should, *"in theory"*, be considered 'thin' qualifications, the research concluded. This classification includes partial qualifications and those not formally classified along NQF lines ('first aid', 'marketing', 'computer course'). The research concludes, however, that for practical purposes these should be assigned to one or more NQF levels for the purposes of analysis, typically level 2 or below.

As yet the recommendations of this study have not been incorporated into the LFS and therefore we continue to use the 55/35/10 split here in order to best replicate existing LFS measures.

A number of non-'other' qualifications are also assigned to levels in set ratios.

If a trade apprenticeship is the highest qualification then half these learners are assigned as having achieved a level 2 qualification and half a level 3.

If a CSYS is the highest qualification then 67% are allocated as a level 2 and 33% a level 3.

And there are also a number of qualifications where the level is determined by the number and level achieved. For example, 4 GCSEs grade A\*-C count as being below level 2, whereas someone with 5 or more GCSEs grade A\*-C counts as being at level 2. Similarly two or more A levels count as level 3, one as being a level 2. If A levels, AS levels or O levels are the highest qualification but the learner is unsure how many that they have, then level is determined using the results of those that do have such qualifications as their highest and assigning the proportion of learners at each level. For example, at the overall level the distribution for the main section of the present survey is as follows:

- λ A levels - 29% level 2 / 71% level 3
- λ O levels - 56% level 1 / 44% level 2
- λ AS levels – 24% level 1 / 56% level 2 / 19% level 3

There are a number of other issues in regards to LFS that are worth noting:

- λ The high proportion of proxy answers (i.e. answers given about a respondent by someone else in the household). Nearly a third of responses are by proxy and a follow-up survey indicated that the qualification questions were poorly answered by proxy respondents in relation to lower level qualifications (GCSEs) and vocational qualifications (responses for degree level qualifications were more accurate).
- λ For approximately 1% of respondents there is no answer given for the qualifications that they have.
- λ The relatively high proportion of respondents with their highest qualification identified either as unknown or 'other' (c 13%).

Comparisons of the number of current learners as collected via the LFS compared with administrative counts of current learners show large differences which suggest the LFS has difficulties accurately capturing information on current learning.

### **E) 'Other' qualifications: a comparison of the survey against LFS**

With the LFS classification of level, where the highest qualification reported by a learner is not one of a set list of qualifications, then these "other" qualifications are assigned to a level in a pre-determined manner (55% to level 1, 35% to level 2 and 10% to level 3). These proportions are based on analysis undertaken on the 1991/1992 General Household Survey<sup>15</sup>.

One of the advantages of the methodology used in the present survey was that additional information was collected on these "other" qualifications in an attempt to assign every single highest "other" qualification to a specific level (in this appendix this is titled the 'survey classification' to distinguish it from LFS classification). It was therefore expected that the breakdown of these 'other' qualifications by level would not exactly match the LFS pre-defined assignment ratios. The additional information on this 'other' highest qualification that was collected in this survey was:

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<sup>14</sup> Improving The Collection of Qualifications Data, DfES Research Report no. 715. <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR715.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> See appendix D for a discussion of a possible revision to this ratio

- λ Age when achieved highest qualification
- λ The entry requirement in terms of qualifications or experience required, if any
- λ How long it took to achieve the qualification
- λ Whether the qualification was part-time or full-time
- λ A combined respondent and interviewer *estimation* of the level using the following descriptions:
  - λ A level 1 qualification which is entry or foundation level - this includes short courses
  - λ A level 2 intermediate qualification, such as O levels or City and Guilds craft level
  - λ A level 3 advanced qualification such as A levels, and ONC or OND or a City and Guilds Advanced craft. This is likely to take 2 years to complete, and would not be gained by anyone under 17
  - λ A first degree (this would take 2-3 years to complete and you would normally need qualifications at A level or equivalent) [Would be aged 20 plus to acquire this]
  - λ A higher degree like an MBA or a PhD (this would take a number of years to complete and would normally require a first degree).

Using all this information to assign a specific level to the highest qualification enables a comparison of the outcome with the pre-determined LFS assignment (55% to level 1, 35% to level 2 and 10% to level 3). The table below shows the level assigned to those learners from the survey who have an 'other' qualification and no pre-coded qualification, compared against the pre-defined assignment ratios that the LFS uses<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> It is only possible to make direct comparisons between the survey classification of the highest 'other' qualification with LFS where no pre-coded qualifications were mentioned. If a learner says they have an "other" qualification **and** a pre-coded qualification in the LFS classification system then the pre-coded qualification is **always** taken to be the highest. So if the learner says that they have a pre-coded level 1 qualification and an "other" non pre-coded qualification then the highest qualification taken is the always the level 1 qualification even if the "other" qualification was, say, a foreign degree.

