

## What's happened in schools since the removal of 'food' A-level?

### Overview

To ascertain whether there has been any impact on schools and students due to the removal of the option to offer and study A-levels in 'food', i.e. A-level in Food technology or Home Economics, the British Nutrition Foundation (BNF), in partnership with the Food Teachers Centre (FTC), surveyed secondary school food teachers in England. The work took place in January-February 2020.

### Executive summary of the findings

- **There is less food teaching in our schools:** Overall, the results suggest that the removal of A-levels in 'food' has led to the reduction of food and nutrition education at Key Stage 3 in 1 in 4 schools and in 15% schools at Key Stage 4 (GCSE). A majority of respondents also stated that GCSE numbers had declined.
- **There is less funding for teaching about 'food' in 1 in 4 schools:** While the majority reported that funding at Key Stage 3 and 4 had remained the same, 1 in 4 indicated that funding had reduced.
- **The status of the subject (food) is in decline:** With the removal of A-level, respondents reported that the status of the subject had declined.
- **Staffing remains an issue, in terms of capacity and subject specific knowledge and skills.**
- **There is no clear route of progression from GCSE for those students with an interest or passion in 'food'.** 71% respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed that routes of progression had remained the same, and 17% agreed/strongly agreed that routes of progression had remained the same. For those that had taught A-level, 78% disagreed/strongly disagreed that routes of progression had remained the same.
- **There is student interest in A-level 'food'.** For the years 2018 and 2019 teachers stated that in total 6,216 students had expressed an interest in taking an A-level in 'food'.
- **Former A-level students have careers in a wide range of 'food' careers.** Just over half the respondents that participated indicated that they had links with former students that had undertaken an A-level in food. From the analysis of 197 written responses, 122 students have careers in the food industry, 113 in health professions, 57 in teaching, 43 in hospitality and catering, and 18 in other related professions.
- **A majority (98%) of respondents indicated that they believed that an A-level in 'food' should be reintroduced.**

## Background context

In 2016, the decision was taken by the Department for Education that A-levels in Food technology and Home Economics would not continue in England (with last teaching in 2018).

This was based on an announcement of a consultation in July 2015, which stated that AS and A level food technology would not be developed as a separate qualification, as it has been part of the Design & Technology suite and did not fit, due to their being a number of vocational qualifications available post-16 in food-related subjects (including confectionary/butchery) and that top universities offering food science/nutrition related courses had told DfE that they were looking for students with science qualifications for entry to their courses, rather than food-related A levels. [16 July 2015 – GCSE and A level subject content consultation](#)

On 7 October 2015 (updated on 15 December 2015), Ofqual published *GCSE, AS and A level subjects that are being reformed*, which stated that AS and A-level Home economics: food, nutrition and health would not be reformed as it was not proposed by exam boards.

The response to the original consultation (July 2015) was published in January 2016, which confirmed that A-level 'food' would not be reformed. It was stated that 31 responses to the consultation were received around 'food', which commented that whilst there is a need for a 'food' A level, 'food' did not fit comfortably within design and technology suite of qualifications. The response repeated the view of the consultation document that: there were already a number of high-quality vocational qualifications available post-16 in food-related subjects; there are applied general qualifications that have a focus on food nutrition and food science, which have been endorsed by universities and have associated UCAS points; a high proportion of universities offering food science and nutrition related courses are looking for students with science qualifications for entry to their courses, and whilst some do view food technology as an acceptable entrance qualification, many either do not accept it or do not require it; and that there are low numbers currently taking the subject. [Reformed GCSE, AS and A level subject content – Government consultation response](#)

## Methodology

Two surveys were created, one for teachers that had taught an A-level in 'food' and one for those that had not taught an A-level in 'food', to ensure that data collected reported impacts in different school scenarios. The surveys were written by BNF and the FTC, and covered whether the removal of A-levels in 'food' had had any impact on teaching time, funding and teacher provision; student numbers and subject selection at A-level; as well as exploring any potential barriers to A-levels in 'food' being reintroduced, using closed and open questions.

The surveys were promoted to secondary school teachers, via BNF and FTC newsletters and social media, and were open from 4 to 29 February 2020. In total, 819 responses were received (462 from those that had taught A-level and 357 that had not taught A-level), all respondents were self-selecting and not all respondents answered every question.

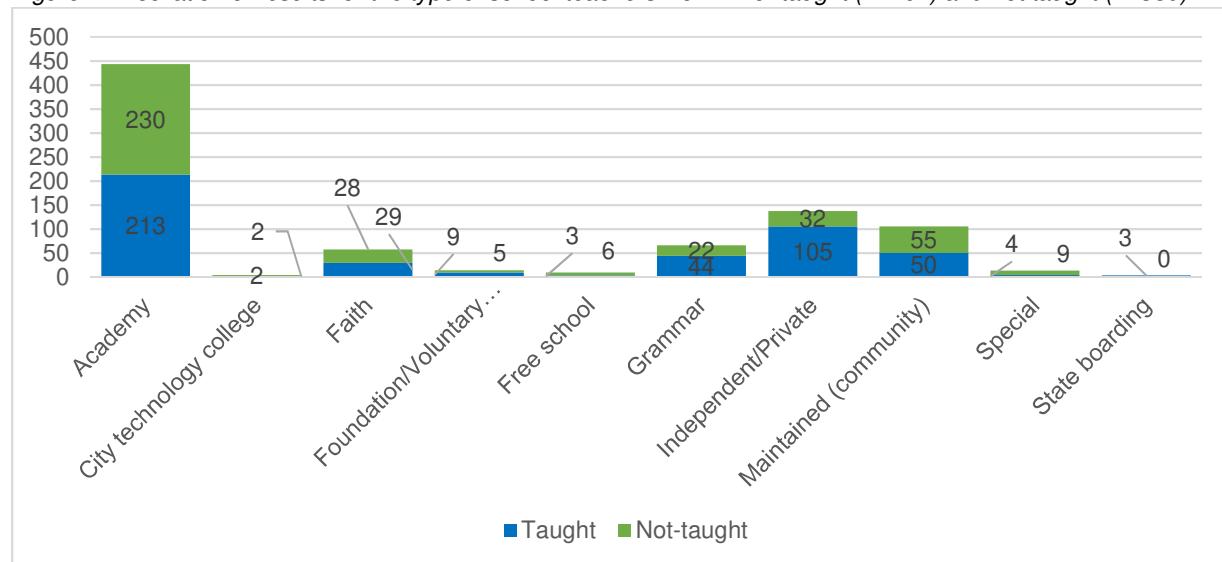
## Results

The results show what teachers reported, presented as 'have previously taught A-level', 'have not taught A-level' and 'all responses' (i.e. have and have not taught A-level). For some questions, 'independent/private school' responses have been filtered out, to show stated-funded school responses only.

### Question 1: In what type of school do you work?

#### 1.1 The number of responses from teachers on which type of school they work in.

Figure 1: A collation of results for the type of school teachers work in for taught (n=462) and not taught (n=389).



#### 1.2 The combined number of responses from teachers on which type of school they work in.

Table 1: The combined figures of the type of school teachers work in from the surveys for taught (n=462), not taught (n=389) and the combined data (n=851).

