

Teachers' Views on GCSE Coursework

Research Study Conducted for the QCA

Final report



Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority

9 May - 26 May 2006

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Introduction

Background and Objectives

This report shows the findings of a survey on attitudes towards GCSE coursework conducted by Ipsos MORI on behalf of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA).

The main objectives of the survey are to:

- Assess the views of experienced GCSE teachers (in seven selected subjects) on the key issues around present coursework arrangements; and
- Gather information in regards to GCSE teachers' opinions on future arrangements for coursework in their subject.

Telephone Survey of GCSE Teachers – Methodology

Ipsos MORI conducted 700 telephone interviews using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI), between 9th and 29th May 2006.

The sample for the survey came from three different sources:

- The Department for Education, Lifelong Learning, and Skills (DELLS) provided a sample of schools in Wales;
- The Council for Curriculum Evaluation and assessment (CCEA) provided a sample of schools in Northern Ireland; and
- Ipsos MORI provided a sample of schools in England, sourced from the Schools Government Publishing Company database.

The sample of schools in England was drawn to be representative of the population of schools by Government Office Regions. Welsh schools requiring the interviews to be conducted in Welsh were given the opportunity to do so.

Quotas and Respondent Profile

Respondents to this survey meet two recruitment criteria:

- Heads of subject or heads of department for one or more of the following GCSE subjects: Business Studies, English/English Literature, Geography, History, Religious Studies, Music, French, German or Spanish; and

- Currently involved in teaching that subject to year 10 and/or year 11 students.

Quotas for the survey were set by geographical areas and subject. The table below shows the profile of respondents, along with the quotas set:

Quotas and respondent profile		
	Quotas	Sample achieved
<i>Base: All respondents</i>		<i>(700)</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
Subjects		
Business Studies	100	100
English/ English Literature	100	100
Music	100	100
History	100	100
Geography	100	100
Religious Studies	100	100
Modern Foreign Languages (French, German, Spanish)	100	100
Areas		
England	n/a	656
Northern Ireland	At least 20	22
Wales	At least 20	22
Years taught		
Year 10	n/a	656
Year 11	n/a	674
<i>Source: Ipsos MORI</i>		

Report Structure

After this introduction, this volume contains:

- **Executive Summary:** drawing out key results from the research.
- **Research Findings:** examining the questions asked in this survey using charts and including some sub-group analysis.

- **Appendices:** containing a guide to statistical reliability, as well as a marked-up questionnaire.

Presentation and Interpretation of the Data

It should be remembered that a sample, not the entire population of heads of subject or department, has been interviewed. This means that all results are subject to sampling tolerances. A guide to statistical significance is provided in the appendices.

In some instances, reference is made to 'net' figures. This represents the balance of opinion on attitudinal questions and provides a useful means of comparing the results for a number of variables. In the case of a 'net agree' figure, this represents the percentage agreeing with a particular statement minus the percentage who disagree. For example, 45% of teachers agree that coursework rules need tightening in their GCSE subject and 43% disagree, so the 'net agree' figure is +2 points.

Note that 'Modern Foreign Languages' only includes French, German and Spanish for the purpose of this survey.

Acknowledgements

Ipsos MORI would like to take this opportunity to thank Dennis Opposs of the QCA for his help and advice in developing the project. Thanks also to the heads of subjects and heads of department who gave up their time to take part in the research.

Publication of Data

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

Executive Summary

- Ipsos MORI interviewed 100 heads of subject or department for each of the following subjects: Business Studies, History, Geography, English/English Literature, Music, Religious Studies, Modern Foreign Languages (i.e. French, German and/or Spanish). All respondents teach at least one of these subjects at GCSE level.
- The GCSE courses taught by the majority (90%) of teachers include a coursework component. For nearly four in five (79%), this coursework component is mandatory.
- English, Music and Geography are the most coursework intensive subjects at GCSE level. All (100%) teachers of these subjects say that their students do a coursework component which, for the most part, is mandatory. In the case of Music, English and Modern Foreign Languages, several assignments are required and, as well as written coursework, these subjects are also likely to require a practical or oral element.
- In contrast, GCSE Religious Studies students are least likely to do coursework. Just half (50%) of Religious Studies teachers say that their students do a coursework component, and only 35% say that coursework is mandatory.
- Overall, teachers' views about GCSE coursework are fairly positive and nearly all acknowledge that it benefits their students. However, a clear pattern can be seen throughout the survey: favourability towards GCSE coursework is somewhat higher among heads of subject/department who teach courses with a coursework component, in particular among those whose students do oral or practical coursework. Music and English teachers are most likely to view coursework positively. At the opposite end of the scale, teachers of Religious Studies are the most sceptical about coursework. It may be interesting to further examine why Religious Studies teachers are so negative about coursework: is it because coursework is of limited value in this subject, or because there are problems with the system for Religious Studies coursework?
- The main perceived benefits of coursework for students include *helping them gain experience and build some skills in the subject* (29%), *encouraging independent learning* (25%), and *making them work in some depth on a particular subject* (20%). Other perceived benefits relate to a student-friendly assessment method, for example *being less stressful than exams* (23%), and *allowing students to work at their own pace* (13%).
- A minority (seven percent) of teachers say that students do not benefit from coursework at all. In comparison, nearly a third (31%) of teachers say they as teachers do not get any benefit from coursework. The main benefit of coursework cited for teachers is that it *allows them to get to*

know students and their work better (24%). It is also seen to give teachers *greater freedom and flexibility with the curriculum*, particularly among English teachers (cited by 32% English teachers versus 16% overall).

- Looking at the perceived drawbacks of coursework, just under one in ten (nine percent) teachers believe there are none for students, and one in twenty (five percent) say that there are none for teachers. However, for both students and teachers alike, the key drawbacks cited relate to workload:
 - The biggest drawback for students are three-fold: *GCSE coursework is time consuming* (36%), *students have difficulties meeting deadlines* (25%), and *coursework requires a lot of work compared with its weight in the GCSE mark* (10%).
 - Perceived drawbacks for teachers centre on *the burden of marking the coursework*, mentioned by two thirds (65%) of teachers, and *the additional work it generates* (46%). English teachers in particular cite the burden of marking (75% compared to 65% overall). In thinking about the future of coursework, the QCA may want to consider ways of reducing the assessment burden for teachers.
- The majority (91%) of teachers agree that standards for assessing coursework in their subject are the same across the school. Although teachers appear to be divided in their views about the consistency of mark schemes between different schools, this may be because they have limited experience of marking coursework in other schools. Three in ten (29%) disagree the mark scheme is consistent, two in four (38%) agree, a third (33%) neither agree nor disagree or do not know. However, nearly three in five (58%) teachers believe that students in some schools are able to use unfair advantage in their coursework under the current system.
- Interestingly, the majority of teachers are not overwhelmingly worried about the use of the internet for coursework. Four in five (82%) disagree that their students make too much use of the internet for their GCSE coursework, and three in five (63%) disagree that the use of the internet presents problems authenticating coursework.
 - Teachers of Geography, who are more likely than average to say that their students need to use the internet for coursework, are *less concerned than average* that this presents problems when authenticating work. In contrast, teachers of Religious Studies are the most concerned about authenticating coursework (54% agree versus 31% overall), and half (50%) say their students need the internet for their coursework.

- Although the majority of English teachers say that their students do not need to use the internet for coursework, teachers of this subject are *more concerned than average* (41% agree versus 31% overall) that internet use by their students presents problems authenticating coursework.
- Nearly a quarter (24%) of teachers say they have seen the QCA leaflet about authenticating coursework. Of those who have read it, three quarters (75%) say they found it useful. English teachers who have seen the leaflet are most likely to say they found it *very useful* (44% versus 22% overall).
- The majority of teachers are equally positive about the control they have over coursework conditions. Three quarters (75%) agree that their students do their GCSE coursework without external help, although over half (58%) feel that candidates in some schools are able to gain unfair advantage in their coursework under the current system. However, the majority of teachers do provide support and guidance to students including: *an opportunity to re-draft and re-submit after initial feedback* (84%), *a checklist* (73%) and *tutorial or clinics* (69%). English teachers are more likely than those in other subjects to provide support with GCSE coursework, perhaps further contributing to their heavy marking workload.
- There is no clear consensus as to whether more rules and guidance about GCSE coursework are needed. Although three quarters (76%) of teachers believe there is enough guidance on coursework (increasing to 86% among those who have seen the QCA leaflet), nearly half (45%) feel that coursework rules need tightening up.
- Looking at future arrangements for coursework, the majority of teachers would like to see a coursework element in their subject in the future: two thirds (66%) oppose removing GCSE coursework from their subject, including half (51%) who *strongly oppose* this. Teachers who use practical or oral coursework are most likely to oppose removing coursework from their subject (75% and 77% respectively oppose removing coursework). Only one in seven (14%) teachers say unprompted that GCSE coursework in their subject should be removed, although among Religious Studies teachers this view is expressed by three in ten (30%).
- Other than this, there is little consensus about what future arrangements should be:
 - 13% of teachers say coursework should be done under supervised conditions, in particular English teachers (22%). Controlled conditions for coursework may be seen as a possible solution to the problems of heavy workload (for students) and authenticating coursework (for teachers) in subjects such as English.

- 11% say the marking scheme should be fairer or more consistent (slightly more among Geography teachers, with 16% mentioning this)
- Ten percent would welcome more guidance, information and support from examination boards.

