

2006 Business & Administration Skills Survey

Contents

Introduction	2
Executive Summary	3
Methodology	6
Findings	8
Conclusions	35
Recommendations	37
Appendices	38

1. Introduction

This report combines the desk research compiled for milestone 1 and the qualitative interviews researched for milestone 2 with quantitative research interview findings for milestone 3.

The findings are divided into 4 sections:

- Skills Needs and Gaps
- Needs of Employers
- Needs of Employees and Learners
- Business & Administration Provision

Skills Needs and Gaps explores the Business & Administration skills needed within other sectors, the current and future skills needs and current skills gaps for administrators.

Needs of Employers looks at the administration function, administration strategies, recruitment and retention of administrators, administration job roles and performance.

Needs of Employees and Learners explores the administration work force, working hours, salary, training opportunities, the image of administration roles and career development.

Business & Administration Provision looks at administration sectors, the age of the workforce, qualifications, education provision, current skills within our provision, equal opportunities and credit frameworks.

Each section looks at UK wide data (and local data where available) that relates to the Business & Administration sector and aims to give an insight into the current state of the sector as well as recommendations for the future of the sector.

These key findings and proposed recommendations will then be disseminated for consultation using the following methods:

- Employers Forum in February
- E-Consultation with employers and learning providers in February
- Sector Body E-Consultation in February
- Awarding Body Forum in March

2. Executive Summary

2.1 Skills & Provision within Sectors

There are approximately 3.6 million workers in the UK that are working in administrative roles. 1.7 million workers require administration roles as part of a specialist role such as legal secretary. 18 million workers require administration skills to undertake their own administration duties.

Employees with 'administration only' roles are able to use CfA standards in levels 1-4, apprenticeships and VRQs to develop and train their skills. The CfA needs to ensure that the current standards are reviewed (through incremental change funding) and changes made as necessary; that awarding bodies develop appropriate VRQs that the CfA support and that apprenticeship frameworks are constantly reviewed to ensure that they are appropriate in developing skills.

Employees with specialist administration roles have specialist standards that have been developed as well as new standards that are being developed in 2006 for sectors such as local government, health and education.

Employees with roles that require them to undertake their own administration duties are able to use meta standards which were developed in 2005 for this purpose.

2.2 Current & Future Skills Needs

At junior level, the three most needed skills are IT, verbal communication and answering queries. At intermediate level, the skills most needed are IT, verbal communication and organising and planning. At senior level, the most needed skills are people management, verbal communication and IT.

In the future, skills needed at junior level will be IT, answering queries and verbal communication. At intermediate level, these will be IT, verbal communication and answering queries. At senior level, these will be IT, people management and verbal communication.

The CfA will ensure that those skills that are currently demanded of administrators are present within the current version of standards as a part of the incremental change project. The CfA is also currently undertaking an employability project to decide which skills are those that made a candidate employable within administration, both in the short term and the long term.

Future skills demanded of administrators will also be developed within current standards to ensure that skills are developed now for when they are required in the future.

2.3 Skills Gaps

Skills gaps are identified within financial understanding/budgets, IT, organising and planning, people management, verbal communication, legislation and regulation knowledge and information management.

Skills that been identified as lacking will be developed within current standards as part of the incremental change process and the employability project.

2.4 Needs of Employers

More and more administration roles are becoming specialist in that a traditional personal assistant may become an assistant to the marketing manager who needs to have specific marketing knowledge.

The CfA will ensure that standards are available for those administration roles that are becoming more specialist.

A third of employers claim that it is harder to recruit skilled administrators than three years ago.

The CfA will promote the use of standards for recruitment purposes within employers.

40% of administrators undertake administration duties for more than 10 people whilst in 2003, 38% of administrators undertook duties for only 3-5 people.

Time management skills need to be developed within current standards as it becomes more important for administrators to undertake administration duties for more than one person.

26% of administrators are aged under 30. 49% are aged between 30 and 50 and 25% are aged over 50.

The CfA is due to develop adult and distance learning training packages for employees to develop adult administrators to be delivered in house and tailored to the organisation and the learner.

2.5 Needs of Employees and Learners

38% of administrators wanted to be in the same role in 5 years time. 29% wanted to be in a higher role and 33% wanted to be in a different role.

The CfA have set up a careers website www.breakinto.biz to ensure that administrators have a resource to make career and learning decisions and can plan their careers accordingly.

Only 33% of administrators had a period of work experience before making any qualification decisions.

The CfA wants to work towards encouraging a period of work placement for all students before qualifications or career paths need to be decided.

The CfA needs to ensure that more young people take up Business & Administration qualifications and that those administrators that are between 30 and 50 have the chance to progress. This could mean creating more adult provisions, which are already in the process of being developed.

2.6 Qualifications & Education Provision

90% of administrators and 86% of employers said that IT should be learnt through an administration context.

The CfA is due to work with E-Skills to develop IT standards written within an administration context.

The CfA needs to ensure that typing and text processing is covered sufficiently within the current standards as traditional typing qualifications are decreasing.

An international benchmarking project is due to be undertaken to ensure that administration qualifications are suitable for any candidate wishing to use their qualifications to gain employment in another country or to enable internal promotion within a global organisation.

The success of foundation degrees will show over time a slow increase in more candidates undertaking a level 4 qualification and therefore increasing promotion prospects.

91% of administrators and 92% of employers thought that communication skills should be taught from the age of 12.

Skills thought essential for school leavers should be integrated into standards suitable for this age group and within programmes such as the Young Apprenticeship.

27% of administrators are aware of Business & Administration entry-level qualifications and 77% of these think that it is an effective provision.

87% of administrators are aware of Business & Administration NVQs and 63% of these think that it is an effective provision.

73% of administrators are aware of Business & Administration apprenticeships and 67% of these think that it is an effective provision.

64% of administrators are aware of Business & Administration higher-level qualifications and 61% of these think that it is an effective provision.

33% of employers are aware of entry-level business & administration qualifications and 59% of these considered them effective in terms of providing appropriate skills for the workplace.

94% of employers are aware of NVQ business & administration qualifications and 68% of these considered them effective in terms of providing appropriate skills for the workplace.

76% of employers are aware of business & administration apprenticeship qualifications and 64% of these considered them effective in terms of providing appropriate skills for the workplace.

64% of employers are aware of higher-level business & administration qualifications and 75% of these considered them effective in terms of providing appropriate skills for the workplace.

The CfA needs to look at promoting and developing standards for entry-level provisions with both employers and employees. With the development of the Foundation Learning Tier, the CfA hope to use our E2E framework to offer entry-level provision in administration.

3. Methodology

3.1 Desk Research

Various sources of desk research were used, namely:

CfA – Administration Survey – March 2003

This survey provides both quantitative and qualitative information with regard to administration skills from both an employer and employee point of view. Data used was collected from an even spread of UK wide respondents.

National Statistics – New Earnings Survey – 2003

The ONS produces a yearly report on earnings data. The data is mainly quantitative. Data collected covers the UK.

Future Skills Wales Website – 2003 data

This website focuses on skills data in Wales by sector. Data collected represents Wales only.

Gordon Yates – Secretarial & Support Staff Survey – Sep 2003

This survey is undertaken each year and focuses on a staff response rather than views from employers. The data is mostly quantitative in design. Data collected was from UK wide respondents.