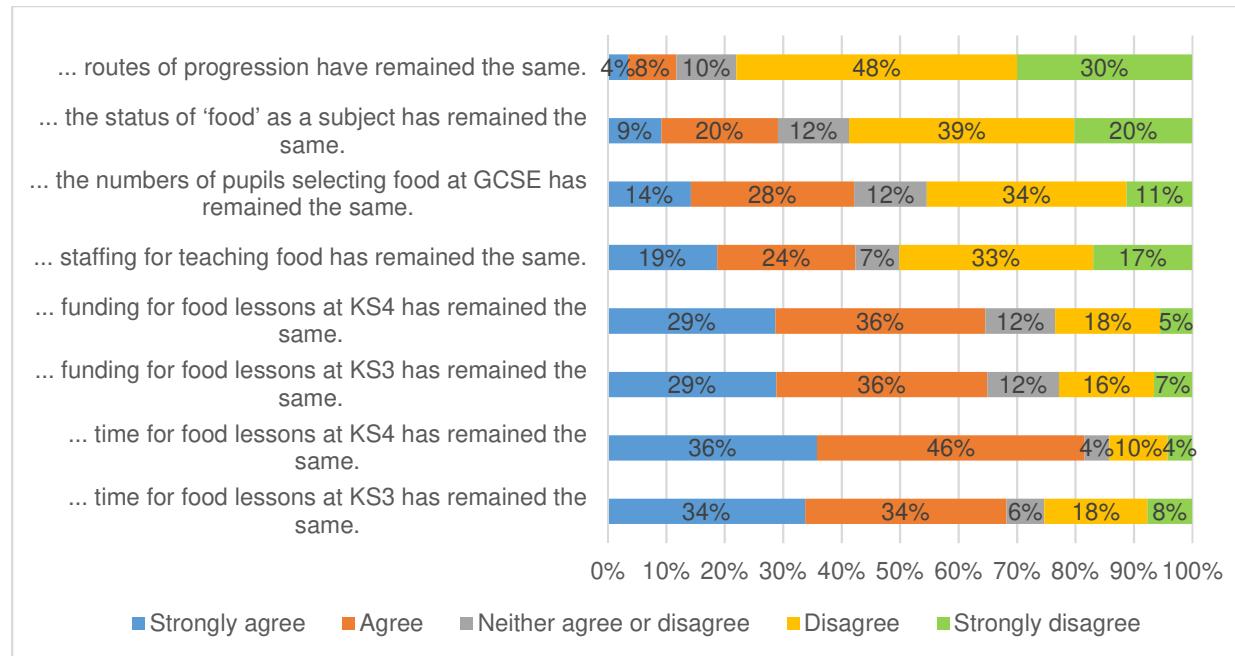
	Taught (n)	Not taught (n)	Combined (n)	Combined (%)
Academy	213	230	443	52%
City technology college	2	2	4	0%
Faith	29	28	57	7%
Foundation/Voluntary school	9	5	14	2%
Free school	3	6	9	1%
Grammar	44	22	66	8%
Independent/Private	105	32	137	16%
Maintained (community)	50	55	105	12%
Special	4	9	13	2%
State boarding	3	0	3	0%

**Question 2: The following explores whether the removal of A-level 'food' has had any impact in your school.**

**2.1 Taught A-level responses (n=403)**

*Figure 2: Teacher responses from the 'taught' survey for whether teachers agree, neither agree or disagree or disagree with the statements listed looking at the impact of removing the A-Level in 'food'.*

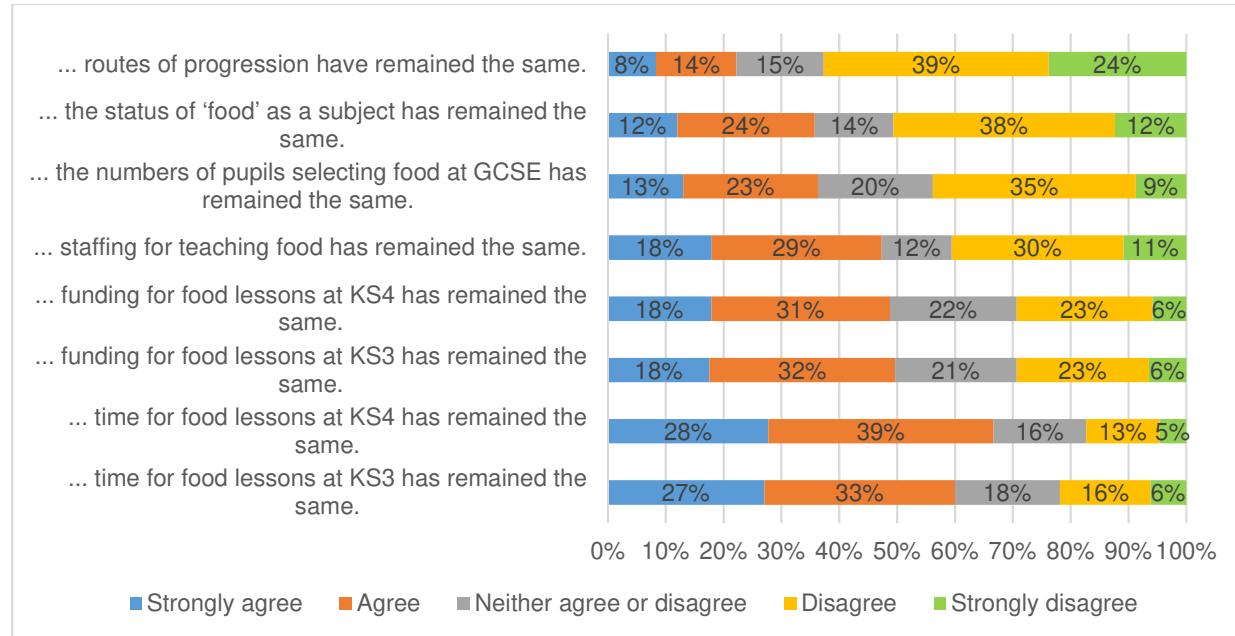
As a direct consequence of the removal of A-level ...