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Checked & Approved:

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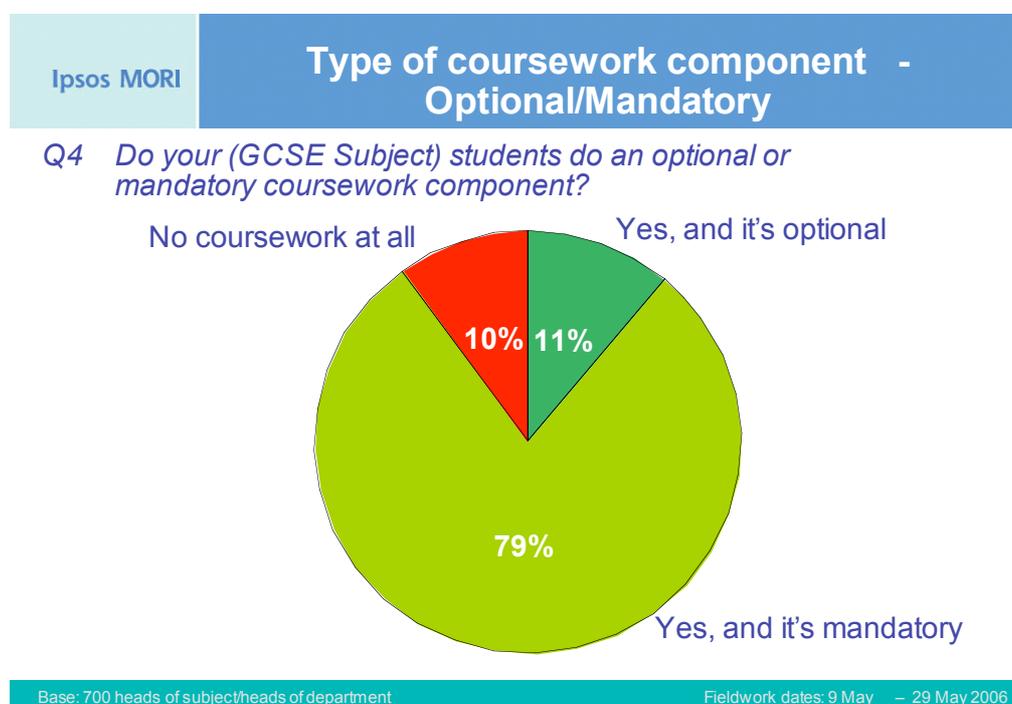
Claire Lister

Choice of GCSE Coursework Component

Coursework Component Types – Optional/Compulsory

All seven GCSE subjects considered in this research may include a coursework component. For some courses it is mandatory, for others it is optional and teachers may not choose this option.

The majority (79%) of teachers surveyed said they teach a GCSE course with a mandatory coursework component, while for just over one in ten (11%) coursework is said to be optional. Ten percent teach courses that do not have a coursework component.



The table below shows coursework components by subject. All English, Geography and Music teachers say their students do a coursework component, as do the majority of History (98%), Business Studies (93%) and Modern Foreign Language (89%) teachers. It is only among Religious Studies teachers that this proportion drops significantly to just half (50%). Geography (99%), English (95%) and Music (93%) teachers are more likely to say that the coursework component they teach is mandatory.

Q4. Do your [GCSE SUBJECT] students do an optional or mandatory coursework component?

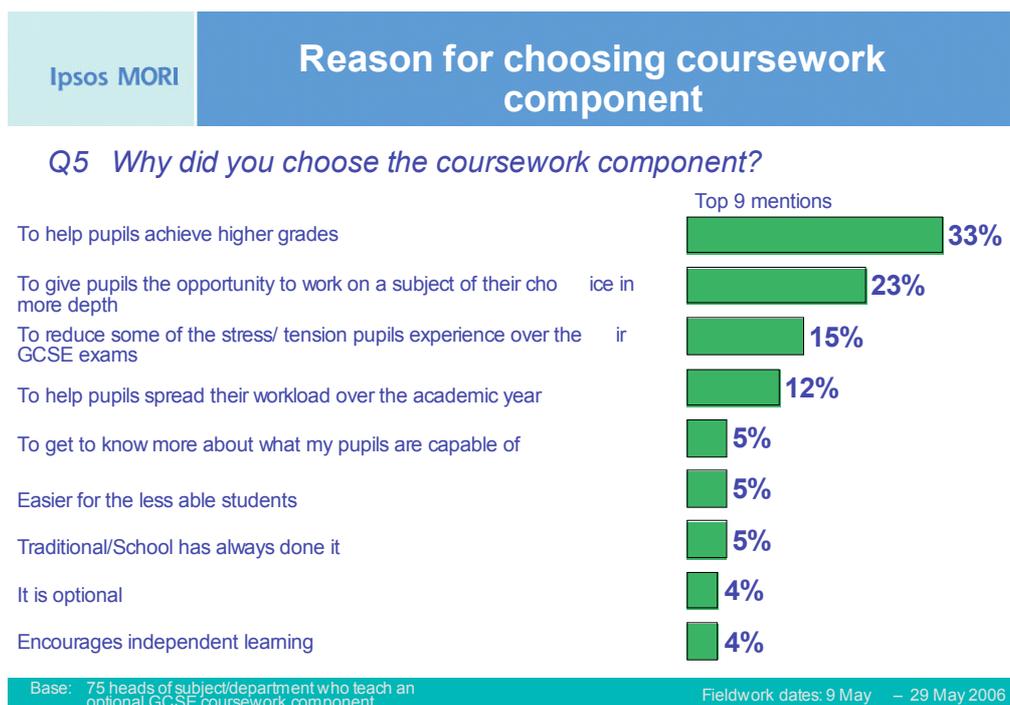
	Yes, and it's optional	Yes, and it's mandatory	No coursework at all
Base: All respondents	(75) 11%	(555) 79%	(70) 10%
Modern Foreign Languages	20	69	11
Religious Studies	15	35	50
Business Studies	14	79	7
History	13	85	2
Music	7	93	-
English/English Lit	5	95	-
Geography	1	99	-

Source: MORI

Reasons for Choosing Optional Coursework Component

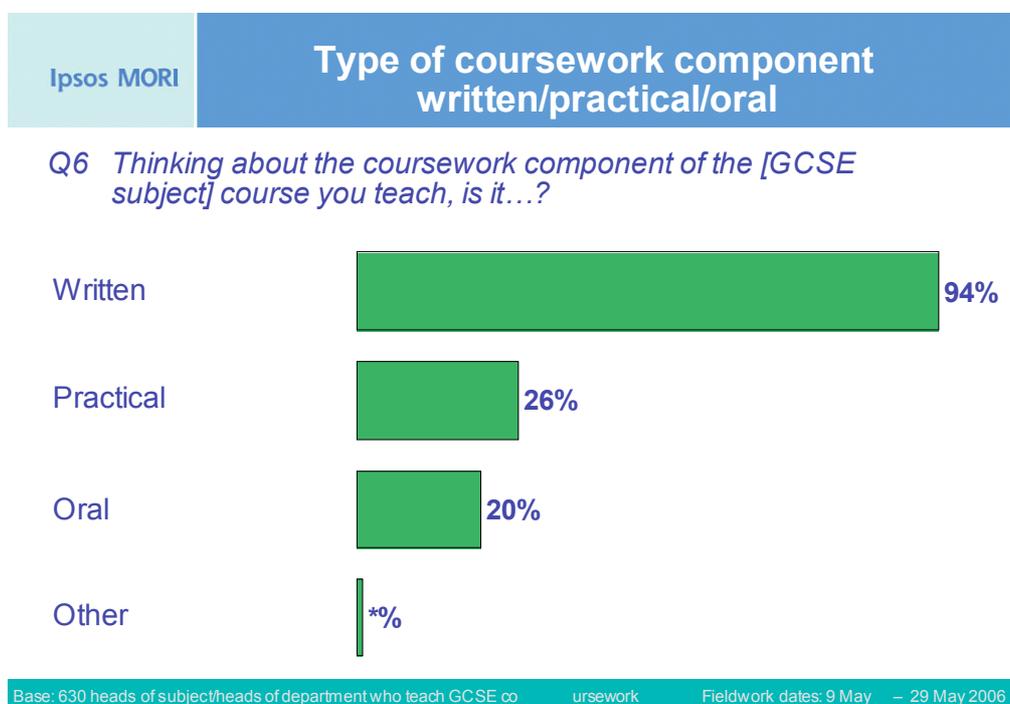
Reasons given for choosing an optional coursework component suggest that coursework is a 'pupil friendly' assessment method. A third (33%) of teachers who chose the optional coursework component say it *helps pupils achieve higher grades*, one in seven (15%) say it *reduces some of the stress/tension pupils experience over their GCSE exams* and just under one in eight (12%) say it *helps their pupils spread their workload over the academic year*. A small proportion (five percent) of teachers also say that this decision was made because coursework is *easier for the less able students*.

In addition, nearly one in four (23%) teachers say that they chose an optional coursework component because it *gives pupils the opportunity to work on a subject of their choice in more depth*.



Type of Coursework – Written/Oral/Practical

The most common type of coursework is written, with 94% of all teachers who teach GCSE coursework saying their course includes this. Around one in four (26%) teachers say their course requires practical coursework, and oral coursework is required by one fifth (20%).



