



**Cambridge
Assessment**

AS level trends 2018

Research Report

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1 Executive summary

This report presents findings from two studies on AS level trends in 2018. The first part of the report describes national trends in AS level entries from analyses of data published by Ofqual. This updates our previous quantitative analysis of AS level trends in 2017 (Vitello & Williamson, 2018). The rest of the report discusses the findings from a survey of school and college Heads of Department (HoDs) in 2017/2018, looking at how recent AS and A level reforms have affected provision and students' programmes of study. The survey was a follow up of the survey we conducted in 2017 (Vitello & Williamson, 2018), with some modifications to adjust for the progression of the reforms.

National AS level entry trends

The number of AS level entries in Summer 2018 was substantially lower than in Summer 2017, both for newly reformed subjects (tranche 3), and for those that had been reformed in previous years. The decreases in Year 12 AS level entries between 2017 and 2018 for individual tranche 3 subjects ranged from 63% in Further Mathematics to 90% in Design & Technology. These decreases were larger than the first year decreases seen for tranche 1 subjects (in Summer 2016) and tranche 2 subjects (in Summer 2017). It is important to note, however, that tens of thousands of Year 12 candidates were still entered for AS levels in 2018: although entries have decreased and continue to do so, it is not the case that all centres have moved away from AS level provision.

Survey respondents

The findings are based on responses from 188 HoDs collected between December 2017 and March 2018. The majority (84%) of HoDs came from sixth forms that were attached to a secondary school, and just over half came from centres that were funded as academies or free schools. Over 50% stated that their students had a wide range of attainment, with another large minority stating that their students were mostly high-attaining (i.e., were expected to achieve A or B grades in their A levels). The HoDs came from a wide range of subject areas, including Art & Design, English, Humanities, Maths, Sciences and Social Sciences. See the Appendix for full details of the respondents' characteristics.

AS level trends from survey respondents

- A programme of 3 A levels + 0 AS levels appears to have become the "new normal". Previous research found evidence of a move away from AS level provision, but these studies had been conducted before the full implementation of AS/A level reforms. Importantly, this survey explores the programmes of study of actual Year 12 students in 2017/2018, the first cohort taking entirely reformed A levels.
- Among HoDs from departments that had already reduced AS level provision, only 13% said they expected to change AS provision in the future, indicating that those who have moved away from AS level provision strongly expect to stabilise in the new, no-AS provision model.
- Reductions in AS provision are likely to increase again from September 2018. Among HoDs from departments that had not yet reduced AS level provision, almost 70% stated that they expected their AS provision to change, and a large majority expected to change provision in time for September 2018. Most of these HoDs expected to stop offering AS levels altogether.

Decisions about AS level provision

- The majority of respondents confirmed that AS provision was decided at centre (rather than departmental) level. For over half of respondents' centres, AS provision was uniform across all departments, and where it varied, AS levels were most commonly offered in only a minority of departments.
- AS level provision has continued in a minority of centres, with a minority of HoDs from these centres saying they have no plans to stop AS provision. Interestingly, centres still offering AS levels seemed to be encouraging a pre-reform programme of study (4 AS levels in Year 12, then 3 A levels) more frequently than a programme that incorporated the AS level in a different way.

Opinions and reasons for decisions

- Opinions on the value or purpose of AS levels, and the reasons given for offering or not offering AS levels, were very similar to those in 2017 (Vitello & Williamson, 2018). The most commonly cited reasons for advising students to take the AS level in their A level subjects were for exam practice, or as a way to 'drop' a subject after starting it as an A level.
- There were substantial increases in the proportions of HoDs who said they advised taking the AS level because it helps students to study for the A level, and because the AS is particularly useful for low-attaining students. This change could suggest that centres who maintained AS provision during the gradual implementation of reformed qualifications for other reasons (e.g., timetabling) are now less likely to advise students to take AS levels, leaving support for lower attaining students as a more prominent motivation among centres still offering AS levels in 2017/2018.
- With regard to reasons for *not* offering the AS level, the dominant reasons concerned negative impacts of studying the AS on the A level, either in terms of student focus or teaching time, as found in 2017 (Vitello & Williamson, 2018).

Wider Key Stage 5 programme of study

- We did not find evidence that the EPQ or any other qualification/activity was being used to "replace" the 4th AS space per se. The non-AS/A level activities and qualifications that HoDs expected their students to take did *not* vary according to the number of AS levels they were taking.
- There was strong agreement among HoDs that the EPQ helps to enhance general, non-subject-specific skills (90% of those who answered), is good preparation for university (86%) and is good for university applications (86%).
- By contrast, few HoDs expressed positive opinions about Core Maths. Many HoDs selected "Don't know" in Core Maths questions, suggesting a lack of familiarity with the qualification.

The continuing trend away from AS level provision raises questions about the reputation of the AS level as well as its future viability, which is a matter of concern in light of the fact that some centres do still appear to value the AS and what it can offer their students. We recommend that interested readers turn to the main discussion section (p. 40), where these and other implications are explored.

2 List of abbreviations

A level	Advanced level
AS level	Advanced Subsidiary level
DfE	Department for Education
EPQ	Extended Project Qualification
FE	Further Education
HoD	Head of Department
KS5	Key Stage 5
NPD	National Pupil Database
OCR	Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations
Ofqual	Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
UCAS	The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service

3 Introduction

The Department for Education announced its intention to reform AS and A levels in 2010 (DfE, 2010). The reformed qualifications that were introduced featured major changes to subject content and assessment structure; most strikingly, AS levels were 'decoupled' from A levels to form separate, standalone qualifications. Both reformed AS and A levels are assessed linearly, and students taking a decoupled A level are not required to take an AS level at all.

The reforms were not implemented for all subjects at the same time. Decoupled AS and A levels in the first tranche of subjects to be reformed were taught from September 2015, those in the second tranche from September 2016, and those in the third tranche from September 2017¹.

In 2017, we conducted three studies to investigate the effects of AS and A level reforms (Vitello & Williamson, 2018). We examined the uptake and provision of reformed AS and A level qualifications, the views of students and Heads of Department (HoDs) towards the reformed qualifications, and, in particular, the reasons given by students and HoDs for choosing to study or not study decoupled AS levels. Findings suggested that the provision of decoupled AS levels was decided upon by centres rather than departments, and that student uptake of decoupled AS levels was largely determined by centre policy. Two dominant centre responses were identified: one large subgroup of centres had removed AS level provision in all reformed subjects, whilst another large subgroup of centres had maintained provision of AS levels, as in the pre-reform system. Despite agreement from many HoDs about the positive value of decoupled AS levels for students, particularly in helping students' A level decisions and in giving students exam practice, a high proportion of HoDs said they were likely to stop all AS provision in the future. Changes were most frequently expected to be implemented from September 2017 onwards, and the great majority of HoDs expected that their students beginning Key Stage 5 in September 2017 would be studying 3 A levels and no AS levels. HoDs from departments that had already reduced their AS level provision were the least likely to expect further changes to their provision. For these reasons, it was concluded that the maintenance of pre-reform AS provision was a transitional state, and further decreases in AS provision were expected.

This report presents a follow-up of the research by Vitello and Williamson (2018). The timing of this subsequent research was important because of the introduction of the third tranche of reformed qualifications in September 2017. This meant that from that point reformed qualifications were being taught in all mainstream subjects for the first time. This report contains findings from two studies conducted after September 2017. The first study analysed national entries and results data, in order to look at changes in the provision and uptake of AS and A levels. The second study conducted a survey of HoDs to further investigate the provision and uptake of reformed AS and A levels, and, particularly, to strengthen our understanding of the reasons behind student and centre decisions.

¹ Decoupled A levels (but not AS levels) will be introduced in a fourth and final tranche of subjects in September 2018. This tranche consists of language subjects with low uptake, such as Modern Greek. Decoupled AS and A levels in Classical Greek, Latin, and the most commonly studied Modern Foreign Languages (French, German, Spanish, Chinese, Italian and Russian) have already been introduced.

4 Data and method

4.1 National entry data

The data on national entries was obtained from Ofqual. Ofqual collates entry numbers for AS and A levels from awarding bodies and publishes aggregated data on its public website. We analysed the collated data on AS and A level entries published by Ofqual a few months prior to the Summer 2018 exam session (Ofqual, 2018b). This data included entries for 2014 – 2018, listed by year, subject, and candidate year group.

The analysis considered changes in AS and A level entries over the course of the phased introduction of reformed AS and A levels. We analysed trends for Year 12 candidates only as well as for all candidates who took those qualifications.

4.2 Survey study

The survey was based upon the Head of Department survey carried out in Spring 2017, reported by Vitello and Williamson (2018). The survey was created and completed online via SurveyMonkey between December 2017 and March 2018. It took approximately 15 minutes to complete. Respondents were entered into a prize draw for one £100 book voucher.

The survey questions targeted the following information:

- Job role of the Head of Department (none, actual, acting or deputy HoD) and their involvement in KS5 provision decisions.
- Characteristics of their centre
- Typical level of student attainment in the respondent's department
- AS and A levels offered in their department
- Opinions on the value of decoupled AS levels and the practicality of delivering them
- Current and future changes to AS/A level provision
- The decision makers of AS level provision at their centre
- Combinations of A levels and AS levels in the same subject and reasons for these combinations
- Uptake of an AS level on its own
- Whole programme of study, including the notion of the '4th AS space', EPQ and Core Maths.

Analyses were restricted to responses from respondents who confirmed that they were HoDs, including acting or deputy Heads, and involved in deciding Key Stage 5 provision. Responses were analysed using SAS to calculate descriptive statistics, primarily counts and percentages.

5 Results: National data

5.1 National trends in AS level uptake

This section gives an update on trends in AS level uptake, using the collated entry data published by Ofqual in early Summer 2018 (Ofqual, 2018b). Table 1 reports percentage changes in AS level entries by subject.

Table 1: Changes in AS level entries, by subject

Tranche	Subject group ²	% change from 2015 to 2018		% change in first year ³ of teaching reformed qualifications	
		Year 12 only	All candidates	Year 12 only	All candidates
1	Art & Design subjects	-86%	-85%	-35%	-34%
1	Biology	-82%	-84%	-20%	-16%
1	Business Studies	-83%	-84%	-16%	-14%
1	Chemistry	-82%	-84%	-20%	-16%
1	Computing	-77%	-78%	-10%	-7%
1	Economics	-84%	-86%	-19%	-15%
1	English	-88%	-89%	-27%	-24%
1	History	-85%	-87%	-29%	-25%
1	Physics	-83%	-85%	-19%	-15%
1	Psychology	-81%	-83%	-22%	-20%
1	Sociology	-78%	-79%	-16%	-15%
2	Drama	-91%	-91%	-72%	-65%
2	French	-88%	-89%	-65%	-52%
2	Geography	-87%	-88%	-64%	-53%
2	German	-88%	-89%	-63%	-51%
2	Music	-91%	-90%	-55%	-50%
2	Physical Education	-90%	-91%	-68%	-58%
2	Religious Studies	-86%	-87%	-66%	-56%
2	Spanish	-87%	-87%	-63%	-50%
3	Design & Technology	-92%	-78%	-90%	-72%
3	Law	-81%	-70%	-78%	-66%
3	Mathematics	-82%	-54%	-80%	-52%
3	Mathematics (Further)	-62%	-33%	-63%	-33%
3	Media / Film / TV Studies	-87%	-80%	-84%	-75%
3	Political Studies	-78%	-61%	-79%	-63%

² Note that the Ofqual data tables report entries according to subject *group*. The subject groups included in this document are those that fall within a single tranche (e.g., Art & Design subjects are all tranche 1). The groups such as “Classical subjects” and “Other Sciences” that encompass subjects from different tranches have been excluded.

³ Note that the first year of teaching reformed qualifications is different for each tranche: reformed qualifications were first taught in tranche 1 subjects in 2015/2016, in tranche 2 subjects in 2016/17, and in tranche 3 subjects in 2017/18.

Table 1 shows that overall decreases between 2015 and 2018 in Year 12 AS level entries were broadly similar for all three tranches of subject. The average decrease across all subjects was 84%, although there was a large range of between 62% and 92%. The subjects with the largest overall decreases were mostly from tranche 2 rather than from tranche 1 or tranche 3. The overall decreases for subjects in tranche 3, the most recent tranche to be reformed, (for which decoupled AS levels were first taught in September 2017, and first examined in Summer 2018) ranged from 62% in Further Mathematics to 92% in Design & Technology.

For tranche 1 and tranche 2 subjects, the decreases between 2015 and 2018 in entries found for the Year 12 candidates were similar in size to the decreases for the whole cohort (i.e., candidates of any age). However, for tranche 3 subjects the decreases were much lower for the whole cohort than for Year 12 candidates only. Cohort differences, especially for tranche 3 subjects, are likely due to differences in the proportions of entries in reformed and legacy AS levels, both of which are included in Ofqual's counts. Whilst Year 12 entries in post-reform years are primarily for reformed qualifications rather than legacy AS levels, legacy AS levels in tranche 2 and 3 subjects could still be taken in Summer 2018. However, legacy AS levels in tranche 2 subjects could only be taken by resitting candidates, whereas tranche 3 legacy AS levels were available for both first time and resitting candidates.

The final two columns of Table 1 show percentage decreases in AS level entries in the first year of teaching the reformed AS levels in each subject. This shows that first-year decreases were lowest for tranche 1 subjects, reformed first, larger for tranche 2 subjects, and largest of all for tranche 3 subjects. This seems readily explained by the progressive transition of centres from the pre-reform model whereby students took the AS level in all A level subjects, to a post-reform model in which the majority of students take A levels only (Williamson & Vitello, 2018).

The figures that follow show graphical representations of AS level entry trends in each subject, grouped by reform tranches. Complementing Table 1, the figures show the absolute numbers of entry rather than percentage changes. Figures 1 to 3 show AS level entries for **all** students, whilst Figures 4 to 6 show AS level entries for **Year 12** students only.

Although there were sharp drops in AS entries across all subjects, the figures show that many were still taken by tens of thousands of candidates in 2018, especially in tranche 1 and tranche 3 subjects. AS level entries in Mathematics remained far higher than entries in other tranche 3 subjects for the whole cohort (Figure 3) and for the Year 12 only candidates (Figure 6), although the decreases between 2017 and 2018 were very substantial. In Further Mathematics, the decreases in AS entries were noticeably smaller than in other tranche 3 subjects. This may reflect differences between Further Mathematics and other AS/A level subjects, such as its very high level of association with Mathematics (Sutch, 2015).

Reporting on a survey of mathematics provision carried out by the organisation Mathematics in Education and Industry (MEI), Lee, Lord, Dudzic, and Stripp (2018) noted that fewer centres reported a decrease in Further Mathematics uptake than reported decreases in Mathematics uptake. Some survey respondents also highlighted that Further Mathematics was being treated differently to other subjects, post-reform, for example being the only subject that students were permitted to take as a "4th" subject.

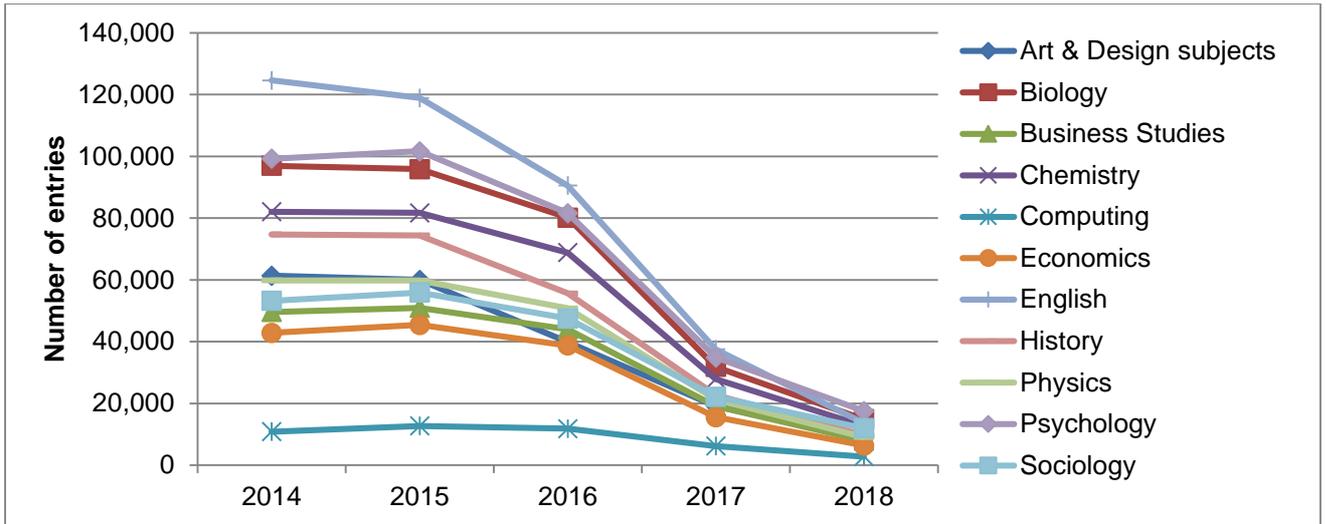


Figure 1: AS level entries in tranche 1 subjects, all candidates in England (of any age)

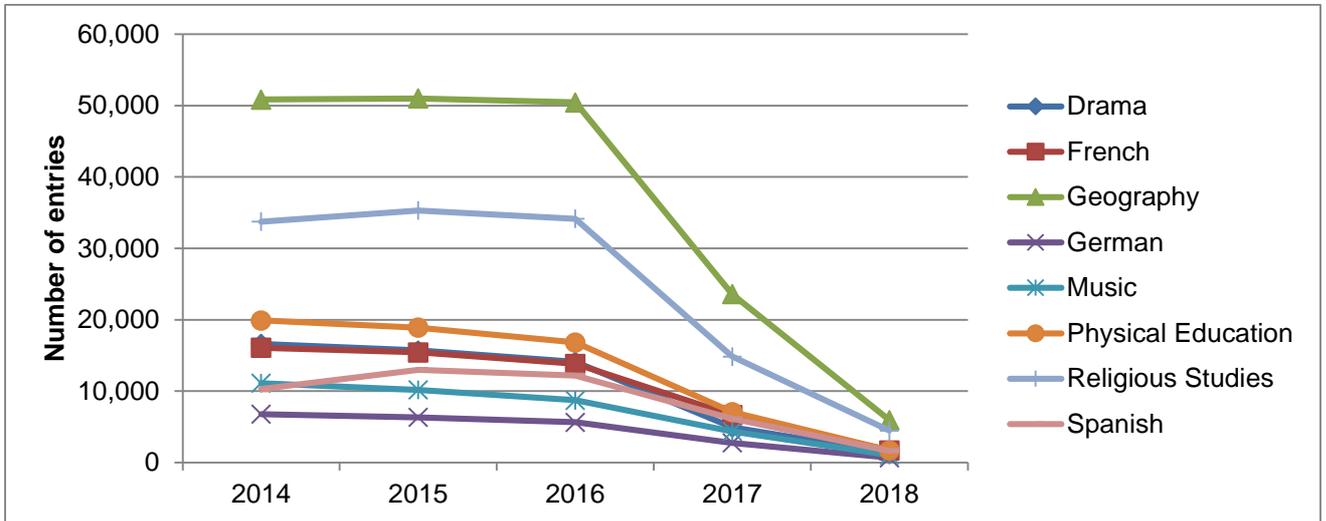


Figure 2: AS level entries in tranche 2 subjects, all candidates in England (of any age)

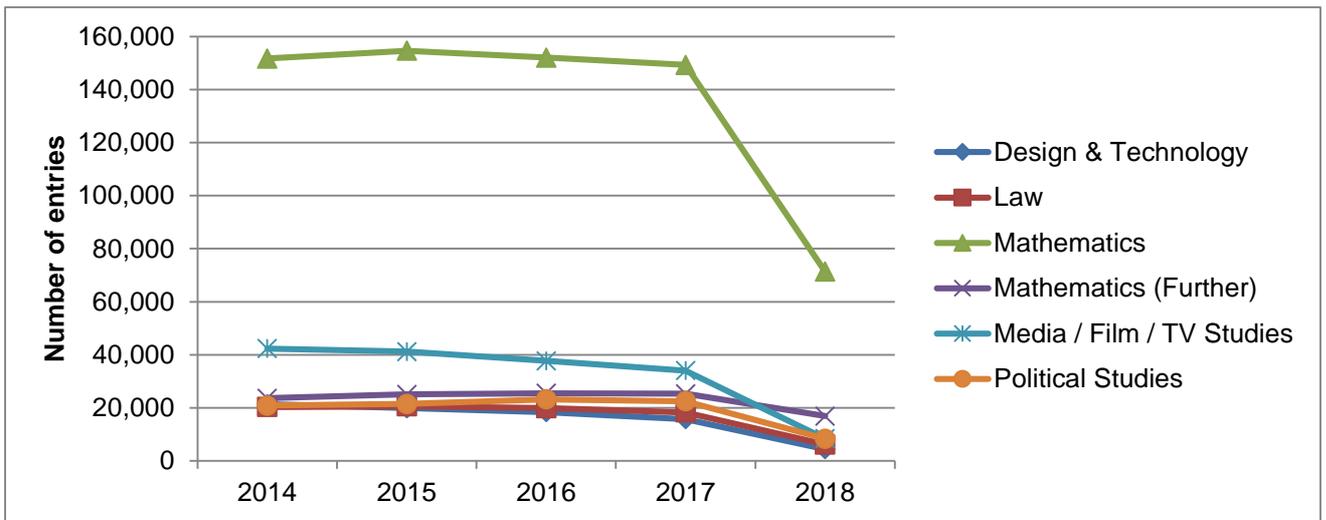


Figure 3: AS level entries in tranche 3 subjects, all candidates in England (of any age)