**2.2 Not taught A-level responses (n=325)**

*Figure 3: Teacher responses from the 'not taught' survey for whether teachers agree, neither agree or disagree or disagree with the statements listed looking at the impact of removing the A-Level in 'food'.*

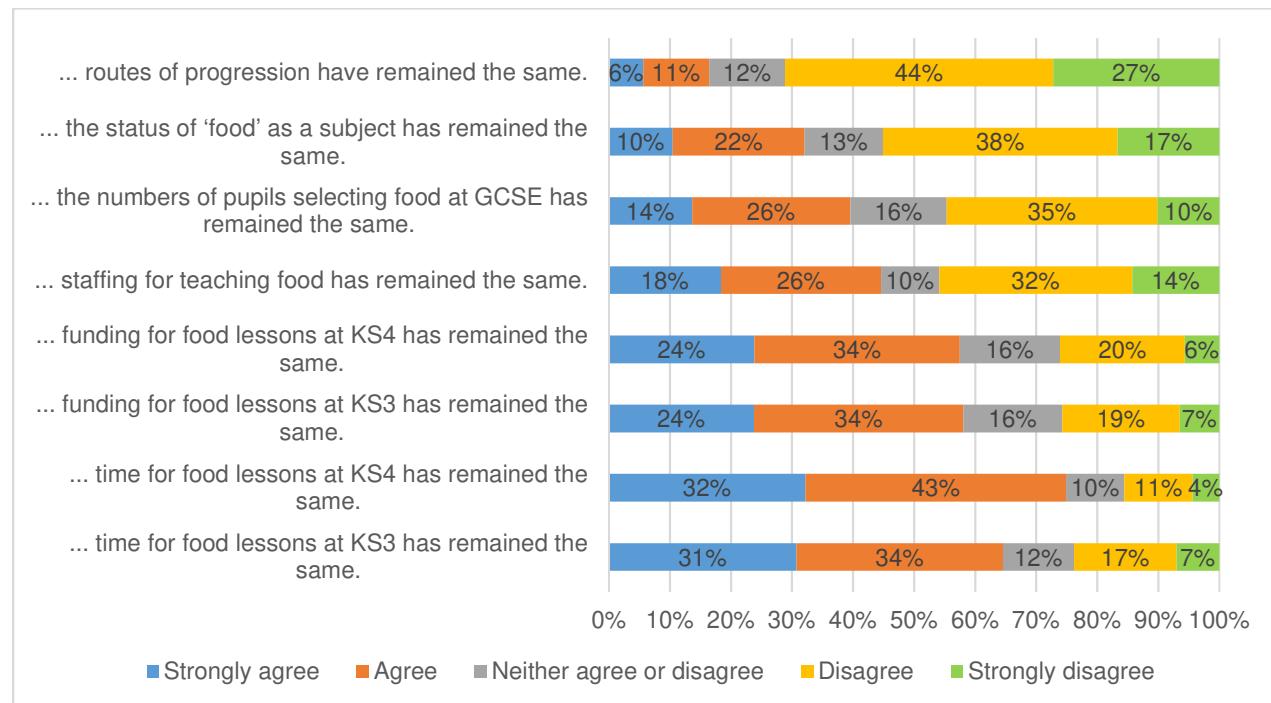
As a direct consequence of the removal of A-level ...



### 2.3 Combined responses (n=728)

Figure 4: Teacher responses combined from both surveys for whether teachers agree, neither agree or disagree or disagree with the statements listed looking at the impact of removing the A-Level in 'food'.

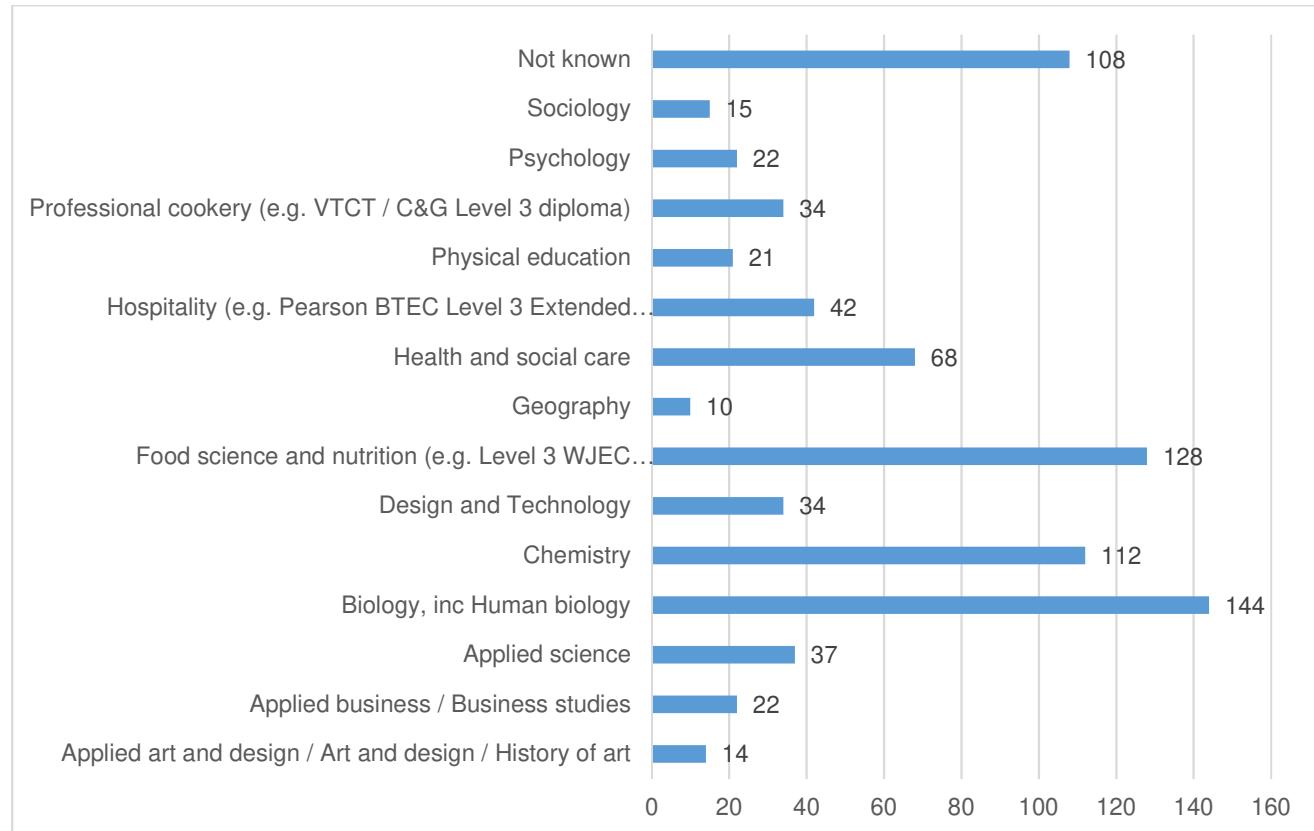
As a direct consequence of the removal of A-level ...



**Question 3: As students can no longer select A-level 'food', what subject/s are they choosing to secure a university place on a food related degree or career? (Tick all that apply.)**

**3.1 The number of each subject that is being taken to secure a university place on a food related degree or career as per teacher responses.** Question asked in the 'taught A-level' survey only (n=389).