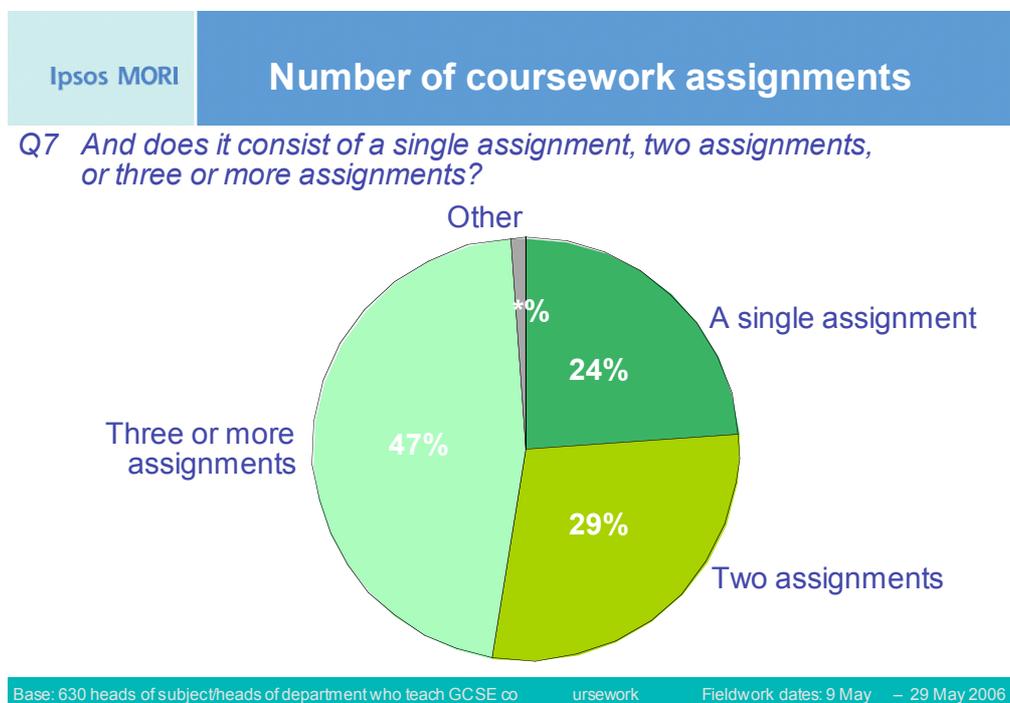
As we would expect, there is some variation between subjects. Almost all (97%) of those who teach Music say their course involves a practical element,

as do almost half (47%) of Geography teachers and a significant minority (15%) of Business Studies teachers.

The majority (85%) of English teachers say their course involves oral coursework. Other subject teachers who teach GCSE courses with an oral coursework component include Modern Foreign Language teachers (18%) and Music teachers (14%).

Number of Coursework Assignments

Almost half (47%) of those who teach GCSE courses with a coursework component say three or more assignments are required. Around a third (29%) say their course requires two assignments and one quarter (24%) a single assignment.

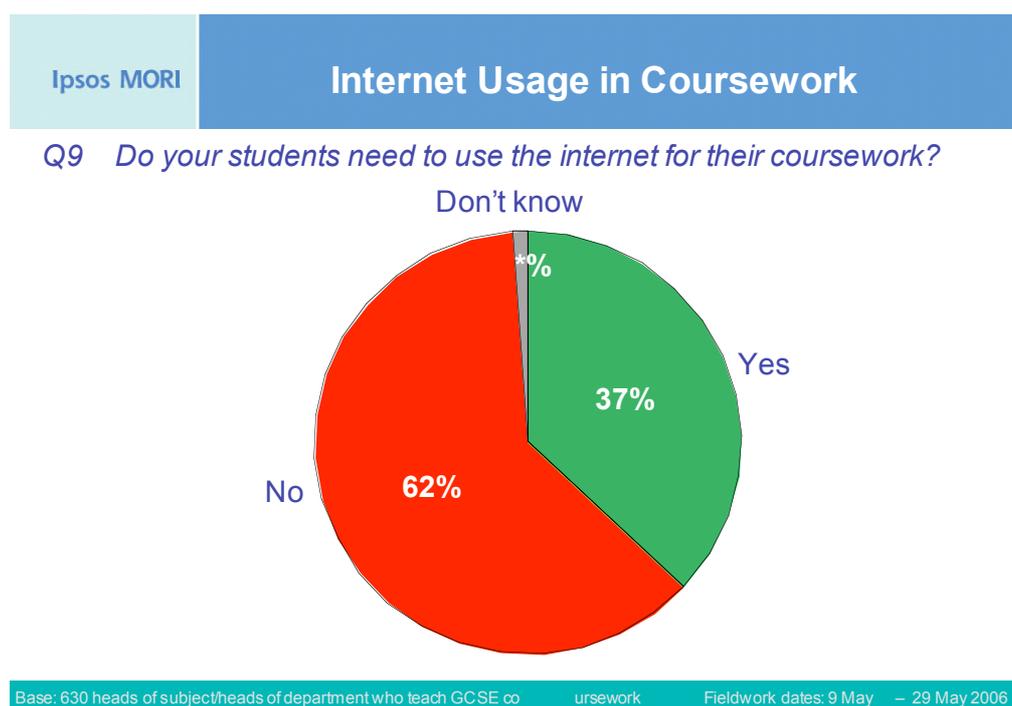


Again, there is considerable variation between subjects. Of the teachers who teach a GCSE course with a coursework component, English, Music and Modern Language teachers are by far the most likely to say it consists of three or more assignments (English 100%, Modern Foreign Languages 94% and Music 78%). In contrast, Geography and Business Studies courses that include coursework are most likely to require a single assignment (76% and 63% respectively).

Internet Usage and Support with Coursework

Internet Usage in Coursework

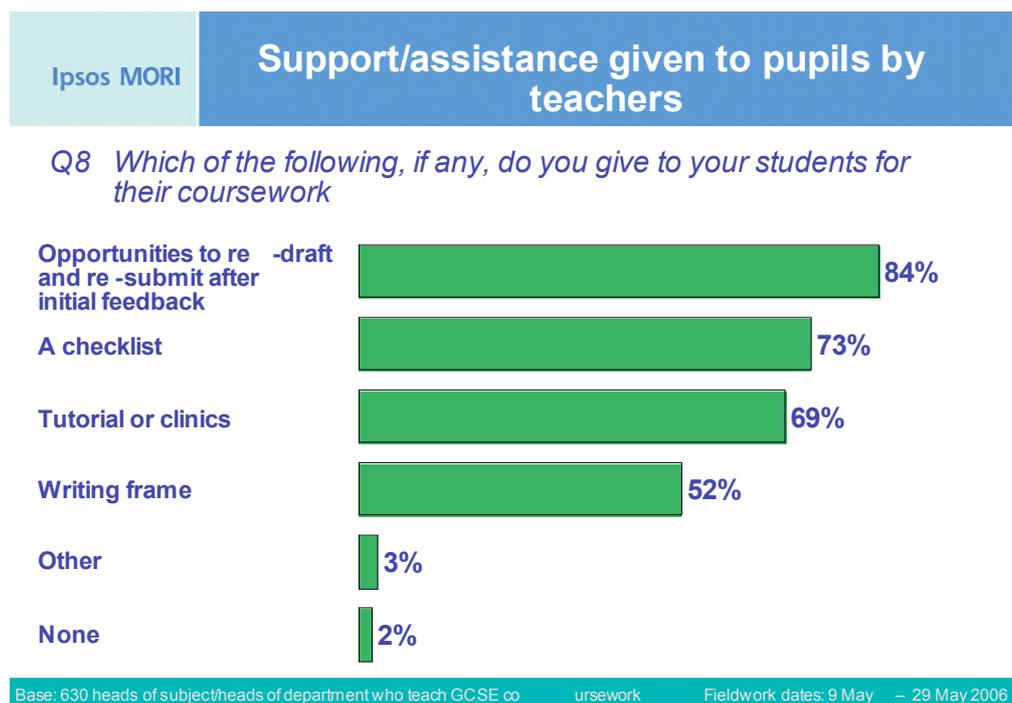
The majority (62%) of teachers say their students do not need to use the internet for their coursework assignments. Less than two in five (37%) do need to use it.



However, this pattern is not the same across all subjects. Just over eight in ten (83%) Business Studies teachers who teach GCSE coursework say that their students do need to use the internet for their coursework, as do nearly three in five (58%) Geography teachers. In contrast, teachers in Foreign Modern Languages (12%), Music (17%), and History (23%) are less likely than average to say that their students need the internet for their coursework.

Support/Assistance Given to Pupils by Teachers

The majority (98%) of teachers provide some sort of support to pupils for their GCSE coursework. Opportunities for students to re-draft and re-submit coursework after initial feedback are given by the majority (84%) of teachers. A checklist is provided by almost three out of four (73%) teachers and tutorials or clinics are run by seven in ten (69%). Just over half (52%) of GCSE coursework teachers provide a writing frame.



The type of support and guidance given varies between subjects. History teachers are somewhat less likely than average to give their students opportunities to re-submit and re-draft after initial feedback (55% compared to 84%), provide a checklist (47% compared to 73%) or tutorials or clinics (58% compared to 69%). Conversely, English teachers are significantly more likely than average to provide opportunities to re-submit and re-draft after initial feedback (96% compared to 84% overall) and a writing frame (76% compared to 52% overall).

