

**Bridge
Group**
research
action
equality

Access Accountancy

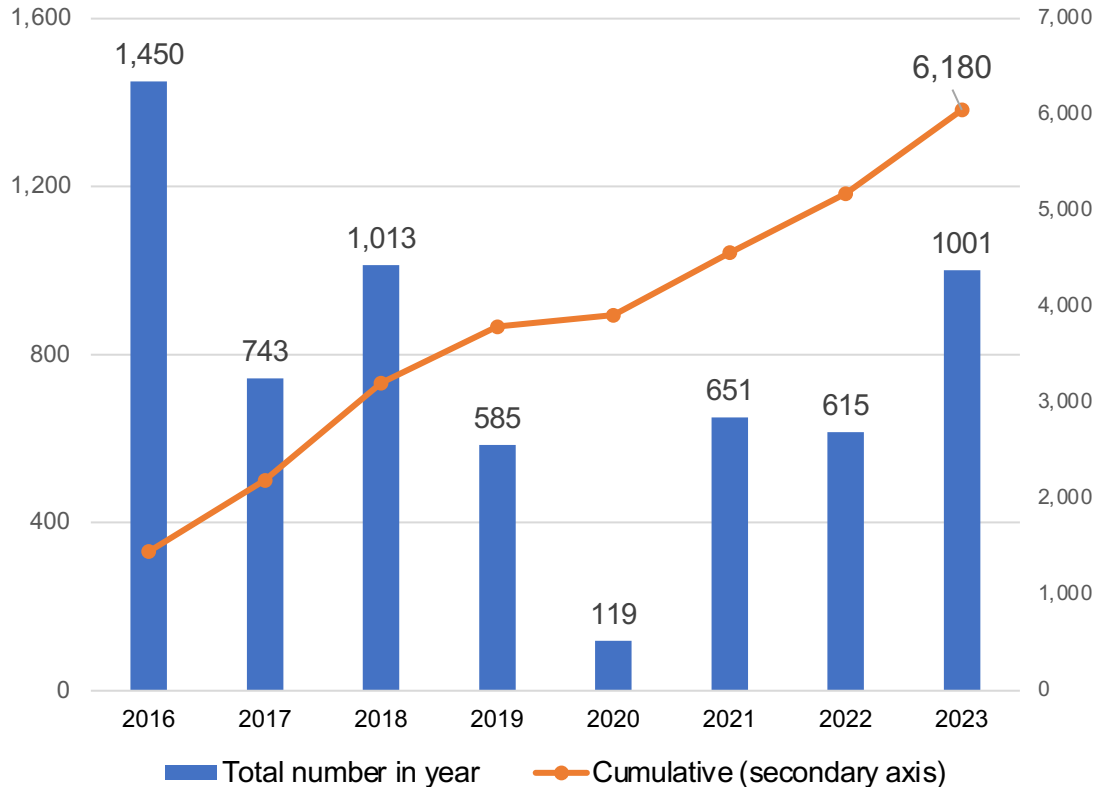
Work Experience (2022/23)

May 2024

Work experience: key findings

- Data was submitted by 13 signatories for a total of N=1,283 respondents. Of these, seven signatories had impact survey figures at pre and post time points, with an additional two signatories having conducted the survey after work experience placements and a further signatory had conducted the survey anonymously.
- More than three in four respondents (78%, n=1,001) were validated as meeting the Access Accountancy (AA) eligibility criteria of attending a state school and at least one further criterion, with 95% attending a state school. Note that there were some candidates for whom it was not possible to identify eligibility on any criteria (n=30) and some signatories shared their wider work experience data.
- Seven signatories provided data on 1,054 work experience candidates at pre survey and ten signatories provided data on 830 candidates at post survey. Data from 712 respondents (from six signatories) were also matched across pre and post surveys. Students undertook placements between September 2022 and August 2023.
- Findings from the impact analysis continue to be positive. Following the work experience, most respondents said that their business skills and awareness (96%) and networking/communication skills (93%) had increased.
- Respondents who rated their awareness of careers in this sector as 'Excellent' or 'Good' rose from 47% at pre survey to 91% at post survey. At post survey, 90% of respondents also said they were 'very much' or 'possibly' interested in a professional services / accountancy career.