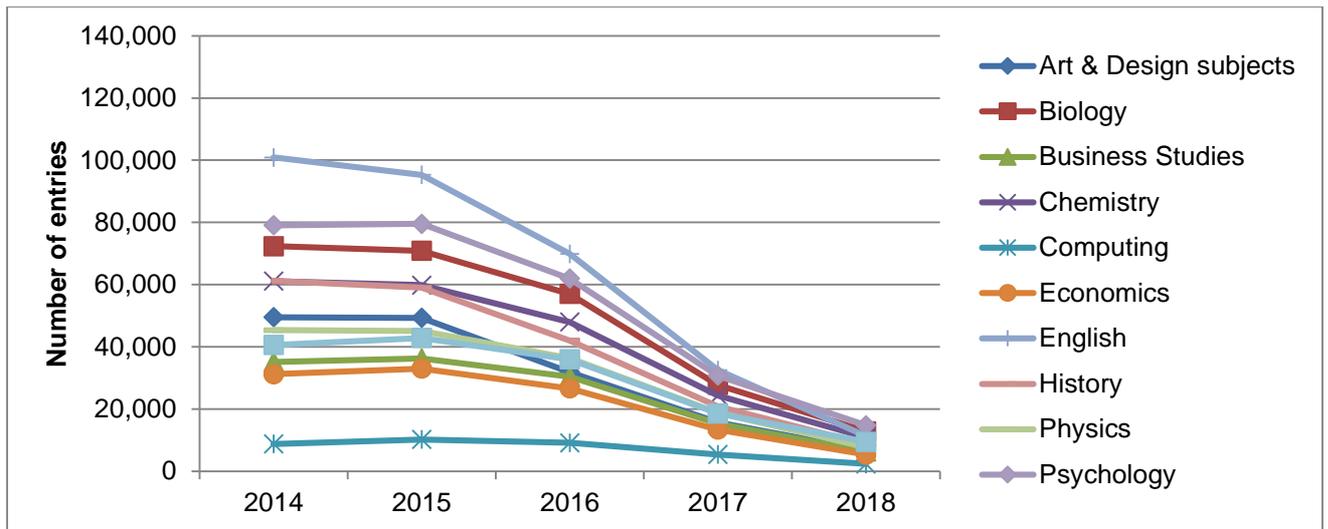


Figure 4: AS level entries in tranche 1 subjects, Year 12 candidates in England only

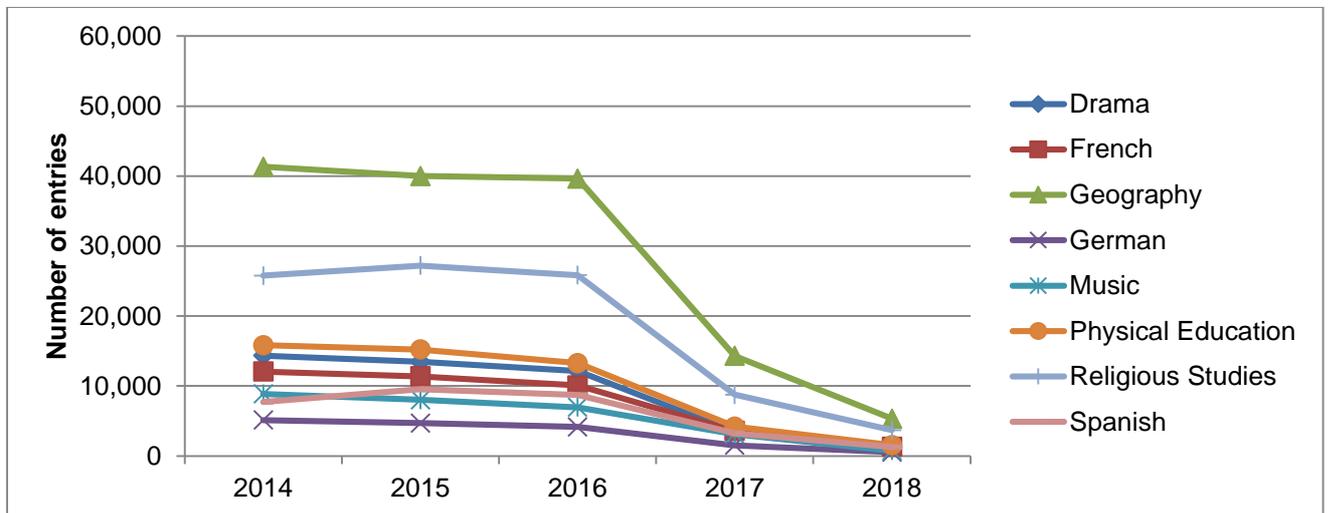


Figure 5: AS level entries in tranche 2 subjects, Year 12 candidates in England only

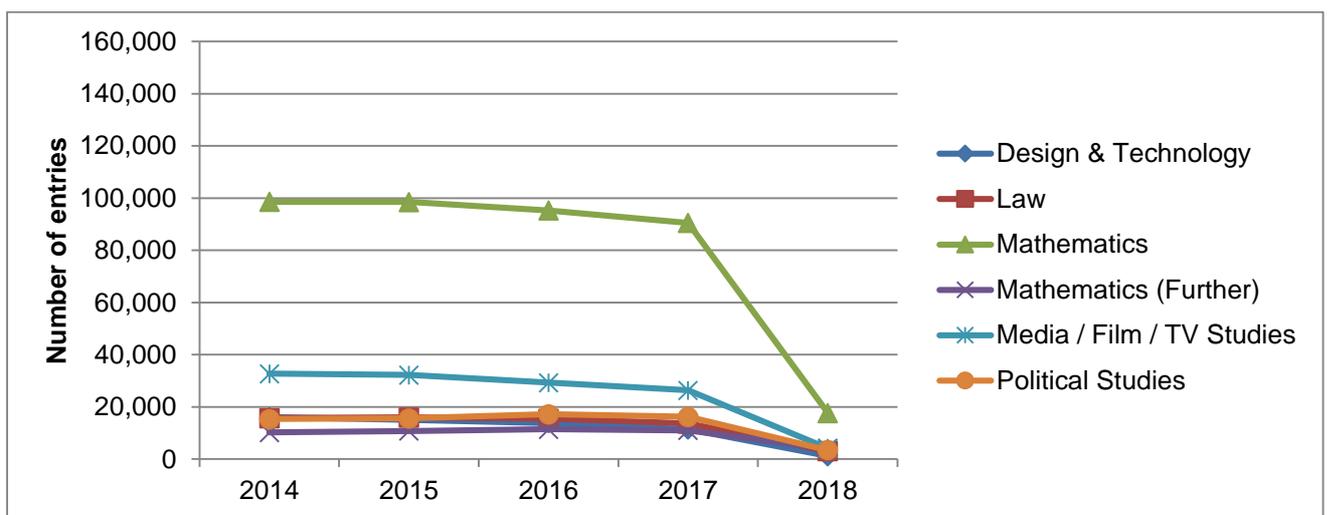


Figure 6: AS level entries in tranche 3 subjects, Year 12 candidates in England only

6 Results: Survey data

6.1 Survey respondents

In total, 188 respondents were included in the analysis. A full description of the respondents and their characteristics is provided in the Appendix but the main features are summarised as follows. The majority (84%) of responding HoDs came from sixth forms attached to a secondary school, and just over half came from centres that were funded as academies or free schools. The proportions of respondents by category of institution and funding model were broadly representative of the distributions of institution types and centre funding models in England. Over half of the responding HoDs stated that their students had a wide range of attainment, with another substantial minority stating that their students were mostly high-attaining (i.e., were expected to achieve A or B grades in their A levels). The respondents represented a wide range of subject areas, including Art & Design, English, Humanities, Maths, Sciences and Social Sciences.

6.2 How do Heads of Department view decoupled AS levels?

HoDs were given a list of statements about decoupled AS qualifications and asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement on a scale of 1 to 4 (1 = not true at all and 4 = entirely true). Between 151 and 156 HoDs responded to the statements. In the figures below, shades of red represent disagreement (values 1 or 2) while shades of blue indicate agreement (values 3 or 4). For ease of comparison and interpretation, the level of disagreement was calculated by aggregating the percentages of 1s and 2s (red) while the level of agreement was calculated by aggregating the percentages of 3s and 4s. However, it should be remembered that the values represent a continuum of agreement.

Figure 7 shows HoDs' opinions on eight statements about the potential value/purpose of decoupled AS qualifications. The majority of HoDs (between 52% and 62%) expressed disagreement with the top six statements in the figure; between 25% and 34% of HoDs strongly disagreed with them (i.e., they selected "not true at all"). These HoDs disagreed that there was student/parent demand for AS levels, that AS levels enhance university applications, that AS levels are useful for job prospects and that AS levels help students study the A level, with the highest rates of disagreement for the statements about student or parent demand. It is important to note, however, that a substantial minority (between 22% and 41%) expressed agreement with those six statements, with between 6% and 17% agreeing entirely.

The bottom two statements in Figure 7 had agreement from the majority of HoDs: 67% agreed that decoupled AS levels give students exam practice and 57% agreed that they help students decide if they want to do the A level. Around half of those agreeing with these statements agreed strongly. Disagreement was expressed by 30% and 37%, respectively.

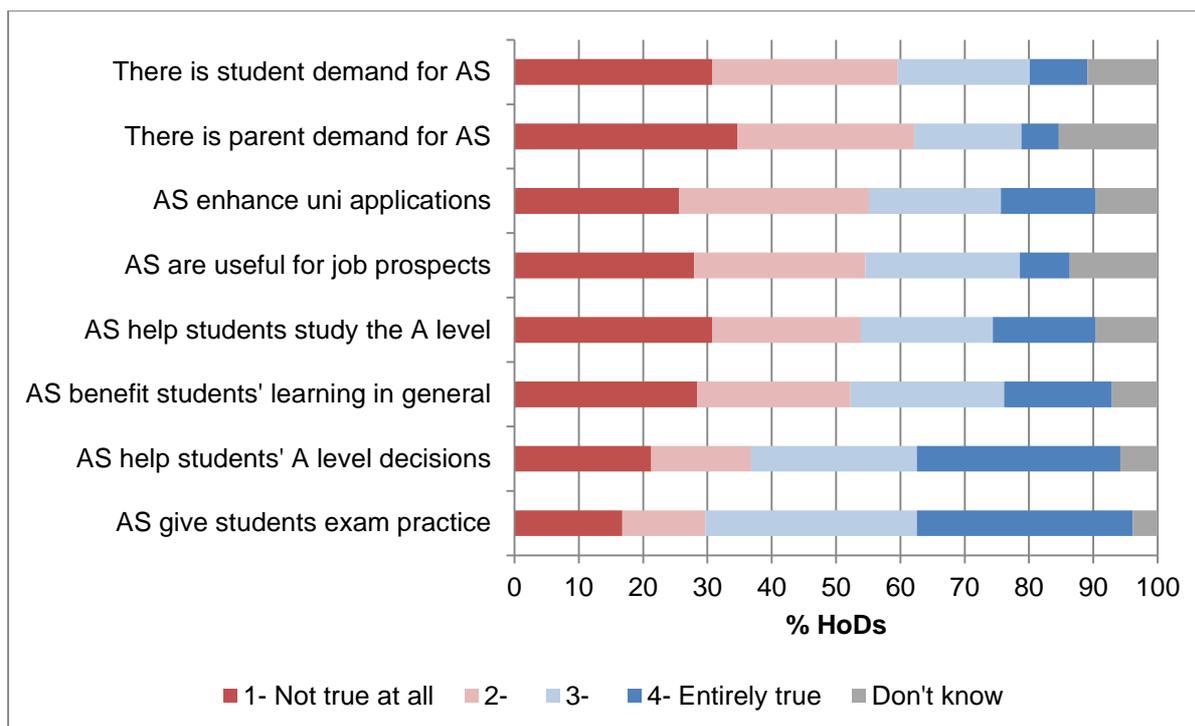


Figure 7: Agreement with statements related to potential value of the decoupled AS

Figure 8 shows opinions on the importance of other qualifications relative to the decoupled AS levels. Just over half of HoDs agreed that preparing for university applications and taking extra-curriculars (50% and 52%, respectively) were more important than taking decoupled AS levels. However, a large minority disagreed with those two statements (45% and 42%, respectively). There was a slightly more balanced mix of agreement and disagreement for the importance of other general qualifications relative to AS levels.

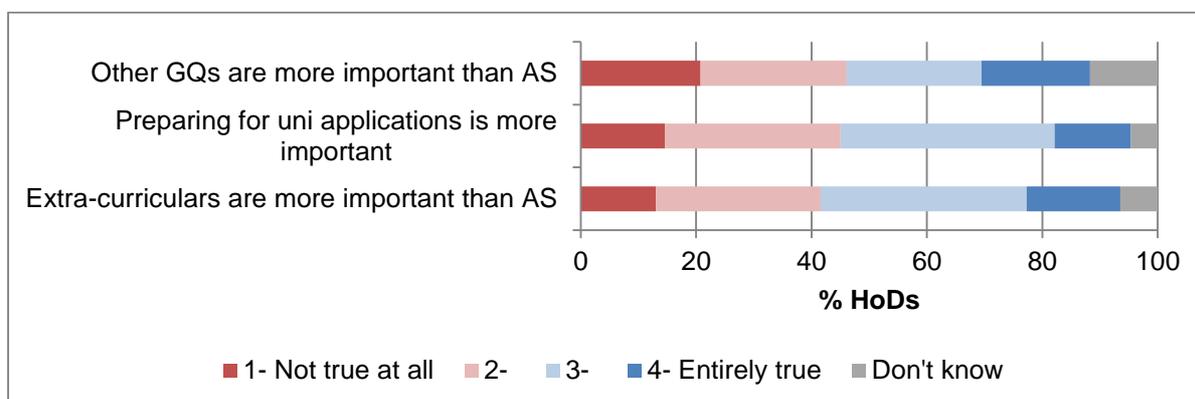


Figure 8: Agreement with statements related to importance of non-AS qualifications

Figure 9 shows opinions on the practicalities of delivering the decoupled AS alongside other qualifications. The first statement concerns the co-teachability of AS and A levels. Just over half of the HoDs agreed that AS levels are co-teachable with the A level in the same subject (51%), although a large minority disagreed (43%). Despite the tendency to perceive AS levels as co-teachable, a larger majority agreed that teaching the AS takes time away from the A levels (67%) and that there is insufficient time in student timetables to teach decoupled AS (63%). Disagreement for the latter two statements was expressed by 28% and 34% of

HoDs, respectively. A large percentage of HoDs said they did not know about the practicality of delivering AS levels alongside GCSEs, or level 2 or 3 vocational qualifications. This may be because these centres do not offer these qualifications or that they are offered by other HoDs at their centre.

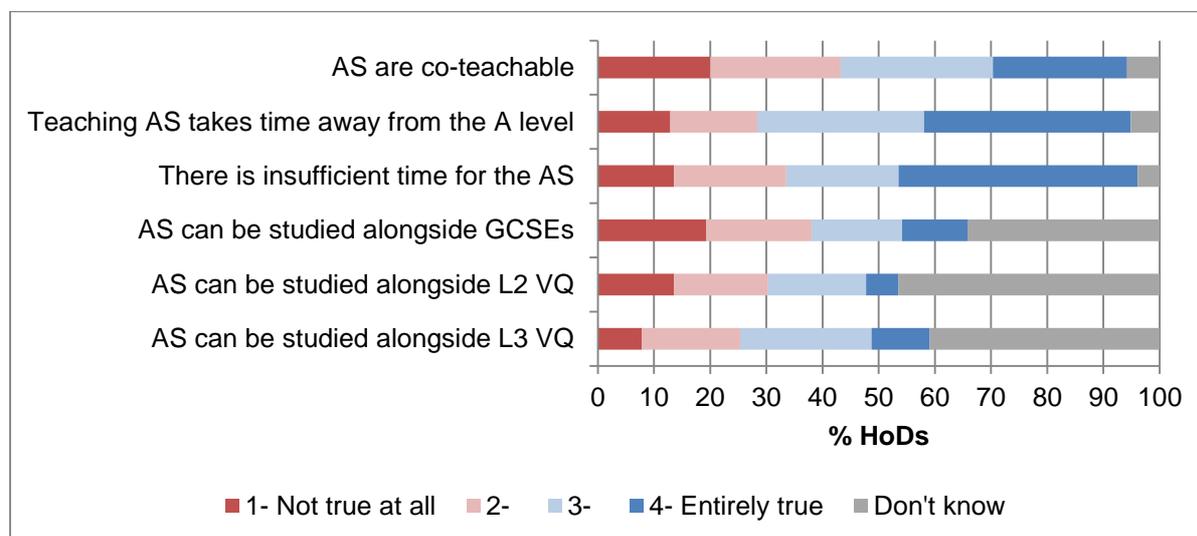


Figure 9: Agreement with statements related to delivering the AS alongside other qualifications

Figure 10 shows opinions on other practical aspects of offering the decoupled AS. The majority of HoDs agreed that teachers have enough expertise to teach the decoupled AS (74%), but a smaller percentage agreed that there are enough teachers to teach them (50%). Most HoDs were uncertain about whether the decoupled AS levels count in the DfE’s performance tables. A large majority agreed that it was difficult to find budget for the AS levels (60%), with over a third agreeing entirely with that statement.

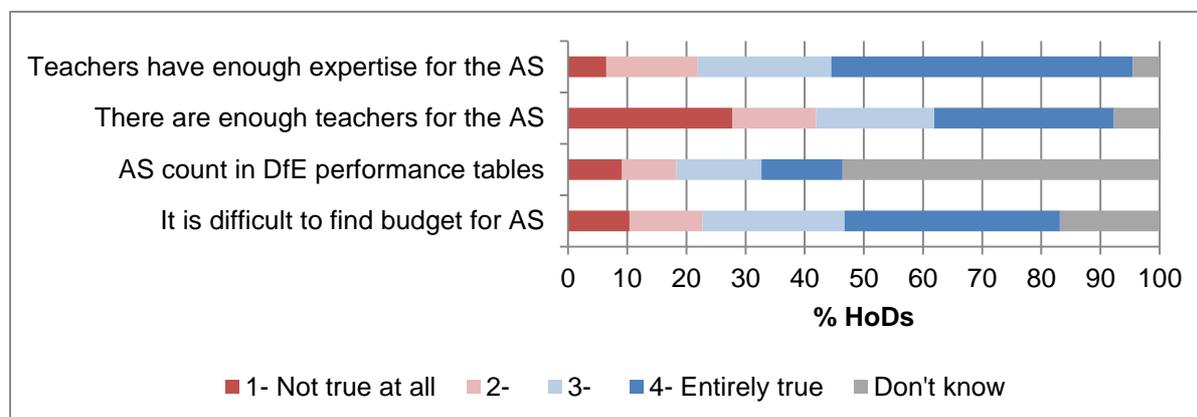


Figure 10: Agreement with statements related to other practicalities of delivering the AS

6.3 How has AS level provision changed?

Several questions were asked about changes that HoDs have, or have not, made to their AS provision following the A level reforms. The first question in this section asked, “Has your department changed its AS provision as a result of the decoupling of AS from A levels?” Figure 11 shows the changes to AS provision that were reported by HoDs in this 2018 survey, as well as the findings from our previous survey conducted during 2017 (Vitello &

Williamson, 2018). This comparison highlights a different pattern of provision change compared to the previous year's survey. In 2018, a much larger percentage of HoDs said they had changed AS provision since the decoupling of AS levels: 70% of the HoDs had reduced provision compared to 51% in 2017. In contrast, only 23% of HoDs in this year's survey said they had not changed provision compared to almost double the percentage (43%) in the 2017 survey.

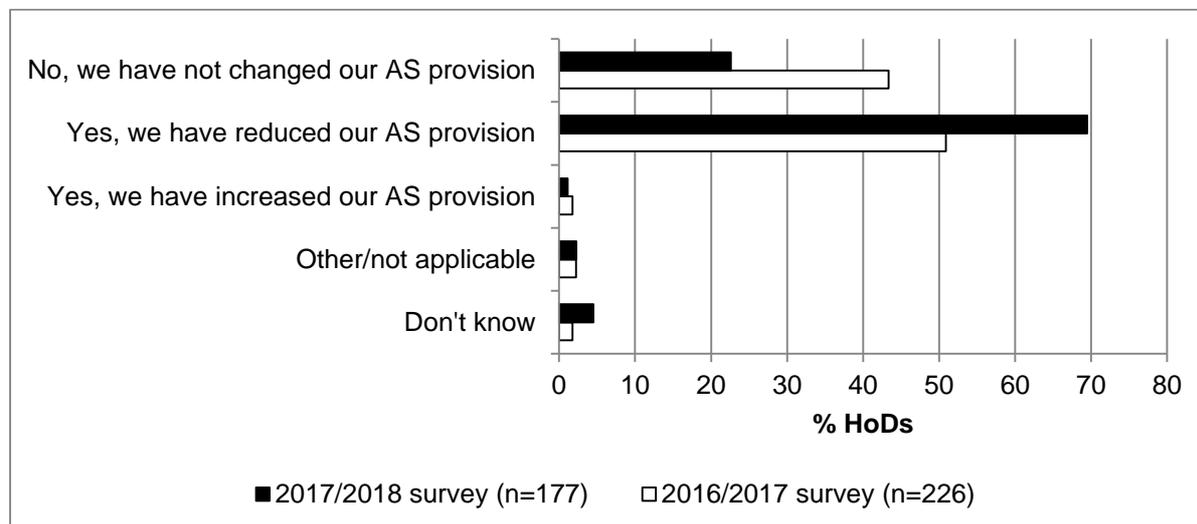


Figure 11: Change already made to AS provision as a result of AS decoupling (% of HoDs who responded to the question)

Figure 12 shows the pattern of changes to AS provision specifically for HoDs who confirmed that they were offering decoupled AS/A levels in academic year 2017/2018. Their pattern was very similar to that for all 177 responding HoDs, indicating that the overall pattern reflects reactions to AS reform of centres for which these decoupled qualifications have become part of their provision.