Benefits and Drawbacks of Coursework for Teachers and Students

Benefits of Coursework for Students

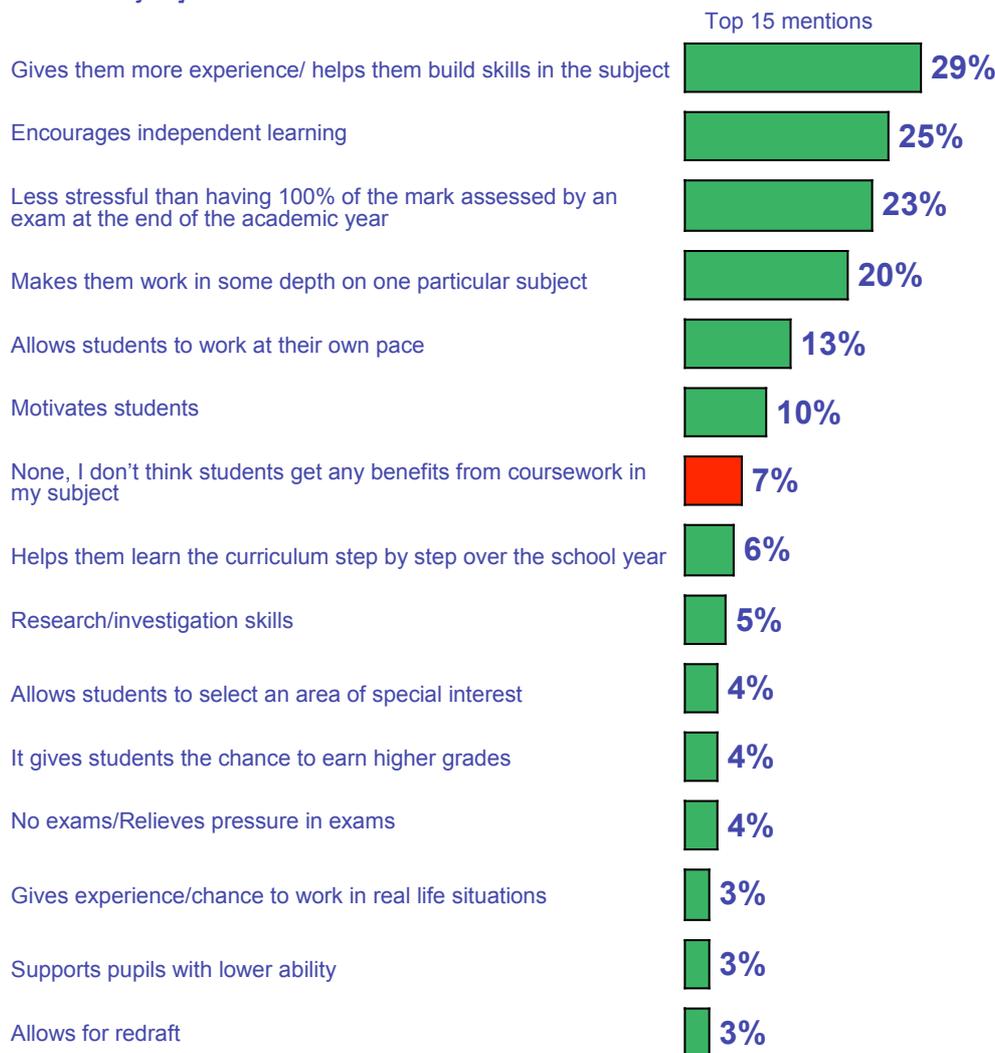
Most of the teachers who took part in this study think that coursework is of benefit to students in some way; only seven per cent say that students do not get any benefit from coursework in their subject.

The majority of benefits cited are educational. Just under three in ten (29%) teachers say that coursework *gives students more experience/helps them build skills in the subject*. Around one quarter (25%) say that coursework *encourages independent learning* and one in five (20%) say it *makes students work in some depth on one particular subject*. However, several benefits cited do relate to balancing workload and reducing stress. Just under one quarter (23%) say that coursework is *less stressful than having 100% of the mark assessed by an exam at the end of the academic year* and one in eight (13%) suggest that it *allows students to work at their own pace*.

In contrast to the reasons cited for choosing an optional coursework component (discussed earlier), relatively few teachers suggest that coursework is an “easy option”. For example, less than one in twenty (4%) teachers say that coursework *gives students the chance to earn higher grades* and just three per cent say that it *supports lower ability pupils*.

Ipsos MORI **Benefits of coursework for students**

Q10 What, if any, do you think are the benefits of coursework in [GCSE subject] for students?



Base: 700 heads of subjects/heads of department

Fieldwork dates: 9 May – 29 May 2006

There is some variation between subjects in terms of perceived benefits of coursework for students. A much higher than average proportion of Religious Studies teachers say students do not get any benefit from coursework in their subject (20% compared to 7% overall). This is likely to relate to the fact that there is no coursework component in the GCSE courses taught by half of this group. Meanwhile, Music teachers are more likely than average to believe that coursework gives students in their subject *more experience/helps them build skills* (41% compared to the average 29%). More than one in five (21%)

Geography teachers think that coursework has the benefit of providing *research/investigation skills* in their subject.

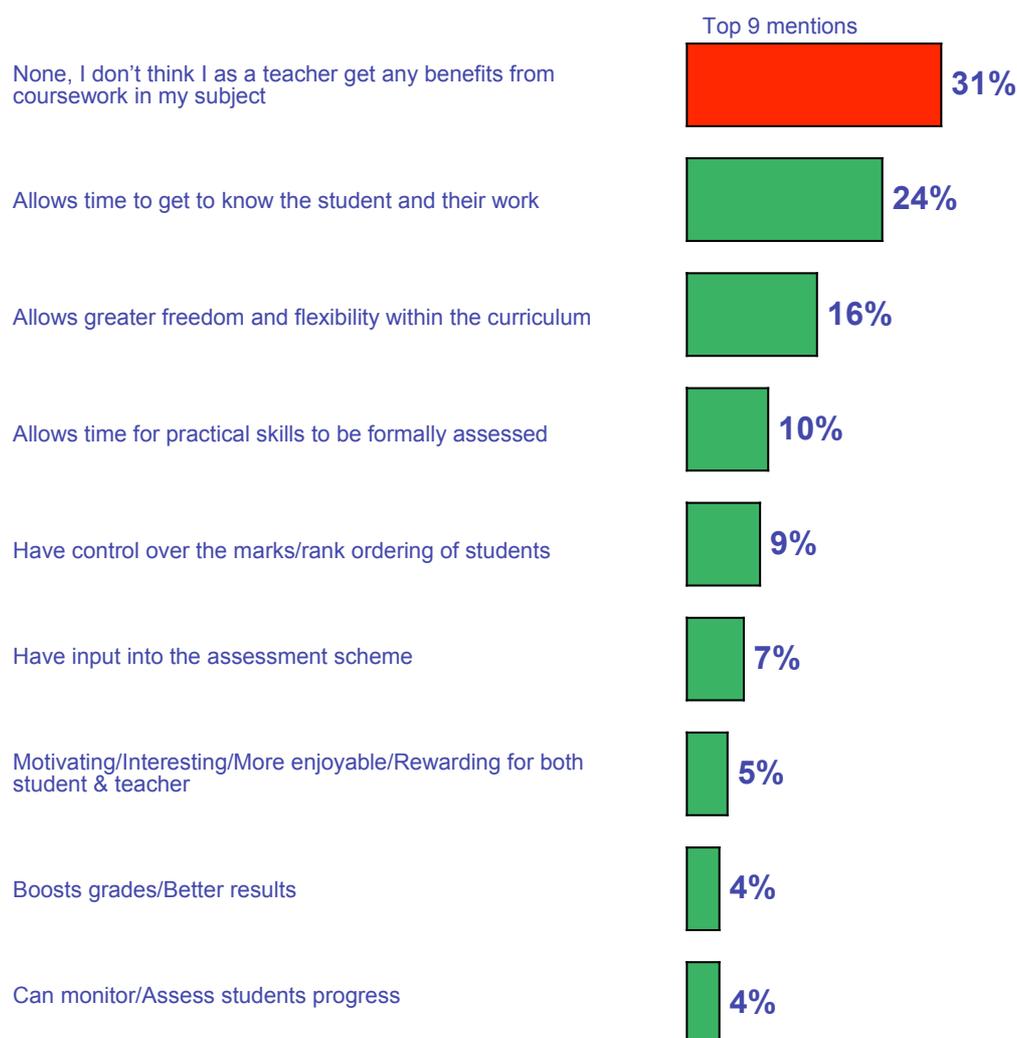
Benefits of Coursework for Teachers

Teachers are somewhat less positive about the benefits of coursework for themselves as teachers. Almost one third (31%) do not think that as a teacher they get any benefits from coursework, compared to the seven percent who said that students do not get any benefits from coursework in the subject they teach.

However, many do see benefits for themselves, the most common being that it *allows time to get to know students and their work* (24%). Almost one in six (16%) say it *allows greater freedom and flexibility within the curriculum* and around one in ten suggest coursework *allows time for practical skills to be formally assessed* (10%) and *gives them control over the marks/rank ordering of students* (9%).

Ipsos MORI **Benefits of coursework for Teachers**

Q11 What, if any, do you think are the benefits of coursework in [GCSE subject] for you as a teacher?



Base: 700 heads of subjects/heads of department

Fieldwork dates: 9 May – 29 May 2006

Breaking this down by subject, English teachers are the most positive about the benefits of coursework for teachers. Only one in six (18%) do not see any benefits for themselves as teachers from coursework in their subject. Twice as many English teachers, in comparison to the average, feel that coursework *allows greater freedom and flexibility within the curriculum* (32% compared to 16%). Meanwhile, Music teachers are more likely than all teachers generally to suggest that it *allows time for practical skills to be formally assessed* (18% compared to 10% overall).

Religious Studies teachers are generally less positive, with over half (54%) saying that they do not think that they get any benefits from coursework in their subject, compared to the average of almost one in three (31%).