**Table A3.1: Level of ‘other’ qualification (where no pre-coded qualification) based on ‘survey classification’**

	Survey classification	LFS system of assigning “other” qualifications
<i>Base</i>	138	132
	%	%
No qualifications	10	-
Level 1	44	55
Level 2	24	35
Level 3	12	10
Level 4 or 5	10	-

Although the assignment to levels of learners with just other qualifications in the survey classification is relatively subjective the survey findings suggest that LFS assumptions overstate the proportions with level 1 and 2 qualifications and ignore those with qualifications at level 4/5. The survey results suggest 10% of these ‘other’ highest qualifications are at level 4/5. The LFS also ignores those learners who report having an “other” qualification but do not then report any usable qualification data (or report having made an error). The survey classification would edit these respondents’ data to record them as having no qualifications at the data checking stage.

Again it needs to be noted that that the survey is looking at current adult (aged 19 plus) learners enrolled on LSC-funded FE provision whereas the LFS is a survey of the general population. The differences in how these “other” qualifications are assigned partly reflect the fact that learners in FE are likely to be more highly qualified than the general population.

## **F) Survey questionnaire**

### **Screener**

Can I speak to (NAMED RESPONDENT) please.

#### **WHEN SPEAKING TO NAMED RESPONDENT**

Hello, my name is XXX and I'm calling from IFF Research, an independent market research company. We are conducting a survey of people who have recently been on FE courses at colleges or training providers on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council. It is an important study for the Learning and Skills Council, and will help them understand the qualifications that people had before starting their recent learning.

The interview only takes about 10 minutes. All responses you give will be strictly confidential – we are only reporting anonymised responses back to the LSC.

Would now be a convenient time to undertake the interview (or could I call you back later at a more convenient time)?

#### **REASSURANCES: USE AS NECESSARY**

Where did you get my name / number from? The sample was drawn at random from records held by the Learning and Skills Council on current and recent learners in FE.

Who are the LSC?: The LSC are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational education and training for everyone over 16 in England, other than higher education.

#### **Contacts:**

At IFF – Laura Godwin at IFF Research on 020 7250 3035.

At LSC – Stuart Vickers on 02476 823951

IFF works strictly within the Market Research Society Code of Conduct. The MRS has a freephone number, 0500 396999.



**RECORD FROM SAMPLE:**

S1) GENDER

Male	1	
Female	2	

S2) AGE

19-24	1	
25-44	2	
45-60 (if female) / 45-65 (if male)	3	
61+ (if female) / 66+ (if male)	4	

S3) FE LEVEL

FE Full Level 2	1	
FE Full Level 3	2	
FE Part Level 3	3	

S4) REGION

EE East of England	1	
EM East Midlands	2	
GL Greater London	3	
NE North East	4	
NW North West	5	
SE South East	6	
SW South West	7	
WM West Midlands	8	
YH Yorkshire & Humberside	9	

S5) INSTITUTION TYPE

Action plan`	1	
No action plan	2	
Non SE / Non boost sample	3	

S6) EMPLOYER LED

YES	1	
NO	2	
<b>QUOTAS: S2 AND S3 INTERLOCKED S2, S3 AND S4 INTERLOCKED S4 S5 NON INTERLOCKED. S1 MONITORING ONLY. S3, S6 AND S4 INTERLOCKED S3, S5 AND S4 INTERLOCKED</b>		

- 1) First can I just check, in November 2005 were you enrolled on a course at (INSERT COLLEGE or PROVIDER)?

	( )	
Yes – currently on course	1	GO TO MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE
Yes – was on it but have left now (= RECENT LEAVER)	2	GO TO Q1a
No / not sure	3	THANK AND CLOSE

ASK LEAVERS (Q1 = 2) OTHERS GO TO MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1a) Did you complete the course or did you drop out without completing?

	( )	
Completed course	1	GO TO MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE
Did not complete course / dropped out	2	
Don't know	3	

ASK ALL

- 1b) Which course or programme [TEXT SUB: are (Q1/1) / were (Q1/2)] you enrolled on at (INSERT COLLEGE or PROVIDER) [TEXT SUB: in November 2005 (Q1/2)]?