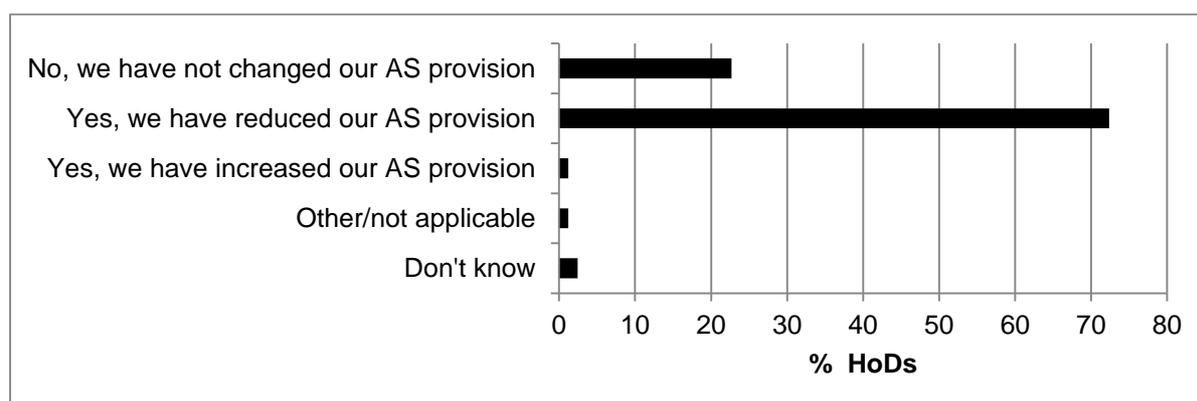


Figure 12: Change already made to AS provision as a result of AS decoupling, by HoDs who were offering decoupled AS or A levels (n=163)

Figure 13 shows the current type of AS/A level provision of HoDs who stated that they had made no change to AS provision and the current provision of HoDs who had reduced AS provision. As expected, the majority of HoDs who had not changed provision were currently offering both AS and A levels (70%), although current provision could not be determined for

28% due to incomplete responses in the survey. With regard to the HoDs who stated that they had reduced provision, most (68%) indicated that they were only offering decoupled A level, without any AS levels. However, a substantial minority (28%) were still offering both AS and A levels, which indicates that their reduction in provision was not a complete removal of AS levels.

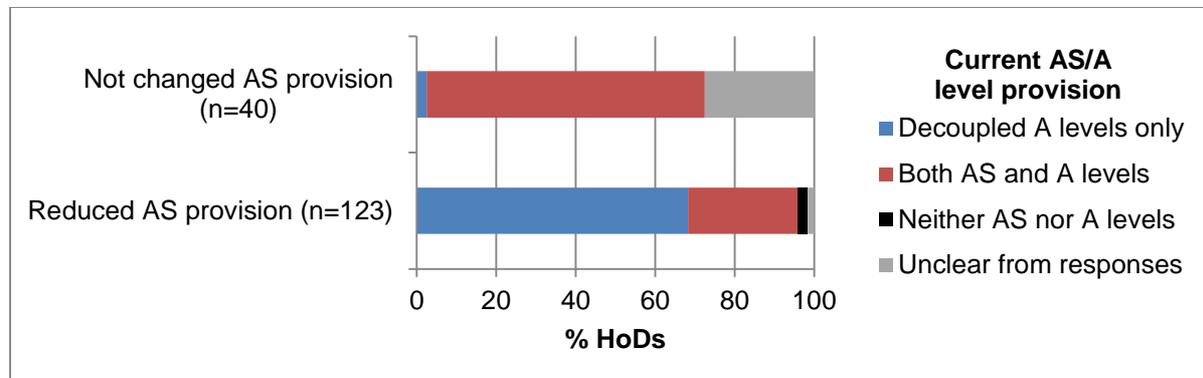


Figure 13: Current AS/A level provision of HoDs who had either made no change to AS provision or who had reduced provision

The next question asked HoDs about the timing of their change to AS provision: “When did your department change its AS level provision?” Figure 14 shows that 43% of the HoDs who had reduced provision had made that change when the reforms were enforced (i.e., as soon as teaching was compulsory); this was the most common time of change among the HoDs. The next popular time was after the first year of offering the new AS levels, selected by 31% of HoDs. A smaller percentage (9%) reduced provision after the second year of offering the new qualifications. Almost a fifth of HoDs (18%) had reduced provision at the beginning of the reform process, soon after the reforms were announced by Ofqual. These percentages include a few HoDs who had changed provision twice since the reforms; for example, two HoDs stated that they had changed provision soon after the announcement and then again after the teaching was enforced.

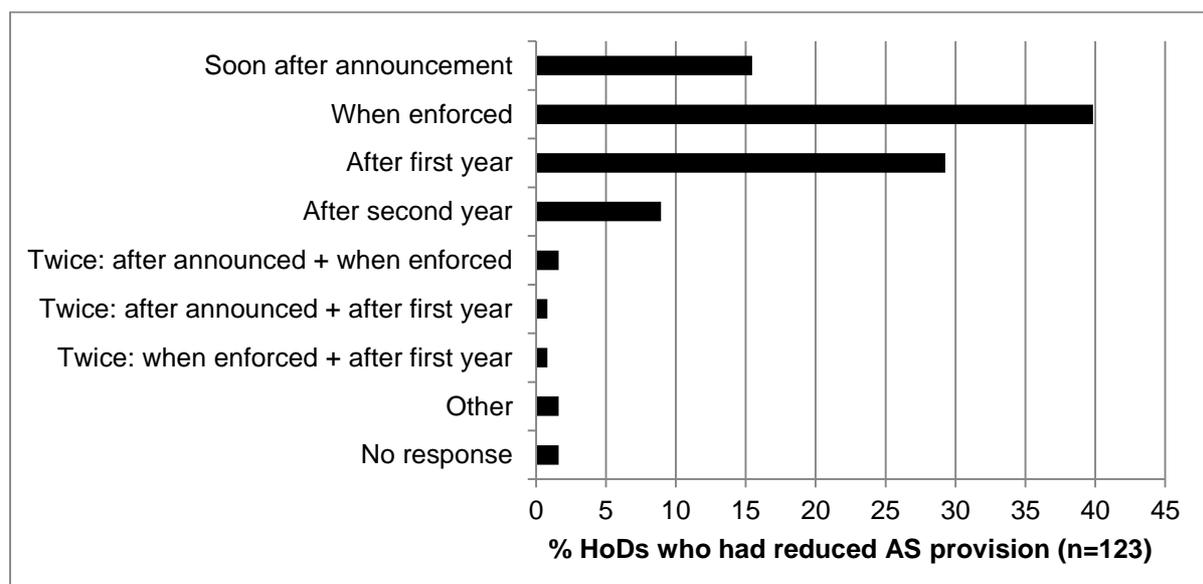


Figure 14: When AS provision was reduced by HoDs

6.4 Who makes the decisions about AS provision within centres?

In this survey, three questions were asked to gain insights into the decision making process surrounding AS provision at HoDs' centres. The first question aimed to understand centre-wide provision of AS levels, asking HoDs "Roughly what proportion of departments across your institution still offer decoupled AS levels?". Figure 15 shows that of the 133 responding HoDs, the largest group of HoDs came from centres who did not offer AS levels in any departments (47%). Another 22% came from centres in which only a minority of departments offered AS levels. Only 8% of HoDs came from centres in which *all* departments were still offering the decoupled AS levels.

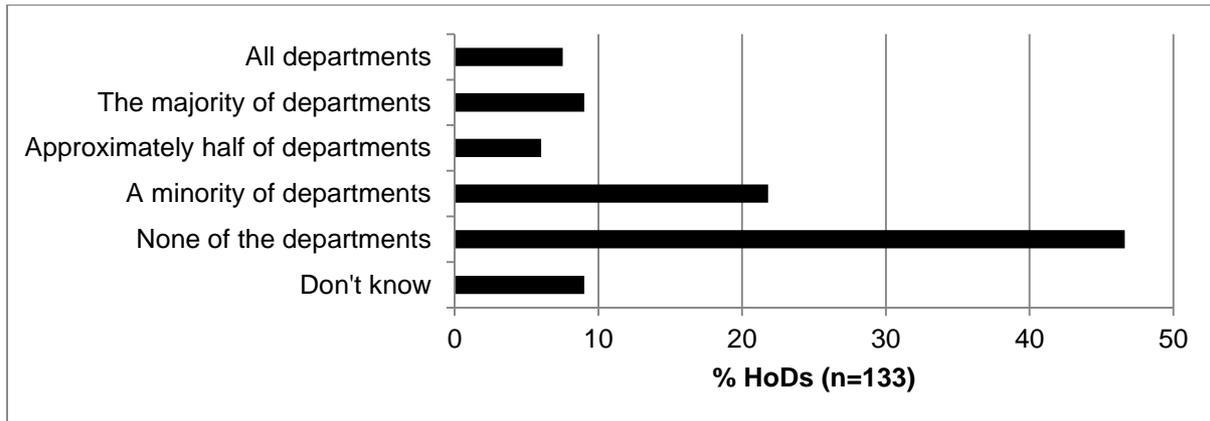


Figure 15: Proportion of departments at HoDs' centres that offer decoupled AS levels

The next two questions asked HoDs to identify the key people in deciding AS provision in their department. We asked "Who has the most influence in deciding the AS provision your department will offer?" and "Who makes the final decision about the AS provision your department will offer?" Figure 16 shows that the majority of responding HoDs (63%) stated that the senior leadership team had the most influence in the decision to offer AS levels in their departments. HoDs had the most influence in 25% of centres. When asked who makes the final decision about AS provision, the percentage selecting the senior leadership team increased to 77% and the percentage selecting HoD decreased to 10%. These differences indicate that, in some centres, the people making the final decision are not those with the most influence, which suggests that they take direction from others, especially HoDs.

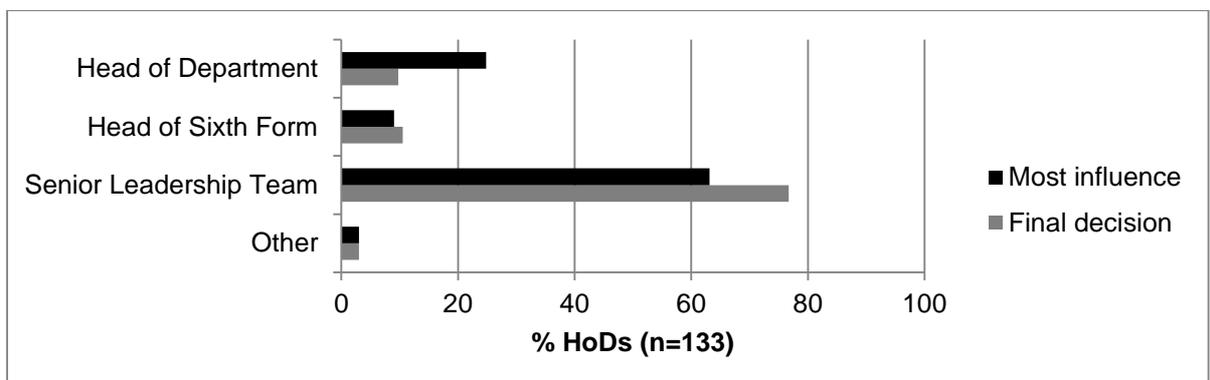


Figure 16: Staff with the most influence in deciding AS provision for the HoDs' departments and who makes the final decision

Figure 17 shows centre-wide provision of AS levels, as a function of whether the senior leadership team (SLT) or the HoDs had the most influence in deciding their departments' AS provision. Among centres in which the SLT had the most influence on AS provision decisions, the majority had no departments that offered AS levels (58%). The corresponding proportion among centres in which the HoD had the most influence was much smaller (18%). By contrast, the proportions of centres where AS provision varied to at least some extent across departments (i.e., the AS was offered by the majority, approximately half, or a minority of departments) were higher among centres where the HoD had the most influence on AS provision than among centre where the SLT had the most influence.

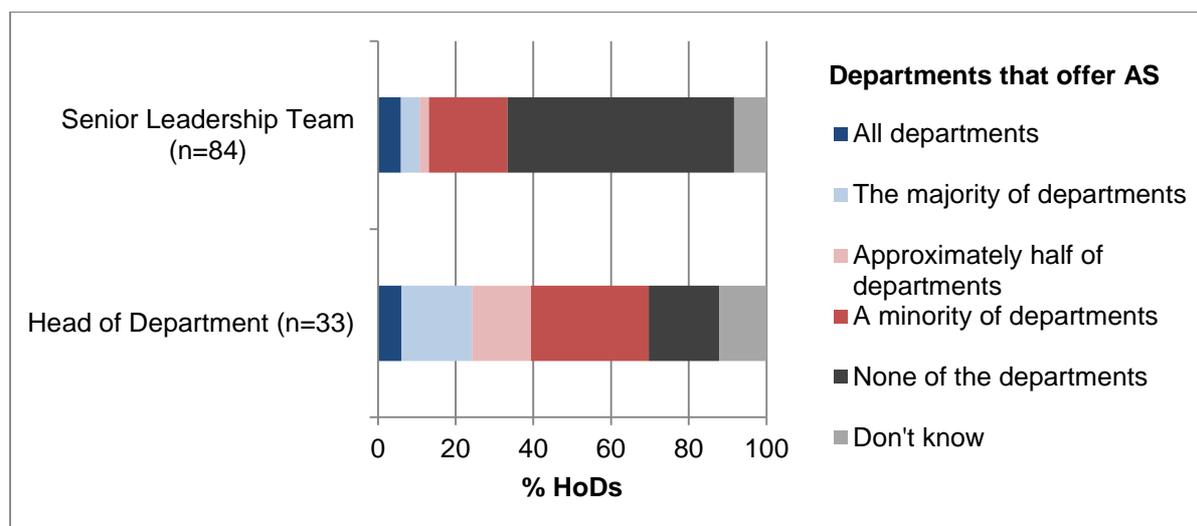


Figure 17: Proportion of departments that offer AS, by person with the most influence in deciding AS provision

6.5 Are students taking the AS in their A level subjects?

HoDs were asked a series of questions to understand the extent to which their students were taking both the decoupled AS and A level in the same subject. This combination was compulsory when the two qualifications were coupled but one aim of the AS decoupling was to enable students to take the A level without having to take the AS level.

As in the 2017 survey, HoDs were first asked “Do you have a general principle for advising students about taking both the new, decoupled A level and AS in the same subject?”

Figure 18 shows the general principles followed by HoDs in the 2018 survey as well as the corresponding findings from our previous survey conducted during 2017 (Vitello & Williamson, 2018). This comparison highlights a different pattern of advice compared to the 2017 survey. In 2018 a much larger majority of responding HoDs stated that they advised their A level students not to take the AS compared to 2017 (59% vs. 41%), with a much smaller percentage (19% vs. 35%) saying that they still advised their students to take the AS level. Similar to the 2017 survey, a small proportion (14%) stated that they followed general principles but that they varied between subjects or that they did not have general principles, giving advice on a student-by-student basis instead (8%).

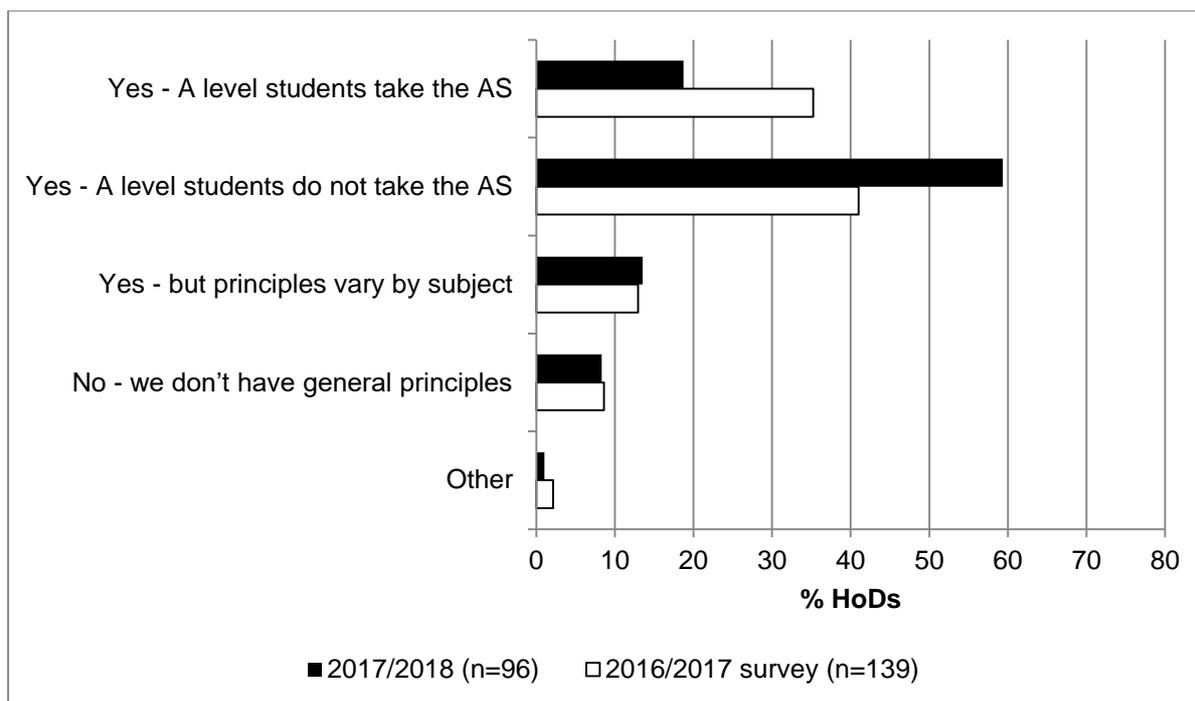


Figure 18: General principles for combining decoupled AS and A levels in the same subject

HoDs were next asked to indicate the actual combinations taken by their students and to explain why. HoDs selected all subjects in which any of their current students (in their own department) would leave KS5 with (1) “both the new, decoupled A level and new, decoupled AS in the same subject” and (2) “a new, decoupled A level without having taken the new, decoupled AS in the same subject”.

The two combinations were presented separately which allowed HoDs to select different subjects with different AS/A level combinations if that reflected their students’ uptake. Figure 19 shows the consistency of response across the subjects selected and the combinations selected. The purple bars represent the combinations that HoDs chose for all their selected subjects while blue bars represent the combinations that were selected for different subjects.

The left panel of Figure 19 shows that almost all the HoDs (91%) selected the same combinations for all of the subjects in their department. The right panel shows that 59% of HoDs stated that, for every subject in their department, all students are not taking the AS with the A level in the same subject. A much smaller percentage (21%) selected the opposite for every subject; that is, students are taking the AS with the corresponding A level. 11% of HoDs selected both combinations for every subject, indicating that some students (in every subject) are taking the AS and some are not.

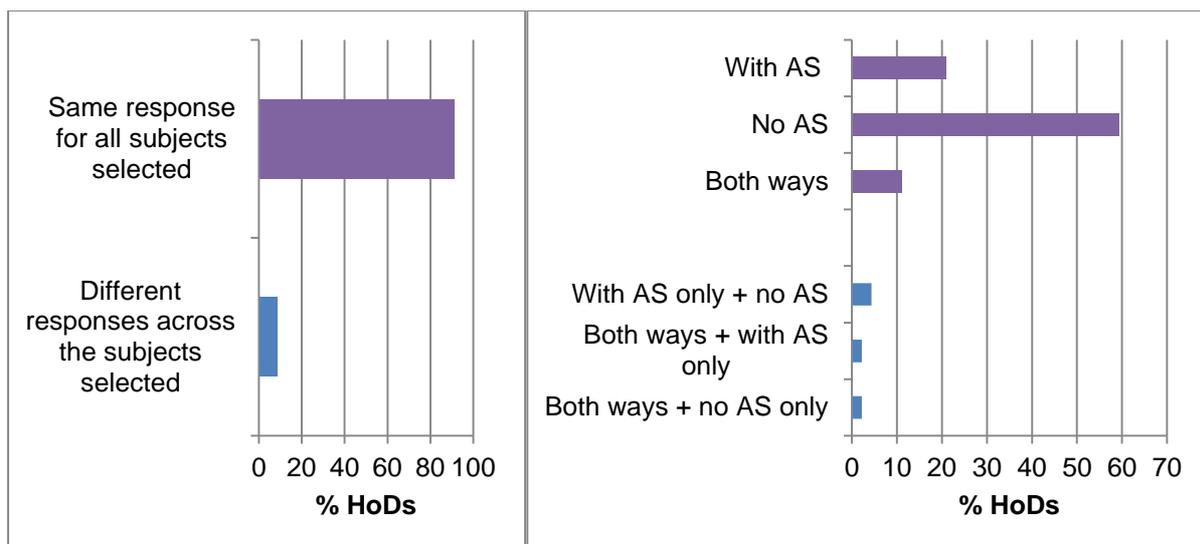


Figure 19: Left panel shows the consistency of responses across subjects selected (n=91 HoDs who gave an answer for at least one subject). Right panel shows the combination of decoupled AS and A levels taken by students in the same subject.