*Figure 5: A summary of the teacher responses looking at the subjects students who can no longer select A-level are taking instead. Subjects with 10 or more votes are included in the table.*



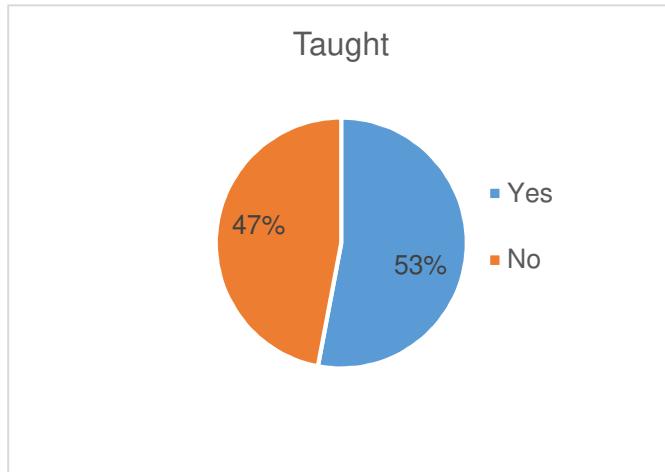
Subject group	Included subjects	Total
Science subjects	Sociology, Psychology, Food Science and Nutrition, Chemistry, Biology	458
Health subjects	PE, Health and social care	89
Professional cookery	Professional cookery	34
Hospitality	Hospitality	42
Design and Technology	Design and Technology	34
Other subjects	Geography, Business, Art	46

*(This data excludes the responses for courses with less than 10 responses).*

**Question 4: Do you have links with any students that studied A-level 'food' with you and now have a career in 'food'?**

**4.1 The percentage of teachers that have links with students that have studied A-level 'food'**

*Figure 6: A comparison of the number of teachers who have links with students that have studied A-level food (n=383).*



**4.2 Analysis of comments provided, based on main themes.** (197 comments received, some comments were not about the question so were excluded.)

*Table 2: Number of students working in different food based careers*

Food industry	Hospitality and catering	Teaching profession
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food developer/NPD x 60</li> <li>Own food business x 15</li> <li>Food industry (general) x 8</li> <li>Food technologist x 7</li> <li>Food scientist x 7</li> <li>Food marketing x 6</li> <li>Event management x 5</li> <li>Food buyer x 4</li> <li>Food journalist/writer x 3</li> <li>Food photographer x 3</li> <li>Food stylist x 2</li> <li>Food engineering x 1</li> <li>Food retailing management x 1</li> </ul> Total = 122	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chef x 24</li> <li>Hospitality management x 19</li> </ul> Total = 43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food teacher x 44</li> <li>Teacher x 10</li> <li>Primary teacher x 3</li> </ul> Total = 57
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heath profession</li> <li>Dietician x 50</li> <li>Sports therapy/nutrition x 23</li> <li>Heath care (nurses, midwives, doctors, physiotherapists) x 22</li> <li>Nutritionist x 18</li> </ul> Total = 113	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other</li> <li>Environmental Health Officer x 6</li> <li>Academic x 5</li> <li>Nanny x 5</li> <li>Government department (Defra) x 1</li> </ul> Agriculture x 1

**4.3 Analysis of references to previous A-Level students who studied food related degrees at universities**

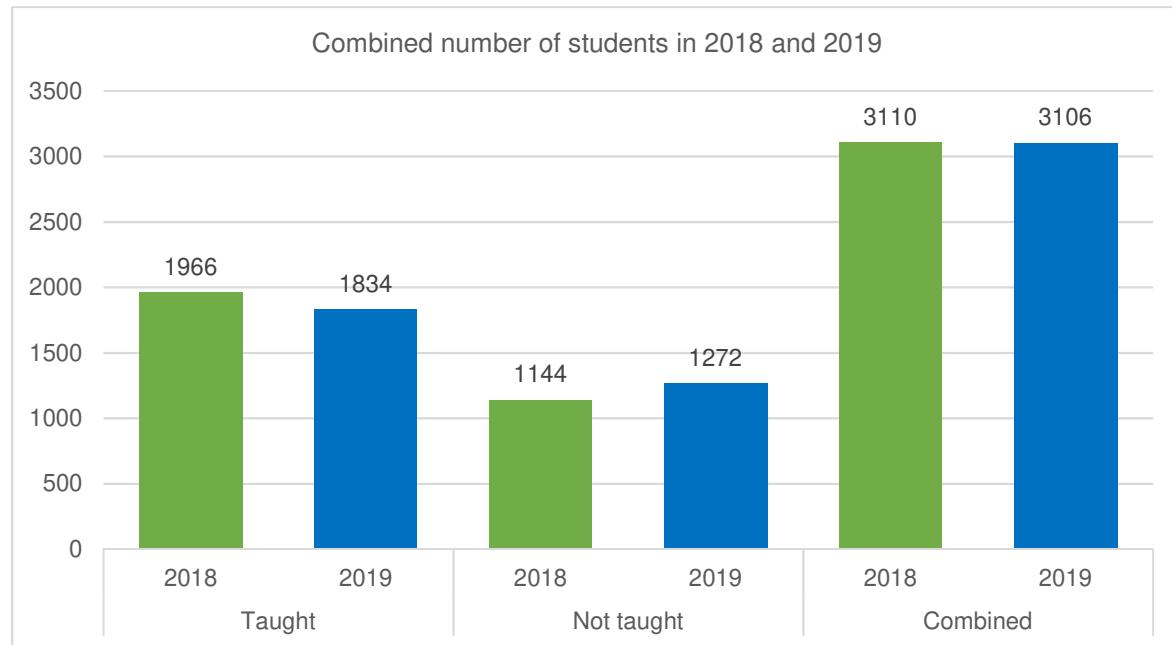
*Table 3: An amalgamation of comments (unprompted) from teachers on the Universities where food related degrees have been studied.*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bath Spa x 2, Birmingham City x 4, Bournemouth x 1 and Brighton x 1</li> <li>Chester x 1, Coventry x 1</li> <li>Harper Adams x 8, Herriot Watt x 2, Hull x 1</li> <li>Kings, London x 1</li> <li>Leeds x 5, Liverpool x 1</li> <li>Manchester Metropolitan x 3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Newcastle x 5, Nottingham x 6</li> <li>Oxford Brooks x 1</li> <li>Reading x 7</li> <li>Sheffield Hallam x 11</li> <li>Westminster x 5</li> </ul> Total = 61 Other students had undertaken degree level food related apprenticeships.
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**Question 5: Do you have, or have you had, students that wish to study ‘food’ at A-level?**