	( )	
Text:	1	Go to Q2

**Main questionnaire**

ASK ALL

- 2) The first area I would like to cover is any qualifications you may have had **BEFORE** you started the [INSERT TEXT FROM Q1b] course or programme with [NAME OF PROVIDER] I am interested in any qualification you had before starting the course, whether you got it at school or college or through work or training; and no matter how long ago you got them. So do you have any qualifications from any of the following? READ OUT

		Yes	No	Don't know
a	School, college or university	1	2	3
b		1	2	3
c	Connected with work, whether your current employer or a previous one	1	2	3
d	From government schemes	1	2	3
e	From an Apprenticeship [ADD IF NECESSARY: These qualifications began in 1995. In 2004 Modern Apprenticeships changed name to Apprenticeships. They are work based learning opportunities and are for those aged 16-25.]	1	2	3
	From having been educated at home, when you were of school age			
f		1	2	3
g		1	2	3

IF NO/DON'T KNOW TO ALL OPTIONS AT Q2 ASK Q3 (OTHERS GO TO QUALIFICATIONS SECTION)

- 3) So can I just check, you left full time education with no qualifications and have not gained any qualifications since then, for example through work or returning to college?

	( )	
Correct – no qualifications	1	CHECK SECTION ON ADDITIONAL DFES QUESTIONS
No – DO have qualifications	2	GO TO QUALIFICATIONS SECTION
Not sure if what have counts as a qualification	3	GO TO QUALIFICATIONS SECTION
Can't remember if have qualification	4	THANK AND CLOSE (THIS DOES NOT COUNT AS AN INTERVIEW)

### **QUALIFICATIONS SECTION**

IF ANY QUALIFICATIONS:

- 4) Before I run through some qualifications, can you tell me if you had any qualifications specific to Scotland or Wales before starting your [INSERT TEXT FROM Q1b] course (ADD IF NECESSARY: such as SCOTVEC or SCEs)?

	( )	
Yes – Scottish	1	IF THIS SINGLE CODED EXCLUDE UNDERLINED IN ITALICS AT Q5
Yes – Welsh	2	IF THIS SINGLE CODED EXCLUDE THOSE IN PLAIN UNDERLINING AT Q5
No	3	EXCLUDE QUALIFICATIONS UNDERLINED IN FOLLOWING TABLE

- 5) I'd like to run through a list of qualifications to see which you had BEFORE starting your [INSERT TEXT FROM Q1b] course. (IF Q2 has at least one Yes among first 4 statements: "Please include all those acquired from [list statements answered YES AT Q2\_a to Q2\_d]"). However, please do NOT include the qualifications which your [INSERT TEXT FROM Q1b] course intended to lead to. READ OUT

Qualification	Code	Max level achievable with that qualification
A degree (such as a foundation degree, a BSc, a BA, MA or a PhD), graduate membership of a professional qualification a PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate of Education), or higher	1	5
A Diploma in Higher Education: this usually takes two years full-time or three years part-time. (Examples are DipHE in youth and community work, or DipHE in design)	2	4
HNC / HND (Higher National Certificate / Higher National Diploma)	3	4
ONC / OND (Ordinary National Certificate / Ordinary National Diploma)	4	3
BTEC / BEC / TEC / EdExcel/ LQL	5	4
SCOTVEC, SCOTEC or SCOTBEC	6	4
Teaching qualification other than PGCE	7	4
Nursing or other medical qualification (excluding nursery nurse qualifications) not yet mentioned (please do not include first aid courses)	8	4
Other Higher Education qualifications below degree level	9	4
A levels (if respondent aged 60 plus add: including Higher School Certificate and Matriculation Higher)	10	3
SCE Higher (Scotland)	11	3
NVQ / SVQ	12	5
GNVQ / GSVQ	13	3
AS-level / vocational AS-level	14	3
Certificate of 6th Year Studies (CSYS)	15	3
Access to HE	16	3
O levels or AO levels (if respondent aged 60 plus add School Certificate and Matriculation) [nb ended in 1988]	17	2
Standard/Ordinary (O) Grade/Lower (Scotland)	18	3

GCSEs [nb introduced from 1988]	19	2
CSEs [nb ended in 1988]	20	2
National Qualifications (Scotland) including SCE Intermediate	21	4
RSA or OCR	22	4
City and Guilds	23	3
YT Certificate	24	1
Key Skills / Core Skills (Scotland)	25	2
Basic Skills including Skills for life/literacy/numeracy/ESOL	26	1
Welsh Baccalaureate	27	Level 3
International Baccalaureate	28	Level 3
Entry Level Qualifications	29	1
Any other professional or vocational qualification such as HGV or first aid qualification (IF YES: Can you tell me what such qualifications you have?)	30	Level derived (if highest) from next but one section
Any foreign, non-UK qualifications (IF YES: Can you tell me what such qualifications you have?)	31	Level derived (if highest) from next but one section
Which other qualifications, if any, do you have? (LIST)	32	Level derived (if highest) from next but one section
Any other qualifications? (LIST)	33	Level derived (if highest) from next but one section
Any other qualifications? (LIST)	34	Level derived (if highest) from next but one section

**SECTION: FOLLOW UP ON QUALIFICATIONS TO DETERMINE HIGHEST  
LEVEL & 'THINNESS'**

Before starting your [INSERT TEXT FROM Q1b] course.....