6.6 Why do students take the decoupled AS in their A level subjects?

37 HoDs indicated that some of their students were taking the decoupled AS in the same subject as the A level, of which 31 selected at least one reason.

Figure 20 shows that the most frequently selected reason for students taking the AS in their A level subjects was that the AS level gave students exam practice, selected by 68% of the HoDs. This was also the most frequently selected reason in the 2017 survey (71%). Six other reasons were selected by over half of the HoDs. Four of them were related to student benefits, specifically that the AS level helped students study the A level (58%), make A level decisions (55%), benefited student learning in general (52%), and was useful for low-attaining students (55%). The proportion of HoDs who selected as a reason for taking the AS that the AS helped students study the A level was noticeably higher than in the 2017 survey (58%, up from 42% in 2017). Similarly, the proportion who selected AS benefits for learning in general as a reason increased notably (52%, up from 35% in 2017). The fifth majority reason was related to delivery, specifically that the AS was co-teachable with the A level (55%), and the sixth one was that the AS enhanced university applications (52%). Almost half of HoDs also selected that the AS was taken because of departmental policy, which was to maintain the pre-reform way of teaching until they knew what university and employers expected, although this was chosen much less frequently than in the 2017 survey (48% in 2018 compared with 68% in 2017).

Other reasons that were selected less often related to the newness of the subject for the student, parent/student demand and performance tables; these were also the least selected in the 2017 survey. Finally, it is interesting to note that, almost identical to the 2017 findings, the percentage of HoDs who said that it was useful for their low-attaining students (55%) was almost double the percentage who selected that it was useful for their high-attaining students (29%).

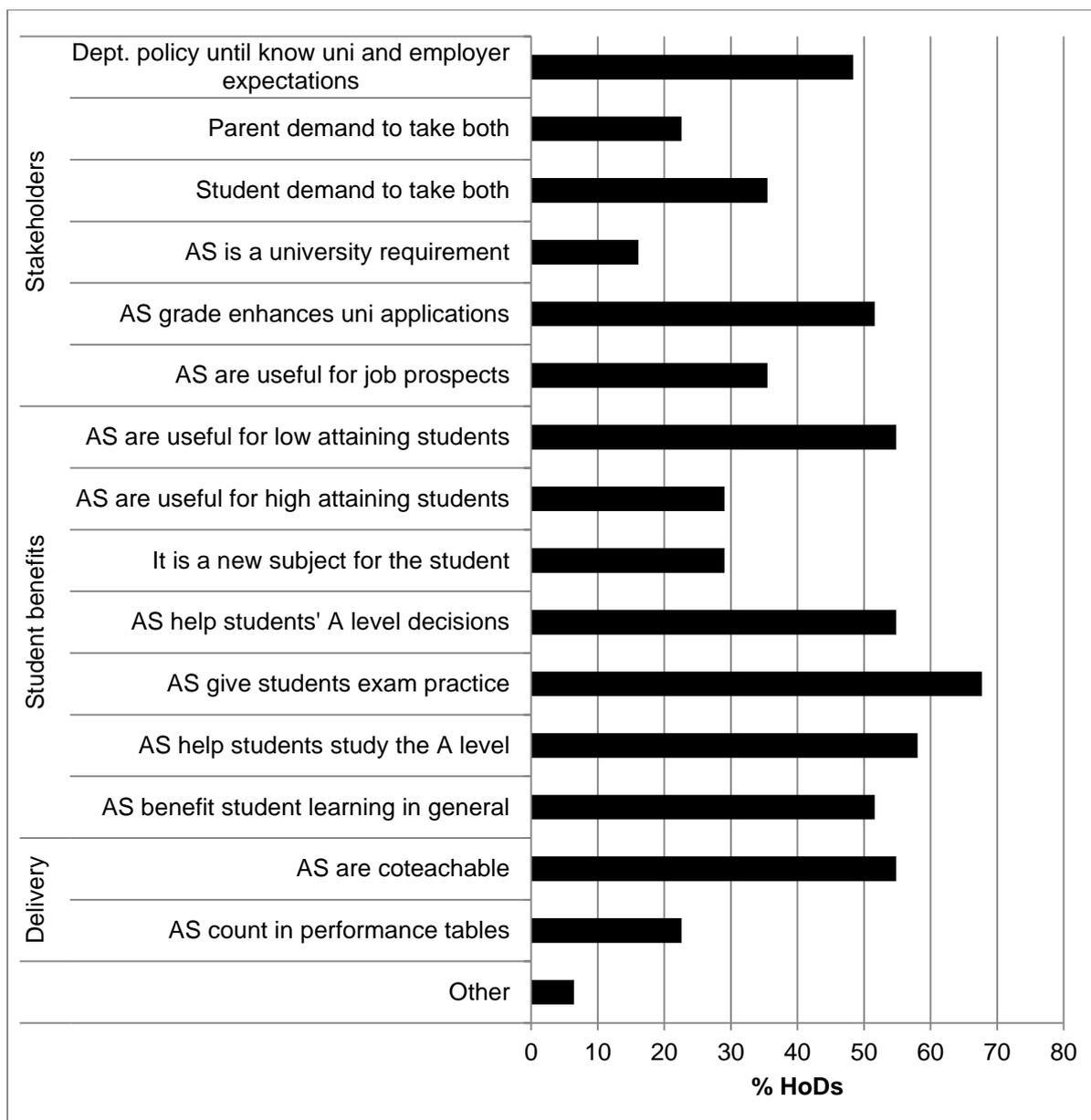


Figure 20: Reasons for taking the AS level in A level subjects (n=31)

6.7 Why don't students take the decoupled AS in their A level subjects?

72 HoDs indicated that some of their students were taking the A level without the decoupled AS in the same subject, with 63 HoDs selecting at least one reason why.

Figure 21 shows that the most frequently selected reason for students not taking the AS in their A level subjects was the need for students to focus on the A level rather than the AS level (76%). This was also the most frequently selected reason in the 2017 survey (74%). This was related to the next commonly selected reason which was that studying for the AS level would take time away from A level teaching (73%).

Other reasons related to impacts (or lack of impacts) on students were selected relatively frequently, including that the AS level was not a university requirement (62%), it did not benefit student learning (40%) and students were not interested in taking it (48%). Co-

teachability was chosen by just over 50% of HoDs as a reason for not taking the AS, while insufficient budget was chosen by 41% of HoDs. Other reasons were selected less often, which related to student attainment, student workload, performance tables and other educational activities. Overall, the pattern of reasons chosen was very similar to those in the 2017 survey, especially the ones that were chosen most frequently.

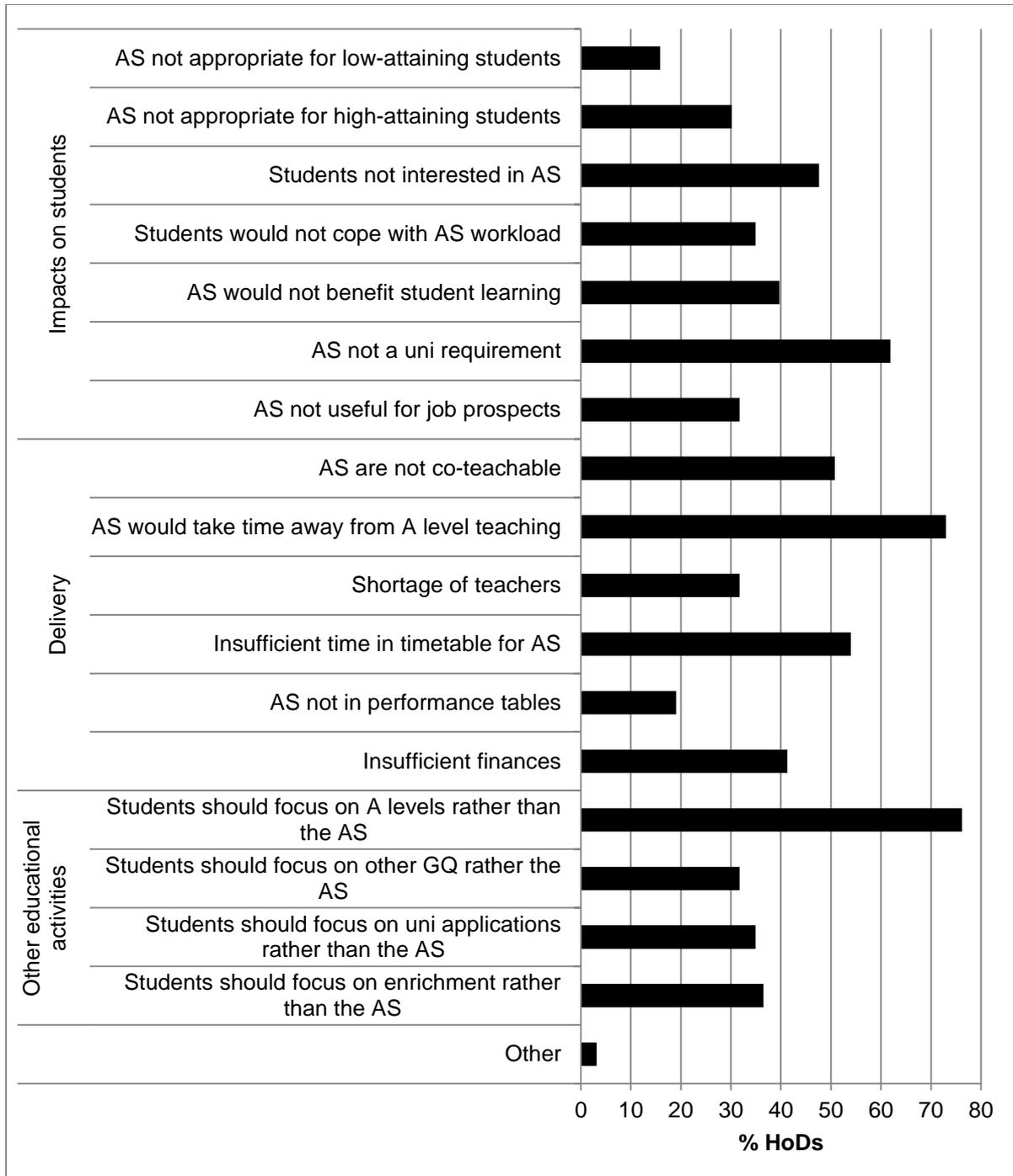


Figure 21: Reasons for not taking the AS level in A level subjects (n=63)

6.8 Are students taking decoupled AS levels on their own, and why?

We asked HoDs to select all subjects in which any of their current students would leave KS5 with a decoupled AS level but without having taken the A level in the same subject. 31 HoDs indicated that some of their students would take an AS level without continuing onto the A level. 29 HoDs selected reasons why.

To facilitate interpretation of the results, Table 2 shows the characteristics of the HoDs who gave the responses. From the table, it is clear that most of these HoDs came from academy school sixth forms that were medium or small in size and whose students had a wide range of attainment.

Table 2: Characteristics of HoDs in departments where students take AS levels on their own

Characteristic grouping	Characteristic	No. HoDs	%
Centre funding	Academy/free school	15	51.7
	Independent	5	17.2
	Local authority maintained	7	24.1
	Other	2	6.9
Centre type	School sixth form – local authority	3	10.3
	School sixth form – academy	14	48.3
	School sixth form – independent	4	13.8
	FE college	3	10.3
	Other	2	6.9
Centre size	Large	6	20.7
	Medium	10	34.5
	Small	13	44.8
Attainment range	Wide range	20	69.0
	Mostly high attainment	7	24.1
	Mostly low attainment	2	6.9
Department	Art/Design	1	3.5
	Computing	2	6.9
	Humanities	1	3.5
	Modern Foreign Languages	1	3.5
	Maths	12	41.4
	Science	5	17.2
	Social Science	5	17.2
	Unknown	2	6.9

It was interesting to understand whether departments allowing students to take an AS level without the corresponding A level were departments in which A levels were taken with the AS level or those in which the AS level was not taken by A level students. The latter type of department would suggest that AS levels had a different role than the A level in student's programmes of study.

Figure 22 shows the actual combinations of A level and AS levels in the same subject amongst the HoDs in which some students take the AS on its own (see Figure 19 and its discussion for more details of the analysis). The top part of Figure 22 (purple bars) shows

that a substantial minority (35%) of HoDs whose students took an AS level on its own were from departments in which none of their A levels students took the AS level in their A level subjects. This suggests that in these departments the AS levels were not being taught as part of an A level course but as a separate qualification.

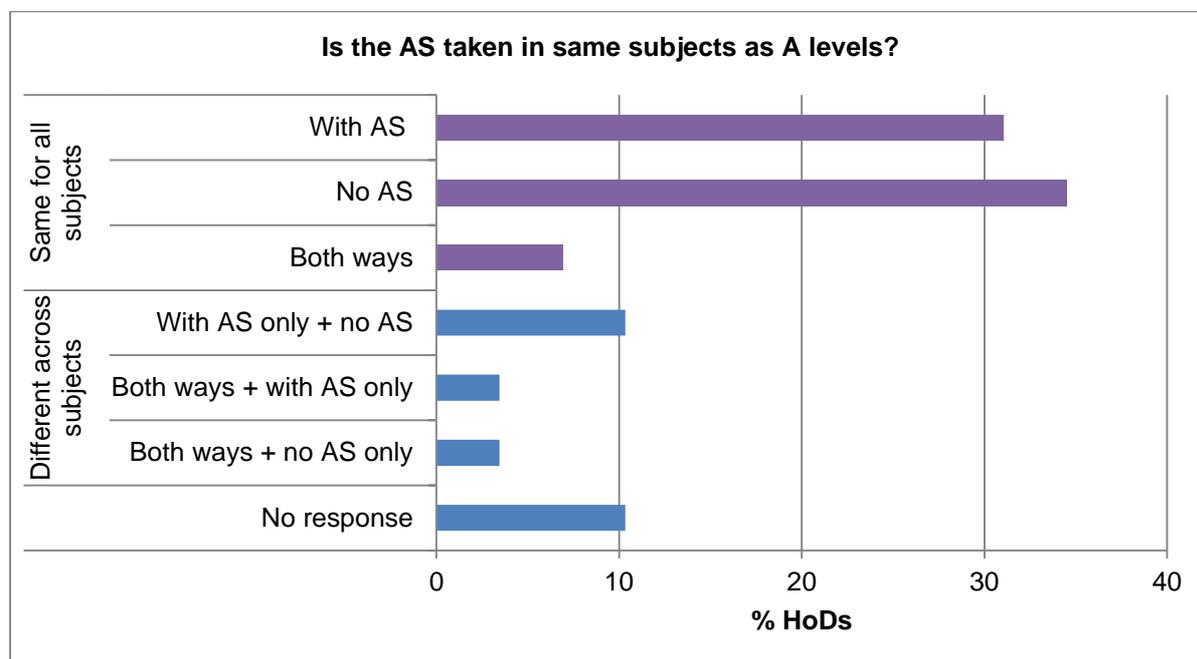


Figure 22: Whether A levels are taken with or without the AS level in the same subject, within departments in which some students take the AS level on its own (n=29).

Figure 23 shows that the most frequently selected reasons for students taking the AS level on its own concerned the perceived value of the AS level. In particular, the largest majority (76%) indicated that their students took the AS level because of starting to study it for the A level but dropping at the A level. 62% of HoDs stated it was so that students could have an extra AS like they had in the pre-reform system, with another 62% choosing the more specific reason of subject breadth. Reasons related to other student factors were selected relatively often, especially that these AS levels were taken because they were low-attaining students (55%) or that they were taken alongside other A levels (41%). Overall the patterns of reasons selected were very similar to those in 2017 survey, especially with regard to the most and least selected reasons.

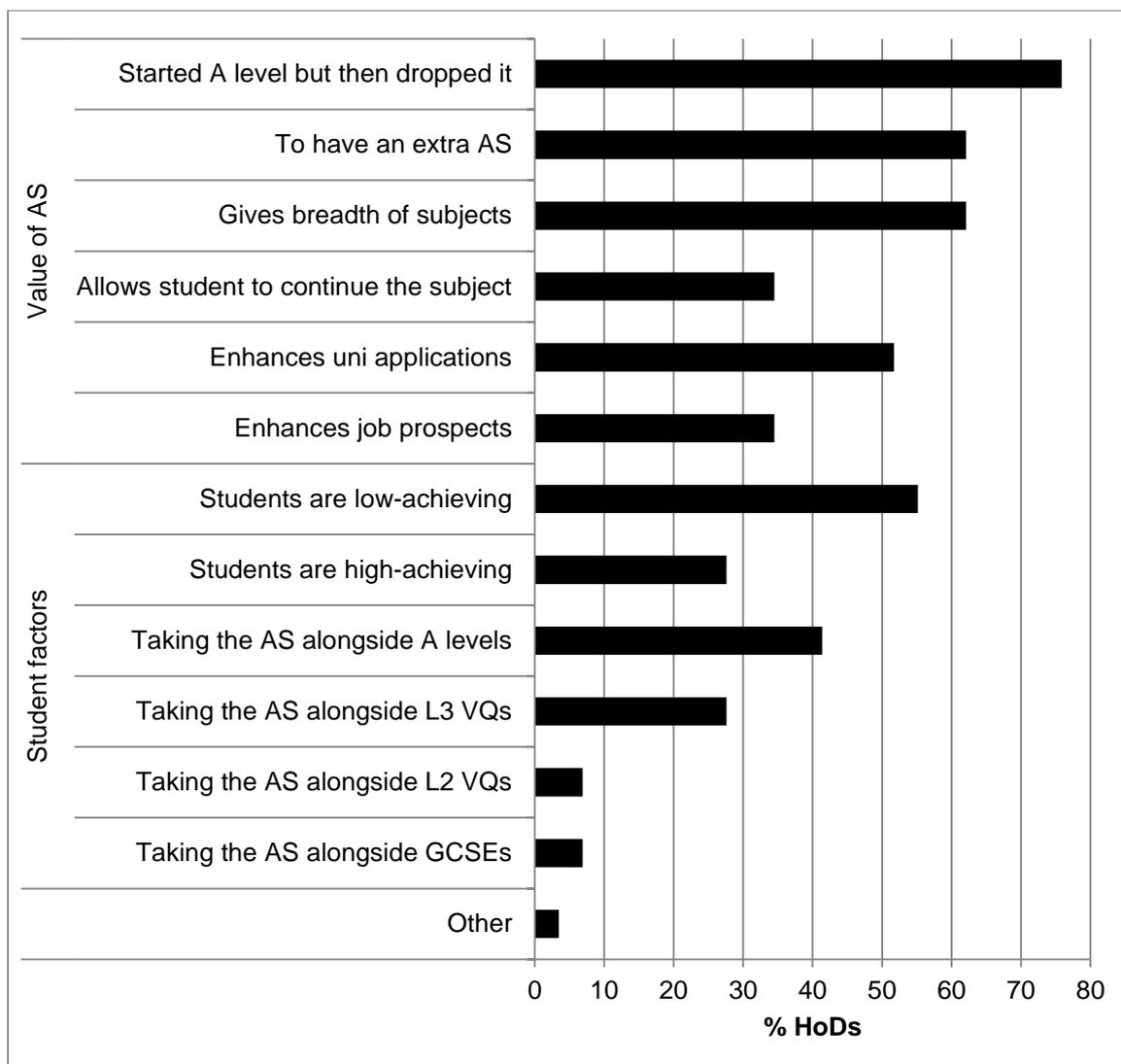


Figure 23: Reasons for taking the AS level on its own (i.e., without the A level) (n=29)

6.9 What are Heads of Department’s future plans for AS provision?

HoDs were asked about their future plans for provision of the new AS levels: whether they expected their current provision to change, whether they expected to stop provision of some/all AS levels, and when they expected any changes to take place. The survey questions were the following:

“How likely is it that you will make any changes to your provision of these new, decoupled AS subjects in the future?” For each of the statements below, respondents were asked to choose one answer from “Not applicable”, “Definitely”, “Highly likely”, “Quite likely”, “Not very likely” or “Never”.