Work experience participants



- This chart considers the number of work experience candidates validated as meeting the AA eligibility criteria (annually in the bars and cumulatively in the line).
- Across the eight years, a total of 6,180 participants have been validated as meeting the criteria. The dip in numbers since 2019 through to 2021 are the years most affected by the pandemic.
- These figures are based on data that was submitted by the signatories. **There were more AA work experience participants**, however their data was not submitted for analysis.

Work experience eligibility: 2018-2022

- The proportion of respondents meeting the AA eligibility criteria continues to increase. However, it is important to note that some signatories submit data on candidates from other work experience programmes. The number of respondents/students has also varied greatly across the last 5 cycles.
- For this cycle (2022-23) more signatories and data was submitted than previous years (a total of 13 signatories and 1,283 respondents).
- 78% were validated as meeting the AA eligibility criteria.
- The availability of data was mixed. While there was little missing data for criteria such as the type of school respondents attended (2% of data was missing), whether their parents had attended university (9%) and whether respondents had been eligible for free school meals (FSM) (5%). Other eligibility criteria such as whether respondents' schools had above average FSM rates for their area, had high levels of missing data (65% missing). Key contributing factors for this are that 6th form and FE colleges do not have FSM data and errors in students providing their school details mean an accurate match cannot be made.

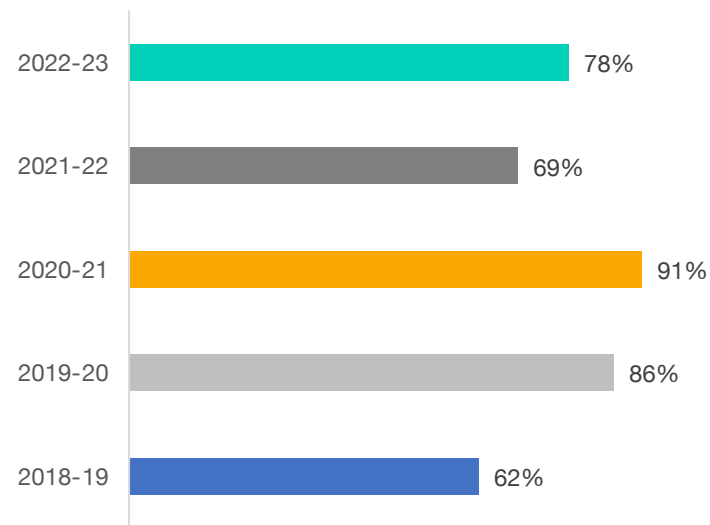


Figure 1. Percentage of students meeting the AA eligibility criteria.

(2022-23 No. of eligible students=873; 2021-22 No. of eligible students=615; 2020-21 No. of eligible students=651; 2019-20 No. of eligible students=119; 2018-19 No. of eligible students=585)

Work experience eligibility

- 97% of respondents attended a state school (N=1,247). Some signatories distinguished between selective and non-selective state school with 11% of respondents overall having attended a selective school (N=131).
- We see the proportion of respondents who were FSM eligible increase this cycle to 57%, while those attending a school that is above the regional average for FSM has decreased. However, this latter criterion had a high proportion of missing data (65%, primarily due to 6th form and FE colleges not having FSM averages) compared to respondents individually indicating if they have been eligible for FSM in the last 6 years (5%).
- The percentage of respondents meeting the criteria continues to change. While the availability of data like the FSM average of schools is likely to impact this, changes may additionally be due to the greater volume of data received this cycle and the type of signatories who had submitted data.