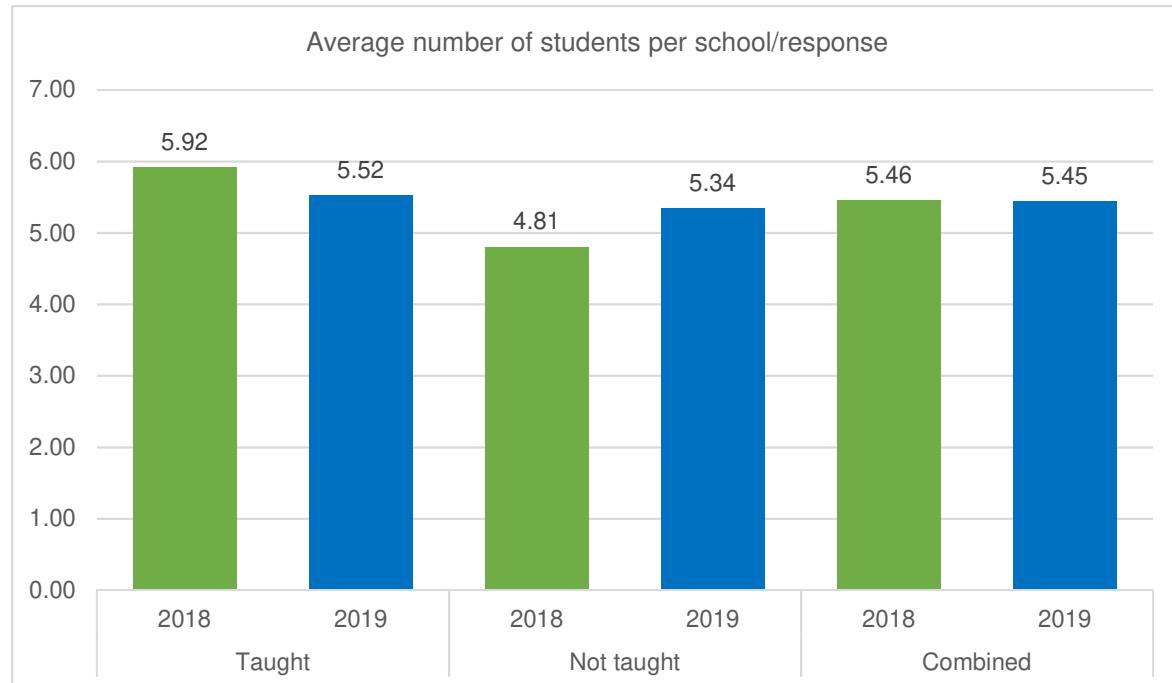
**5.1 The total number of students who expressed an interest to study ‘food’ at A-level in 2018 and 2019**

*Figure 7: Teacher responses for how many students expressed an interest to study ‘food’ at A-level in both 2018 and 2019 in taught (n=332), not taught (n=238) and the combined figures (n=570).*



**5.2 The average number of students who expressed an interest to study ‘food’ at A-level in 2018 and 2019 per school (response)**

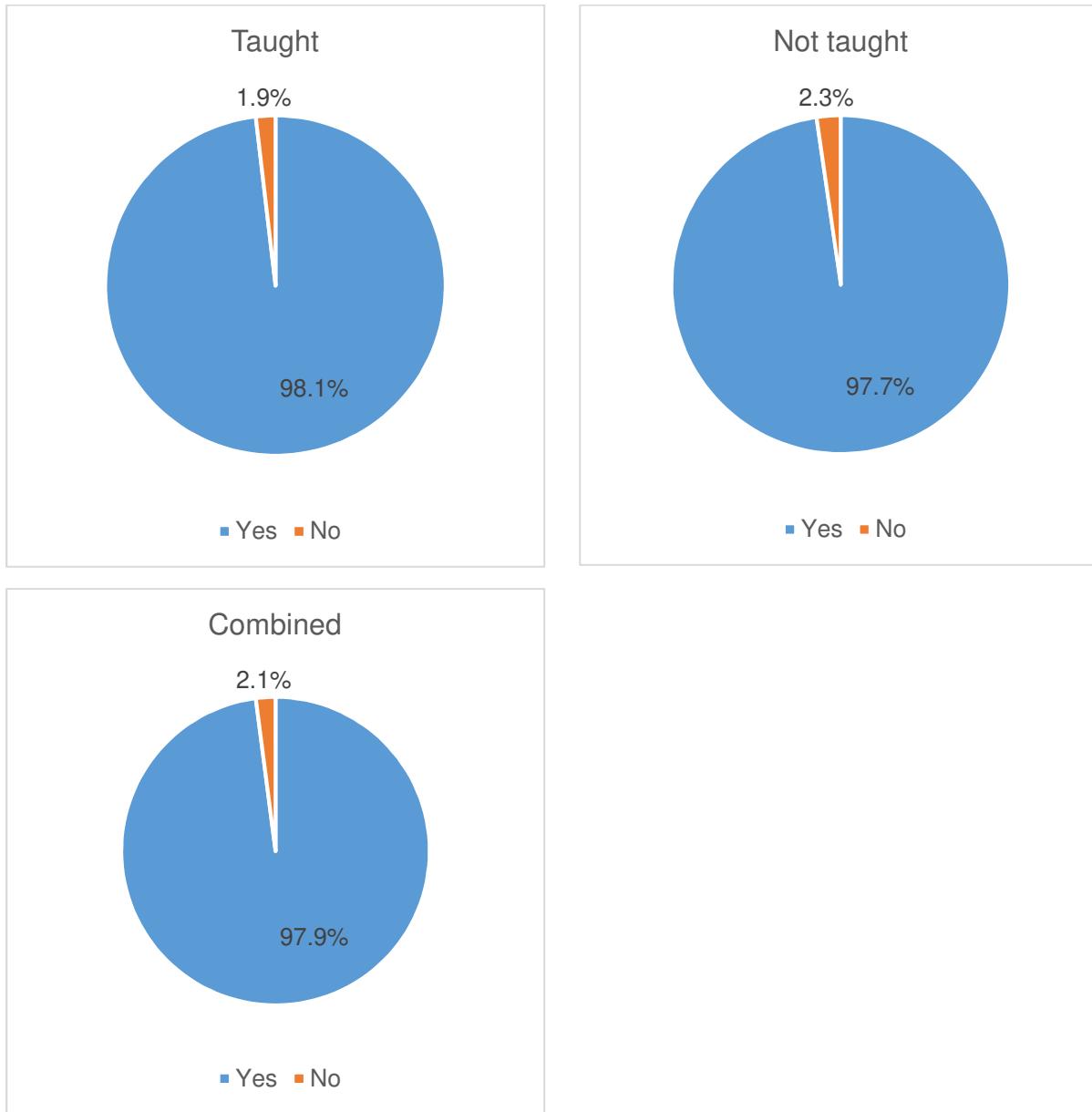
*Figure 8: The mean number students per survey response that expressed an interest to study ‘food’ at A-level in both 2018 and 2019 in taught (n=332), not taught (n=238) and the combined figures (n=570).*



**Question 6: Do you believe that an A-level in 'food' should be reintroduced?**

**6.1 The percentage of teachers who reported that A-level in food should be reintroduced in taught (n=377), not taught (n=304), combined (n=681).**

*Figure 9: A comparison of the number of teachers who reported that the A-level in food should be reintroduced in taught (n=377), not taught (n=304), combined (n=681).*