- My department will change its provision of these new AS levels
- My department will stop offering these new AS levels altogether
- My department will stop offering some of these new AS levels

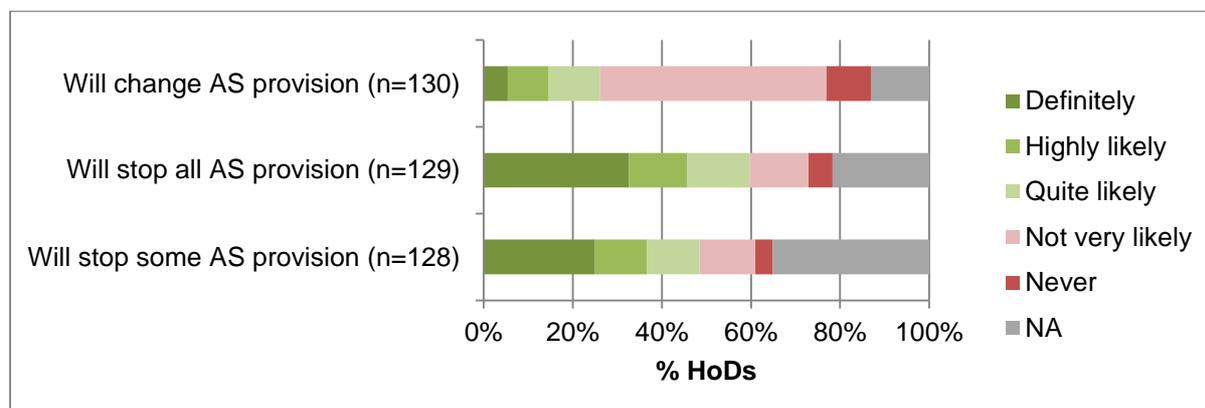
“If you think your AS provision of these subjects will change, when do you think this is likely to happen?” (please select all that apply)

- Not applicable (we do not plan to change provision)
- In time for September 2018, when all tranches (subjects) have been reformed
- When we have a better understanding of student/parent demand for AS levels
- When we have a better understanding of university requirements for AS levels
- When we have a better understanding of employers' values for AS levels
- Other

In summary, results suggested that patterns of AS level provision had stabilised somewhat since the previous survey was conducted (in academic year 2016/2017). Just over a quarter of HoDs said that they expected their AS level provision to change in the future, down from 45% in the previous survey. As in the previous survey, HoDs from departments that had already reduced their AS level provision, or stopped it altogether, seemed more certain about their provision and said that they were unlikely to change again.

Plans to change provision

When asked about their provision of the new, decoupled AS levels, just over a quarter of HoDs who answered reported that they were likely⁴ to change provision in the future (Figure 24), a notably lower proportion than in the 2017 HoD survey (where 45% reported that they expected to change provision). Just over 60% reported that they were *not* likely⁵ to change provision (Figure 24), up from 39% in 2017. A majority (60%) of HoDs who answered said that it was likely they would stop offering all new AS levels in the future, and only 19% considered this to be unlikely or never likely to happen (Figure 24). These proportions resembled the findings from the 2017 survey very closely (where 61% said their department was likely to stop all AS levels, and 21% said this was unlikely or never likely to happen).



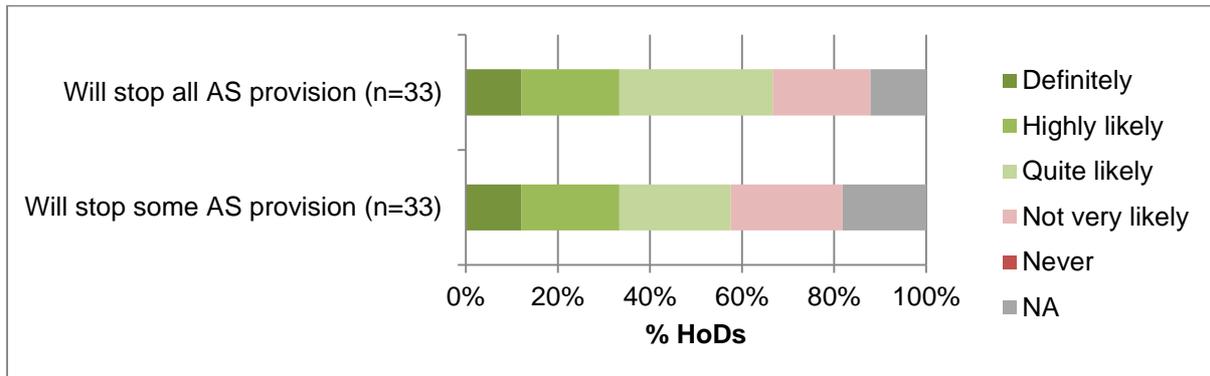
Note. 'NA' means that respondents selected the response "Not Applicable".

Figure 24: Plans for future provision of new AS levels, all HoDs

⁴ "Quite likely", "Highly likely" or "Definitely".

⁵ "Not very likely" or "Never".

Of the HoDs who said it was likely that they would change provision of the new AS levels in the future (Figure 25), two thirds said it was likely that they would stop all provision of new AS levels.



Note. 'NA' means that respondents selected the response "Not Applicable".

Figure 25: Plans for future provision of new AS levels, including only HoDs who said they were likely to change AS level provision in the future

We asked HoDs when they expected their provision of the new AS levels to change. The most frequently chosen timing was "In time for September 2018".

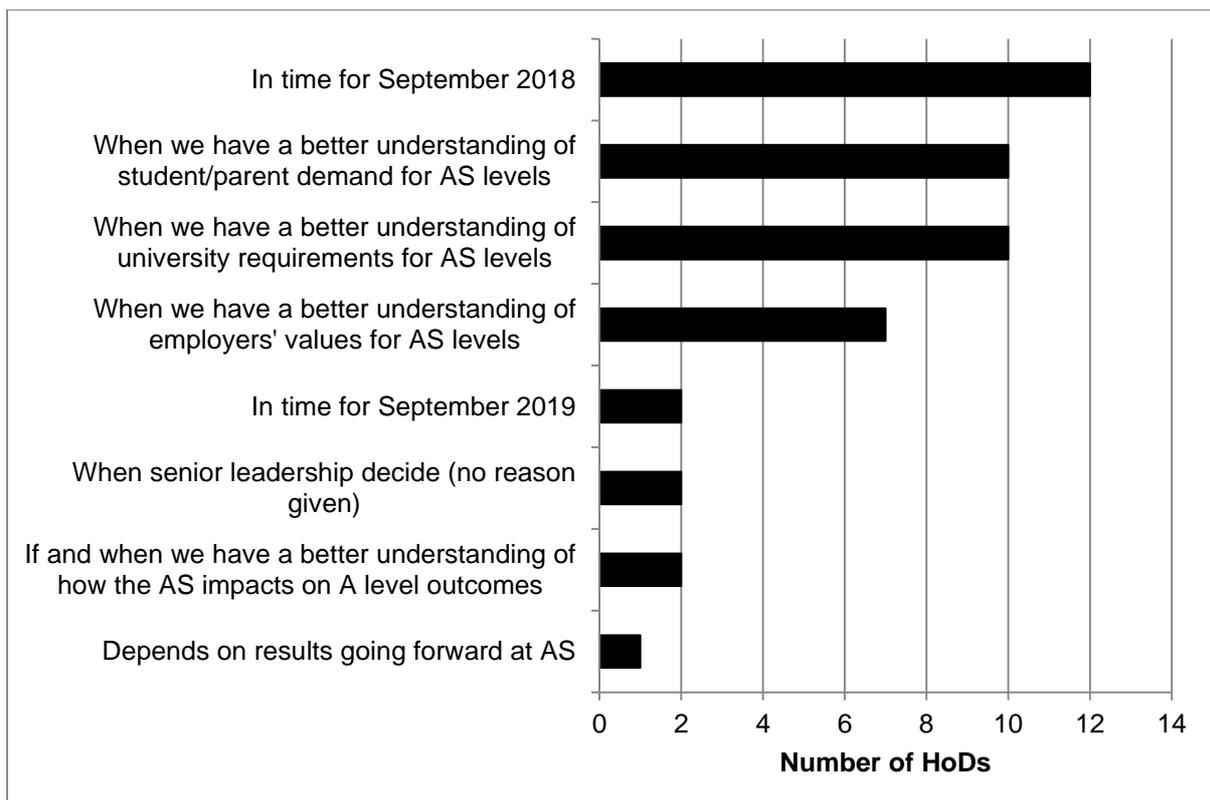
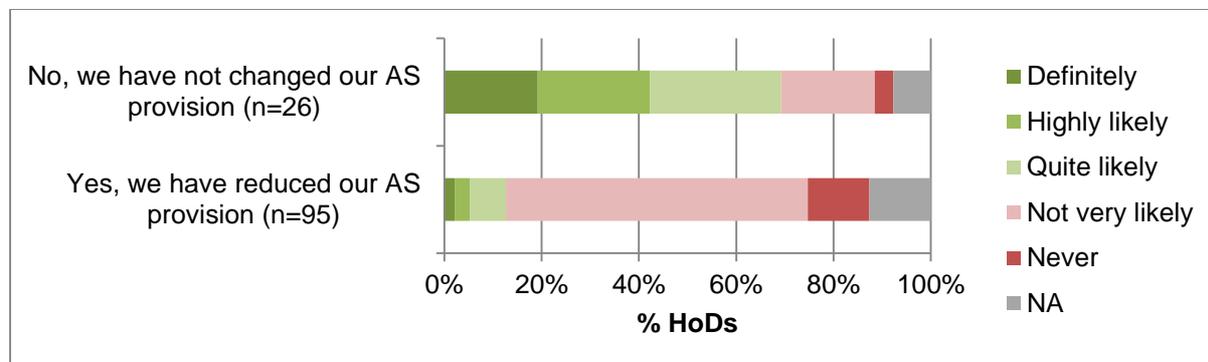


Figure 26: Expected timing of changes to new AS level provision (n=31)

Plans according to whether AS provision already changed

The majority of HoDs who responded to our survey had already reduced their AS provision (see Figure 11). Analysing plans for future changes according to the changes already made

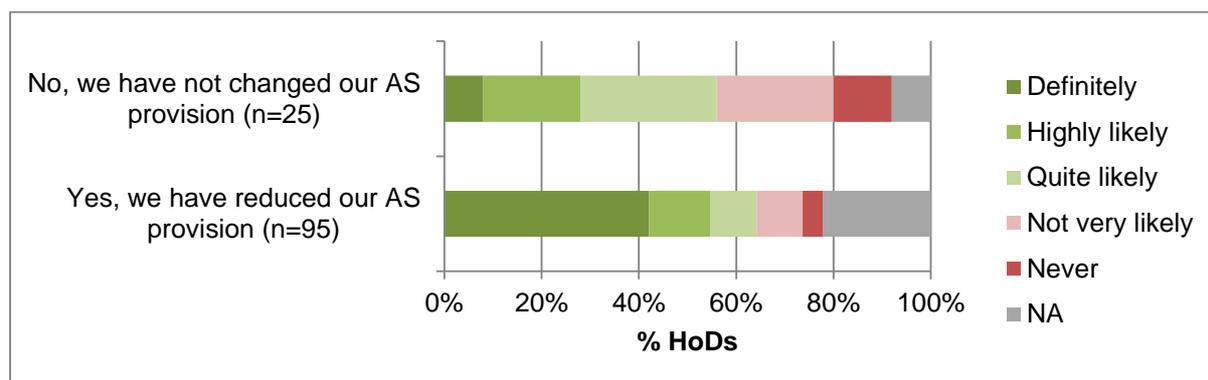
showed substantial differences (Figure 27). As in the 2017 survey, HoDs whose departments had not yet changed their AS provision were far more likely to say that they would change their AS level provision in the future (69%). Amongst HoDs who had already reduced their AS level provision, only 13% said that they were likely to change their AS level provision further.



Note. 'NA' means that respondents selected the response "Not Applicable".

Figure 27: Likelihood of changes to provision of new AS levels, by previous change (130 HoDs answered. Responses for departments which had increased their AS level provision, didn't know, or answered 'other' are excluded as these categories were very small)

Figure 28 shows responses to the question "How likely is it that you will stop offering all AS levels in the future?" according to whether the HoD's department had already changed their AS provision. Amongst respondents whose departments had already reduced AS provision, 64% thought it likely that they would stop offering *all* AS levels in the future, and only 14% said that it was unlikely. These proportions closely resemble the corresponding proportions from the 2017 HoD survey (68% and 6% respectively). A further 22% answered 'not applicable' – 89% of these were HoDs from departments that were no longer offering any AS levels. It is not clear why the remaining 11% answered 'not applicable'. Departments that had not already changed their AS level provision thought it less likely that they would stop offering all AS levels in future, and 36% said that it was unlikely.

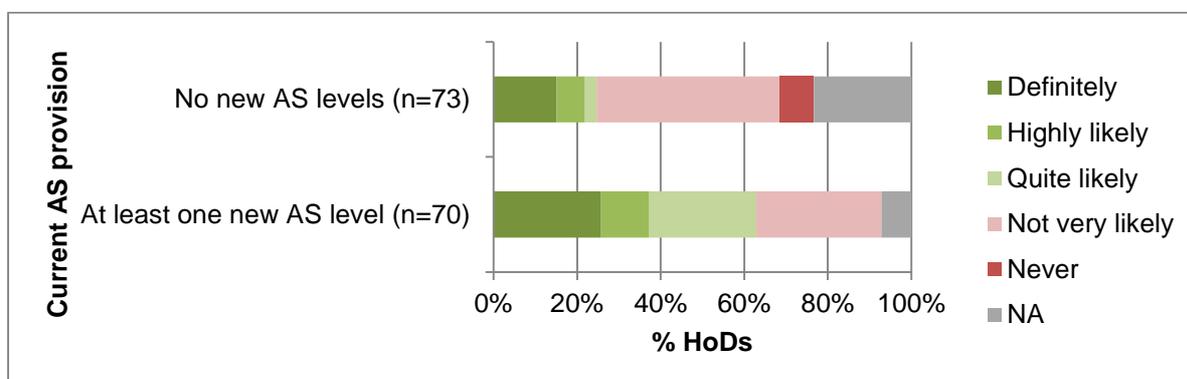


Note. 'NA' means that respondents selected the response "Not Applicable".

Figure 28: Likelihood of stopping provision of all new AS levels in future, by previous change

Plans according to AS provision of currently reformed subjects

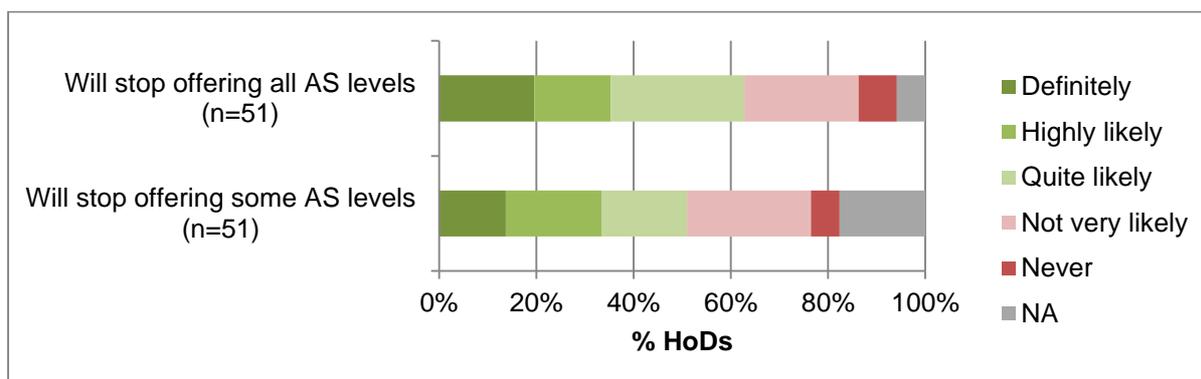
The departments currently offering no reformed AS levels were less likely to think that their AS level provision would change in future (Figure 29). Amongst departments that were offering a reformed AS level, 48% of HoDs thought their AS level provision was likely to change in the future, whereas only 12% of those not offering reformed AS levels thought their provision was likely to change.



Note. 'NA' means that respondents selected the response "Not Applicable".

Figure 29: Likelihood of changes to provision of new AS levels in future

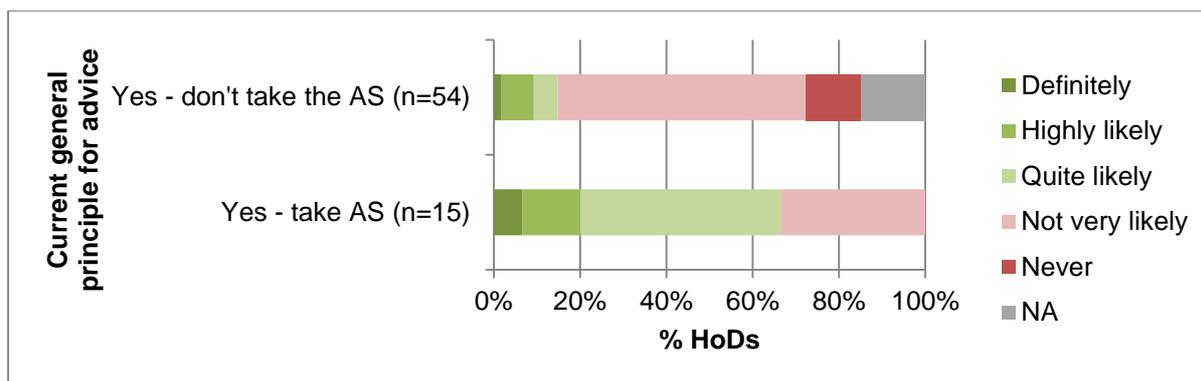
Among departments currently offering at least one reformed AS level (Figure 30), 61% thought it was likely that they would stop offering all AS levels in the future, whilst 31% responded that it was unlikely.



Note. 'NA' means that respondents selected the response "Not Applicable".

Figure 30: Likelihood of stopping provision of new AS levels in future, HoDs currently offering at least one reformed AS level

Analysis of departments' reported "general principles" for AS level provision support the findings above. Among departments who said that they had a general principle of advising students to take the reformed AS level in their A level subjects (a relatively small subgroup of respondents), two thirds said they were likely to change their AS provision in the future (see bottom bar of Figure 31). Among departments currently advising students *not* to take the reformed AS level in their A level subjects (top bar of Figure 31), only 13% said they were likely to change AS level provision.



Note. 'NA' means that respondents selected the response "Not Applicable".

Figure 31: Likelihood of changes to provision of new AS levels in future, according to general principle of current advice

6.10 What is filling the "4th AS space" (if anything)?

In the pre-reform system, students commonly took 3 A levels plus an extra AS, referred to as the '4th AS' (e.g., Sutch et al., 2015). A series of questions were asked to evaluate evidence for the existence and use of the '4th AS space' following the AS decoupling.

An initial set of questions was asked to determine how typical taking a 4th AS level was amongst the HoDs who were surveyed. The questions were: "Were the two cases below typical of your AS/A level students in your department in the old, pre-reformed system?"

- (i) Taking 4 subjects at AS and dropping one at A level
- (ii) Taking more than 4 subjects at AS and dropping (at least) one at A level"

171 HoDs answered the first question, almost all of whom (92%) said that it was typical for students to have taken four subjects at AS and dropped one at A level before the AS decoupling. Thus, these HoDs represent the dominant pattern of AS/A level uptake prior to the AS/A level reforms. A smaller number of HoDs answered the second question about the typicality of taking more than four subjects (n = 141 compared to 171). Only 25% indicated that their students took more than four AS levels and then dropped one and 70% said that pattern was not typical of their students.

HoDs were then asked about the proportion of their current Year 12 AS/A level students taking exactly 3 A levels and the proportion taking more than 3 A levels, given that all subjects had been decoupled in September 2017 (i.e., when these students started Year 12). Figure 32 shows that most HoDs said that the majority of their Year 12 students were taking exactly 3 A levels. As expected from that finding, most HoDs said that only a minority of their students were taking more than 3 A levels.

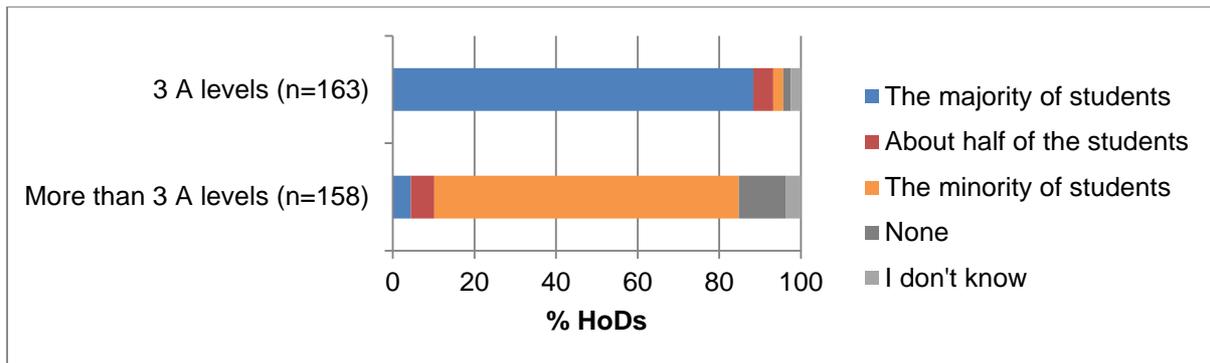


Figure 32: Proportion of Year 12 students taking 3 or more A levels, after all subjects reformed in Sep. 2017

HoDs were then asked what proportion of their AS/A level students taking 3 A levels would also take other qualifications/activities. Figure 33 shows that, in contrast to the pre-reform system, most HoDs (79%) indicated that either none of their students or only a minority would take an AS in a different subject alongside their 3 A levels. This suggests that many HoDs are not viewing the AS level as a way to broaden curriculum. Enrichment activities and, to a lesser extent, EPQs were the only two options that a substantial proportion of HoDs indicated would be taken by at least half of their A level students by (56% and 39% respectively). These percentages were very similar to those found in the 2017 survey.