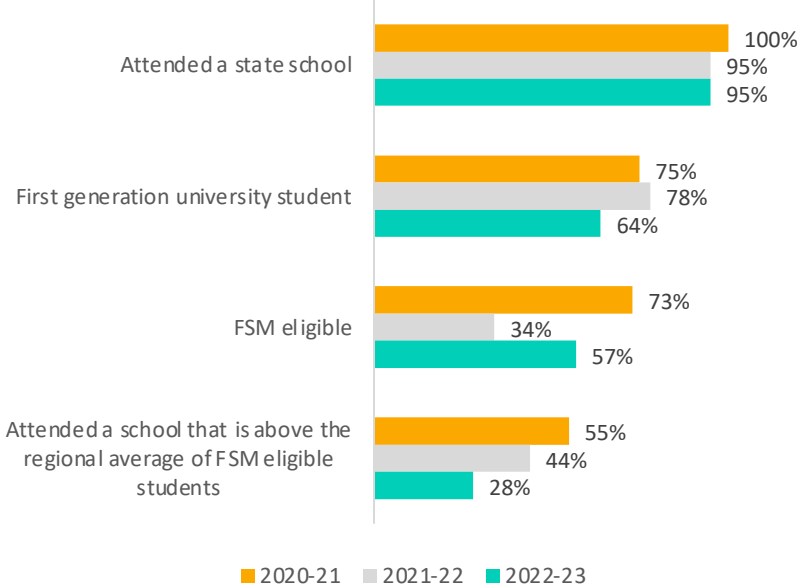


Figure 3. SEB of candidates (2022-23: N ranges from 451 to 1,279; 2021-22: N ranges from 508 to 973; 2020-21: N ranges from 398 to 714)

Work experience eligibility

- The AA eligibility criteria is that respondents attend a state school **and** meet at least one further criterion.*
- Not all respondents have attended a state school, and a further group only meet the criterion for attending which contribute to the overall figure of 78% of respondents have been validated as meeting AA eligibility criteria.
- Figure 4 shows that of those who attend a state school (N=1,212), 18% do not meet any other criteria, but 71% meet one or two of the further criteria.
- Missing data** was high for respondents' schools and above the regional average for FSM eligibility (65%). Therefore, the figure for respondents meeting multiple criteria could be much higher.

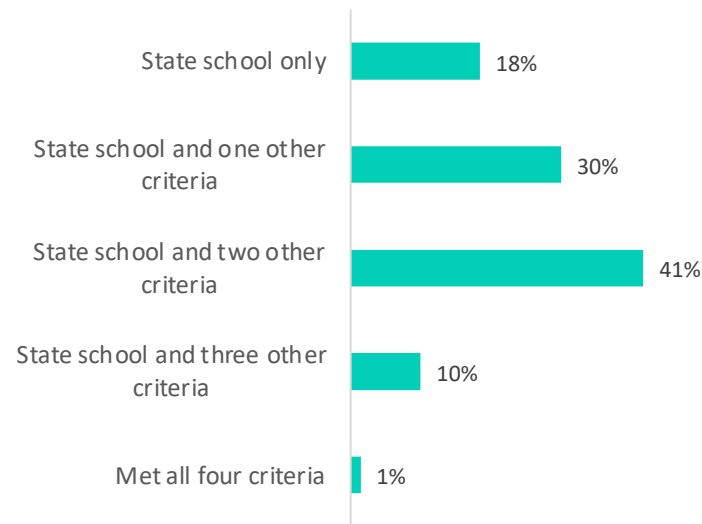


Figure 4. Eligibility of candidates attending state schools (N=1,212)

*Eligibility criteria include having attended a state school / college and meeting one of the following: eligibility for FSM in the last six years; or attending a school that is above the regional average of FSM eligible students; or would be of the first generation in their immediate family to attend university; or low SEB

** School FSM and regional data is not available for those not attending a state school within England; therefore, this data is missing for those who attended school in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, as well as those who attended school overseas, an Independent school and those who did not provide school information.