SSDA/IER – Working Futures Report – 2003

The SSDA worked with the Institute for Employment Research at Warwick University to look at future skills by occupation. The data was quantitative and collected UK wide.

LSC – National Employers Survey – July 2003

This survey is conducted each year and consults with over 27,000 employers spread over the UK. The data is mainly quantitative.

Future Skills Scotland Website – Jan 2004 data

This website focuses on skills data in Scotland by sector. Data collected represents Scotland only.

Gordon Yates – Secretarial & Support Staff Survey – Sep 2004

This survey is undertaken each year and focuses on a staff response rather than views from employers. The data is mostly quantitative in design. Data collected was from UK wide respondents.

QCA – Framework for Achievement – Dec 2004

Whilst this report focuses on qualifications only, there is useful research that identifies the issues that employers have with regard to qualifications, which would be useful data in designing standards and qualifications. Data collected is UK wide.

SSDA – The UK Skills and Productivity Agenda: Strategy 2005-2008

This report was produced in 2004 and looks at skills development over 3 years. Data collected was UK wide.

LSC – Skills in England: Key Messages – March 2005

This report focuses on all skills across all sectors in England and the predicted trends for the next 8 years to 2012. Data collected focuses on England.

CfA – Occupational Map – June 2005

This document sets out to examine the sector and industry footprint that business & administration covers. The data is mainly quantitative. Data collected is UK wide.

LSC – National Employers Skills Survey – July 2005

This survey is conducted each year and consults with over 27,000 employers spread over the UK. The data is mainly quantitative.

DETINI Website – 2005 data

Department for Education, Trade and Industry Northern Ireland website contains skills data for Northern Ireland by sector. Data represents Northern Ireland only.

3.2 Qualitative Research

5 interviews were undertaken with learners and potential learners and 5 interviews with employers. A breakdown of interviewees is attached in Appendix 1. Discussion questions for the interviews are in Appendix 2.

3.3 Quantitative Research

A telephone interview was undertaken with 250 employers and 250 employees to provide reliable data with which to examine skills gaps and needs within the Business & Administration industry as well as perceptions of careers in the sector and how the CfA should act more effectively to promote sector needs and ensure quality programmes. Questionnaires for both employers and employees are attached as Appendix 3 and 4 respectively.

4. Findings

4.1 Skills Needs and Gaps

All data given represents the UK as a whole unless otherwise specified.

4.11 Skills within Sectors

Administration Only Roles Within All Sectors

CfA standards are created to be cross-sector and to be used by any administrator within a role that is completely administration focussed such as a Personal Assistant. 3.6 million workers need generic Business & Administration skills to carry out their job competently.

Specialist Knowledge alongside Administration

In a recent survey, 66% of administrators reported that they did not require specialist sector knowledge as part of their role. However, 10% of administrators needed health sector knowledge, 8% of administrators needed legal sector knowledge, 7% of administrators needed public administration sector knowledge and 7% of administrators needed education sector knowledge. Approximately 1.7 million workers need specialist administration skills to work in these sectors.

This confirms that the top three sectors where most administrators are employed within the UK are within the health, education and public administration sectors.

Business & Administration standards are currently used within the following sectors:

- Hospitality (People 1st)
- Health and safety (ENTO)
- Transportation (Construction Industry Council)
- Management of volunteers (VSNTO)
- Health (Skills for Health)
- Security (SITO)
- Police (PSSO)
- Financial services (FSSSC)
- IT (E-Skills)

In 2006, the CfA is due to look at Business & Administration standards for use within the following growing sectors:

- UK and especially Wales – Travel/tourism/culture (People 1st)
- UK – Health (Skills for Health)
- UK – Sport/leisure (Skills Active)
- UK – Banking (FSSSC)
- Scotland – Real estate/property (Asset Skills)
- Scotland – Retail (Skill Smart Retail)
- Northern Ireland – Education (Teacher Training Agency)

Case Study – Construction Skills SSC

This sector currently employs approximately 1.27m employees with 14% (185,300 people) of these employed in administration and secretarial occupations.

Typical administration roles in this sector are receptionists, typists, civil Service administrative officers & assistants, filing & other records assistants/clerks, database assistants/clerks, telephonists, personal assistants & other secretaries and company secretaries.

For administration staff, the most common skills required are planning and organising own work (as part of a team or working alone), working as part of a team under instruction, communicating by receiving and giving information by telephone, writing, face-to-face, to line managers/work colleagues, assisting, responding and ascertaining customers/clients requests by telephone, writing and face-to-face.

Between 2006-2010 administration occupations within this sector are forecast to increase from 185,300 to 198,600, a net increase of 8,600 administrators.

Case Study - Lantra SSC– Land Management & Production, Animal Health & Welfare, Environmental Industry

This sector currently employs approximately 1.5m employees with 8% (120,000 people) employed within administration and secretarial occupations.

Typical administration job roles include Administrator, Receptionist, Personal Assistant and Office Manager.

For administration staff, the most common skills required are planning and organising, project management, team working, leadership, fundraising, IT and customer service.

There is an expected increase of expansion demand of 21,400, which with a replacement demand of 76,000 gives a net requirement of 97,400 employees in the next 6 years.

Case Study - People 1st SSC – Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism

This sector currently employs approximately 1.9m employees with 10% (190,000 people) employed within administration and secretarial occupations.

Typical administration job roles include Administrator, Receptionist, Personal Assistant, Office Manager, Telephonist/Telephone Operator/Customer Services and Sales Administrator.

For administration staff, the most common skills required are communication skills, team working skills, customer handling skills, problem solving skills, numeracy and literacy.

15,000 new jobs are expected to be created in the next 6 years in addition to the 846,000 roles that meet replacement demands.

Case Study - Pro Skills SSC – Process and Manufacturing Industries

This sector currently employs approximately 454,000 employees with 9% (40,888 people) employed within administration and secretarial occupations.

Typical administration job roles include Receptionist, Personal Assistant, Administration Clerk, Secretary and Administration Manager.

For administration staff, the most common skills required are communication skills, team working skills, customer handling skills, problem solving skills, numeracy and literacy.

There is a negative demand for new jobs of –13,453 over the next 6 years in addition to the 15,725 roles that meet replacement demands, which gives a net requirement of only 2,272 administrators.

Case Study – Skillfast SSC – Apparel, Footwear and Textiles Industry

This sector currently employs approximately 384,000 employees with 9% (34,560 people) employed within administration and secretarial occupations.

Typical administration job roles include Accounts Clerk, Stock Control Clerk, Administrator, Secretary, Office Assistant and Personal Assistant.

For administration staff, the most common skills required are communication skills, team working skills, customer handling skills and problem solving skills.

All regions will see a net decline in administrative and secretarial employment, as with the national picture, but the contribution of replacement demands will ensure that there will be a modest positive recruitment requirement for this occupational category in all regions.

Roles that undertake their own Administration

18 million people are employed as professionals, managers, specialist operators or in small businesses needing some Business & Administration skills in order to carry out their own job roles competently.

In 2005, the CfA developed meta units which are condensed standard units containing essential administration skills for these roles.