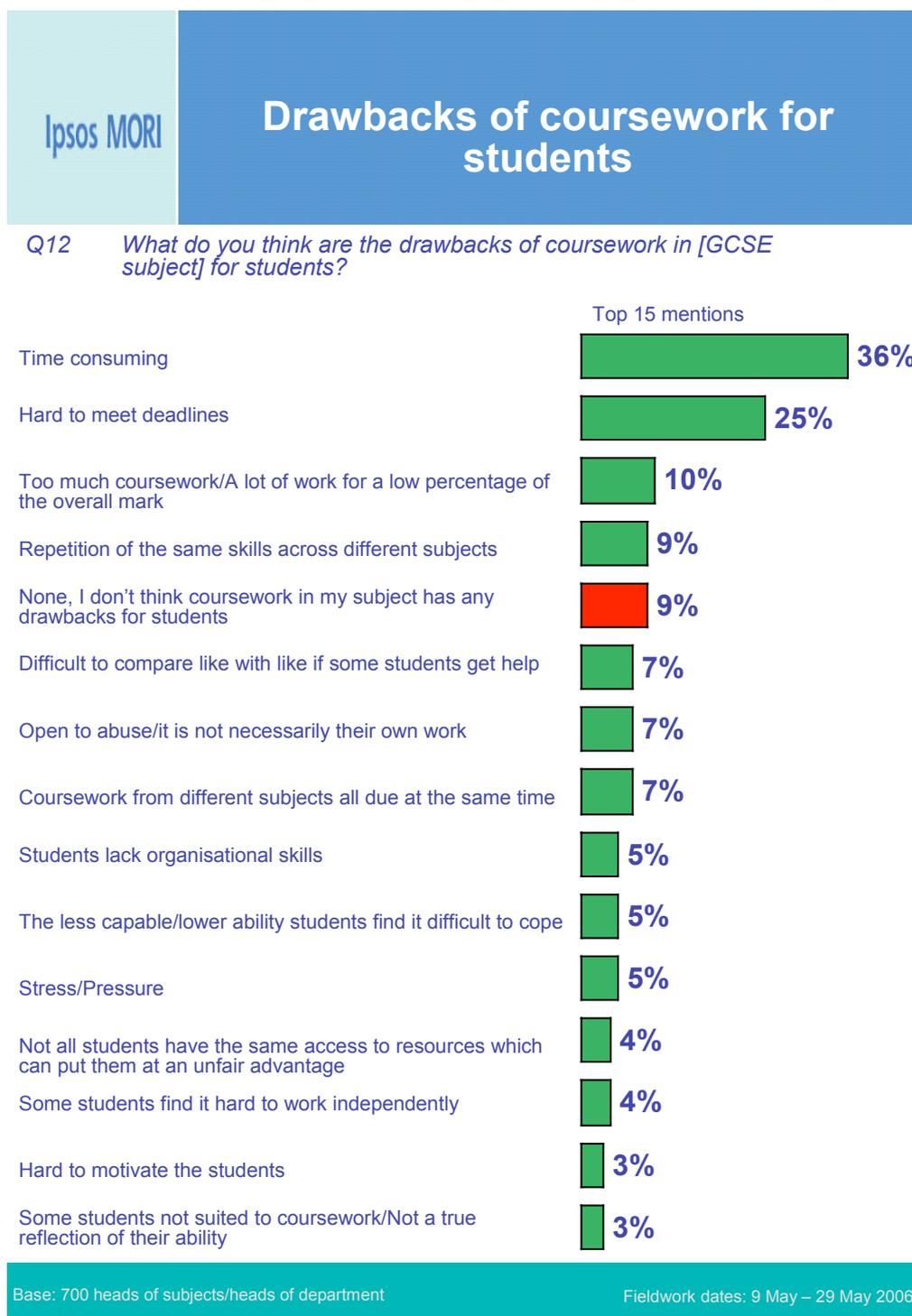
Drawbacks of Coursework for Students

The main drawback of coursework for students according to teachers is that it is *time consuming* (36%). This is followed by difficulties for students *to meet deadlines* (25%). One in ten teachers say there is *too much coursework/a lot of work for a low percentage of the overall mark* (10%).

Just under one in ten (9%) teachers say that there are no drawbacks of coursework in their subject for students.

A small proportion of teachers raise concerns about the control of coursework conditions. Seven per cent of teachers feel that *it is difficult to compare like with like if students get help* and that coursework is *open to abuse/it is not necessarily their own work*. Similarly, four per cent say that *not all students have the same access to resources which can put them at an unfair advantage*.

As seen earlier, the perceived benefits of coursework according to teachers include less stress for pupils and allowing them to work at their own pace. However one in twenty (5%) teachers say that *the less capable/lower ability students find it difficult cope* and that a drawback of coursework is *stress/pressure*.



Once again, there are some differences between teachers from different subjects on this issue. Music teachers are less negative than average about coursework: more than one in six (17%) think there are no drawbacks of coursework in their subject for students (compared to 9% overall) and only some one in five (21%) think that a drawback of coursework for students is that it's *time consuming* (compared to 36% overall).

Drawbacks of Coursework for Teachers

Most of the drawbacks of coursework for teachers relate to workload and time issues. By far the most common drawback, given by nearly two out of three (65%) teachers, is *it takes time it takes to mark them, it's an extra burden*. This is followed by *it gives me more work*, which is seen as a drawback for approaching half (46%) of all teachers.

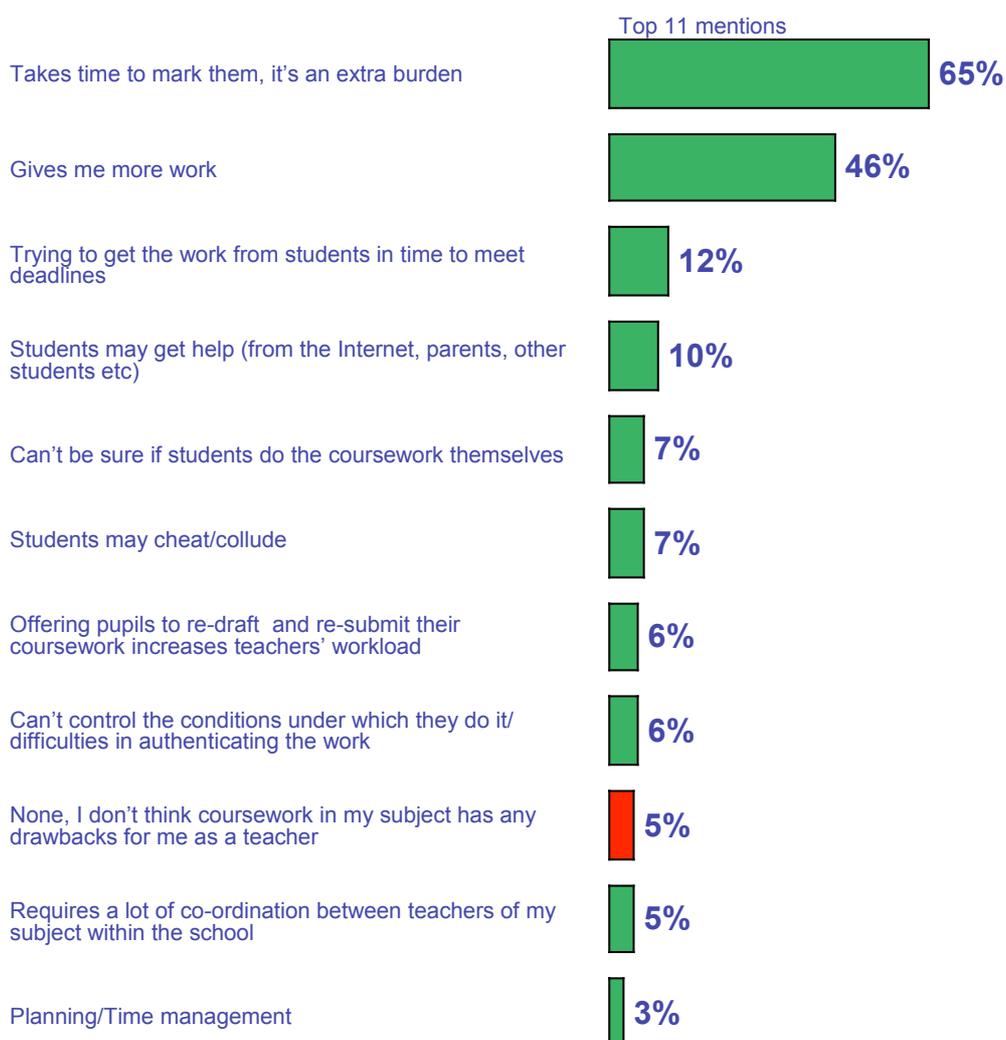
Trying to get the work from students in time to meet deadlines is an issue raised by some one in eight (12%) teachers.

A number of teachers also suggest drawbacks relating to the authenticity of coursework. One in ten (10%) teachers say *students may get help* and seven per cent also say they *can't be sure if students do the coursework themselves* and that *students may cheat/collude* (7% each).



Drawbacks of coursework for teachers

Q13 What do you think are the drawbacks of coursework in [GCSE subject] for you as a teacher?



Base: 700 heads of subjects/heads of department

Fieldwork dates: 9 May – 29 May 2006

There is little significant variation between the different subjects. The top two most common drawbacks given (i.e. *the time it takes to mark coursework* and *gives me more work*) are mentioned across all subjects. It is interesting to note that these drawbacks are cited as frequently by teachers who only have to mark one coursework assignment as those who have to mark three or more assignments.