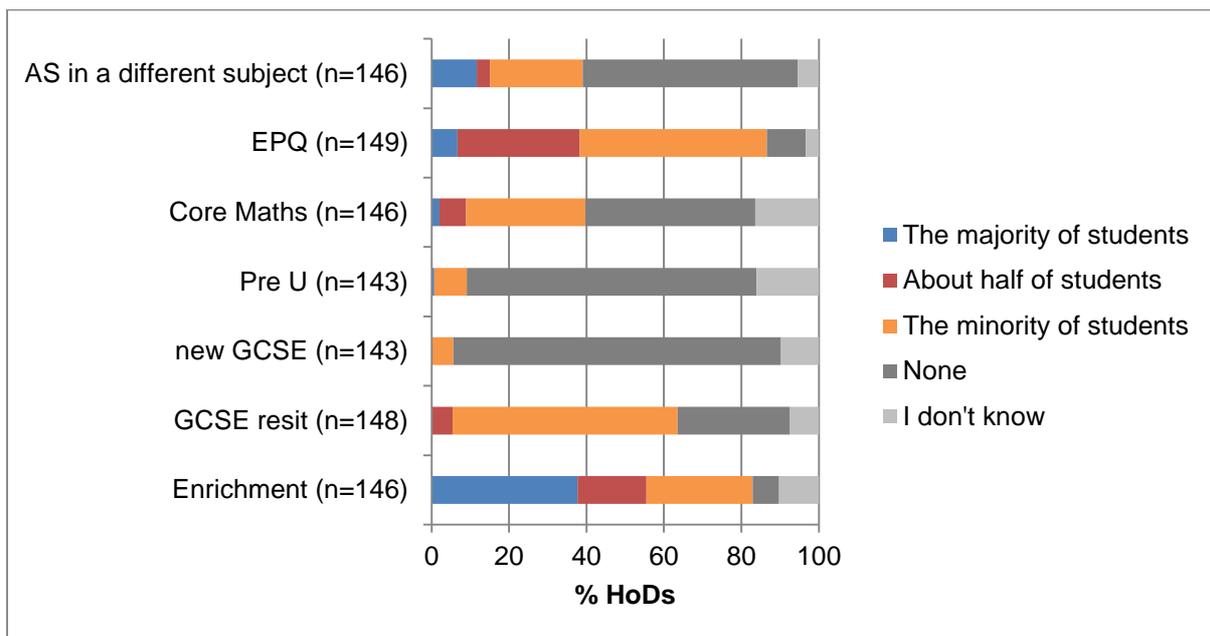


Figure 33: Other qualifications taken by students taking exactly 3 A levels

6.11 How do Heads of Department view the Extended Project Qualification?

HoDs were presented with a set of statements about the value of taking the EPQ, and asked to indicate the extent to which they thought each statement was true. Figure 34 shows there was strong agreement⁶ among HoDs that the EPQ helps to enhance general, non-subject-

⁶ HoDs answering “4 – Entirely true” or “3 – Fairly true”

specific skills (90% of those who answered). There was also strong agreement that the EPQ is good preparation for university (86%) and is good for university applications (86%). These findings closely match those from the previous survey.

Over half of HoDs (57%) agreed that the EPQ was useful across the ability range, a higher proportion than in the previous survey. As in the previous survey, however, a higher proportion said that the EPQ was more useful for high-attaining students (68%), and few felt that it was more useful for low-attaining students (23%).

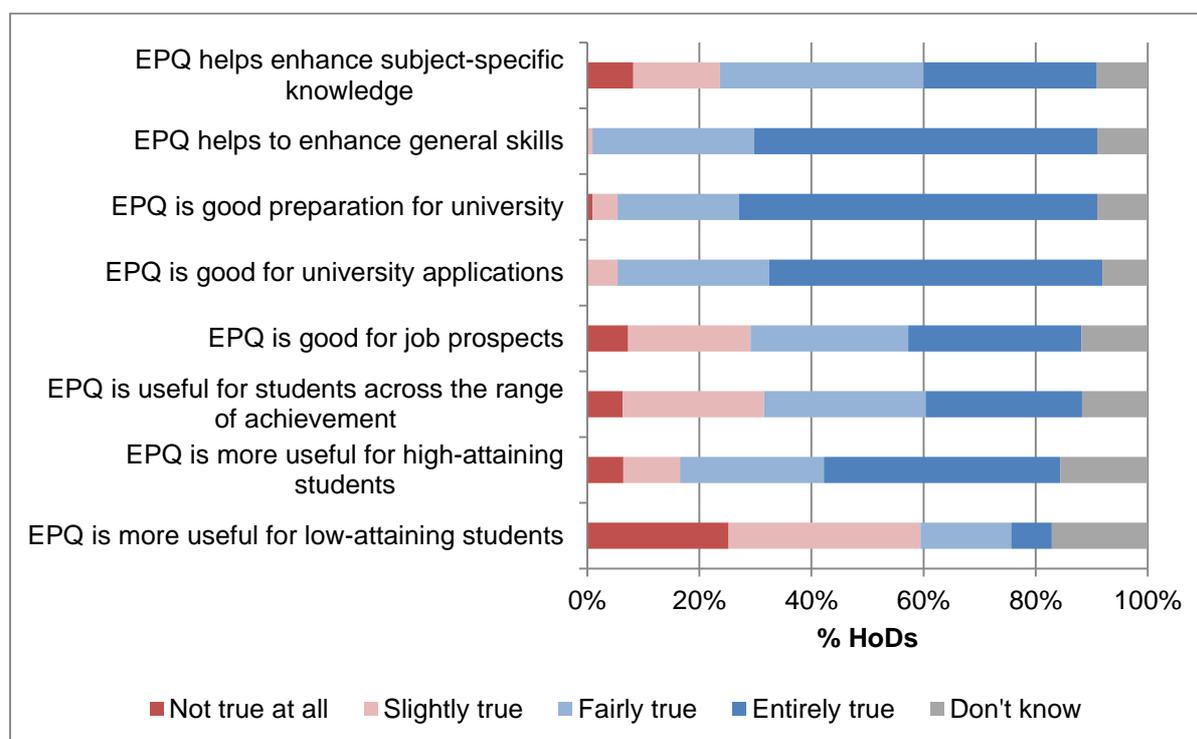


Figure 34: Views of HoDs on statements about value of EPQ (111 HoDs answered)

HoDs were next asked why they would advise their own AS/A level students to take an EPQ. HoDs were given a list of six positive reasons for advising students to take the EPQ as well as the option to indicate that they do not advise their students to take this qualification. HoDs could select one or more reasons. Table 3 shows that 14% of those who answered (16 HoDs) selected “None – I do not advise students to take the EPQ”.

Table 3: Types of responses to the question on advising students to take the EPQ

Response	Number of HoDs	% of HoDs who answered
No response	77	-
"None - I do not advise students to take the EPQ"	16	14%
Selected 1 positive reason to take the EPQ	14	13%
Selected 2 positive reasons to take the EPQ	16	14%
Selected 3 positive reasons to take the EPQ	30	27%
Selected 4 or more reasons to take the EPQ	35	32%
Total	188	

The proportion of HoDs who selected each reason is shown in Figure 35. The most commonly selected reason for advising students to take the EPQ was that it helps to enhance general skills; 69% of HoDs who answered and 81% of those who gave a positive response (i.e., did not answer “None – I do not advise students to take an EPQ”) selected this reason. A high proportion of HoDs also said they would advise taking the EPQ because it is good preparation for university (62% of those answering). The least commonly selected reasons for advising students to take the EPQ were because it is school policy (14%) and because it is good for job prospects (18%). The reasons most and least frequently given for advising students to take the EPQ were the same as in the 2017 survey.

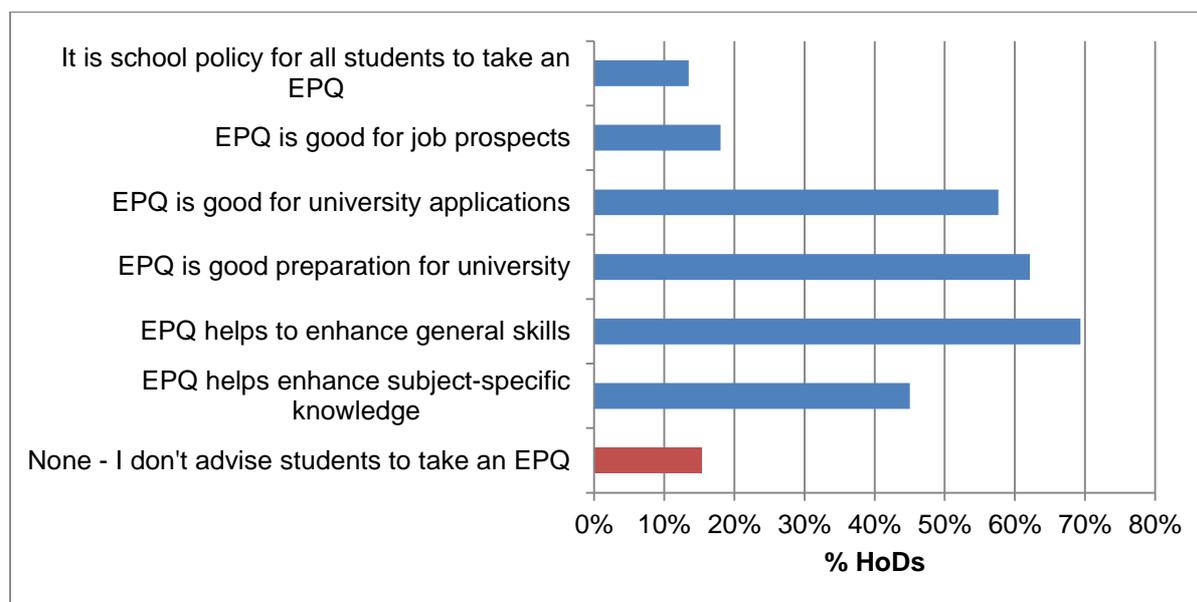


Figure 35: Reasons chosen for advising AS/A level students to take an EPQ (111 HoDs answered)

6.12 How do Heads of Department view Core Maths?

As for the EPQ, HoDs were presented with a set of statements about the value of taking Core Maths, and then indicated the extent to which they thought each statement was true.

The findings for Core Maths contrasted with those for the EPQ, as found in the 2017 survey. For each of the statements about the value of taking Core Maths, between 45% and 55% of HoDs who answered selected “Don’t know”, indicating widespread uncertainty about the qualification. The highest level of agreement was for the statement that Core Maths improves students’ mathematical understanding, with agreement from 89% of those who expressed a definite opinion (i.e., did not answer “Don’t know”). However, since the proportion of “Don’t know” responses was still high, this represented only 49% of HoDs who answered the question. Similarly, whilst 83% of those who expressed a definite opinion agreed that Core Maths helps students with their other AS/A level subjects, this represented only 45% of HoDs who answered, due to the high proportion of “Don’t know” responses. The responses showed particularly low levels of agreement with the idea that Core Maths is more useful for high-attaining students (only 12% agreed, and 33% disagreed), and that Core Maths enables students to take AS/A level mathematics later (only 17% agreed with this statement, and 26% disagreed).

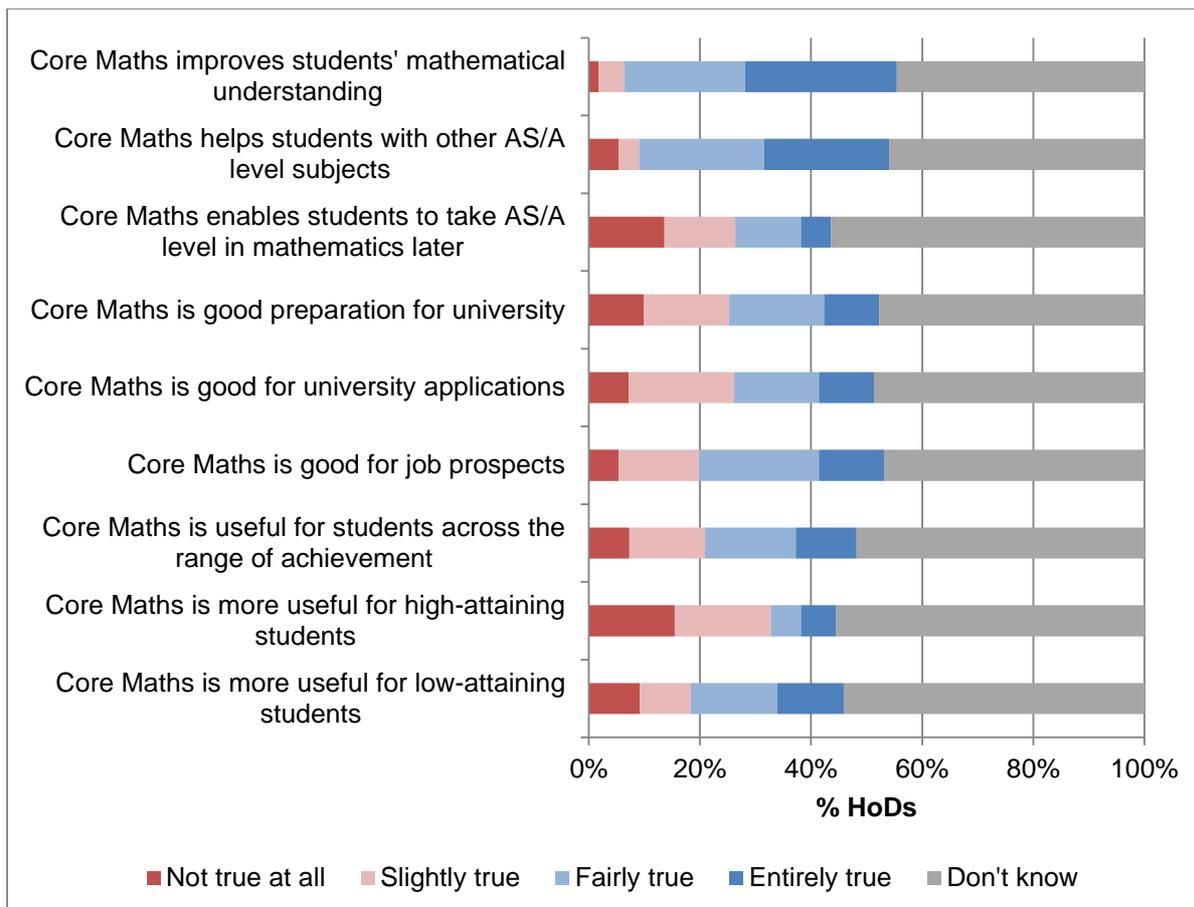


Figure 36: Views of HoDs on statements about value of Core Maths (108 HoDs answered)

Respondents' views on Core Maths were overall very similar to those of the respondents in the previous survey. Respondents were slightly more prepared to give an opinion about the value of Core Maths than those in the 2017 survey (where over 50% of responses for each statement were "Don't know"). Respondents were slightly more likely to agree that Core Maths improves students' mathematical understanding (49%, up from 43% in 2017), and to agree that Core Maths helps students with other AS/A level subjects (45%, up from 39% in 2017). Fewer respondents agreed that Core Maths was more useful for high-attaining students (12%, down from 22% in 2017) and slightly fewer respondents agreed that Core Maths was useful for job prospects (34%, down from 37% in 2017).

HoDs were next asked why they would advise their AS/A level students to take Core Maths, with HoDs asked to select one or more reasons. Table 4 shows that the most frequently chosen response was "None – I do not advise students to take Core Maths", chosen by 68 HoDs (63% of those who answered the question).

Table 4: Types of responses to the question on reasons to advise students to take Core Maths

Response	Number of HoDs	% of HoDs who answered
No response	80	-
"None - I do not advise students to take Core Maths"	68	63%
Selected 1 positive reason for advising students to take Core Maths	12	11%
Selected 2 positive reasons	13	12%
Selected 3 positive reasons	6	6%
Selected 4 or more reasons	9	8%
Total	188	

The proportion of HoDs choosing each response is shown in Figure 37. The most commonly selected positive reason for advising students to take Core Maths was “Core Maths helps students with other AS/A level subjects”. This was chosen by 26% of HoDs overall, and 70% of those HoDs who selected at least one positive reason to take Core Maths (i.e., not “None”). The next most commonly chosen reason was that “Core Maths improves students’ mathematical understanding”, chosen by 23% of HoDs overall, and 63% of HoDs who selected at least one positive reason.

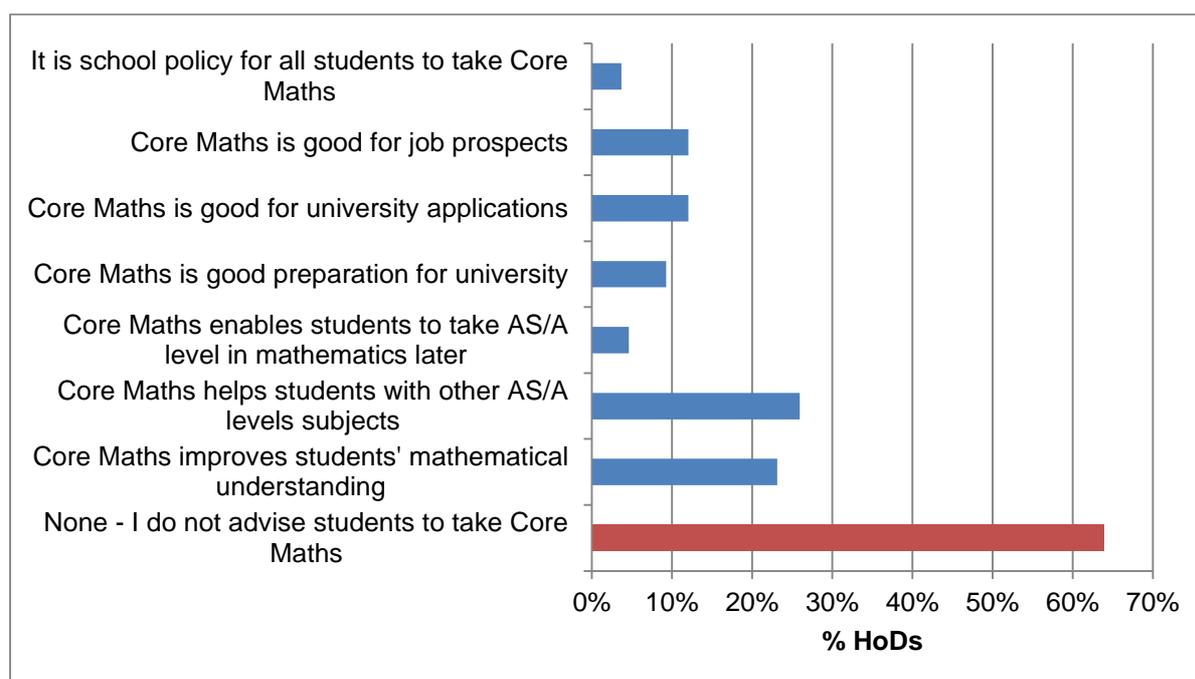


Figure 37: Reasons chosen for advising AS/A level students to take Core Maths (108 HoDs answered)

6.13 What do students’ whole programmes of study contain?

Survey respondents were asked to describe the programmes of study that they expected current Year 12 students in their department to take during Key Stage 5, now that all AS/A level subjects have been decoupled. They were asked to specify the most common combination likely to be taken by high-attaining and low-attaining students. The following results focus first on the expected combinations of AS and A levels, and then on the other qualifications and activities that HoDs said they expect students to take alongside.

Expected number of AS and A levels

Figure 38 and Figure 39 show the relative frequency of each combination of AS and A levels in the programmes of study that HoDs described (combinations selected by higher numbers of HoDs are represented by larger bubbles). In both figures, “DK” indicates that respondents selected the response “Don’t know”.