4.12 Current Skills Needs

In 2003, the following skills were required for administrators (in priority order):

Level	Skill
Junior	Verbal communication Team working Answering queries
Intermediate	Verbal communication IT/databases/spreadsheets Team working
Senior	Verbal communication Organising and planning Supervising an office

In 2006, the following skills were required for administrators (in priority order):

Level	Skill
Junior	IT/databases/spreadsheets Verbal communication Answering queries Organising and planning Supervising an office Team working Literacy People management Problem solving Handling mail
Intermediate	IT/databases/spreadsheets Verbal communication Organising and planning People management Answering queries Non-verbal communication Information management Written communication Numeracy Team working
Senior	People management Verbal communication IT/databases/spreadsheets Organising and planning Financial understanding/budgets Legislation/regulation knowledge Information management Answering queries Non-verbal communication Banking/dealing with money

At junior level, IT has replaced verbal communication as the most important skill. At intermediate level, IT has also replaced verbal communication. At senior level, people management has replaced verbal communication. Verbal communication is now considered the second most important skill for an administrator.

4.13 Current Skills Gaps

Administration has the third highest level of skills gaps.

In 2003, skills gaps were identified in:

- IT/databases/spreadsheets
- Verbal communication
- Answering queries
- Team working
- People management

In 2006, skills gaps were identified in: (from an employers perspective)

- Financial understanding/budgets
- IT/databases/spreadsheets
- Organising and planning
- People management
- Verbal communication

In 2006, skills gaps were identified in: (from an employees perspective)

- IT/databases/spreadsheets
- Financial understanding/budgets
- People management
- Legislation/Regulation knowledge
- Information management
- Organising and planning

An employer says,

"These skills are essential in whatever role you go into. Business skills such as these should be taught at school from the age of 12."

An employer however adds that:

"My board would never sanction an investment that didn't produce bottom line results within 3 financial years."

There are skills gaps reported, across all sectors, of verbal communication, answering queries, team working and problem solving.

Employers give the causes of skills gaps as:

- a lack of experience when the employee is taken on
- the employee is recently recruited
- the employee lacks motivation to retrain
- the company fails to train or develop employees
- an inability of the workplace to keep up with change
- high staff turnover
- recruitment problems.

Administration occupations account for 7% of skills shortage vacancies despite accounting for 13% of workforce.

Where there are skills shortage vacancies, the skills reported lacking are:

- Verbal communication
- Answering queries
- Team working
- Problem solving
- Literacy
- Numeracy
- IT/databases/spreadsheets

4.14 Future Skills Needs

In 2003, skills demanded of administrators in the future were identified as: (in priority order)

Level	Skill
Junior	IT/databases/spreadsheets Verbal communication Organising and planning
Intermediate	Verbal communication Numeracy Organising and planning
Senior	People management Verbal communication Problem solving

In 2006, skills demanded of administrators in the future were identified as: (in priority order)

Level	Skill
Junior	IT/databases/spreadsheets Answering queries Verbal communication Organising and planning People management Information management Literacy Team working Handling mail Legislation/regulation knowledge
Intermediate	IT/databases/spreadsheets Verbal communication Answering queries Organising and planning Financial understanding/budgets People management Information management Legislation/regulation knowledge Non verbal communication Change management
Senior	IT/databases/spreadsheets people management verbal communication organising and planning financial understanding/budgets answering queries legislation/regulation knowledge change management banking/dealing with money information management

At junior level, answering queries, people management, information management, handling mail and legislation/regulation knowledge are all considered more important for the future than at present.

At intermediate level, answering queries, financial understanding/budgets, legislation/regulation knowledge and change management are all considered more important for the future than at present.

At senior level, IT, answering queries, change management and banking/dealing with money are all considered more important for the future than at present.

Some administrators are aware that they need these skills in order to be an effective administrator:

"There is a need for basic numeracy and finance in every administration role because all decisions relate to finance. Most CEOs have a finance background. It is a crucial life skill, having to manage your own money. You have to learn that there are consequences of mismanagement of money."

An employer, comments:

"There are different levels of financial understanding. It wouldn't be necessary for a receptionist to know about balance sheets. We would be prepared to train employees in people management but probably little else as we don't expect to have employees with perfect people management skills."

Structural changes in the economy and labour market will lead to changes in the future pattern of demand for skills within all occupations. There will be a shift towards higher-level managerial, professional and associate level occupations.

There will be a demand for information handling skills at all levels. There will be a demand for communication skills, especially customer handling skills at all levels.

Job losses are predicted amongst administrative, clerical and secretarial occupations.

An employer reveals:

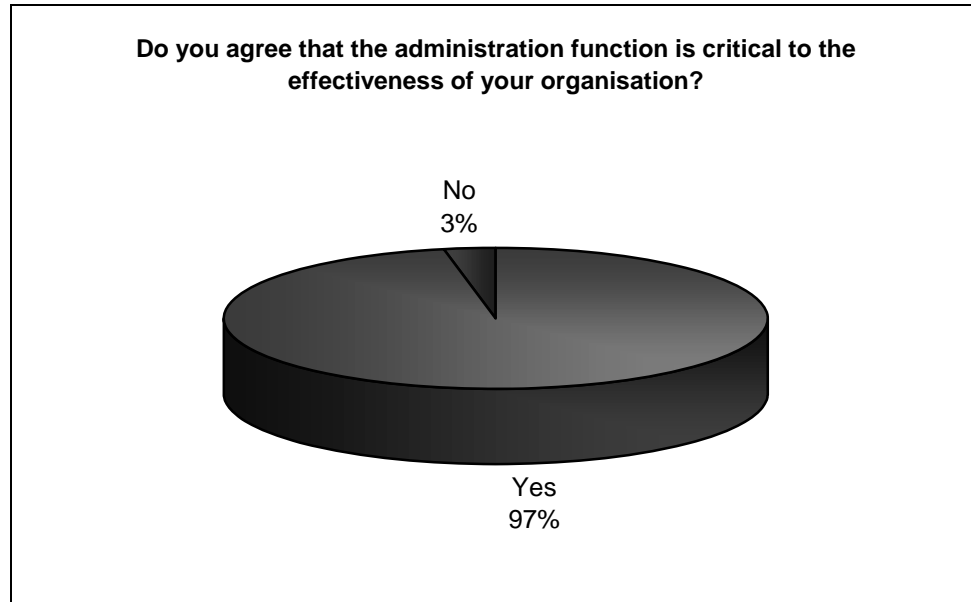
"We are unaware of supply and demand of administrators in the future. If it was that important, someone would tell us."

Replacement demands are high in declining occupations such as administration and clerical occupations across all sectors, but there will be 1.5 million additional administrators needed between now and 2012.

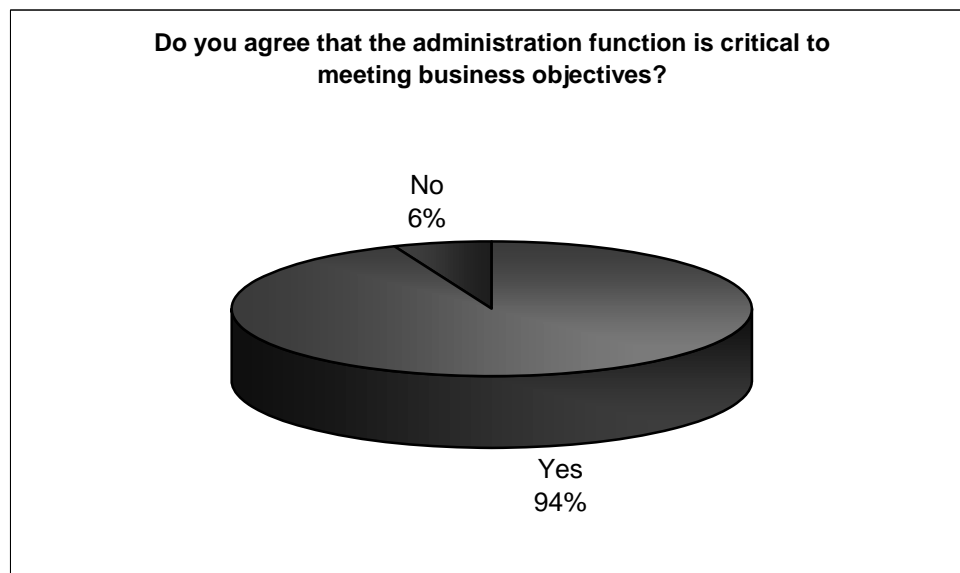
4.2 Needs of Employers

All data given represents the UK as a whole unless otherwise specified.