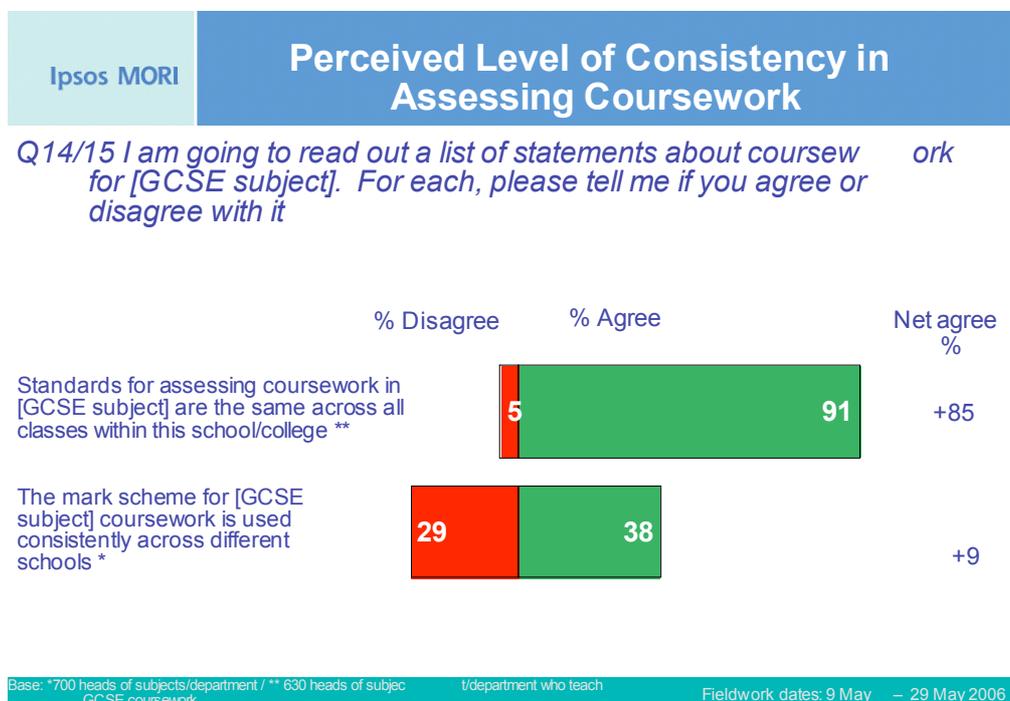
Attitudes Towards Coursework as a Method of Assessment

Perceived Level of Consistency in Assessing Coursework

Teachers were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements relating to coursework in order to find out, among other things, their opinions on the level of consistency in assessing coursework. Perhaps unsurprisingly, teachers are generally more positive about consistency of assessment within their school than between schools.

Nine out of ten (91%) teachers who teach GCSE coursework agree that *standards for assessing (GCSE) coursework are the same across all classes within this school/college*.

In comparison, nearly two in five (38%) teachers agree that *the mark scheme for GCSE coursework is used consistently across different schools*, although this still represents a higher proportion than those who disagree with this statement (29%). Almost one quarter (23%) say they don't know whether or not this is the case, suggesting that a significant proportion of teachers have limited experience of marking coursework in other schools.



A few significant differences between subjects can be observed. English and Music teachers are more likely than average to agree that *the mark scheme for*

GCSE coursework is used consistently across different schools, (net agree scores of +19 and +15 respectively, compared to +9 overall).

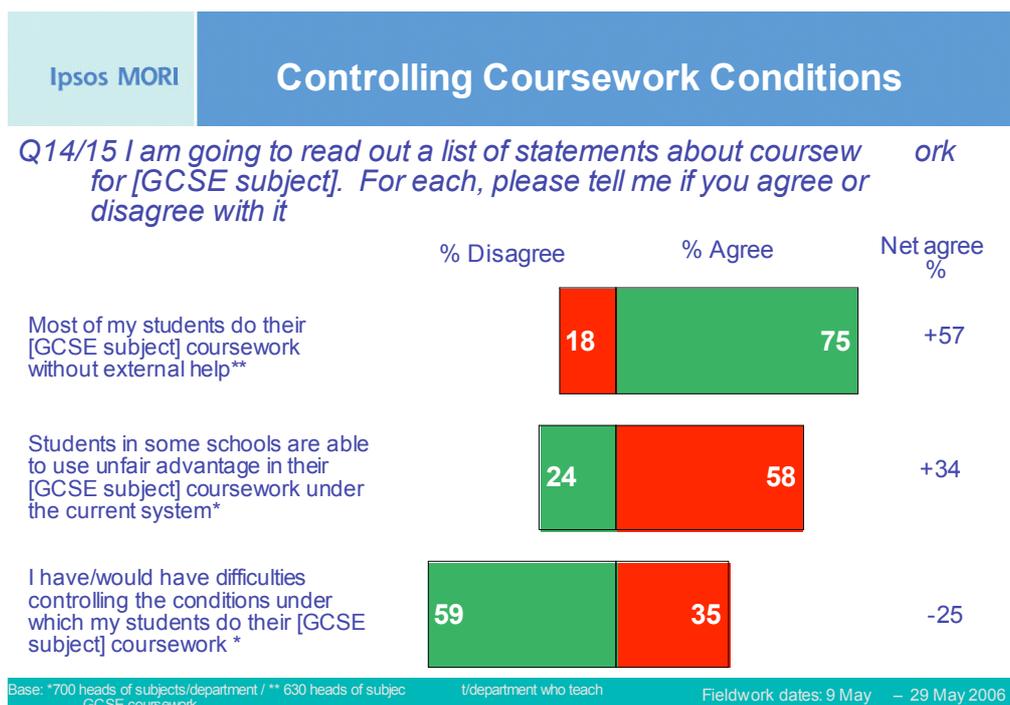
In contrast, teachers in Modern Foreign Languages, History and Religious Studies are least likely to give an opinion.

Controlling Coursework Conditions

Overall, the majority of teachers are quite positive about the control of GCSE coursework conditions, although there are some exceptions to this:

- Three in five (59%) teachers disagree with the statement *I have/would have difficulties controlling the conditions under which my students do their GCSE coursework* compared to around one third (35%) who agree;
- Three quarters (75%) of those teachers who teach GCSE coursework agree that *most of my students do their GCSE coursework without external help*;
- The only statement relating to the control of GCSE coursework conditions where the balance of opinion is negative is that *students in some schools are able to use unfair advantage in their GCSE coursework under the current system*. This statement is agreed with by almost three fifths (58%) of teachers, compared to around one quarter (24%) who disagree.

The chart below illustrates these results. Please note that the first statement is positive and the second two statements are negative. The colour scheme has been adapted accordingly: *Green* represents those who hold positive views about coursework conditions and *red* represents those with negative views.



The strongest disagreement with the statement *I have/would have difficulties controlling the conditions under which my students do their GCSE coursework* can be observed among Modern Foreign Language teachers (net score of -44, compared with -25 overall). Religious Studies teachers are more likely to agree (net score of +19 compared to -25 overall).

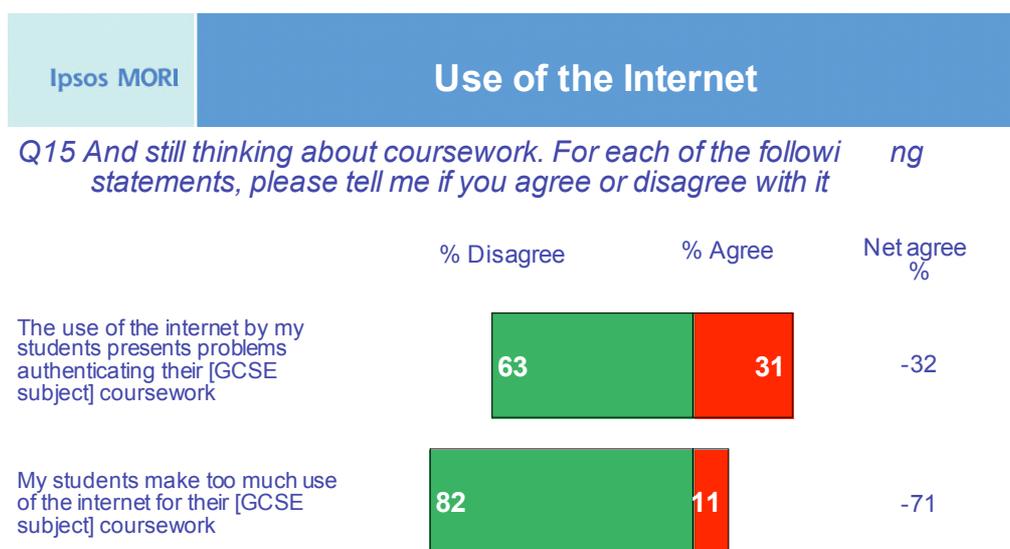
In line with earlier findings, teachers who do not teach coursework are more sceptical about controlling coursework conditions. Almost two thirds (63%) of this group agree that they *would have difficulties controlling the conditions under which their students do their GCSE coursework*, which is much higher than average (35%). This may be a contributing factor in their decision not to include a coursework component in the course they teach.

Teachers who do not teach coursework are also more likely to agree that *students in some schools are able to use unfair advantage in their GCSE coursework under the current system* (net score of +64 compared to +34 overall). So too are Modern Foreign Language teachers (net score of +57). Conversely, a higher proportion of English teachers disagree with this statement (net score of +21).

As we would expect, teachers who have difficulties controlling coursework conditions are less likely than average to agree that their students *do their GCSE coursework without external help* (net score of +46 compared to +57 overall).

Use of the Internet

There is a strong consensus among coursework teachers opposing the statement *my students make too much use of the internet for their GCSE coursework* (82%). Although the majority (63%) disagree that *the use of the internet by my students presents problems authenticating their GCSE coursework*, just under a third (31%) agree with this statement. Teachers' main concern appears not to be *how much* pupils use the internet for their coursework, but *whether they use the internet at all*. In some cases teachers may encourage their pupils to use it; in others they might prefer them not to use it at all.



Base: 630 heads of subject/department who teach GCSE coursework

Fieldwork dates: 9 May – 29 May 2006

Music teachers whose students are required to do coursework are less concerned about internet use than average (81% disagree that *the use of the internet by their students presents problems authenticating their GCSE coursework* and 93% disagree that *students make too much use of the internet for their GCSE coursework*).

Conversely, Religious Studies and English teachers are more concerned than average that *the use of the internet by their students presents problems authenticating their GCSE coursework* (54% and 41% respectively agree, compared to 31% overall).