## 6.2 Analysis of comments provided, based on main themes

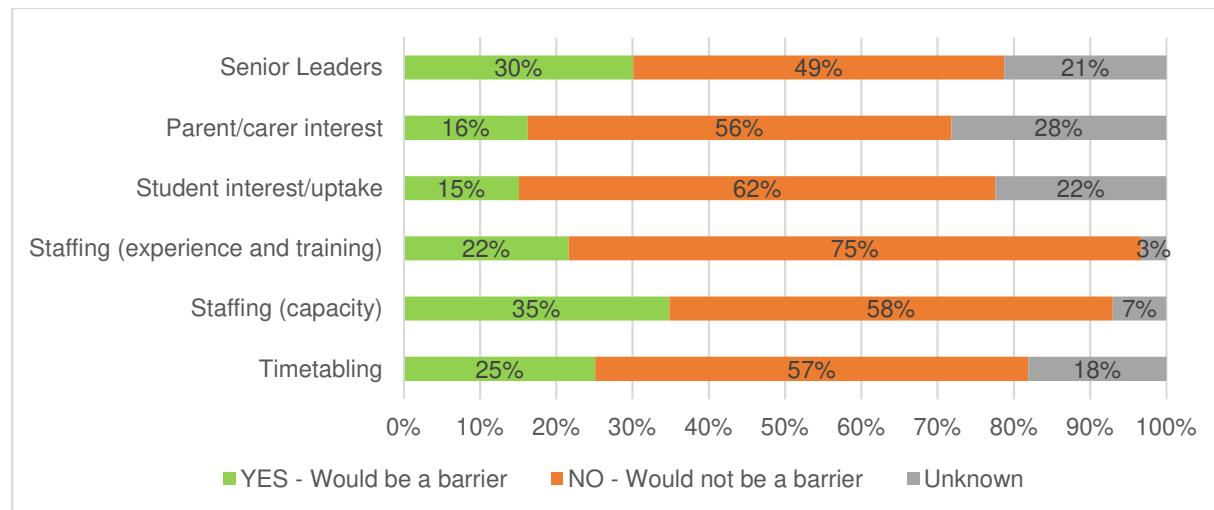
Table 4: An amalgamation of the comments from teachers on whether they believe that an A-level in 'food' should be reintroduced grouped into broader categories.

Have taught A-level	Have not taught A-level
<p>(197 comments received, some comments were not about the question so were excluded)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide progression from GCSE to degree x 38</li> <li>Gives employment opportunities/careers x 29</li> <li>Current options not suitable x 21</li> <li>Links with degree courses x 11</li> <li>Removal has undermined subject x 11</li> <li>Need to make any new course contemporary/relevant x 10</li> <li>Lack of depth/kudos in current Level 3 options x 6</li> <li>Student interest in 'food' x 6</li> <li>Importance of subject content x 5</li> <li>Removal has led to less 'food' teachers x 5</li> <li>Need to keep applied/creativity course aspects x 4</li> <li>Health of the nation x 3</li> <li>Only NC subject without an A-level x 3</li> <li>No interest from students x 3</li> <li>Reduced KS3/GCSE offer x 2</li> <li>Vocational not appropriate for all x 2</li> <li>A-level PE students want to take 'food'</li> <li>Students go to another school now x 1</li> <li>Parent interest x 1</li> <li>Food taught at school not the same as degrees x 1</li> <li>Only chef skills taught x 1</li> </ul>	<p>(193 comments received, some comments were not about the question so were excluded)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gives employment opportunities/careers x 42</li> <li>Provide progression from GCSE to degree x 27</li> <li>Student interest/demand x 20</li> <li>Keep options open for students x 15</li> <li>Need academic food course x 11</li> <li>Lack of kudos/devalue in subject x 10</li> <li>Health of the nation x 9</li> <li>Low/perceived value of L3 courses x 9</li> <li>Route to university x 7</li> <li>Need more vocational route x 6</li> <li>Restricted choice/lack of options x 5</li> <li>KS3/GCSE offer reduced x 4</li> <li>SLT/parent need x 4</li> <li>Push to catering/less academic x 4</li> <li>New food teachers x 3</li> <li>Importance of subject / equality with other subjects x 3</li> <li>Modern course needed x 2</li> <li>BTEC too much science, want cooking x 1</li> <li>Opportunities in food industry, not just catering x 1</li> <li>Move to catering, as no A-level x 1</li> <li>No academic routes x 1</li> <li>It's a life skill x 1</li> </ul>

**Question 7: If A-level 'food' was to be reintroduced, would any of the following be a barrier in your school?**

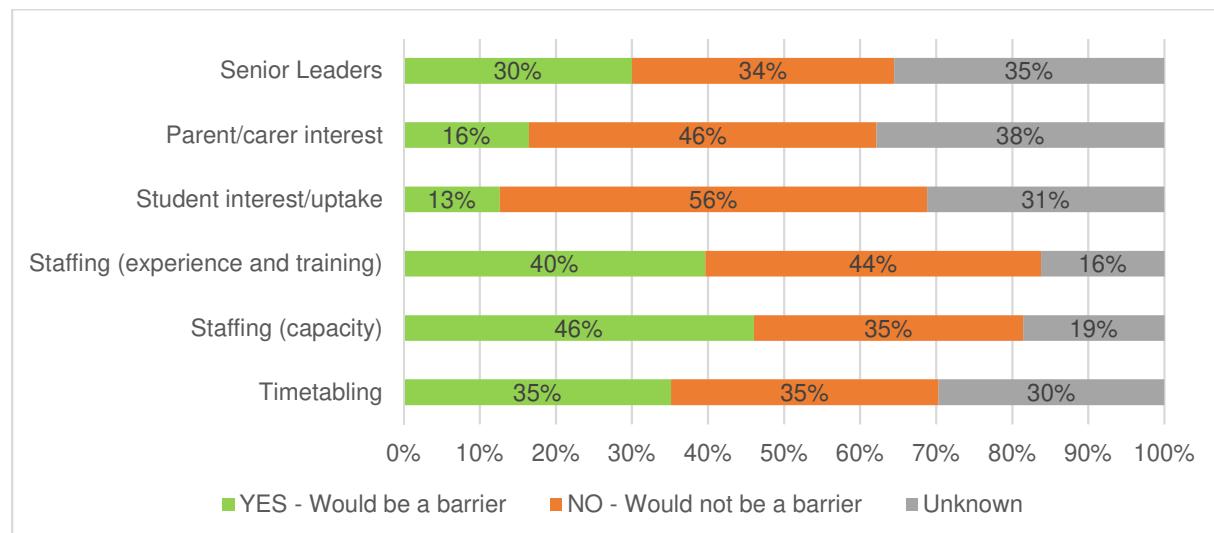
**7.1 The percentage of teachers that responded that different aspects of teaching would be a barrier to the reintroduction of A-Level 'food' in the 'taught' survey (n=374).**

*Figure 10: The percentage of teachers in the taught survey (n=374) that feel different aspects of teacher would not be a barrier, would be a barrier or that it was unknown whether they would be a barrier.*