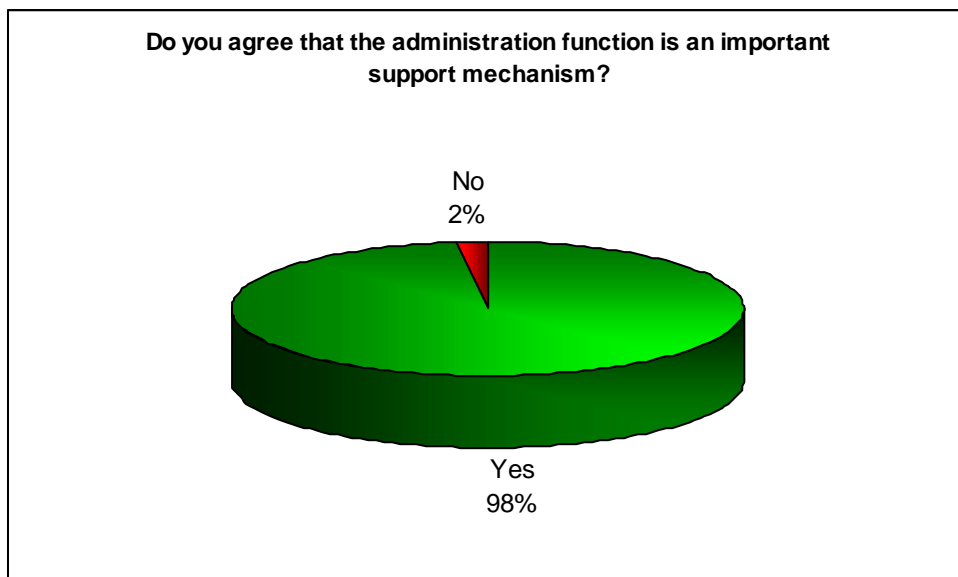
4.2.1 Administration Function



The administration function within organisations varies from company to company as does how management develop an administration strategy.



Employers are moving away from compartmentalising the administration function and keeping administration staff separate from their core business.



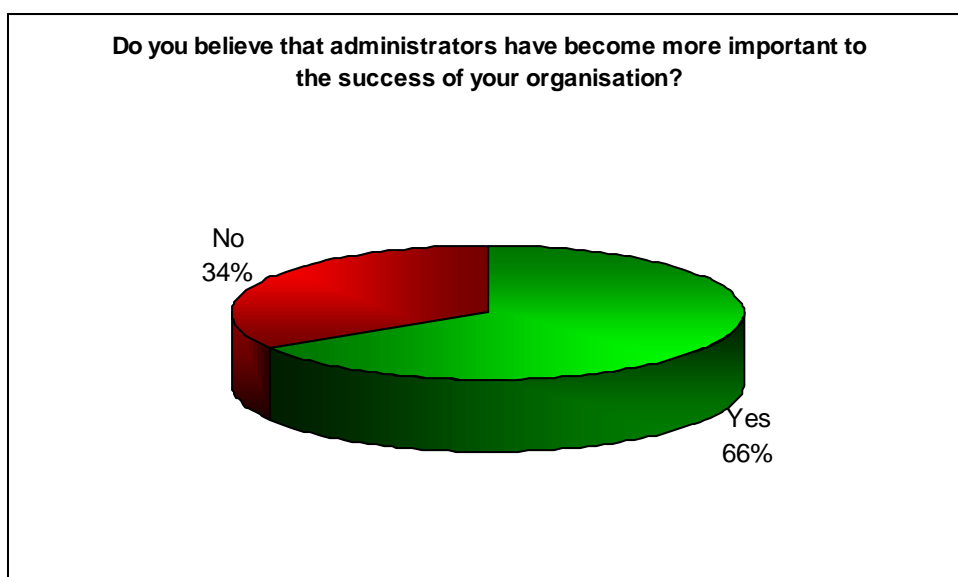
Including the administration function within the fabric of the business means creating new job roles that have administration as part, but not all, of that role. There are numerous examples of this practise which can be illustrated by the specialist job role of marketing assistant, who is responsible for the day-to- day administration needs of the marketing department but also has some marketing responsibilities.

A Business & Administration apprentice, reveals:

"I enjoy not doing the same thing every day. It can be a struggle but it can be done. It's important to learn new and different skills."

A young apprentice, also supports this view:

"I like working within Business & Administration, especially working with a mix of departments. It makes my role more interesting."



This graph illustrates that the majority of employers believe in the importance of administrators in their organisation.

4.22 Administration Strategy

35% of all UK employers do not yet have a strategy in place to improve the Business & Administration skills of their workforce.

An administration strategy should contain:

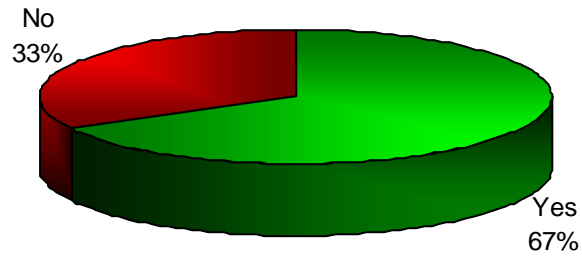
- clear expectations (of the role, systems, procedures and objectives)
- resources available (recruitment, selection)
- induction procedure
- training and development plans
- appraisals and review procedure
- communication channels
- quality control

An administrator, supports having an administration strategy in place, as:
"I have never felt as if my function is not core to the business. My employers have always made me believe that an administrative function is key."

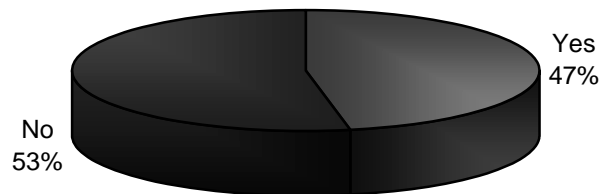
An office manager, also explains the need for training and development for higher-level administrators:
"It is critical to up-skill constantly and there are many CPD programmes in place for administrators particularly those that are high up within a company."



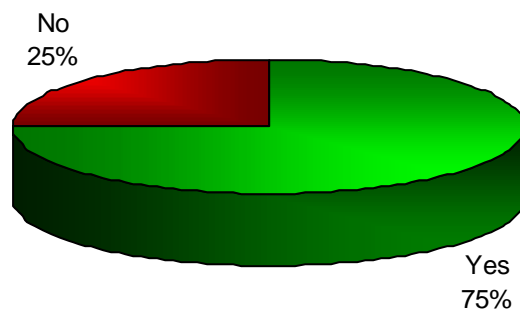
Do you agree that formal qualifications are important in delivering an administration strategy effectively?