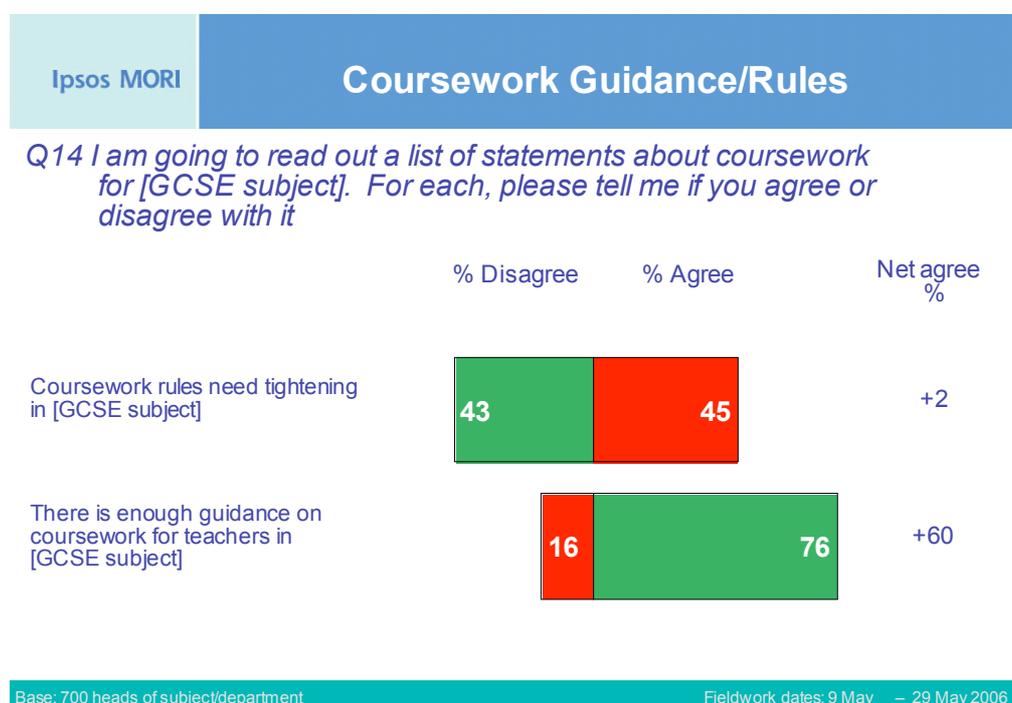
Perhaps unsurprisingly, more than half (52%) of teachers who agree that they have difficulties controlling coursework conditions also agree that *the use of the internet by my students presents problems authenticating their GCSE coursework*, which is a significantly higher proportion than average (31%).

This group is also more likely to agree that their *students make too much use of the internet for their GCSE coursework* (20% compared to 11% overall).

Coursework Guidance/Rules

There is no consensus between teachers as to whether or not *coursework rules need tightening* (45% agree, 43% disagree).

The majority of teachers seem to be happy with the guidance provided on coursework, with three quarters stating that they agree *there is enough guidance on coursework for teachers* (76%). However, one in six disagree with this (16%).



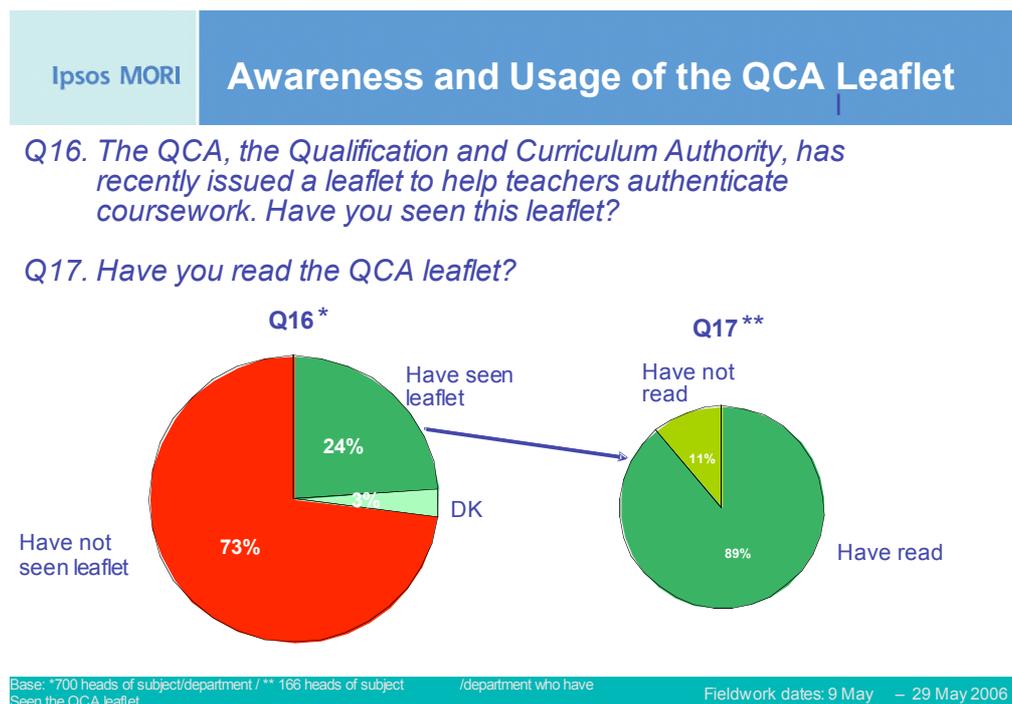
There is also no consensus as to whether or not *coursework rules need tightening* among most of the subgroups considered. However, the net agree figure shows that a slightly higher proportion of Modern Foreign Language, Religious Studies and History teachers agree with this statement than average (+18, +12 and +12 respectively, compared to +2 overall). Indeed, teachers whose students do not do coursework are more likely to agree that *coursework rules need tightening* (64% compared to 45% overall).

There is some variation between the subgroups in terms of the level of agreement with the statement *there is enough guidance on coursework for teachers*. English and History teachers are far more satisfied with the amount of guidance than Business Studies teachers (85%, 90% and 65% respectively agree with the statement).

The QCA Coursework Leaflet

Awareness and Usage of the QCA Coursework Leaflet

The QCA has recently produced a leaflet to help teachers authenticate coursework. However, almost three quarters (73%) of teachers who took part in this study say that they have not seen this leaflet. More positively, of those who have seen the leaflet almost nine out of ten (89%) have read it.

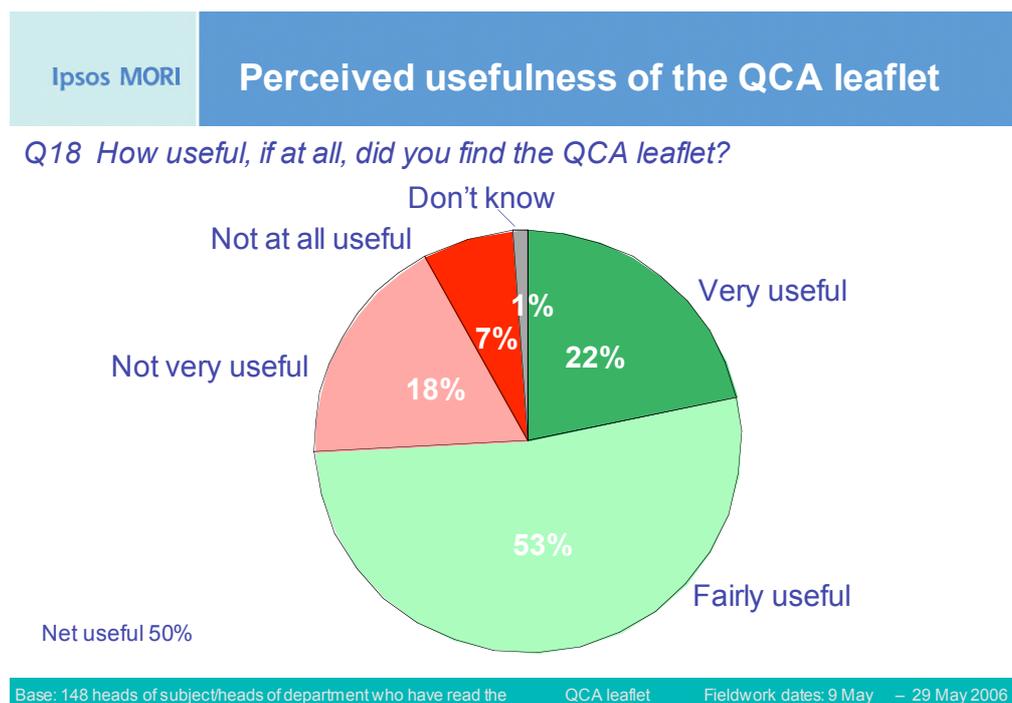


English teachers are more likely than average to have seen the QCA leaflet (35%, compared to 24% overall).

Reassuringly, those who have seen the QCA coursework leaflet are more likely than those who have not seen it to agree that *there is enough guidance on coursework for teachers* (86% compared to 74%).

Perceived Usefulness of the QCA Leaflet

Of those who have read the QCA leaflet, the majority found it fairly useful or very useful (74%).



A few significant differences can be observed between sub-groups: teachers whose coursework involves three or more assignments are more likely than average to find the QCA leaflet very useful (31%), and so are teachers whose main coursework component is oral (40%). Finally, heads of subjects are overall more positive about this leaflet than average (82% found it useful). Please note that due to the small base (148 teachers answering this question), these differences should be interpreted with caution.

The Future of Coursework

General Preference For or Against GCSE Coursework

Most teachers who teach GCSE coursework would like it to remain a part of their course in the future. Two thirds (66%) disagree with the statement *I would prefer there to be no coursework element*, including 51% who strongly disagree. However, just over a quarter (27%) would prefer to get rid of coursework in their subject.