Demographic and socio-economic background (SEB) data

- 54% of respondents identified as female, 45% of respondents identified as male, and just under 1% as a self-described or other identity.
- 42% of respondents (N=167) identified as Asian, 40% were White, (which is an increase from 31% in 2021/22), 12% identified as Black, and a further 6% identified as Mixed or Other. Nine signatories provided ethnicity data, but we could only categorise N=395 respondents, meaning 69% of ethnicity data was missing.
- As shown in Figure 2, just under half of respondents were from a high SEB (45%) with 39% being from a low SEB. This is a change from last year where we saw 52% of respondents being from a high SEB and 30% from a low SEB. SEB data was available for 50% of respondents.
- We also looked at the region in which respondents were carrying out their work experience, with 32% doing so in London, followed by 21% in the North West. 1% took part virtually.

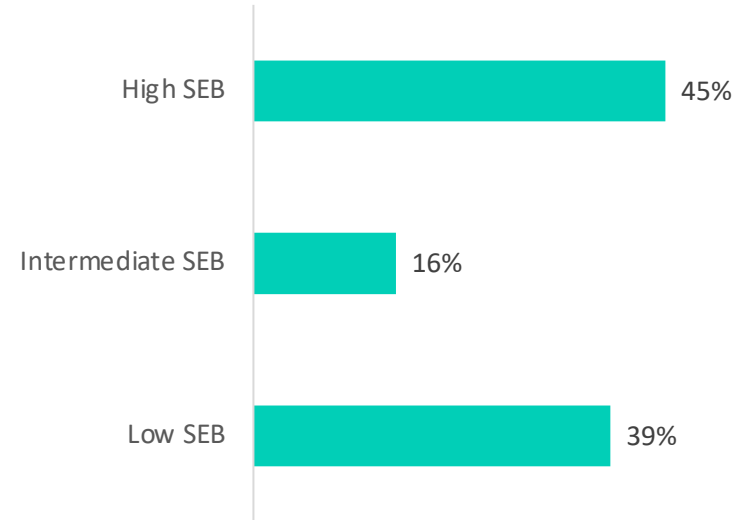


Figure 2. Socio-economic background of candidates based on parental occupation (N=640)

Impact analysis: response rates

Table 1. Number of respondents to pre and post surveys, and the number of signatories submitting survey data from 2018-2023.

	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
Pre survey N	1054	588	799	203	713
Post survey N	830	457	700	216	582
No. of signatories submitting survey data	10	6	7	6	14

Note: These figures are based on pre and post survey data only. This does not include work experience candidates for whom we have demographic data only, which was provided by a further 3 signatories.

Self-rated abilities

The following analysis looks at all pre and post survey responses. Overall, we can see that most respondents rate an increase across the range of abilities, with just 4% of respondents indicating a decrease across all abilities. Respondents' ability to work in a team saw the largest increase by "a lot" (55%), but confidence in this had been high at pre survey with just 4% indicating their ability was "poor" or "very poor".