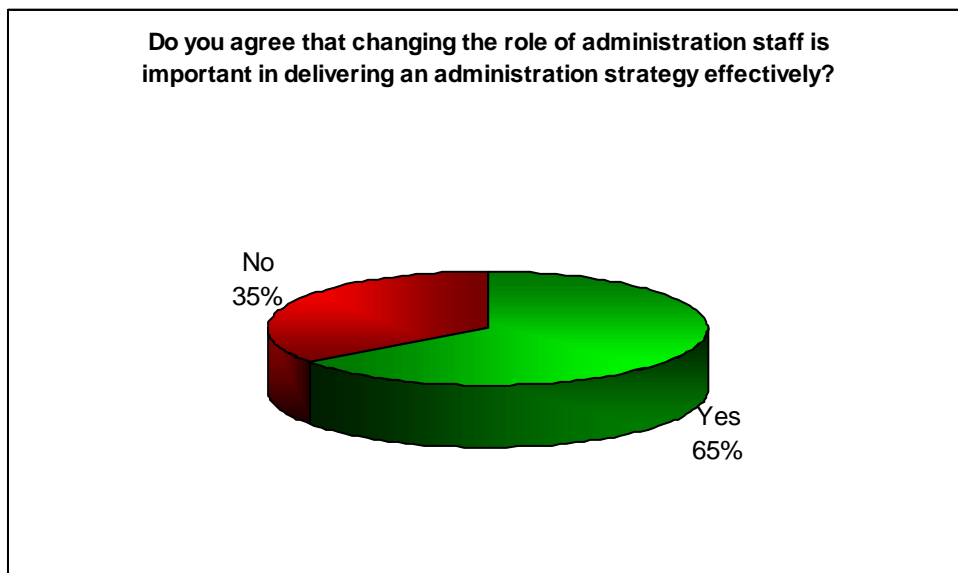
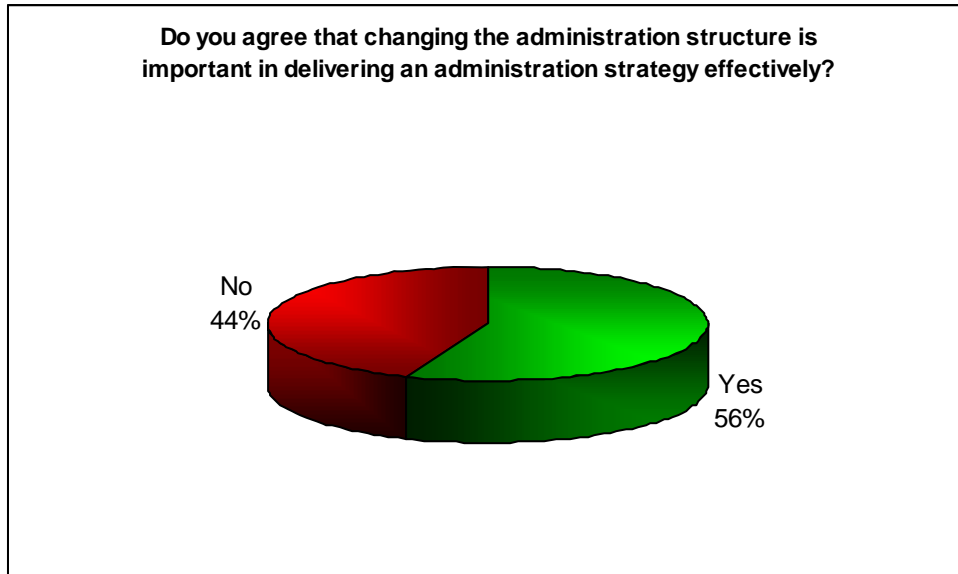


Do you agree that changing the recruitment process is important in delivering an administration strategy effectively?



Do you agree that increasing remuneration levels are important in delivering an administration strategy effectively?





These graphs illustrate the importance of core items within an administration strategy which should result in the strategy being more effective.

4.23 Recruiting and Retaining Administrators

Employers revealed that they believe it is easier to retain skilled administration staff than to recruit them.

An office manager explores this:

"It is hard to shift the image of administrators as they are not income generators. There needs to be more training available. Employers need to remember that there are three different aims of training: to meet the current needs of the business, to meet the future needs of the business and personal growth of the individual. You may not be able to achieve all three in the same training package. A company worth its salt will undertake a yearly pay review to keep ahead of the game. Flexible working arrangements are a benefit so as with any other benefit, they should be taken away if abused. It's about trust between the employer and the home worker."

An employer sums it up:

"A good office manager is like gold dust."

Employers revealed the various recruitment issues within their organisation:

- low skill levels in workplace reflected in a poor recruitment process
- a poor image of administration generally meaning that only certain groups of society are applying for administrative roles
- unattractive salaries which don't naturally attract the most competent of candidates
- the rising cost of agency fees when taking on temporary administration staff

An office manager comments:

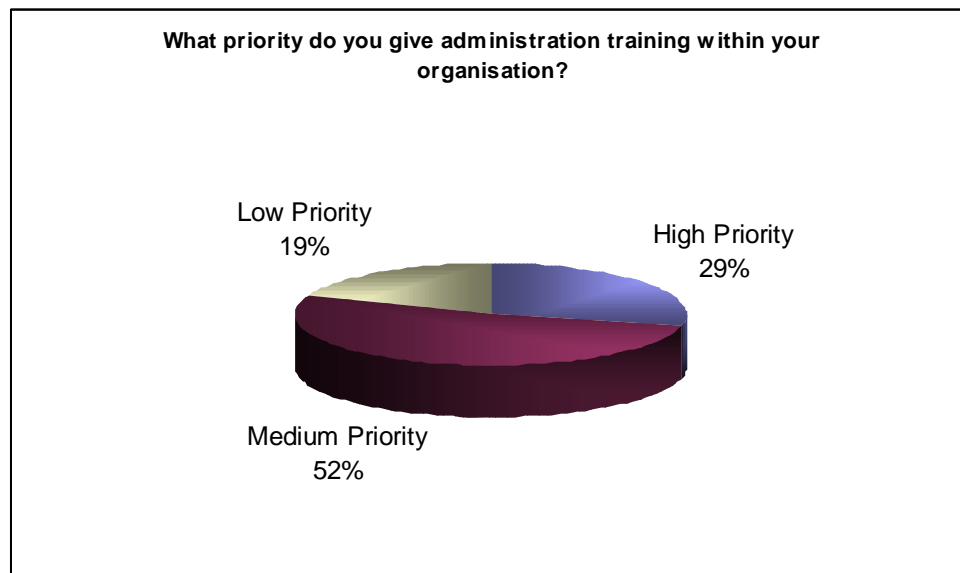
"18% of the annual salary of the vacancy is usually the fee that recruitment agencies ask for. Most employers think that the fee is too much for what they actually get but you have to look at the time and cost it would take to do the recruitment process in house. Specialist administration roles such as PAs to CEOs are usually head hunted or recruited through personal recommendation."

Only 21% of employers found it more difficult to recruit skilled administration staff whilst 11% found it easier.

Only 11% of employers found it more difficult to retain skilled administration staff whilst 16% found it easier.