Although there is a case for retaining coursework, there is no consensus as to whether or not *arrangements for coursework need to be revised* (44% disagree and 42% agree respectively).



Only Religious Studies teachers whose students do coursework are significantly more likely than average to agree that they *would prefer there to be no coursework element in their subject* (44% compared to 27% overall). Music Teachers whose students do coursework are more likely than average to disagree with this (79% compared to 66% overall). This is in line with earlier findings that showed that Religious Studies teachers are, overall, more sceptical about coursework than other teachers, while Music teachers are more in favour.

Teachers of oral or practical coursework are generally more positive about continuing to use coursework in the future than average. Around three quarters of teachers whose students do oral coursework (77%) and practical

coursework (75%) would prefer to keep the *coursework element* in their subject (compared to 66% overall).

Q15. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statement.

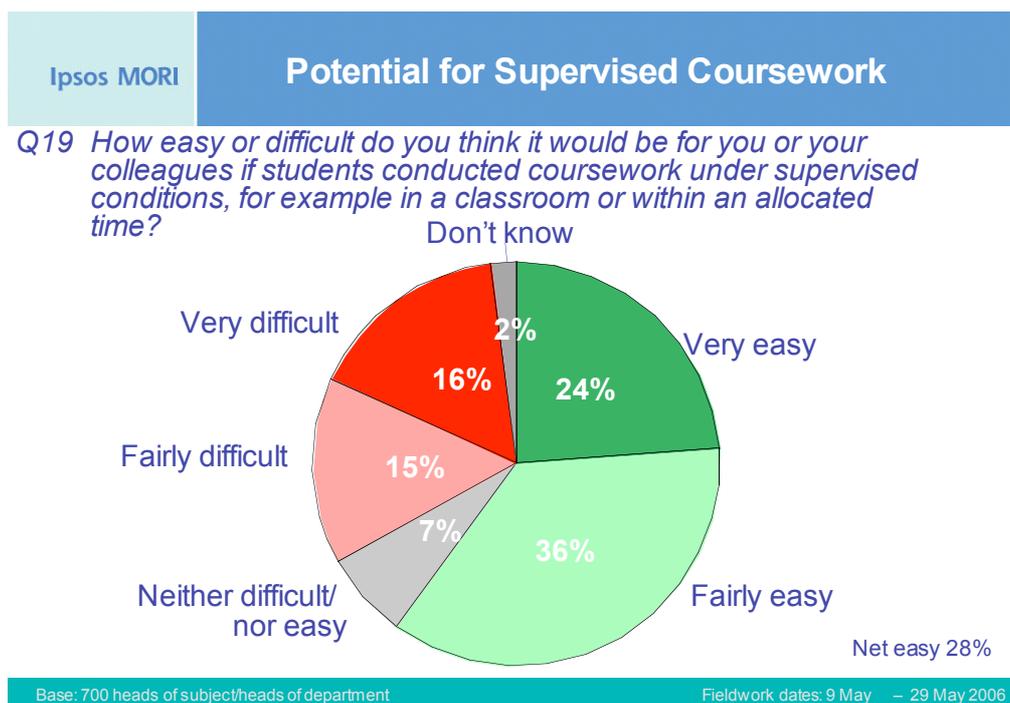
I would prefer there to be no coursework element in [GCSE Subject]

	Agree	Disagree	Net agree
Base: 630 heads of departments / heads of subject who teach GCSE coursework	(172) 27%	(417) 66%	(-245) -39
Religious Studies	44	46	-2
Business Studies	33	63	-30
History	31	59	-29
Geography	30	63	-33
English/English Lit	26	72	-46
Modern Foreign Languages	26	71	-45
Music	10	79	-69

Source: Ipsos MORI

Potential for Supervised Coursework

Teachers have mixed opinions about the potential for supervised coursework. Three fifths (60%) think that it would be easy for them or their colleagues if students conducted coursework under supervised conditions. However, three in ten (31%) feel it would be difficult, including one in six (16%) teachers who would find it very difficult.



Geography and Music teachers are more sceptical about the possibility of supervised coursework conditions (41% and 42% respectively would find it difficult, compared to 31% overall), while Modern Foreign Language and History teachers are more in favour of this (78% and 71% respectively would find it easy, compared to 60% overall).

Unsurprisingly, teachers who have or would have difficulties controlling coursework conditions are more sceptical about the potential for supervising coursework (37% would find it difficult, compared with 31% overall). This might be linked to the nature of the coursework involved, and whether it can be controlled and supervised.

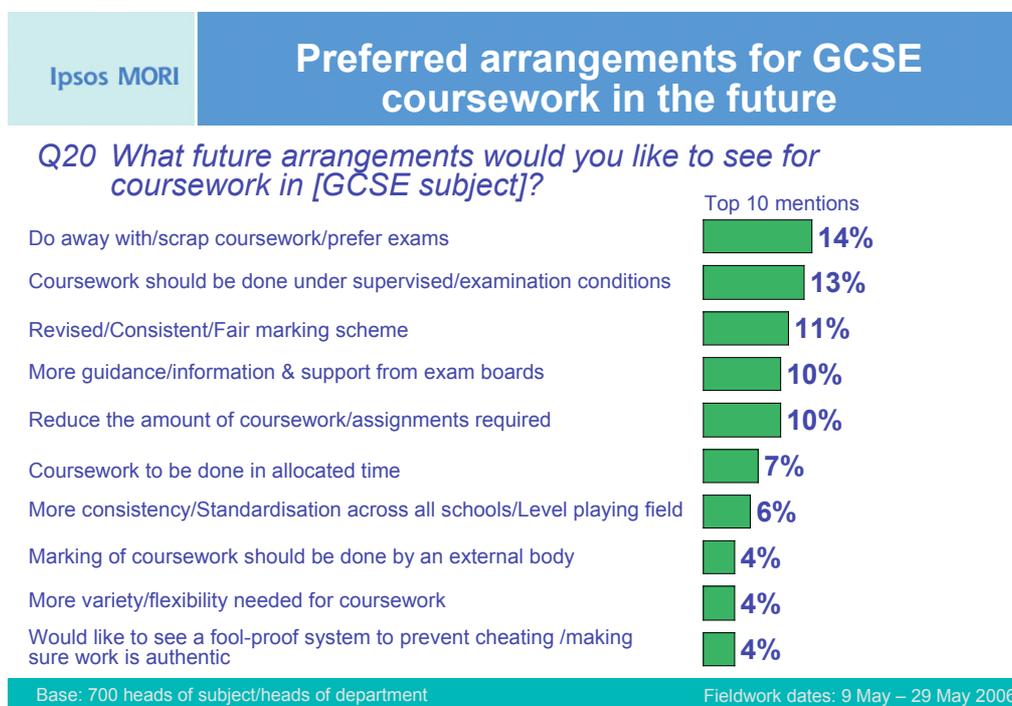
Preferred Arrangements for Coursework in the Future

We asked teachers what arrangements they would like to see for coursework in their subject in the future.

Their suggestions fall into three main categories. The most common relates to the **abolition or reduction of coursework** in the subject they teach. One in seven (14%) teachers would like to *do away with/scrap coursework/prefer exams* and one in ten (10%) would like a *reduction in the amount of coursework/assignments required*.

Other suggestions concern the **control of coursework conditions**. One in eight (13%) would like *coursework to be done under supervised/examination conditions* (13%) and seven per cent would like *coursework to be done in allocated time*.

Consistency and guidance related issues are also commonly raised. One in ten would like a *revised/consistent/fair marking scheme* (11%) and *more guidance/information and support from exam boards* (10%). Six per cent would like *more consistency/standardisation across all schools/level playing field*.



Reflecting earlier findings, Religious Studies teachers are far more likely than average to suggest *do away with/scrap coursework/prefer exams* (30% compared to 14% overall) and Music teachers are far less likely to say this (4%). English teachers tend to have slightly different views from other teachers. One quarter (24%) would like to *reduce the amount of coursework/assignments required* (compared to 10% overall), one fifth (22%) would like *coursework to be done under supervised/examination conditions* (compared to 13% overall) and one in ten (11%) *in allocated time* (compared to 7% overall).

As we might expect, teachers who do not teach coursework are more in favour of taking it out of the curriculum (33%) than teachers in general (14%). Those who agree that they have/would have difficulties controlling coursework conditions are also more likely to say this (26%).

Appendices

Guide to Statistical Reliability

Marked-up Questionnaire

Guide to Statistical Reliability

The sample tolerances that apply to the percentage results in this report are given in the table below. This table shows the possible variation that might be anticipated because a sample, rather than the entire population, was interviewed. As indicated, sampling tolerances vary with the size of the sample and the size of the percentage results.

Approximate sampling tolerances applicable To percentages at or near these levels			
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	±	±	±
Size of sample on which Survey result is based			
700 interviews (heads of department/heads of subject)	2	3	4
630 interviews (heads of department/subject who teach coursework)	2	4	4
75 interviews (heads of department/heads of subject who teach an optional coursework component)	7	10	11

Source: Ipsos MORI

For example, on a question where 50% of the people in a sample of 700 respond with a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that this result would not vary by more than 4 percentage points, plus or minus, from a complete coverage of the entire population using the same procedures.

Tolerances are also involved in the comparison of results from different parts of the sample. A difference, in other words, must be of at least a certain size to be considered statistically significant. The following table is a guide to the sampling tolerances applicable to comparisons.

Differences required for significance at or near these percentages			
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	±	±	±
Size of sample on which survey result is based			
100 and 700	6	10	11
100 and 100	8	13	14

Source: Ipsos MORI