IF BTEC/ BEC / TEC / EdExcel / LQL AT Q5

- 6) Was your highest BTEC qualification...READ OUT AND CODE FIRST THAT APPLIES

	( )	
At higher level (level 4 or higher)	1	Full (100%) level 4
At National Certificate or National Diploma level (level 3)	2	Full (100%) level 3
A first diploma or general diploma (level 2)	3	Full (100%) level 2
A first certificate or general certificate (below level 2)	4	Full (100%) level 1
(DO NOT READ OUT) not sure	5	= treat as full (100%) level 1 for determining level

IF SCOTVEC / SCOTEC / SCOTBEC AT Q5

- 7) Was your highest SCOTVEC qualification...READ OUT AND CODE FIRST THAT APPLIES

	( )	
At higher level (level 4 or higher)	1	Full (100%) level 4
A full National Certificate (level 3)	2	Full (100%) level 3
A first diploma or general diploma (level 2)	3	Full (100%) level 2
A first certificate or general certificate (below level 2)	4	Full (100%) level 1
Modules towards a National Certificate	5	Part level 1
(DO NOT READ OUT) not sure	6	= treat as part level 1 for determining level

IF A LEVEL AT Q5

- 8) Did you have...

	( )	
One A level (or equivalent)	1	Counts as 50% of level 3
Or more than one	2	Full (100%) level 3
(DO NOT READ OUT) not sure	3	= treat as (50%) level 3 for determining level



- 9) IF SCE HIGHERS AT Q5  
Did you have...

	( )	
One Higher	1	Counts as 33% of level 3
Two Higher	2	Counts as 66% of level 3
Three of more Higher	3	Full (100%) level 3
(DO NOT READ OUT) not sure	4	= treat as 33% of level 3 for determining level

- 10) IF NVQ/SVQ AT Q5  
What was your highest level of full NVQ / SVQ...

	( )	
Level 1	1	Full (100%) level 1
Level 2	2	Full (100%) level 2
Level 3	3	Full (100%) level 3
Level 4	4	Full (100%) level 4
Or Level 5	5	Full (100%) level 5
(DO NOT READ OUT) not sure	6	= full level 1 for determining level

- 11) IF GNVQ/GSVQ AT Q5  
Was your highest GNVQ / GSVQ at...?

	( )	
Advanced level 12 units	1	Full (100%) level 3
Advanced level 6 units	2	Part (50%) level 3
[DO NOT READ OUT] Advanced level – unsure of units	3	Full (100%) level 3
Full intermediate level (6 units)	4	Full (100%) level 2
Part one intermediate level (3 units)	5	Part (50%) level 2
[DO NOT READ OUT] Intermediate level – unsure of units	6	Full (100%) level 2
Full foundation level (6 units)	7	Full (100%) level 1
Part one foundation level (3 units)	8	Part (50%) level 1
[DO NOT READ OUT] Foundation level – unsure of units	9	Full (100%) level 1
(DO NOT READ OUT) Can't remember / Don't know	10	= full level 1 for determining level

- 12) IF AS-LEVEL AT Q5  
Did you have...

	( )	
One AS level	1	Counts as 25% of level 3
Two AS levels	2	Counts as 50% of level 3
Three AS levels	3	Counts as 75% of level 3
Four or more AS levels	4	Counts as 100% of level 3
(DO NOT READ OUT) not sure	5	Counts as 25% of level 3

- 13) IF HAVE O LEVELS OR AO LEVELS  
How many O levels or AO levels did you have in total? PROMPT IF NECESSARY. IF DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER ASK IF LESS THAN FIVE

	( )	
One	1	Counts as 20% of a level 2
Two	2	Counts as 40% of a level 2
Three	3	Counts as 60% of a level 2
Four	4	Counts as 80% of a level 2
Or 5 or more	5	Full (100%) level 2
Can't remember but less than 5	6	= treat as 20% of a level 2
(DO NOT READ OUT) Can't remember at all	7	= treat as 20% of a level 2

- 14) IF HAVE SCE STANDARD / ORDINARY O GRADE  
How many SCE Standard grades 1-3 or O grades at grade C did you have? PROMPT IF NECESSARY. IF DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER ASK IF LESS THAN FIVE