Only 29% of employers said that there has been a decline in the quality of administration staff in terms of attitude.

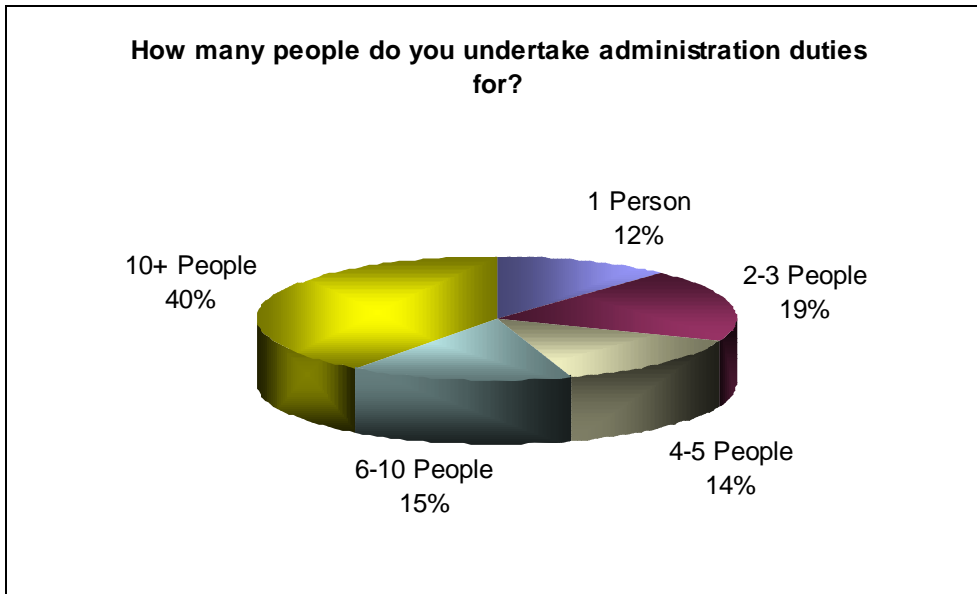
59% of employers said that work experience in any sector is more important than work experience within a specific sector.



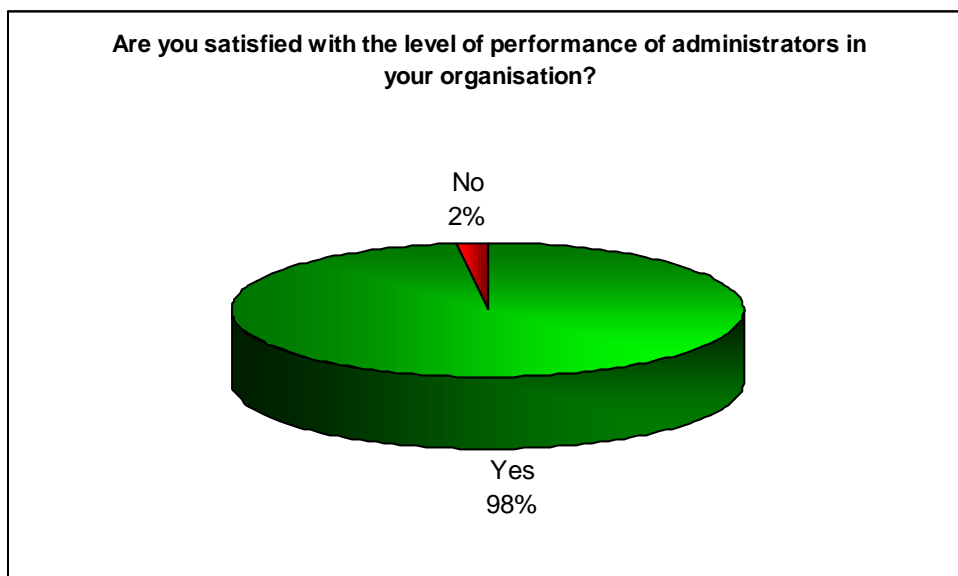
This graph illustrates that half of employers give administration training a medium priority.

4.24 Administration Job Roles

In 2003, 38% of administrators undertook administration duties for between 3 and 5 people. In 2006, 40% of administrators undertook administration duties for 10 or more people.



54% of employers and 53% of employees believe administration only roles will not increase or decrease over time.



This graph illustrates that an overwhelming majority of employers are satisfied with the level of performance from administrators in their organisation.

4.3 Needs of Employees and Learners

All data given represents the UK as a whole unless otherwise specified.

4.31 The Administration Workforce

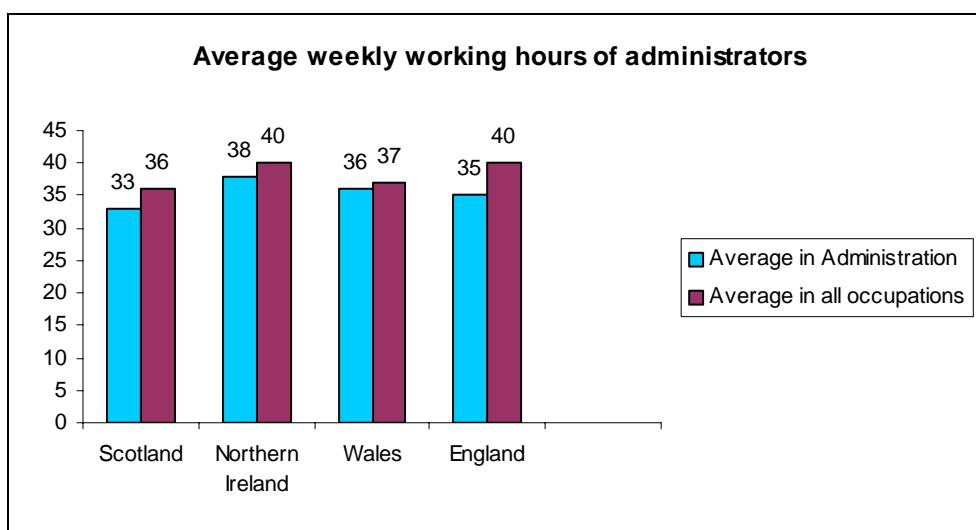
12% of the UK workforce (3.6 million people) is currently employed in administration occupations. This figure is predicted to rise to 5.1 million by 2012. It is estimated that 300 thousand work at level 1, 1.57 million work at level 2, 2 million work at level 3, 585 thousand work at level 4 and 190 thousand work at level 5.

In Scotland, the number of people employed in administration occupations has grown by just under 20% in the last 20 years and now totals 288,000 people or 12% of the workforce.

In Wales, administration occupations have grown by 8% giving a total of 187,320 administrators or 14% of the workforce.