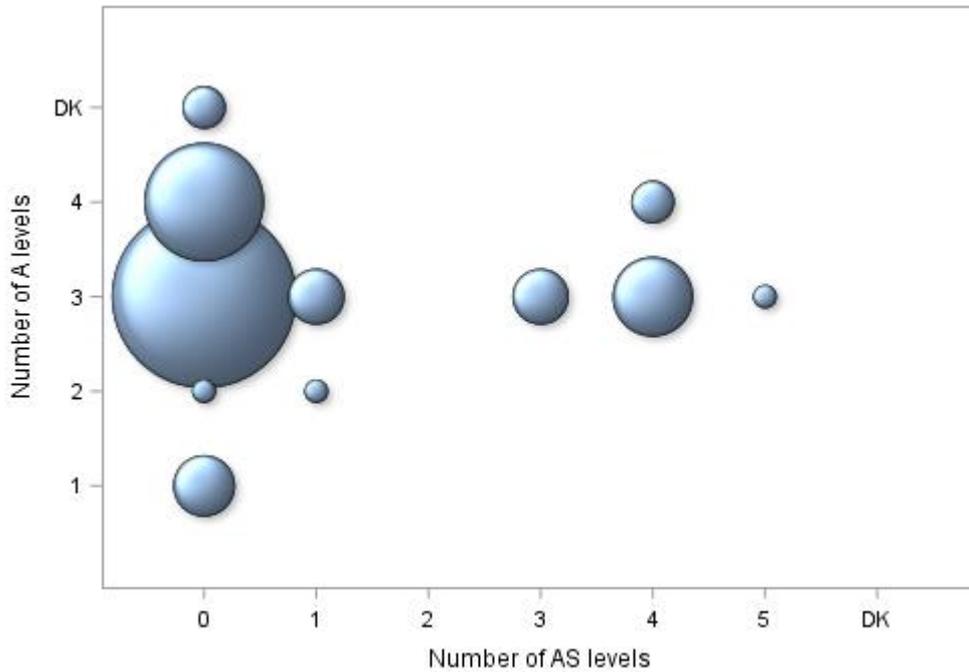


Figure 38: Number of AS and A levels for high-attaining students (109 HoDs gave an answer)

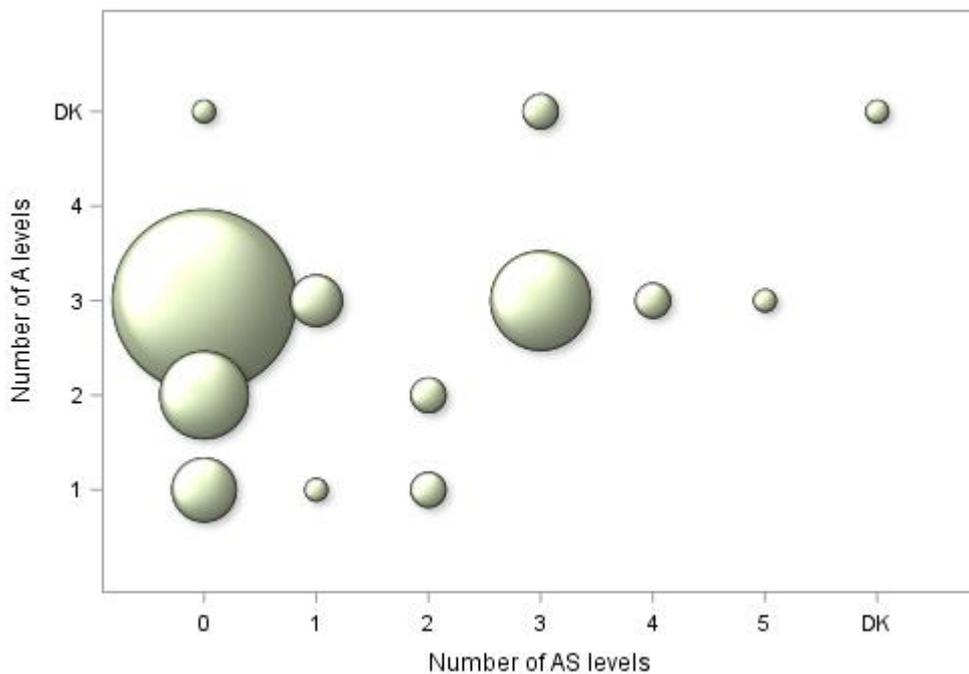


Figure 39: Number of AS and A levels for low-attaining students (94 HoDs gave an answer)

The most frequently selected combination was 3 A levels with 0 AS levels, for both high-attaining and low-attaining students. For high-attaining students (Figure 38), the second most commonly expected combination was 4 A levels with 0 AS levels. Almost all HoDs expected their high-attaining students to take 3 or 4 A levels. By far the most commonly expected number of AS levels was zero. In the previous survey (conducted in 2016/2017), a substantial minority (17%) of HoDs predicted that their high-attaining students in academic year 2017/2018 would be taking 3 A levels with 4 AS levels (Table 5), as in the pre-reform system. For the 2018 survey respondents, however (who were also asked about the 2017/2018 cohort – for them, their current Year 12 cohort) this was already a relatively uncommon combination, chosen by fewer than 10% of HoDs. For low-attaining students (Figure 39), the second most commonly expected combination after 3 A levels with 0 AS levels was 3 A levels with 3 AS levels.

Aside from the most frequently chosen combination (3 A levels with 0 AS), the other combinations expected for low-attaining and high-attaining students varied (see Table 5 and Table 6). HoDs selected combinations of low numbers of AS and A levels, such as 2 A levels with 1 AS level, more frequently for low-attaining students than for high-attaining students. This seems likely to be related to differences in the other elements of the programme of study, which later sections will discuss (see p.37).

Table 5: Top 5 combinations of AS/A levels expected for high-attaining students

Rank	Combination	N	Percentage (of HoDs who answered)	Percentage (2017 survey results)
1	3 A lev + 0 AS	52	47.7	42.2
2	4 A lev + 0 AS	22	20.2	13.0
3	3 A lev + 4 AS	10	9.2	16.9
4	1 A lev + 0 AS	6	5.5	-
5	3 A lev + 1 AS	5	4.6	9.1

Table 6: Top 5 combinations of AS/A levels expected for low-attaining students

Rank	Combination	N	Percentage (of HoDs who answered)	Percentage (2017 survey results)
1	3 A lev + 0 AS	46	48.9	46.8
2	3 A lev + 3 AS	14	14.9	17.0
3	2 A lev + 0 AS	11	11.7	5.7
4	1 A lev + 0 AS	6	6.4	-
5	3 A lev + 1 AS	4	4.3	2.2

For each centre, we calculated the difference between the expected numbers of A levels for high- and low-attaining students, and the difference between the expected numbers of AS levels for high- and low-attaining students. Table 7 shows the frequency of these within-centre differences. The results are grouped by the student ability that the HoD selected, since the relative categories of “high” and “low” attaining will differ according to the overall characteristics of a centre’s students. Centres are excluded from this table if the HoD responded “Don’t know” for the number of AS or A levels taken by high- or low-attaining students.

Table 7 shows that for almost all centres, the number of expected AS levels was either the same for both high- and low-attaining students (i.e., a difference of 0, green column in the table), or one higher for high-attaining students (i.e., a difference of +1). There was more evidence of differences between high- and low-attaining students' programmes of study in centres where the HoD said there was a wide range of attainment, as we would expect.

Table 7: Within-centre differences between numbers of AS and A levels expected for high- and low-attaining students (n=92)

Attainment of centre's AS/A level students	Difference in number of A levels	Difference in expected number of AS levels						
		-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
Wide range of attainment	0	.	.	30	5	.	.	.
	1	.	2	8	2	.	.	.
	2	.	1	5	1	1	.	.
	3	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
	4	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Mostly high-attaining (A/B grades)	-1	.	.	1	.	.	.	.
	0	1	.	11	2	.	.	.
	1	.	.	8	1	.	.	.
Mostly lower attaining (≤ C grades)	2	.	.	1	.	.	.	.
	0	1	.	3	1	.	.	.
	1	.	.	3	.	1	.	.
	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
	3	.	.	1	.	.	.	.

Qualifications other than AS/A levels

In addition to asking about the number of decoupled AS and A levels, the survey question on expected programmes of study asked HoDs about non-AS/A level qualifications and activities, such as vocational qualifications, the EPQ, and enrichment activities. For each qualification/activity, Figure 40 shows the proportion of HoDs who said it would be taken⁷ by their (1) typical low-attaining and (2) typical high-attaining students.

For both low-attaining and high-attaining students, around 60% of HoDs expected their programme of study to include enrichment activities. There was also little difference between high- and low-attaining students in terms of the proportion of HoDs expecting Core Maths in the programme of study, at around 10% for in both cases.

For other qualifications that we asked about, there were clear differences between expectations for high- and low-attaining students. Most strikingly, over 65% of HoDs expected their high-attaining students to take an EPQ, whereas only 27% expected it for low-attaining students, as found in the previous survey. By contrast, vocational qualifications and GCSEs, particularly GCSE retakes in English and Maths, were expected far more frequently for low-attaining students than for high-attaining students, again, as found in the

⁷ Number of HoDs who included the qualification in their expected programme of study. The analysis does not count instances where the HoD selected "Don't know" for a qualification's inclusion.

previous survey. This may be one of the reasons why low-attaining students were expected to take fewer AS and A levels (as seen in Figure 39).

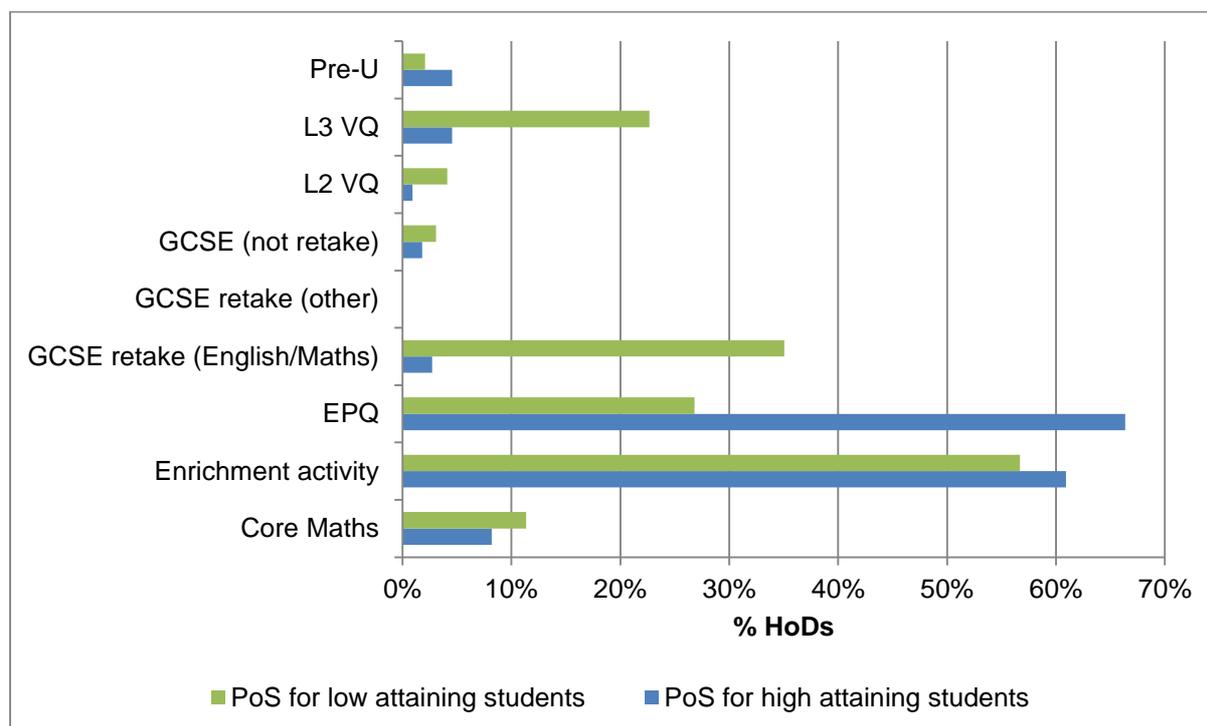


Figure 40: Proportion of HoDs expecting students to include additional qualifications (110 HoDs gave an answer for high-attaining students; 97 HoDs gave an answer for low-attaining students)

Overall programmes

HoDs described a wide variety of expected programmes of study. Considering all qualifications and activities specified, the most frequently described programme for high-attaining students was 3 A levels with an EPQ and enrichment activities, the same as in the previous survey, which was selected by 15% of answering HoDs (n=110). For low-attaining students, the most frequently described programme was 3 A levels with enrichment activities (and nothing else), selected by 13% of HoDs, as it was in the previous survey.

Many HoDs expected that their high-attaining students will take an EPQ and other qualifications⁸ as well as enrichment activities (Figure 41). There was no convincing evidence that the EPQ and other non-AS/A level qualifications were expected to fill the ‘4th space’: the proportion of HoDs expecting students to take other qualifications and/or the EPQ was very high for all combinations of AS and A levels, including where students were taking 4 AS levels. The only slight variation seemed to reflect students’ A level load: HoDs who expected their high-attaining students to take 4 A levels were marginally less likely than other HoDs to expect the EPQ and/or other qualifications alongside.

⁸ We grouped together qualifications other than AS/A levels and EPQ for the purposes of analysis, as the number of HoDs choosing each particular qualification was typically small.

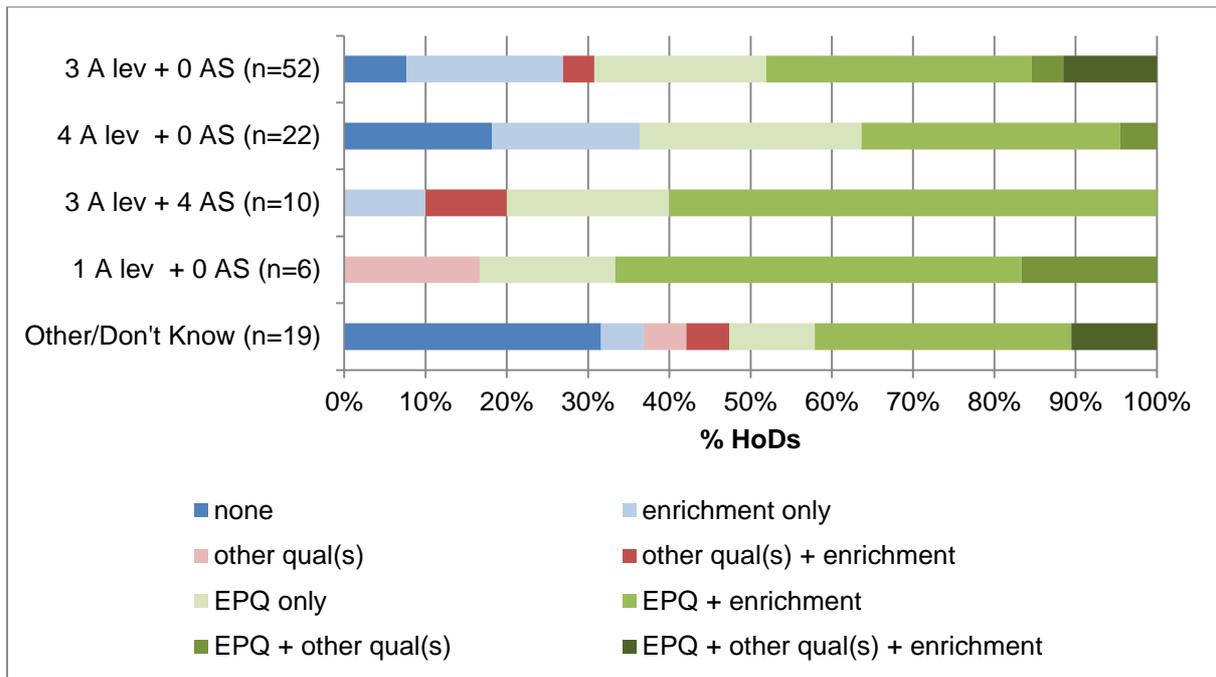


Figure 41: Programmes of study expected for high-attaining students, by AS/A level combination

For low-attaining students (Figure 42), the expected combination of non-AS/A level activities was very similar across all three of the most common AS/A level combinations. As previously seen, the proportion of HoDs expecting their low-attaining students to take the EPQ within their overall programme of study was far lower than the proportion who expected it for their high-attaining students.

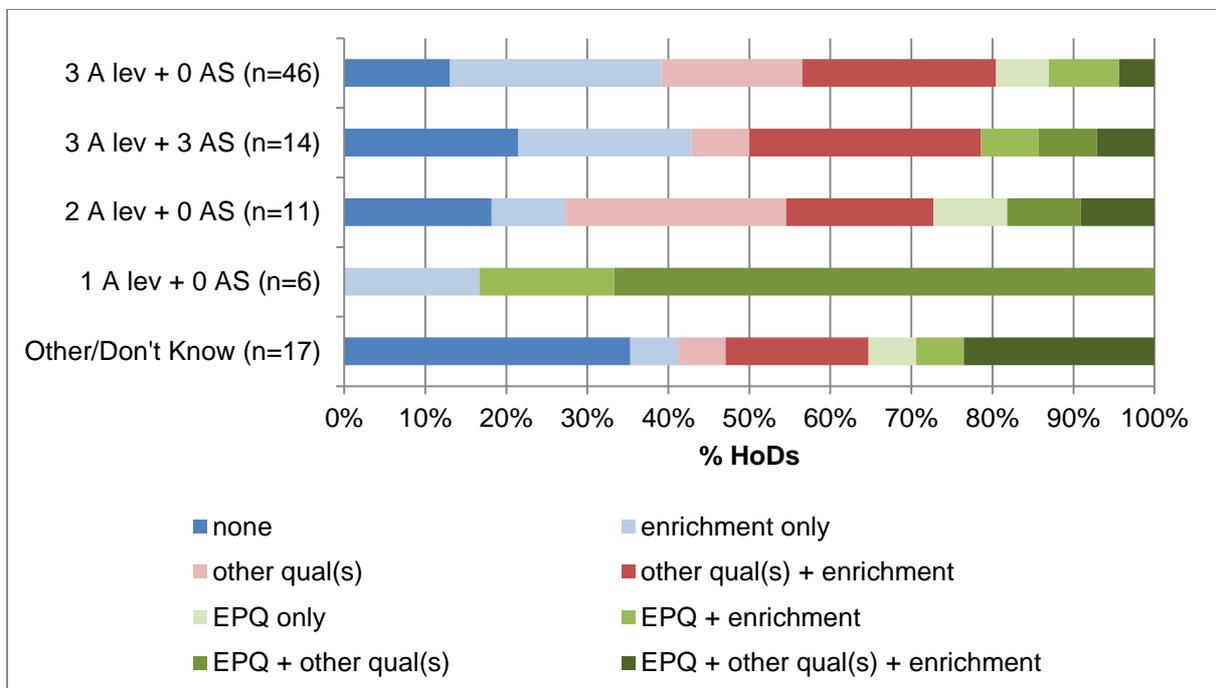


Figure 42: Programmes of study expected for low-attaining students, by AS/A level combination

7 Discussion

This report discusses the findings from a survey completed by HoDs in schools and colleges, which aimed to obtain an up-to-date understanding of provision of decoupled AS and A levels, plans to change provision, and impacts of the reforms on students' overall programmes of study. The survey was a repeat of the HoD survey conducted in 2017 (Vitello & Williamson, 2018) with some modifications to adjust for the progression of the reforms.

Our previous survey was conducted in early 2017, which was before decoupled AS and A levels had been introduced in all subjects. It therefore provided insights into the early effects of the current AS/A level reforms on provision, at a point midway through the implementation of the reforms. The current, 2018, survey was conducted between December 2017 and March 2018. Critically, this was after September 2017, the date of first teaching for decoupled AS and A levels in the third and final⁹ tranche of mainstream subjects. In addition, by September 2017 schools and colleges had received results for decoupled A levels for the first time, for those decoupled A levels which had been taken in June 2017.

The findings from various sections of the 2018 survey suggest that the reforms have created a "new normal" with regard to A level students' programmes of study. Pre-reform, students commonly took 3 A levels plus 1 AS level in a different subject to the A levels (Sutch, Zanini, & Benton, 2015), whereas the survey findings show a widespread move towards a '3 A level + 0 AS' programme, which was indicated by HoDs from various different types of centres and different subjects. Previous research, including our 2017 survey, had already suggested a move away from AS level provision (e.g., UCAS, 2017; Vitello & Williamson, 2018) and predicted a move towards a '3 A level + 0 AS' programme, but these studies had been conducted before all (mainstream) subjects had been reformed (i.e., before September 2017). Our survey reports on the Key Stage 5 programmes of study of actual Year 12 students in the first cohort taking entirely reformed AS and A levels, and, thus, provides important confirmatory evidence of the earlier trend. Among HoDs from departments that had already reduced their AS level provision, only 13% said they expected to make further changes to AS level provision in the future, indicating that those who have moved away from AS level provision strongly expect to stabilise in the new, no-AS provision model.

The survey results further suggest that reductions in AS provision are likely to be even more widespread from September 2018. Among HoDs from departments that had *not* yet reduced AS level provision, we found less expectation of stability in future provision: almost 70% stated that they expected their AS provision to change in future, of which a large majority expected to change provision in time for September 2018. In addition, for most of these HoDs, their plans were not only to reduce AS provision but to stop offering AS levels altogether. These findings suggest that the beginning of academic year 2018/2019 may mark a further step change in Key Stage 5 provision.

From the 2017 survey it appeared that decisions about AS provision were frequently being made at centre level rather than department level. However, we could not draw strong conclusions because the majority of our evidence on this point was indirect, since the survey

⁹ Decoupled A levels (but not AS levels) will be introduced in a fourth and final tranche of minority subjects in September 2018. This tranche consists of language subjects with low uptake, such as Modern Greek.

questions had not specifically targeted this information. The 2018 survey included specific questions on decision-making within centres. The findings support the earlier conclusion, showing that AS provision was decided at centre level in the vast majority of centres. Over 60% of HoDs stated that the Senior Leadership Team had the most influence on deciding AS provision for their department and 78% stated that the SLT made the *final* decision. Decisions made at centre level do not necessarily result in AS provision that is the same across all departments. However, uniform provision was the case for over half of the centres sampled. We suggest that this is likely to reflect the practical need for consistency between departments. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasise that in another large minority of centres, there was variation across departments in terms of AS provision, although this often showed AS levels as being offered in only a minority of departments, rather than in many departments. It is perhaps not surprising that variation in AS provision across departments was reported to occur more frequently in centres where the HoD had the most influence on AS provision than in centres where the SLT had the most influence.

Alongside the trend away from AS level provision, it is important to emphasise that AS level provision has continued in some centres. The fact that there are still centres offering AS levels is often given little, if any, attention, with media commentators in particular emphasising increasing and dramatic reductions in AS level entries (e.g., Busby, 2017) and the concerns associated with this effect of AS decoupling. Of the HoDs who responded to our survey, 21% said that at least some of their students were taking both the AS level and A level in the same subject and, for 19% of HoDs, taking the AS level was a general principle for their A level students. Further evidence of resistance to removing AS levels was the finding that among departments currently offering at least one reformed AS level, 31% said that it was unlikely that they would change AS provision, indicating that they would keep offering AS levels. Interestingly, centres still offering AS levels seemed to be encouraging a pre-reform programme of study rather than a programme that incorporated the AS level in a different way. Many more of these centres expected their current Year 12 students to take the pre-reform model of 3 A levels + 4 AS levels than, for example, 3 A levels with 1 AS level.

Our survey did not find notable changes in the opinions of HoDs about the value or purpose of AS levels. As in the 2017 survey, HoDs overall tended to disagree that there was demand for AS levels, and were split on the question of whether it helps students to study for the A level in the same subject. The highest levels of support were for the statement that AS levels give students exam practice, and the statement that the AS helps students make A level decisions.