	( )	
None	1	Counts as full level 1
One	2	Counts as 20% of a level 2
Two	3	Counts as 40% of a level 2
Three	4	Counts as 60% of a level 2
Four	5	Counts as 80% of a level 2
Or 5 or more	6	Full (100%) level 2
Can't remember but less than 5	7	= treat as 20% of a level 2
(DO NOT READ OUT) Can't remember at all	8	= treat as 20% of a level 2

- IF HAVE GCSEs
- 15) How many GCSEs grade C or above did you have? PROMPT IF NECESSARY. IF DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER ASK IF LESS THAN FIVE

	( )	
None	1	Counts as full level 1
One	2	Counts as 20% of a level 2
Two	3	Counts as 40% of a level 2
Three	4	Counts as 60% of a level 2
Four	5	Counts as 80% of a level 2
Or 5 or more	6	Full (100%) level 2
Can't remember but less than 5	7	= treat as 20% of a level 2
(DO NOT READ OUT) Can't remember at all	8	= treat as 20% of a level 2

- IF HAVE CSEs AT Q5
- 16) How many CSEs did you have at grade 1? PROMPT IF NECESSARY. IF DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER ASK IF LESS THAN FIVE

	( )	
None	1	Counts as full level 1
One	2	Counts as 20% of a level 2
Two	3	Counts as 40% of a level 2
Three	4	Counts as 60% of a level 2
Four	5	Counts as 80% of a level 2
Or 5 or more	6	Full (100%) level 2
Can't remember but less than 5	7	= treat as 20% of a level 2
(DO NOT READ OUT) Can't remember at all	8	= treat as 20% of a level 2

IF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (SCOTLAND) INCLUDING SCE INTERMEDIATE AT Q5

- 17) Was your highest National Qualification... READ OUT AND CODE FIRST THAT APPLIES?

	( )	
Advanced higher	1	ASK NEXT QUESTION
Higher	2	Full (100%) level 3
Intermediate level 2	3	<u>ASK Q20</u>
Intermediate level 1	4	<u>ASK Q19</u>
Access Level	5	Full (100%) level 2
(DO NOT READ OUT) not sure	6	Full (100%) level 2 for determining level

IF ADVANCED HIGHER NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (SCOTLAND) INCLUDING SCE INTERMEDIATE AT PREVIOUS QUESTION

- 18) Did you have ... READ OUT AND CODE?

	( )	
One advanced higher	1	Part (50%) level 4
Or more than one	2	Full (100%) level 4
(DO NOT READ OUT) not sure	3	= Part (50%) level 4 for determining level

IF INTERMEDIATE LEVEL 1 AT NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (SCOTLAND) INCLUDING SCE INTERMEDIATE AT LAST BUT ONE QUESTION

- 19) How many Scottish National Qualifications Intermediate level 1 did you have at grade B or above ... READ OUT AND CODE?

	( )	
None	1	Counts as full level 1
One	2	Counts as 20% of a level 2
Two	3	Counts as 40% of a level 2
Three	4	Counts as 60% of a level 2
Four	5	Counts as 80% of a level 2
Five or more	6	Full (100%) level 2
(DO NOT READ OUT) not sure	7	= treat as 20% of a level 2

IF INTERMEDIATE LEVEL 2 AT NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS  
(SCOTLAND) INCLUDING SCE INTERMEDIATE

- 20) How many Scottish National Qualifications Intermediate level 2 did you have at grade C or above ... READ OUT AND CODE?

	( )	
None	1	Counts as full level 1
One	2	Counts as 20% of a level 2
Two	3	Counts as 40% of a level 2
Three	4	Counts as 60% of a level 2
Four	5	Counts as 80% of a level 2
Five or more	6	Full (100%) level 2
(DO NOT READ OUT) not sure	7	= treat as 20% of a level 2

IF CITY AND GUILDS AT Q5

- 21) Was your highest City and Guilds qualification... READ OUT AND CODE FIRST THAT APPLIES?

	( )	
Advanced Craft / part 3	1	Full (100%) level 3
Craft / part 2	2	Full (100%) level 2
Foundation / part 1	3	Full (100%) level 1
(DO NOT READ OUT) not sure	4	= Full level 1 for determining level

IF RSA / OCR AT Q5

- 22) Was your highest RSA or OCR...? READ OUT AND CODE FIRST THAT APPLIES

	( )	
A higher diploma	1	Full (100%) level 4
An advanced diploma or advanced certificate	2	Full (100%) level 3
A diploma	3	Full (100%) level 2
Or Some other RSA or OCR (including Stage I, II and III)	4	Full (100%) level 1
(DO NOT READ OUT) not sure	5	Treat as full (100%)_level 1

IF APPRENTICESHIP AT Q2

23) Was your Apprenticeship ... READ OUT?