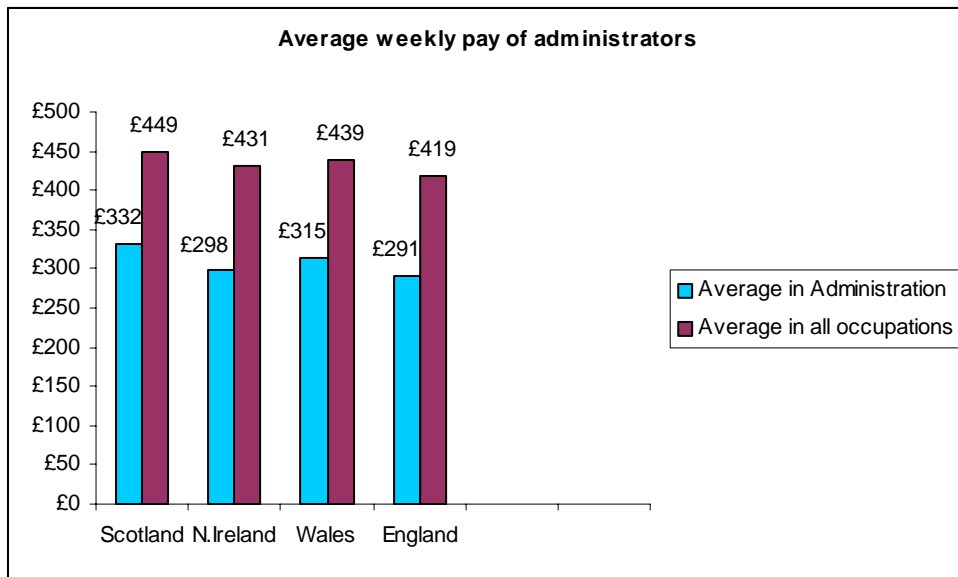
In Northern Ireland, administration occupations make up 13% of the workforce totalling 98,800 people. This has remained the same percentage for the last 4 years and is not set to increase.

4.32 Working Hours



This graph illustrates that administrators work an average lower number of hours per week than other occupations, the lowest average being in Scotland and the highest average in Northern Ireland.

4.33 Salary



This graph illustrates that the average salary for an administrator is less than that of other occupations, the lowest average being in England and the highest average being in Scotland.

4.34 Training Opportunities

52% of employers gave administration training a medium priority compared to 46% of administrators who thought it was given a low priority.

28% of UK employers spend nothing on training support staff.

An employer reveals:

"Why should we pay for training? What else would they do? We have lifelong learning in every sector but within administration, the provision is geared to very young people at the start of their admin careers. This needs to change."

A Business & Administration apprentice explores further:

"Employers think that employees will stay where they are and that if they train them, they will go elsewhere. Training shows that employers value their staff and ironically they will lose employees if they don't train them!"

An office manager gets to the core:

"The bottom line is that administrators are not income generators and the role is limited so employers wonder why they should fork out for training."

A young apprentice looks at her future needs:

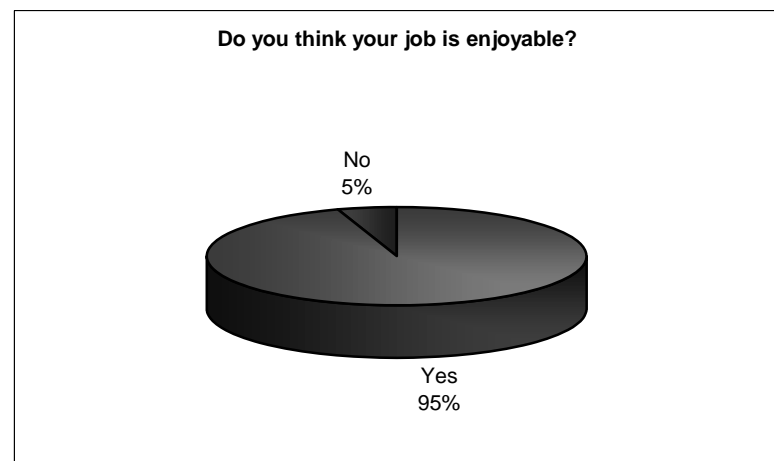
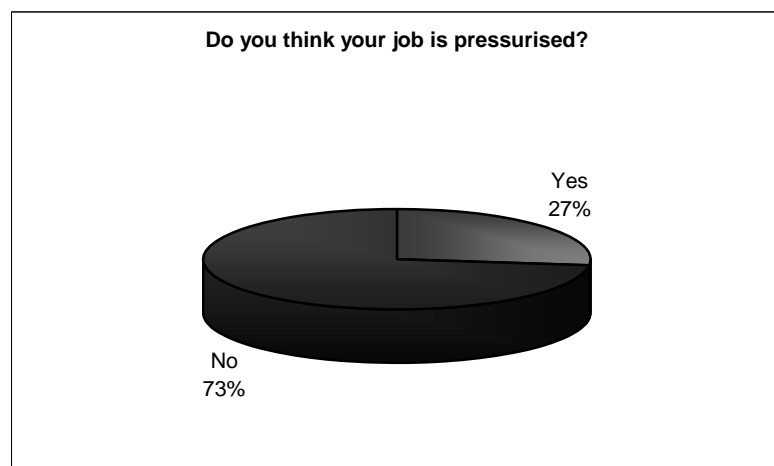
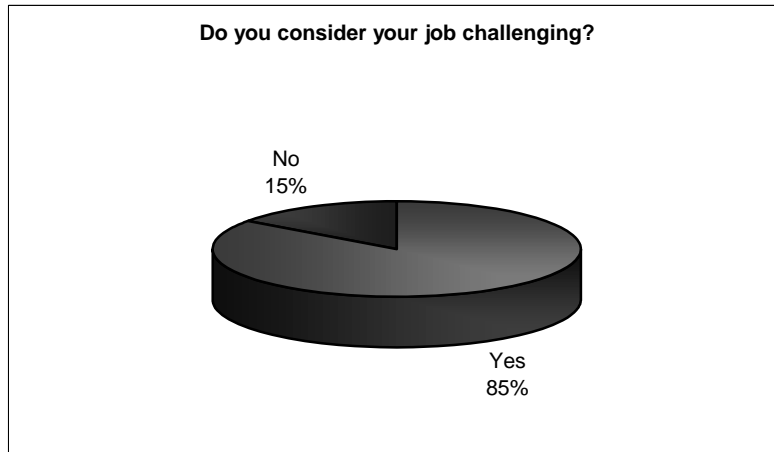
"My future employer will have to give me a good training programme during my time there."