The reasons that HoDs gave for offering or not offering AS levels were also very similar to those found in the 2017 survey. The most commonly cited reason for advising students to take the AS level in their A level subjects was that AS levels give students exam practice, as it was in the 2017 survey. The AS level was also still used by many HoDs as a way for students to 'drop' a subject after starting it as an A level. Notably, there were substantial increases in the proportions of HoDs who said they advised taking the AS level because the AS level helps students to study for the A level, and because the AS is particularly useful for low-attaining students. This change could suggest that centres who maintained AS provision during the gradual implementation of reformed qualifications for other reasons (e.g., for pragmatic reasons such as timetabling) are now less likely to advise students to take AS

levels. Consequently, the specific goal of helping lower attaining students accounts for a greater extent of the motivation for AS provision among those centres which have maintained AS provision into academic year 2017/2018. This explanation would correspond well with views on the purpose of AS provision shared by teachers and providers at OCR's recent Post-16 event. With regard to reasons for *not* offering the AS level, the dominant reasons concerned negative impacts of studying the AS on the A level, either in terms of student focus or teaching time, as in the 2017 survey results.

There are various implications of the move away from AS levels on students' overall programme of study. It has already been mentioned that this has affected the combinations of AS and A levels being taken such that the previously common '3 A level + 1 AS' model appears to have been replaced by a '3 A level + 0 AS' model. When the two models are directly compared, there is an apparent space in students' programmes of study due to the removal of the AS level; this has been called the '4th space'. While this notion of an unoccupied '4th space' seems appealing, especially because it provides an apparent opportunity to broaden students' programmes of study, the survey findings suggested that HoDs did not perceive the existence of such a space. Many HoDs agreed that teaching the decoupled AS takes time away from the A level, and that there is insufficient time to teach AS levels. Furthermore, in our analysis of students' whole programmes of study, we did not find that the EPQ or any other qualification/activity was being used to "replace" the 4th AS. It was striking that the non-AS/A level activities and qualifications that HoDs expected their students to take did *not* vary with their AS level load (although HoDs expecting students to take 4 A levels were marginally less likely to expect students to take an EPQ). It may be the case that students' fourth AS level was never widely perceived as an additional or broadening feature of programmes of study, and that the use of the AS level as 'safety net' was the far more common perception (Sutch et al., 2015). Many HoDs also agreed that there was insufficient budget to offer AS levels, meaning that provision could be low even where it was perceived as beneficial.

The clearest evidence of subject differences was found with regard to views on Core Maths. Core Maths was better understood and more positively viewed by HoDs in Maths departments, a perhaps unsurprising finding. It was striking how few respondents in other departments actively agreed with statements about the value of Core Maths, either for improving mathematical understanding or for supporting students in other subjects, even in subjects which might have been expected to welcome additional study in Maths, such as Social Sciences. As in the previous survey, however, this finding seemed to reflect uncertainty about the Core Maths qualification, with very high proportions of "Don't know" responses, rather than negative perceptions. Among respondents who expressed a definite opinion, the perception of Core Maths was highly positive.

In conclusion, the continuing trend away from AS level provision raises questions about the future viability of the AS qualification, and this is a matter of some concern in light of the fact that some centres appear to value the AS and what it can offer their students. The findings from this research complement qualitative studies examining the impact of AS and A level reform. For example, Ofqual (2018a, published during the course of this research) reported on a study of 13 schools, which highlighted the wide variety of entry approaches found in centres post-reform, and illustrated some of the reasoning behind centres' decisions.

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9 Appendix – Description of respondents

Number of HoDs

188 respondents were included in the analysis. It must be noted that not all questions were completed by every respondent; for ease of interpretation, the number of responses are indicated for each question.

Centre and department characteristics

The survey contained questions about four centre-level characteristics: (1) category of institution, which ignored the centre's funding arrangement (e.g., school sixth form, sixth form college), (2) funding arrangement (e.g., academy), (3) selectivity (e.g., comprehensive) and (4) centre size (i.e., number of KS5 students). In addition, respondents were asked to identify the pattern of student attainment in their own department (i.e., not centre level attainment). The results are presented in Table 8 to Table 17, which contain the full list of response options that was given in the survey.

Table 8 and Table 9 show that almost all HoDs came from sixth forms attached to a secondary school, with the majority having an 11-18 age intake. A small percentage (11.8%) came from standalone sixth form colleges or FE colleges.

Table 10 shows that these proportions are broadly representative of the distribution of institution categories in England, especially with regard to the large representation of school sixth forms.

Table 8: Categories of institution in survey sample

Category of institution	Number of HoDs	%
School sixth form	158	84.0
Sixth form college (standalone)	14	7.4
Further education college	8	4.3
Specialist college	2	1.1
Other	5	2.7
No answer	1	0.5
<i>Total</i>	<i>188</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 9: Age range of students at centres in the survey sample

Student age	Number of HoDs	%
Primary age-18 years	9	4.8
11-18 years	143	76.1
13-18 years	13	6.9
16+	6	3.2
16-19 years	17	9.0
No answer	0	0.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>188</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 10: National distribution of institutional categories

Category of institution	Number of centres	%
Sixth forms attached to schools	2877	88.6
Sixth form colleges (post-16 only)	90	2.8
General FE colleges (post-16 only)	206	6.3
Specialist college (post-16)	1	0.03
Other post-16 centres	54	1.7
Other	18	0.6

Note. Based on 2015/2016 Key Stage 5 performance tables data¹⁰

Table 11 shows that just over half of the HoDs came from centres funded as academies or free schools, and another quarter came from independent centres. Table 12 shows that these proportions are broadly representative of the distribution of funding types in England.

Table 11: Centre funding in the survey sample

Funding	Number of HoDs	%
Academy or free school	98	52.1
Independent	46	24.5
Local authority maintained	34	18.1
Other	8	4.3
Do not know	2	1.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>188</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 12: National distribution of academy and independent schools

Funding	Number of centres	%
Academy	1451	51.6
Independent	569	20.2
Not academy or independent	794	28.2

Note. Based on National Pupil Database data 2015/2016 data

Table 13 shows that the majority of HoDs came from small or medium centres, with 100-200 or 201-500 students. To put these sizes in context, the average size of state-funded mainstream school sixth forms in 2016 was 211 students (Thomson, 2016). However, centres with fewer than 200 have been considered to be small by the DfE, having published guidance recommending that new school sixth forms should have at least 200 students (Department for Education, 2016).

Table 13: Size (number of students) of centres in survey sample

Size category	Centre size (number of KS5 students)	Number of HoDs	%
Small	less than 100	36	19.2
	100-200	63	33.5
Medium	201-500	65	34.6

¹⁰ The data was downloaded from the government website (<https://www.gov.uk/school-performance-tables>). See the DfE technical guidance for further information (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/school-performance-tables-about-the-data#2016-data:-ages-16-to-18>).

Large	501-1000	8	4.3
	1001-1500	3	1.6
	1501-2000	3	1.6
	more than 2000	10	5.3
	<i>Total</i>	<i>188</i>	<i>100</i>

Particularly because one category of institution (school sixth form) was dominant among responding HoDs, it was worth examining the overlap between key centre characteristics. Figure 43, Figure 44 and Figure 45 show the overlap from three different perspectives.

Figure 43 shows the funding types of respondents' centres, according to the category of institution. The categories "Specialist college" (n=2) and "Other" (n=5) were excluded due to small numbers. Figure 43 shows that 56% of the school sixth forms in our sample were academies (or free schools), a further 25% were independent and 15% were local authority maintained. Among the sixth form colleges, there was a more even distribution of academy, local authority maintained and independent centres. In contrast, most of the FE colleges were local authority maintained.

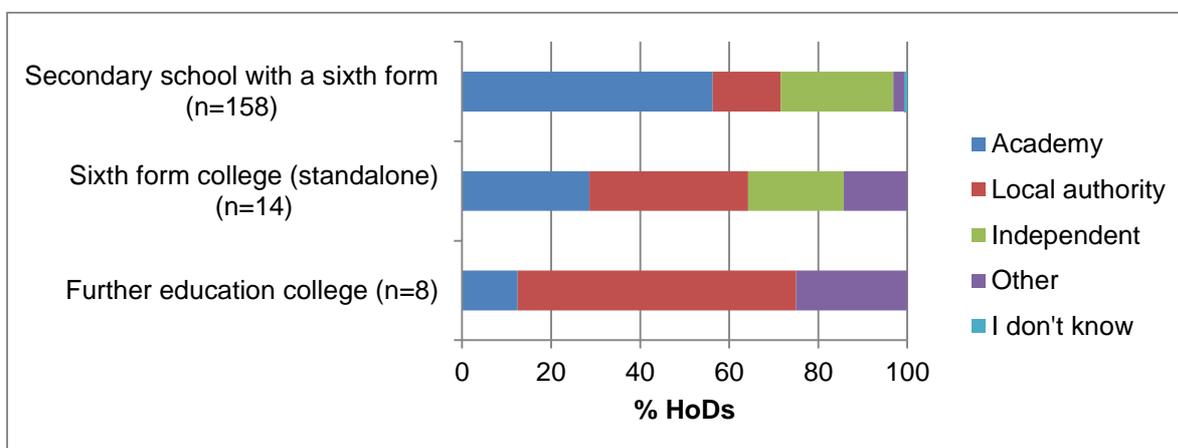


Figure 43: Centre funding selected by category of institution

Table 14 shows more clearly that, owing to the large number of school sixth forms sampled, each of the main funding categories for this particular type of centre was represented by a substantial number of respondents.

Table 14: Numbers and percentage of HoDs for each combination of centre funding and category of institution

Centre funding	Category of institution					
	School sixth form		Sixth form college		FE college	
	Number of HoDs	%	Number of HoDs	%	Number of HoDs	%
Academy	89	56.3	4	28.6	1	12.5
Local authority	24	15.2	5	35.7	5	62.5
Independent	40	25.3	3	21.4	0	0.0
Other	4	2.5	2	14.3	2	25.0
Don't know	1	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>158</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>100</i>

As explained in the Methods section of the main report, we derived the centre type classification by combining the variables on category of institution and centre funding. Table 15 shows the number and percentage of HoDs from each centre type.

Table 15: Numbers and percentage of HoDs by centre type classification

Centre type	Number of HoDs	%
School sixth form – academy	89	47.3
School sixth form – local authority	24	12.8
School sixth form – independent	40	21.3
Sixth form college	14	7.4
FE college	8	4.3
Other (including 'Don't know')	13	6.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>188</i>	<i>100</i>

Looked at from the funding point of view (Figure 44), all three of the main funding categories of academy, local authority maintained and independent centres were dominated by school sixth forms in our sample. A slightly larger percentage of the local authority centres were sixth form colleges (red) or FE colleges (green) compared to the academy or independent centres.

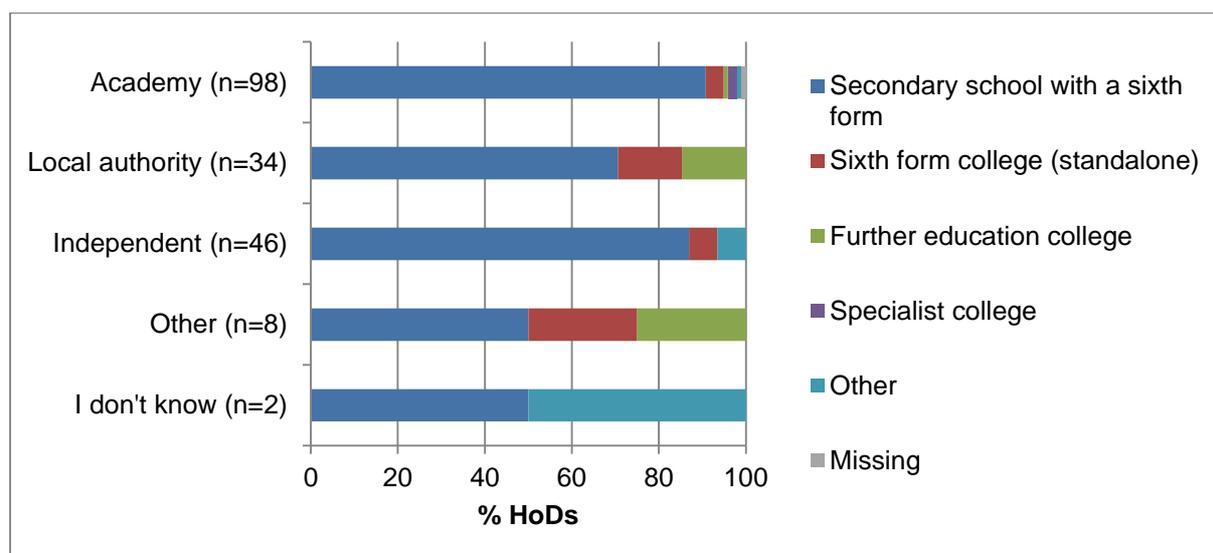


Figure 44: Category of institution by centre funding

Considering the centre size categories (small = 0-200 students, medium = 201-500, and large = over 500), Figure 45 shows that both small and medium centres were predominantly school sixth forms, whilst large centres included a more balanced mix of school sixth forms and sixth form colleges.

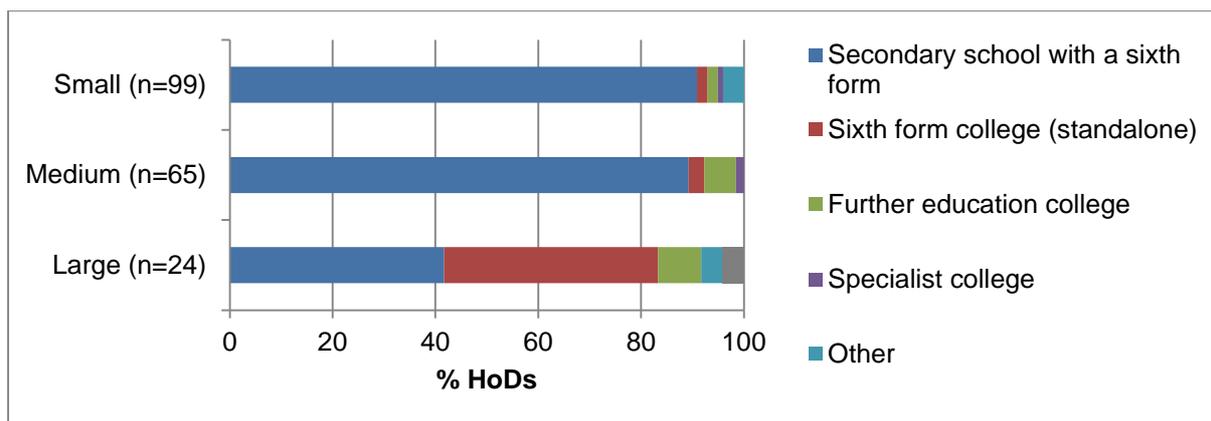


Figure 45: Category of institution by centre size

Table 16 shows that over half of the responding HoDs stated that their students had a wide range of attainment, with another substantial minority (30%) stating that their students were mostly high-attaining (i.e., who were expected to achieve A or B grades). Less than 10% of HoDs had a predominately low-attaining cohort (i.e., who were expected to achieve C grades or lower). Table 17 shows that 60% of HoDs came from centres with a comprehensive intake, while another third were from academically selective centres.

Table 16: Student attainment of respondent's department

Student attainment	Number of HoDs	%
Most are high-attaining (A or B expected)	57	30.3
Most are lower attaining (C or lower expected)	17	9.0
Wide range of attainment	108	57.5
Other	3	1.6
No answer	3	1.6
<i>Total</i>	<i>188</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 17: Student selection process in respondent's centre

Intake selection	Number of HoDs	%
Comprehensive	113	60.1
Academically selective	62	33.0
Other selective	8	4.3
Other	2	1.1
Do not know	1	0.5
No answer	2	1.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>188</i>	<i>100</i>

Subject/department coverage

As explained in the main report's Methods section, respondents' departments were derived from the department names that they typed in a free-text question, as well as the combination of subjects they selected, in order to give an estimate of department coverage and to help detect subject differences.

Table 18 shows that the largest number of HoDs (20%) indicated that they led a Mathematics department. The second largest number came from an Art or Design Technology department (17%). Smaller, but still sizeable, numbers of HoDs came from Science, Social Science, Humanities, Computing and English/Media departments.

A department could not be derived for 11% of respondents, and were grouped into an 'Unknown' category. Those HoDs had either selected a diverse set of subjects or none (i.e., they did not answer the question about the subjects they offered).

Table 18: Department coverage derived from department name and subject selections

Department (derived)	Number of HoDs	%
Art/Design	31	16.5
Business/Economics	3	1.6
Computing	13	6.9
English/Media	10	5.3
Humanities	19	10.1
Modern Foreign Languages	3	1.6
Maths	38	20.2
Performing Arts	2	1.1
Science	23	12.2
Social Science	19	10.1
Sport	6	3.2
Unknown	21	11.2
<i>Total</i>	<i>188</i>	<i>100</i>

Note. Green highlights the most represented departments, which are the ones included in the subgroup analyses.

The next three tables show how the departments sampled in this survey were distributed across centres with different characteristics in regard to centre type (Table 19), size (Table 20) and attainment range (Table 21).

The overall distribution of departments shown in Table 18 was most similar to the distribution amongst the academy school sixth forms (see Table 19), although there were some differences. For example, the academies had a notably higher percentage of Art/Design HoDs than the overall sample and this was also higher than the proportion in all the other centre types. The independent centres had a higher percentage of HoDs from humanities departments than the academies or local authority maintained centres. None of the local authority HoDs were from Art/Design departments but they had a higher percentage of Computing HoDs relative to the academies and independent centres. The subject distributions among colleges were more noticeably different to the overall distributions. HoDs from sixth form colleges came from a range of departments, with at least one from each of the most represented departments (green), but with a more even spread across them. HoDs from FE colleges mostly came from 'Unknown' departments.

The distribution of departments was similar between small and medium centres, although there was a larger proportion of Maths HoDs among the medium centres and a larger proportion of Humanities HoDs among the small centres. The large centres also covered a wide range of subjects but with a different distribution, including having a much smaller percentage of Art/Design HoDs.

With regard to attainment range, the overall pattern in Table 21 most closely reflected the distribution among departments with a wide range of attainment. HoDs with mostly high-attaining students showed a similar pattern, although they were represented by a larger percentage of Science HoDs. In contrast, HoDs with low-attaining students were less likely to be from Maths departments and more likely to be from Art/Design departments.

Table 19: Number and percentage of each department for each centre type

Department	School sixth forms						Sixth form college	FE college		Other		
	Academy /free		Independent		Local authority			No.	%	No.	%	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%						
Art/Design	22	24.7	8	20.0	0	0.0	1	7.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
Business/Econ.	1	1.1	1	2.5	1	4.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Computing	4	4.5	1	2.5	4	16.7	2	14.3	0	0.0	2	15.4
English/Media	4	4.5	0	0.0	3	12.5	2	14.3	0	0.0	1	7.7
Humanities	7	7.9	7	17.5	3	12.5	1	7.1	0	0.0	1	7.7
MFL	2	2.2	1	2.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Maths	21	23.6	5	12.5	4	16.7	4	28.6	0	0.0	4	30.8
Performing Arts	1	1.1	1	2.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Science	9	10.1	5	12.5	3	12.5	1	7.1	1	12.5	4	30.8
Social Science	7	7.9	5	12.5	4	16.7	1	7.1	1	12.5	1	7.7
Sport	4	4.5	1	2.5	0	0.0	1	7.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
Unknown	7	7.9	5	12.5	2	8.3	1	7.1	6	75.0	0	0.0

Table 20: Number and percentage of each department for each centre size

Department	Large		Medium		Small	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Art/Design	2	8.3	11	16.9	18	18.2
Business/Economics	0	0.0	1	1.5	2	2.0
Computing	3	12.5	4	6.2	6	6.1
English/Media	1	4.2	3	4.6	6	6.1
Humanities	3	12.5	4	6.2	12	12.1
MFL	0	0.0	1	1.5	2	2.0
Maths	6	25.0	17	26.2	15	15.2
Performing Arts	0	0.0	1	1.5	1	1.0
Science	2	8.3	8	12.3	13	13.1
Social Science	3	12.5	6	9.2	10	10.1
Sport	1	4.2	2	3.1	3	3.0
Unknown	3	12.5	7	10.8	11	11.1

Table 21: Number and percentage of each department with each type of student attainment

Department	Wide range		Low		High		Other		Missing response	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Art/Design	18	16.7	6	35.3	7	12.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Business/Econ.	1	0.9	1	5.9	1	1.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
Computing	7	6.5	2	11.8	3	5.3	1	33.3	0	0.0
English/Media	7	6.5	2	11.8	1	1.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
Humanities	11	10.2	1	5.9	6	10.5	1	33.3	0	0.0
MFL	2	1.9	0	0.0	1	1.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
Maths	22	20.4	1	5.9	14	24.6	1	33.3	0	0.0
Performing Arts	1	0.9	0	0.0	1	1.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
Science	10	9.3	0	0.0	13	22.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
Social Science	13	12.0	1	5.9	5	8.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
Sport	2	1.9	1	5.9	3	5.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Unknown	14	13.0	2	11.8	2	3.5	0	0.0	3	100

Note. 'Low' refers to the selected response "The majority of our AS/A level students are lower attaining - expected to obtain a C or lower"; 'High' refers to the selected response "The majority of our AS/A level students are high-attaining - expected to obtain an A or B grade".