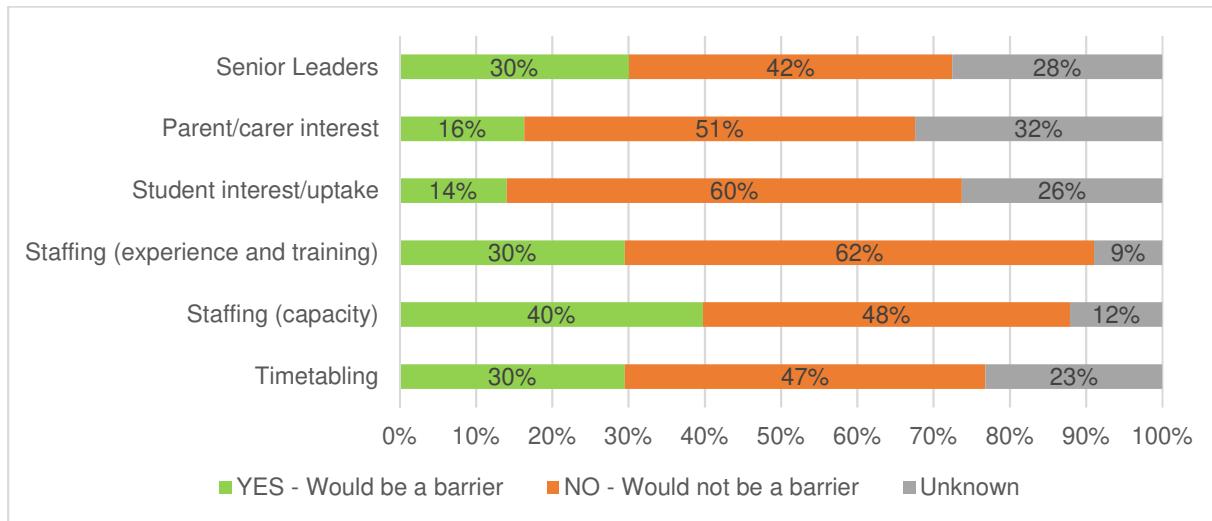
**7.2 The percentage of teachers that responded that different aspects of teaching would be a barrier to the reintroduction of A-Level 'food' in the 'not taught' survey (n=293)**

*Figure 11: The percentage of teachers in the not taught survey (n=293) that feel different aspects of teacher would not be a barrier, would be a barrier or that it was unknown whether they would be a barrier.*



**7.3 The percentage of teachers that responded that different aspects of teaching would be a barrier to the reintroduction of A-Level 'food' for the combined responses (n=667).**

*Figure 12: The percentage of teachers in both surveys combined (n=667) that feel different aspects of teacher would not be a barrier, would be a barrier or that it was unknown whether they would be a barrier.*



## 7.4 Analysis of comments provided, based on main themes.

Table 5: An amalgamation of the comments from teachers on the barriers to A-Level 'food' reintroduction grouped into broader categories.

Have taught A-level	Have not taught A-level
<p><i>(104 comments received, some comments were not about the question so were excluded)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food is a high profile subject, fully supported by SLT. A food A-level would be welcomed x 16</li> <li>Student interest may be low and therefore the course would not be financially viable x 15</li> <li>Staffing would be an issue, particularly as experienced teachers have retired/left the school since the removal of A-level x 10</li> <li>Teachers potentially lack knowledge and skills required to teach A-level x 7</li> <li>Schools/parents prefer A-levels x 7</li> <li>Food is not seen as an academic subject by SLT/parents/pupils x 7</li> <li>Currently teach Level 3 Food Science and Nutrition x 7</li> <li>Facilities (including timetabling) would be an issue x 6</li> <li>It would take time to rebuild the numbers of students interested in taking A-level x 5</li> <li>Currently teach Level 3 but would prefer to teach A-level x 5</li> <li>No sixth form/A-level provision at school x 4</li> <li>Would attract more students to our sixth form x 2</li> <li>Funding would be needed for resources (but none available) x 2</li> <li>Parents need to understand that there is a range of careers, not just catering x 1</li> <li>Would welcome an option of BTEC/Level 3 and A-level to account for student's different requirements x 1</li> <li>Currently offer IB x 1</li> <li>Currently teaching Level 3 but this is attracting very weak students. A-level would be welcomed x 1</li> <li>Smaller class sizes at GCSE would impact numbers choosing A-level x 1</li> <li>The new GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition would be the perfect lead into a new A-level x 1</li> </ul>	<p><i>(85 comments received, some comments were not about the question so were excluded)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No sixth form/A-level provision at school x 29</li> <li>Food is a high profile subject, fully supported by SLT. A food A-level would be welcomed x 12</li> <li>Student interest may be low and therefore the course would not be financially viable x 9</li> <li>Food, as a subject, is not valued at the school x 5</li> <li>Staffing would be an issue/struggling with teacher retention and recruitment x 5</li> <li>Facilities would be an issue x 4</li> <li>Due to the nature of the school, A-level would not be appropriate x 3</li> <li>Only one food room so timetabling would be an issue x 2</li> <li>Currently teach Level 3 Food Science and Nutrition x 2</li> <li>Currently teach BTEC Hospitality and Catering so no clear progression to A-level x 1</li> <li>Parents can often provide a barrier as they want their child to study a more 'academic' subject x 1</li> </ul>

**Question 8: It is likely that if a new 'food' A-level was introduced it would focus more on food science and nutrition, as well as progress learning from GCSE. For the following knowledge/skill areas, please indicate those areas where support would be required to you personally to teach the qualification.**

**8.1 The number of teachers that responded that the following knowledge/skill areas would require support for them to teach A-Level food.**

*Table 6: The number of teachers that selected each of the following knowledge/skill areas (to note, teachers could select multiple answers per response).*

	Taught (n=319)	Not-taught (n=281)	Combined (n=600)
Human physiology and digestion	140	158	298
Relationships between diet and health, and between current dietary patterns and the prevalent chronic diseases	34	61	95
Dietary and hydration needs and eating patterns of the UK population	43	59	102
Food chemistry and commodity science	166	196	362
Food safety and hygiene	13	27	40
Microbiology	172	187	359
Food preservation and food additives	38	63	101
Food technology, including production and processing	94	92	186
Sensory evaluation	15	32	47
Relationship between behaviour, dietary patterns, food choice and health and apply this knowledge when planning, preparing, modifying and evaluating meals	30	50	80
Food legislation - National and European mandatory policies relating to the provision of a safe food supply including production, processing and labelling	162	158	320
Food provenance, sustainability and security issues	53	47	100
Analytical and critical approach to scientific research in nutrition and food	186	190	376
Key skills needed to understand, analyse and communicate nutrition and food science in both written and practical activities.	83	119	202

Note: The topics were selected based on a review of current GCSE subject contents and first year degree courses by BNF.

**Question 9: Please feel free to add any other comments about the removal of A-level 'food' and/or its potential reintroduction.**

**9.1 Analysis of comments provided, based on main themes of general comments on A-level 'food'.**

*Table 7: An amalgamation of the general comments from teachers on the reintroduction of A-Level 'food' grouped into broader categories.*

<b>Have taught A-level</b> <i>(161 comments received, some comments were not about the question so were excluded)</i>	<b>Have not taught A-level</b> <i>(82 comments received, some comments were not about the question so were excluded)</i>
Generic comment around 'should be reintroduced' x 41 Need A-level due to industry shortages/impact on industry x 15 Miss the A-level/disappointed with the removal x 14 Important given socio-political context (obesity crisis and low skills) x 11 Removal devalues subject x 11 Excellent follow on to GCSE/there's now no progression x 10 Lack of funding and low uptake adds challenge x 10 Should be reintroduced with changes x 9 Level 3 not a suitable alternative x 7 Removal impacts GCSE and KS3 x 5 Level 3 is a good alternative x 4 Negative perception of A-level food x 4 Needs to be more information on jobs available in food industry x 4 Reduces passion for further study x 3 Should be part of science x 3 Training needed/lack of specialists x 1	Generic comment around 'should be reintroduced' x 15 Excellent follow on to GCSE/there's now no progression x 11 Need A-level due to industry shortages/impact on industry x 9 Important given socio-political context (obesity crisis and low skills) x 9 Removal devalues subject x 9 Training needed/lack of specialists x 8 Reduces passion for further study x 4 Lack of funding and low uptake adds challenge x 3 Level 3 not a suitable alternative x 3 Removal impacts GCSE and KS3 x 1 Level 3 is a good alternative x 1 Negative perception of A-level food x 1