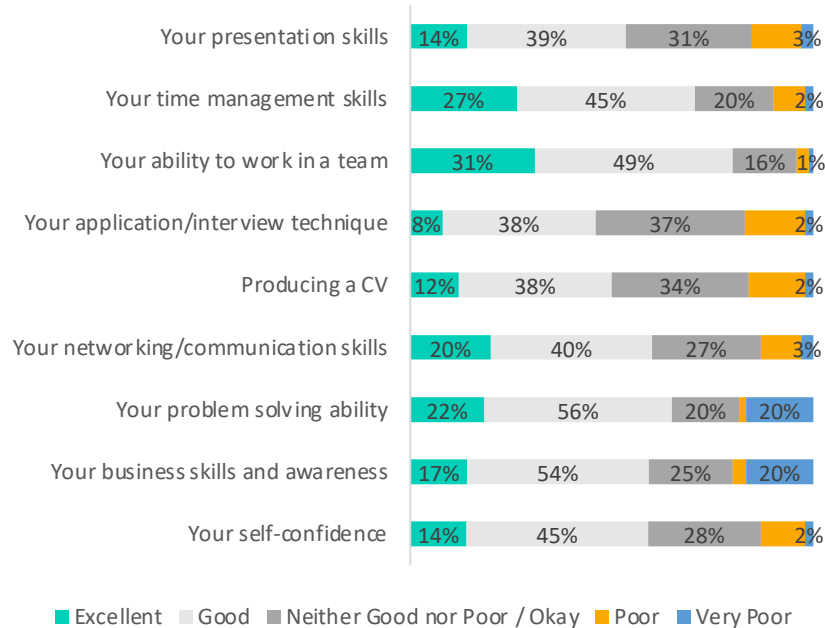


Figure 5. Rating of abilities prior to work experience (N=1,054)

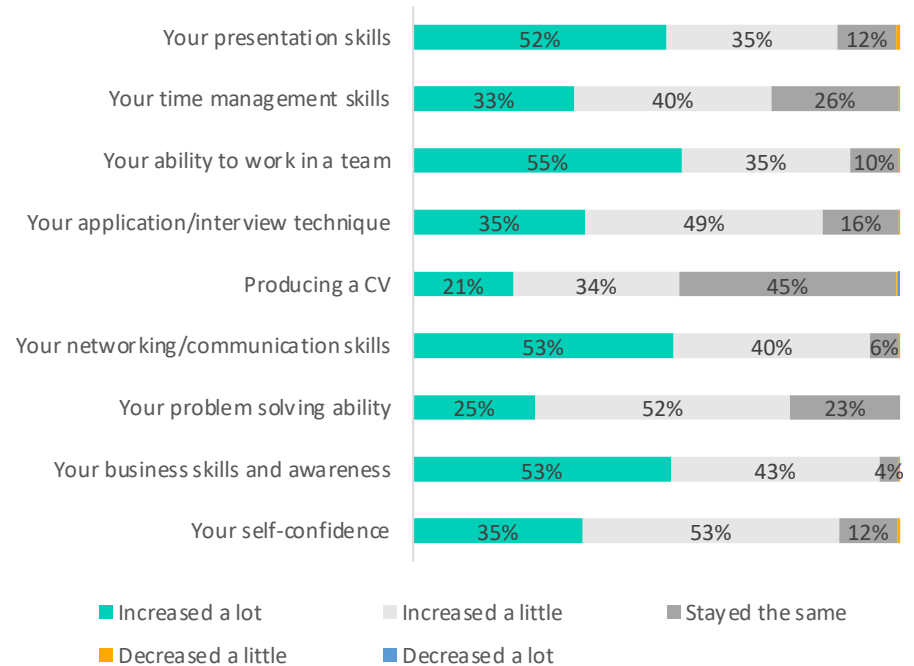


Figure 6. Impact of work experience on all abilities (N=359)

Self-rated abilities

In the post survey, some signatories used the same response options as the pre survey. These are not matched responses, but we can see an overall trend that the proportion of ratings for “excellent” and “good” are higher after the work experience. In the pre survey respondents' ratings of their problem-solving ability and business skills and awareness had the poorest ratings of 22% and 24% respectively (combined “poor” and “very poor”). These decrease to 2% and 6% in the post survey.