	( )	
Advanced level	1	Full (100%) level 3
Foundation level (National traineeship)	2	Full (100%) level 2
(DO NOT READ OUT) not sure	3	ASK Q24

IF NOT SURE (Q23/3)

24) When did you complete your Apprenticeship. Did you complete before 2001 or in 2001 or later?

	( )	
Before 2001	1	Full (100%) level 3
In 2001 or more recently	2	Full (100%) level 2
(DO NOT READ OUT) Can't remember	3	= treat as full level 2

**SECTION FOR 'OTHER' AND 'FOREIGN' QUALIFICATIONS AT Q5**  
**(i.e. codes 30-34)**  
**(OTHERS GO TO NEXT SECTION)**

IF 'OTHER' OR FOREIGN QUALIFICATION CODED AT Q5 (codes 30-34) AND THIS MULTICODED WITH OTHER RESPONSES (including 2 other responses, or an other and a foreign qualification) ASK Q25 (IF 30-34 AT Q5 AND THIS SINGLE CODED ASK Q26)

- 25) You've mentioned that you had a number of qualifications before starting your [INSERT TEXT FROM Q1b] course. Which of the following do you regard as the highest qualification? READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY

(INSERT EACH OF THOSE CODED FROM 1-29 IF ANY. ALSO INSERT ANY OF Q2_E AND Q2_F IF CODED)	1	GO TO NEXT SECTION
INSERT TEXT OF 'OTHER' (CODE 30 IF APPLICABLE)	2	ASK NEXT QUESTION
INSERT TEXT OF 'OTHER' (CODE 31 IF APPLICABLE)	3	
INSERT TEXT OF 'OTHER' (CODE 32 IF APPLICABLE)	4	
INSERT TEXT OF 'OTHER' (CODE 33 IF APPLICABLE)	5	
INSERT TEXT OF 'OTHER' (CODE 34 IF APPLICABLE)	6	
INSERT TEXT OF ANY FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS (CODE 31)	7	
All equal	8	see instructions below*
Not sure	9	GO TO NEXT SECTION

\*if "All Equal" coded, set dummy variable below and re-ask Q25 based on which is most recent.

EQUALDUM = 1 if Q25="All equal"

IF CODES 30-34 AT Q5 SINGLE CODED, OR IF CODE 2 - 7 AT Q25  
(OTHERS GO TO NEXT SECTION)

- 26) Can you tell me a bit more about this qualification. What age were you when you achieved it? IF DON'T KNOW EXACT THEN HAVE A RANGE

	( )	
16 or under	1	
17-18	2	
19-24	3	
25 plus	4	
Can't remember	5	

- 27) Were there entry requirements for starting this qualification, for example could you only start learning for this qualification if you had other qualifications or if you had relevant experience?

	( )	
Yes – entry requirements	1	ASK Q28
No – entry requirements	2	ASK Q29
Can't remember	3	

IF ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- 28) What other qualifications or relevant experience did you need?


IF CODES 30-34 AT Q5 SINGLE CODED, OR IF CODE 2 - 7 AT Q25  
29) How long did it take to achieve this qualification from start to completion? PROMPT WITH RANGES IF NECESSARY

	( )	
A month or less	1	
More than a month but less than 3	2	
More than 3 months but less than 6	3	
More than 6 months but less than 9	4	
More than 9 months but less than a year	5	
Between 1 year and 18 months	6	
More than 18 months	7	
Can't remember	8	
Other (RECORD HOW LONG AND DETAILS PROVIDED)	0	



IF Q29 = 3-8 OR 0

29a) And was the course a full-time or part-time course?

	( )	
Full-time	1	
Part-time	2	
Can't remember	3	

30) INTERVIEWER EITHER CLASSIFY INTO LEVEL IF CLEAR OR CHECK WITH RESPONDENT: Qualifications are often classified into broad levels. Which of the following broad descriptions do you think comes closest to the level of this qualification?