## Highlights from the results

- School type: As a combined response, the majority were from academies (52%), followed by independent/private (16%) and maintained (community) schools (12%). When reviewing the responses from 'taught' only, a higher percentage of independent/private schools participated (n=105, 23%). Data was filtered to remove 'private/independent' schools, however this did not significantly change the overall results.
- Progression: 71% respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed that routes of progression had remained the same, and 17% agreed/strongly agreed that routes of progression had remained the same. For those that had taught A-level, 78% disagreed/strongly disagreed that routes of progression had remained the same.
- Status of subject: 55% respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed that the status of 'food' had remained the same, and 32% agreed/strongly agreed that the status of 'food' had remained the same. For those that had taught A-level, 59% disagreed/strongly disagreed that the status of 'food' had remained the same.
- GCSE numbers: 45% of respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed that the numbers of pupils selecting food at GCSE had remained the same, and 40% agreed/strongly agreed that the numbers of pupils selecting food at GCSE had remained the same.
- Staffing: 46% of respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed that staffing for teaching food had remained the same, and 44% agreed/strongly agreed that staffing for teaching food had remained the same. For those that had taught A-level, 50% disagreed/strongly disagreed that staffing for teaching food had remained the same.
- Funding: A majority of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that funding for food lessons has remained the same at Key Stages 3 and 4 (58% for both). 26% disagreed/strongly disagreed that funding for food lessons has remained the same at Key Stages 3 and 4. For those that had not taught A-level, 29% disagreed/strongly disagreed that funding for food lessons has remained the same at Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Time: A majority of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that the time for food lessons has remained the same at Key stages 3 and 4 (65% and 75% respectively). 24% disagreed/strongly disagreed at Key stage 3, and 15% disagreed/strongly disagreed at Key Stage 4, that the time for food lessons has remained the same.
- A majority of respondents indicated that students are now selecting a range of A-level science subjects, followed by the Level 3 Food science and nutrition course. Some are taking courses in cookery and hospitality.
- Just over half the respondents that participated indicated that they had links with former students that had undertaken an A-level in food. From the analysis of 197 written responses, 122 students have careers in the food industry, 113 in health professions, 57 in teaching, 43 in hospitality and catering, and 18 in other related professions.
- Respondents reported that in 2018 and 2019 3,110 and 3,106 students respectively had expressed an interest to study 'food' at A-level.
- A majority (98%) of respondents indicated that they believed that an A-level in 'food' should be reintroduced. Analysis of comments provided (n=390) shows that aspects of progression (from GCSE to degree) and employment opportunity/careers were the most cited reasons for support. Other comments included current options not being suitable, student demand and interest, keeping options open for students, links with degree courses, lack of kudos in the subject, and the development of a new modern specification.

- In relation to potential barriers to reintroducing 'food' at A-level:
  - A majority of respondents (42%) indicated that senior leaders would not be a barrier for reintroducing A-level 'food'. This figure increased to 49% for those teachers that had taught A-level previously.
  - A majority of respondents (51%) indicated that parent/carer interest would not be a barrier for reintroducing A-level 'food'. This figure increased to 56% for those teachers that had taught A-level previously.
  - A majority of respondents (60%) indicated that student interest/uptake would not be a barrier for reintroducing A-level 'food'.
  - A majority of respondents (62%) indicated that staff, in terms of experience and training, would not be a barrier for reintroducing A-level 'food'. This figure increased to 75% for those teachers that had taught A-level previously, and 44% for those that have not taught A-level before.
  - Overall, a majority of respondents (48%) indicated that staff, in terms of capacity, would not be a barrier for reintroducing A-level 'food'. This figure increased to 58% for those teachers that had taught A-level previously, and 35% for those that have not taught A-level before.
  - 35% of respondents indicated that timetabling would be a barrier for reintroducing A-level 'food' and 35% reported that it would not be a barrier. For those that had taught A-level previously, 57% said that would not be a barrier, and for those that have not taught A-level before this reduced to 35%.
  - 189 comments were reviewed in relation to this question. The most common comments were around food being supported by SLT, lack of provision, student interest, staffing, preference for A-levels, and perception of food as a qualification (positive and negative).
- Based on a review of current GCSE subject contents and first year degree courses, teachers indicated from which knowledge/skills areas they would require support. Overall, teachers (n=600) indicated if the following knowledge areas were included in a new A-level, support would be required around analytical and critical approaches to scientific research (n=376), food chemistry and commodity science (n=362), microbiology (n=359), food legislation (n=320) and human physiology and digestion (n=298).
- From the 243 comments reviewed, top themes included 'should be reintroduced', career opportunities, progression from GCSE/to degree, health of the nation, devaluing the subject, and teacher workforce need.

Overall, the results suggest that the removal of A-levels in 'food' has led to the reduction of food and nutrition education at Key Stage 3 in 1 in 4 schools and in 15% schools at Key Stage 4 (GCSE). A majority of respondents also stated that GCSE numbers had declined. While the majority reported that funding at Key Stage 3 and 4 had remained the same, 1 in 4 indicated that funding had reduced. With the removal of A-level, respondents reported that the status of the subject had declined. Staffing remains an issue, in terms of capacity and subject specific knowledge and skills. The data suggests that the removal of A-level, as well as changes at GCSE, have had unintended consequences on food and nutrition teaching in our schools, i.e. less time, funding, status and staffing.

In terms of student interest, for the years 2018 and 2019 teachers stated that in total 6,216 students had expressed an interest in taking an A-level in 'food'. While most students took sciences at A-level, respondents reported that clear routes of progression and career opportunities had been missed. Overall, most respondents did not see the reintroduction of an A-level in 'food' as an issue for their school and a majority supported a new A-level being made available.

## Recommendations

Based on the survey results, it is recommended that the following be undertaken:

1. Hold a formal review to explore the potential interest and demand for the reintroduction of a 'food' A-level, taking into account changes that have happened in GCSE qualifications, introduction of T-levels, review of vocational qualifications, teacher workforce numbers, student interest and demand, university and employer need, and awarding organisation interest. If sufficient interest, a working group to develop draft subject content for consultation should be established.
2. Ensure that all schools (including academies and free schools) offer a minimum level of food and nutrition education at Key Stage 3 (based on the recommendations made from the Food Education Learning Landscape research, 2017), and offer routes of progression at Key Stages 4 and 5 where there is need/demand.
3. Review the number of secondary school 'food' subject specific teachers entering the workforce to ascertain whether there is suitable succession planning to ensure the continuation of high-quality food and nutrition education in schools. In addition, ensure that trainee, newly qualified and current 'food' teachers have the subject specific skills and knowledge (as set out in [Food teaching in secondary schools: knowledge and skills](#), PHE 2015).

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