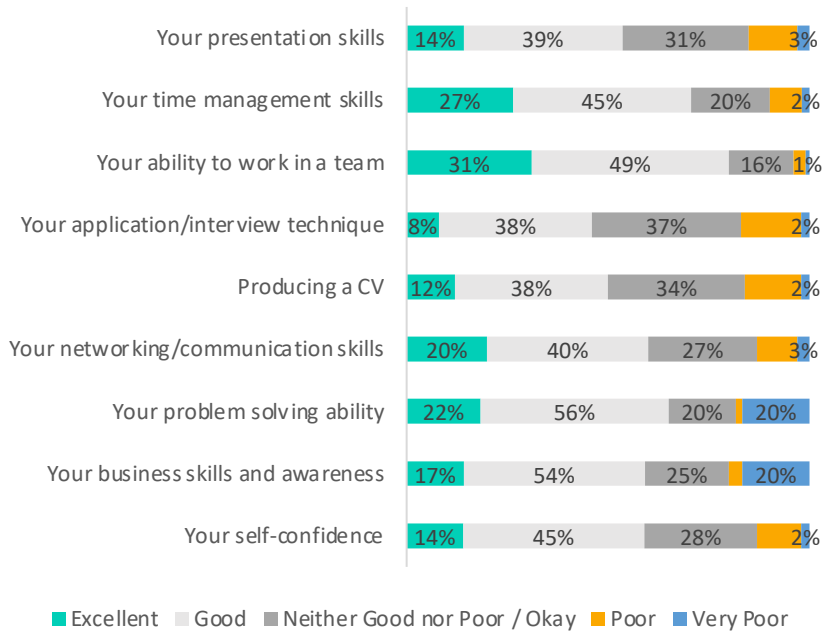


Figure 7. Rating of abilities prior to work experience (N=1,054)

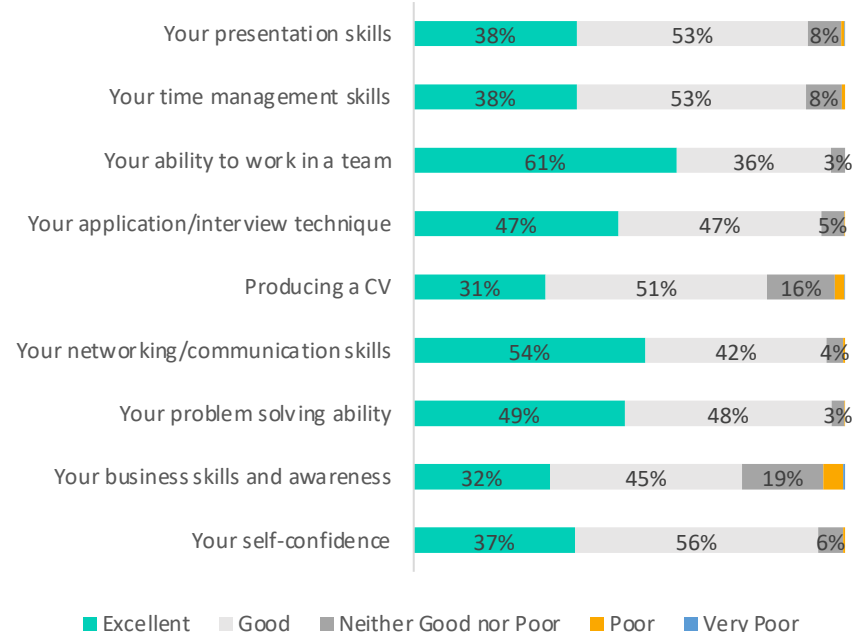
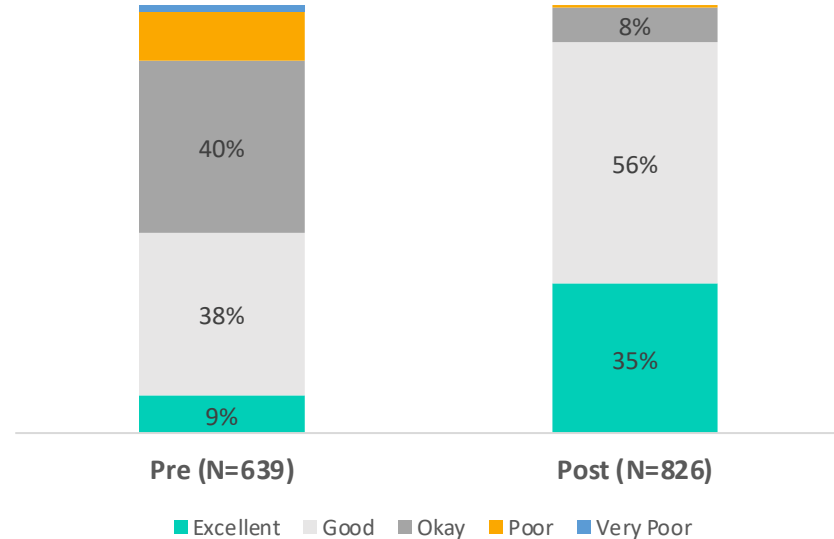