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION – USE PREVIOUS ANSWERS TO HELP GUAGE ESTIMATED LEVEL RELEVANT

		Estimated at:
Level 1 which is entry or foundation level - this includes short courses.	1	= level 1
A level 2 intermediate qualification, such as O levels or City and Guilds craft level	2	= level 2
A level 3 advanced qualification such as A levels, and ONC or OND or a City and Guilds Advanced craft. This is likely to take 2 years to complete, and would not be gained by anyone under 17.	3	= level 3
A first degree (this would take 2-3 years to complete and you would normally need qualifications at A level or equivalent) [Would be 20 plus to acquire this]	4	= level 4
A higher degree like an MBA or a PhD (this would take a number of years to complete and would normally require a first degree). [Would be over 20 to acquire this].	5	= level 5
Don't know / unsure	6	= UNCLEAR

IF SAY 'Teaching qualification other than PGCE' AT Q5 (Q5=7) ASK 30a (OTHERS CHECK Q30b)

30a) You said earlier that you had some teaching qualification other than a PGCE. Can you tell me a bit about this teaching qualification – where you attained it, at what age, how long it took, whether you needed any qualifications to get on the course and, if so, what qualifications and finally whether it was a full or part-time course? Also can you tell me what type of job the qualification was needed for (e.g. classroom teacher vs. classroom assistant)

NOW CHECK Q30b

IF SAY 'Nursing or other medical qualification, excluding nursery nurse qualifications' AT Q5 (Q5=8) ASK Q30b, (OTHERS CHECK NEXT PAGE)

Q30b) You said earlier that you had some Nursing or other medical qualification, excluding nursery nurse qualifications. Can you tell me a bit about this nursing qualification – where you attained it, at what age, how long it took, whether you needed any qualifications to get on the course and, if so, what qualifications and finally whether it was a full or part-time course? Also can you tell me what type of job the qualification was needed for?


**CATI TO DETERMINE HIGHEST QUALIFICATION OR QUALIFICATIONS**

IF Q5 SINGLE CODED HIGHEST QUALIFICATION = ANSWER AT Q5

IF Q25 ANSWERED CODE 2-7 TAKE ANSWER OF HIGHEST QUALIFICATION FROM ANSWER AT Q25

IF Q25 ANSWERED AS CODE 1 (REFERRING TO A RESPONSE CODED AT Q5 AS 1-29) AND ONLY ONE ANSWER AT Q5 CODED 1-29 TAKE THIS AS HIGHEST QUALIFICATION

OTHERS TAKE HIGHEST QUALIFICATION (S) FROM HIGHEST QUALIFICATION FROM Q5-Q30 RESPONSES (LEVEL 3 FULL HIGHER THAN A PART LEVEL 3; PART LEVEL 3 HIGHER THAN LEVEL 2 ETC ETC)

NOTE:

IF A LEVEL AND AS LEVEL SELECTED AS HIGHEST THEN ALWAYS CHOOSE A LEVEL A S HIGHEST AND ASK Q32 (ONE QUAL HIGHEST)

**IF MORE THAN ONE QUALIFICATION HIGHEST (OTHERS ASK Q32)**

- 31) From what you have told us about the qualifications you had before starting your [INSERT TEXT FROM Q1b] course, we take it that your highest qualifications were <insert qualifications>. Which of these did you achieve most recently? SINGLE CODE ONLY

	( )	
<Highest qualification 1>	1	ASK Q32
<Highest qualification 2>	2	
<Highest qualification 3>	3	
Two or more at the same time	4	
Don't know	5	

**SAY TO ALL WITH QUALIFICATIONS**

- 32) IF ONE QUALIFICATION HIGHEST: From what you have told us about the qualifications you had before starting your [INSERT TEXT FROM Q1b] course, we take it that your highest qualification was <insert qualification>. How many years ago did you achieve this qualification?  
IF UNSURE PROMPT WITH RANGES.

IF MORE THAN ONE QUALIFICATION HIGHEST: How many years ago did you achieve [<ANSWER FROM Q31> IF CODES 1-3 OR IF DON'T KNOW OR CODE 4 'the most recent of these qualifications']

	( )	
EXACT NUMBER OF YEARS AGO THAT ACHIEVED	1	RECORD EXACT YEAR (1920-2005)
Don't know	2	ASK Q33

IF DON'T KNOW (OTHERS ASK Q34)

- 33) Roughly how many years ago would you say it was...? READ OUT

	( )	
Within the last 3 years	1	
Within the 5 years	2	
Within the last 10 years	3	
Within the last 20 years	4	
Within the last 30 years	5	
More than 30 years ago	6	
Don't know	7	

**ASK ALL EXCEPT THOSE SINGLE CODE AT Q5 (IF SINGLE CODED GO TO NEXT SECTION)**

- 34) Have you gained any other qualifications since your {[<highest qualification> if only one highest qualification identified by CATI] OR [<highest qualification> at q31 if codes 1-3] OR ['these highest qualification' if other answer at q31]}? Please do not include your [INSERT TEXT FROM Q1b] course that you enrolled on in November 2004'.