Figure 8. Impact of work experience on all abilities (N=415)

Awareness of careers

- Respondents were asked about their awareness of careers in the professional services/accountancy at pre and post survey.
- The percentage of those who rated their awareness of careers in this sector as 'Excellent' or 'Good' almost doubled between pre (47%) and post survey (91%).
- At baseline, 12% of respondents indicated their awareness was 'Poor' and 1% 'Very Poor', whereas at the post survey only 1% indicated their awareness was 'Poor'.

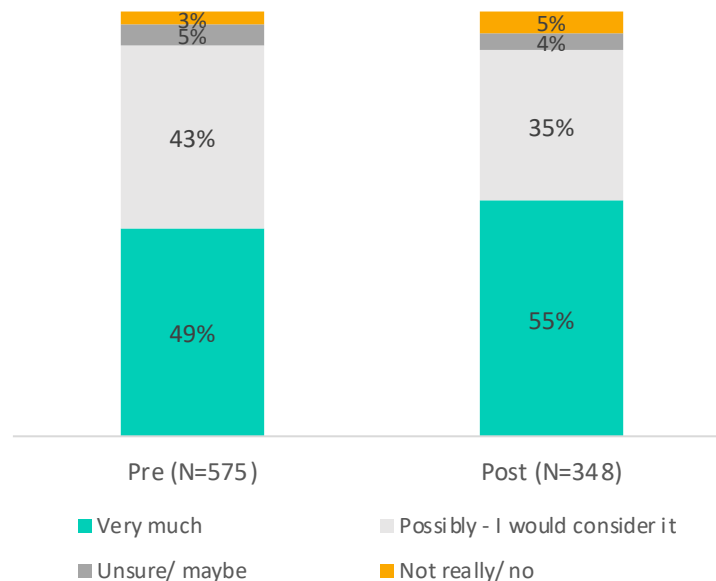
Figure 9. Awareness of careers in professional services / accountancy before and after work experience



Interest in careers

- We don't see much change in the interest of careers in professional services and accountancy between baseline and post.
- 92% of respondents at baseline were 'very much' or 'possibly' interested in a career in professional services/accountancy and this was 90% following the work experience. This is similar to last year's results where the proportion was 92% at both pre and post work experience.
- However, the proportion of those who responded 'very much' increased from 49% at baseline to 55% in the post survey.
- Respondents were also asked what they see themselves doing after the current year. More than half of respondents indicated they would continue with education (whether finishing GCSEs, A-levels or going on to study for a degree), with 56% at pre survey increasing to 67% at post. School leaver programmes/ further training/ degree apprenticeships were the next most popular response, with 35% at pre survey and 25% at post.

Figure 10. Interest in a career in professional services / accountancy before and after work experience