Yes	1	ASK Q35
No	2	GO TO NEXT SECTION
Don't know	3	

**ASK ALL WITH MORE RECENT QUALIFICATIONS (i.e. NO AT Q34)**

- 35) What was the most recent qualification that you had before starting your [INSERT TEXT FROM Q1B] course? LIST ANSWERS FROM Q5 [PLUS AN OTHER – NOTE TO RESEARCH - WE WILL NEED TO EDIT THESE] AND PROMPT IF NECESSARY

- 36) And how many years ago did you achieve <ANSWER FROM Q35>?

	( )	
EXACT NUMBER OF YEARS AGO THAT ACHIEVED _____	1	RECORD EXACT YEAR (1920-2005)
Don't know	2	ASK Q37

IF DON'T KNOW (OTHERS GO TO NEXT SECTION

- 37) Roughly how many years ago would you say it was...? READ OUT

	( )	
Within the last 1 year	1	
Within the last 3 years	2	
Within the 5 years	3	
Within the last 10 years	4	
Within the last 20 years	5	
More than 20 years ago	6	
Don't know	7	

ASK ALL

- 38) I'm interested to know the reasons for your studying the [INSERT COURSE AT Q1b] course. Did you go on the course because you thought it would help in your current job, help with future work or career, both or neither.

	( )	
Help in your current job	1	ASK ALL OF Q39
Help in future work / career	2	
Both	3	
Neither	4	ASK ONLY CODES IN BOLD AT Q39
Don't Know	5	ASK ALL OF Q39

- 39) Can you tell me if the following were a key reason, a part of the reason or not a reason at all for starting your [INSERT COURSE AT Q1b] course (DEPENDING ON HOW ANSWER Q1: that you are currently on (Q1/1) / that you recently left (Q1/2))..? READ OUT.

*RANDOMISE STATEMENTS*

	Key reason	Part of the reasons	Not a reason	DO NOT READ OUT Not sure / don't know
To get a new job	1	2	3	4
To develop my career	1	2	3	4
To change to a different type of work	1	2	3	4
To gain new skills for my (q38/1 - current job / q38/2 – future work q38/3 – current job or for future work)	1	2	3	4
To help me get a pay rise	1	2	3	4
To help me get a promotion	1	2	3	4
To help me get more satisfaction at work	1	2	3	4
[ONLY ASK IF CODE 2 OR 3 AT Q38] To help me set up my own business	1	2	3	4
To refresh skills or qualifications that were becoming out of date	1	2	3	4
[ONLY ASK IF CODE 1 OR 3 AT Q38] My employer made me do it	1	2	3	4
To meet legislative requirements	1	2	3	4
I needed to do this course so I could get on to another course that I want to do in the future	1	2	3	4
For personal interest and development	1	2	3	4
Were any other reasons important (SPECIFY)	1			

- 40) Why did you decide to embark on your current course WHEN you did i.e. why was it an appropriate time for you as opposed to a couple of years before? DO NOT READ OUT [MULTICODE OKAY]

	( )	
Decided it was time to change career	1	ASK Q41
Employer suggested it	2	
Personal circumstances favourable e.g. children left home; time on my hands	3	
Enable me to progress in the job I was doing at the time	4	
Course not available before	5	
Interest	6	
Progression from a previous course	7	
Availability of government initiatives to help with the costs	8	
Other (SPECIFY)	0	
Don't know	X	

- 41) Finally, at the moment are you ...READ OUT – CODE FIRST YES (MAIN ACTIVITY)

<u>(ONLY IF S2=4)</u> <u>Retired</u>	1
<u>Employed full time (30+ hours a week)</u>	2
<u>Employed part time (less than 30 hours a week)</u>	3
Self-employed	4
On a government-supported training and employment programme ADD IF NECESSARY: This includes things like New Deal and Work Based Learning programmes, but not education courses without an employment element	5
Unemployed though looking and available for work	6
Unemployed but not looking or not available for work	7
Doing unpaid family work	8
None of the above	

SAY TO ALL

**INTERVIEWER READ OUT: "You've now reached the end of the survey. Just in case you missed it, my name is X and I am calling from IFF Research on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council. I'd like to thank you ever so much for taking part and I hope you have a pleasant day / evening"**

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THANK RESPONDENT AND CLOSE INTERVIEW

I declare that this survey has been carried out under IFF instructions and within the rules of the MRS Code of Conduct.	
Interviewer signature:	Date:
Finish time:	Interview Length mins



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