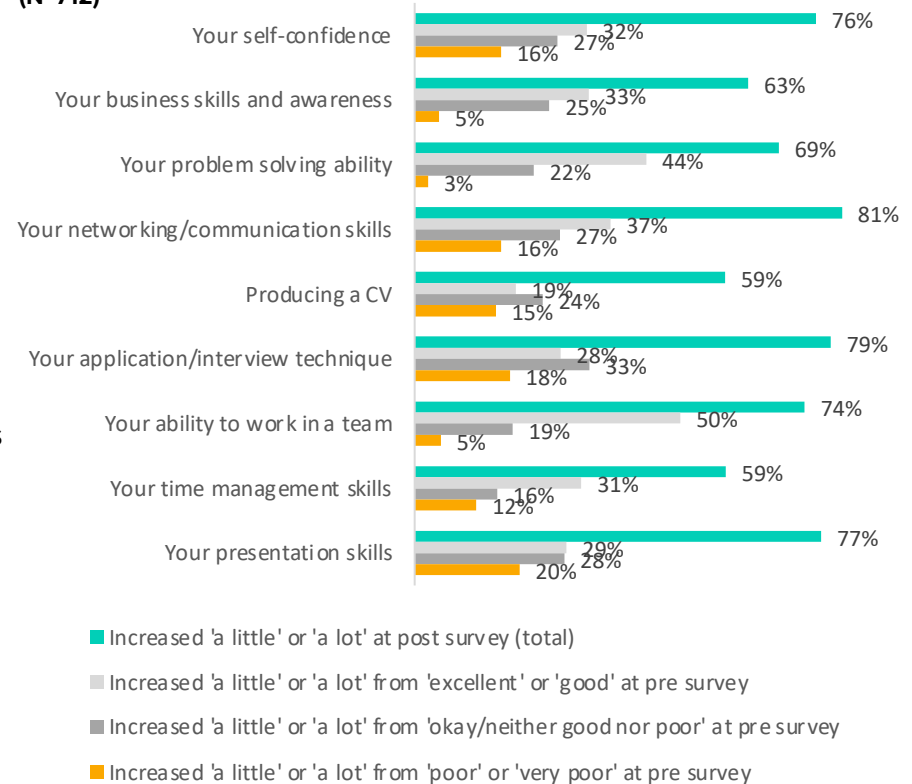
Matched respondents: Self-rated abilities

- Figure 11 compares change in responses for those who answered both the pre and post surveys and could be matched (matched respondents, N=712)*.
- Networking/communication skills and application/interview technique increased the most for matched respondents (81% and 79% respectively).
- The largest increases in self-rated abilities at post survey were generally reported by those who had rated themselves as 'excellent' or 'good' at pre survey. However, it is important to note that a lower proportion of respondents initially rated their abilities as 'poor' or 'very poor'.

*We used a broader matching methodology this cycle. In addition to linking pre and post responses using respondents name and date of birth, where this was not available, we used a combination of eligibility criteria and school information to increase the sample and include a wider range of signatories.

The wording of response options in the post survey does vary between signatories. For example, some using 'excellent' 'good' at both pre and post. These responses are recoded to indicate whether there has been an increase, decrease or responses have remained the same.

Figure 11. Impact of work experience on all abilities, matched respondents (N=712)



Matched respondents: Awareness of careers

- Table 2 compares the change in responses for those who answered both the pre and post surveys and could be matched (N=293).
- Interest increased for 63% of respondents (shown in teal) while 'excellent' and 'good' ratings were maintained for 24% (shown in light grey) following the work experience.

Table 2. Changes to awareness of professional services / accountancy careers, matched respondents (N=293)

		Post survey				
		Excellent	Good	Okay	Poor	Very Poor
Pre survey	Excellent	6%	3%	0%	-	-
	Good	16%	18%	2%	-	-
	Okay	8%	25%	7%	-	-
	Poor	3%	6%	4%	-	-
	Very Poor	-	-	-	-	-

Matched respondents: Interest in careers

- Table 3 compares the change in responses for those who answered both the pre and post surveys and could be matched (N=293).
- Interest increased for 12% of respondents (shown in teal) while 'very much' and 'possibly' ratings were maintained for 74% (shown in light grey).

Table 3. Changes to interest in a professional services / accountancy career, matched respondents (N=293)

		Post survey			
		Very much – It's my first choice	Possibly - I would consider it	Unsure	Not really
Pre survey	Very much – It's my first choice	52%	6%	-	-
	Possibly - I would consider it	9%	22%	2%	2%
	Unsure	1%	2%	1%	-
	Not really	-	-	-	1%

Appendix: signatories submitting selection/hires and work experience data for this cycle

Work experience and / or demographic data

BDO

Blick Rothenberg

Cafcass

Deloitte

Duncan and Toplis

EY

ICAEW

KPMG

MHA MacIntyre Hudson

Mazars

National Audit Office

PwC

RSM UK