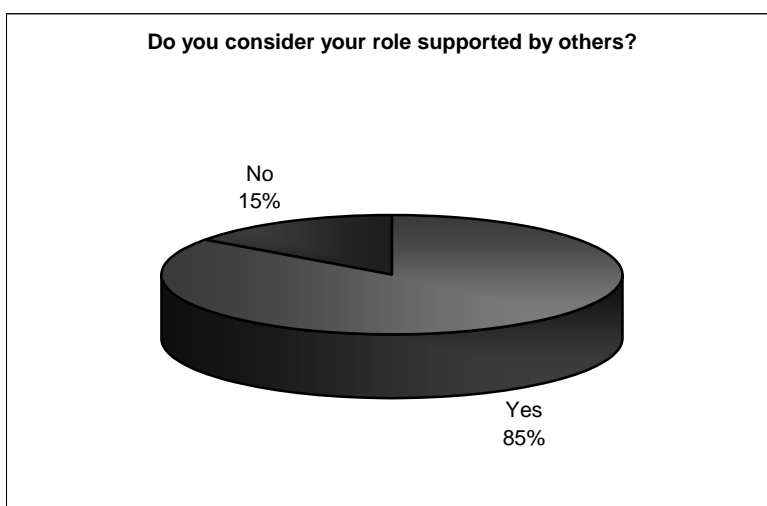
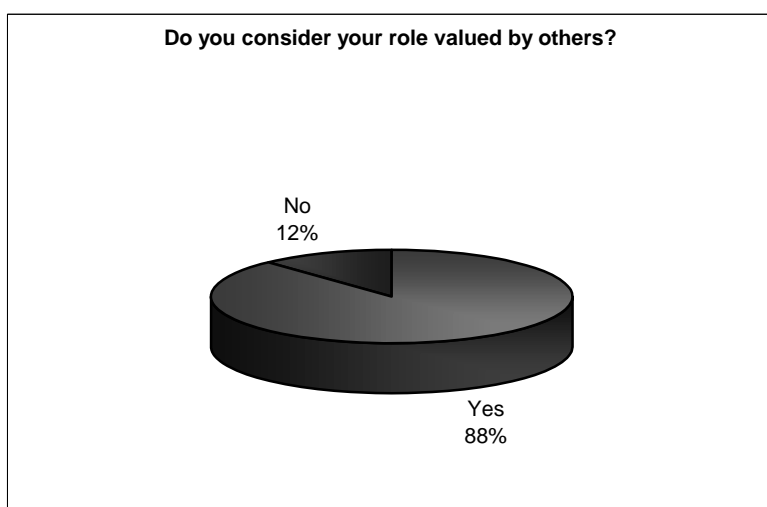
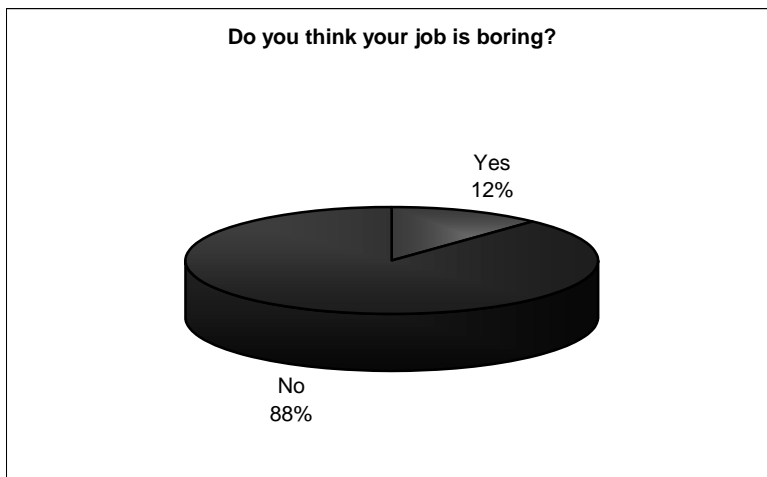
60% of administrators feel that the most essential training needed for their role in the future would be IT training.

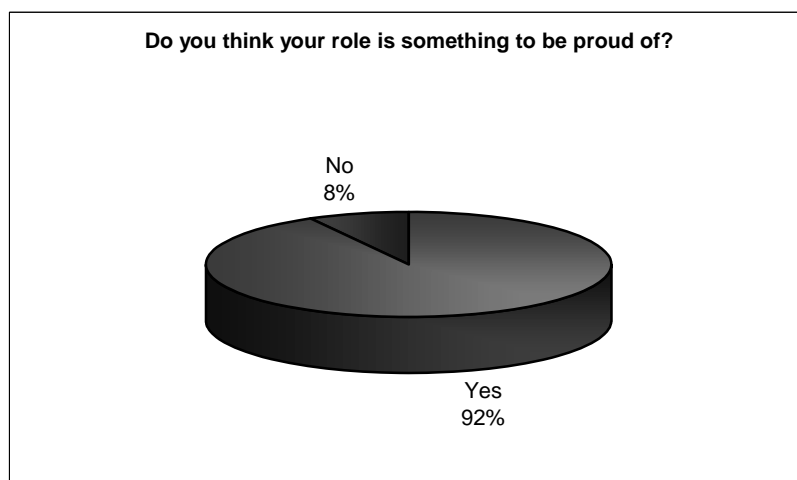
Employers felt that administration staff would need future training in:

- Financial understanding/budgets
- IT/databases/spreadsheets
- Organising and planning
- People management
- Verbal communication

4.35 A Positive Image of Role







These graphs illustrate the thoughts that administrators have about their role in administration.

An office manager goes into more depth:

"Administrators do not like to feel that they are just dogsbodies. However if you respect yourself and work hard then you will earn respect from others. If you are confident in yourself, then others will follow."

An employer comments:

"It's all about respect. Administrators have the power to change our perceptions of administration if they take responsibility for it. I believe in presenting yourself properly. If you look and sound the part, you will have a higher perception from others."

98% of administrators are satisfied with their current level of performance and 96% are satisfied with their current job role.

The top three things that administrators would change about their role were:

- 19% would increase the salary
- 10% would reduce the range of tasks
- 9% would improve the communication systems

Generally, employees wanted the following from a job: (in priority order)

- A good rate of pay
- Interesting work
- A good working atmosphere
- To be valued

Administrators wanted: (in priority order)

- A good rate of pay
- Interesting work
- To be valued
- A good working atmosphere

An employer reveals:

"Truthfully, we don't know what administrators want. They don't have a voice in the workplace."

4.35 Career Development

In a recent survey, 61% of administrators started working in an administration background from the beginning of their career and only 33% of administrators had a period of work experience before they made qualification or career decisions.

Only 41% of administrators make a conscious decision to become administrators.

A young apprentice describes how she decided to make administration her career:

"I was doing another work placement when I realised that working in administration was what I wanted to do as my career. But I had to actually do the job to know that it was for me."

A Business & Administration apprentice reveals a similar story:

"I started off working in my Dad's office. I don't think I could have picked my qualifications until I had been there and tried it."

42% of administrators said they would consider moving into non-administrative roles within their organisation.

An administrator sees problems with this:

"I think it depends on what kind of company you work for. If you work for a law firm it is highly unlikely that you could move from an administration role into a solicitor role. Some roles require specific qualifications. However, a lot of the essential skills of an administrator are transferable, such as people skills, organisation skills, time management and good IT skills."

An employer comments:

"In the old days of industry, there was no job mobility. You worked for the same company for most of your life, working your way up from the bottom. These days, employees have their own agenda, which as an employer, you aren't always aware of. It becomes a chess game of assumptions and guesses."

38% of administrators would like to be in the same role in 5 years time, 29% would like to be in a higher role and 33% would like to be in a different role.

66% of administrators would like to be working in the same company in 5 years time whereas 28% would like to be within a different company.

Of those administrators planning to stay in administration, 48% were choosing to do so because they had high job satisfaction, 39% felt secure in their role, 25% felt that their role offered flexibility, 12% enjoyed a good salary and 11% wanted to further their career.

A Business & Administration apprentice, at the start of her administration career supports this:

"Young people want to be trained up to use the job as a stepping stone."

An employer comments:

"Its pay related. Administrators at level 4 are more likely to stay within a company because they are able to transfer their skills easily."

More employers believe that employees are planning long-term careers in administration than is actually the case.

An office manager adds to this:

"There used to be a feeling that you will be in a job for life. But no one stays in the same place for 25 years for a gold watch. Our own expectations change with age and therefore our learning journey is created: we discover aspects of our roles that we like and don't like. Any employee needs to 'buy in' to their role and company from the start."

An employer suggests:

"Taster programmes at school are essential for learners. Work experience is one of the biggest influences on career decisions."

4.4 Business & Administration Provision

4.41 Sectors

In England, growth is predicted for culture, media and sport sectors. Administrators are most likely to be employed within public administration, education or health sectors.

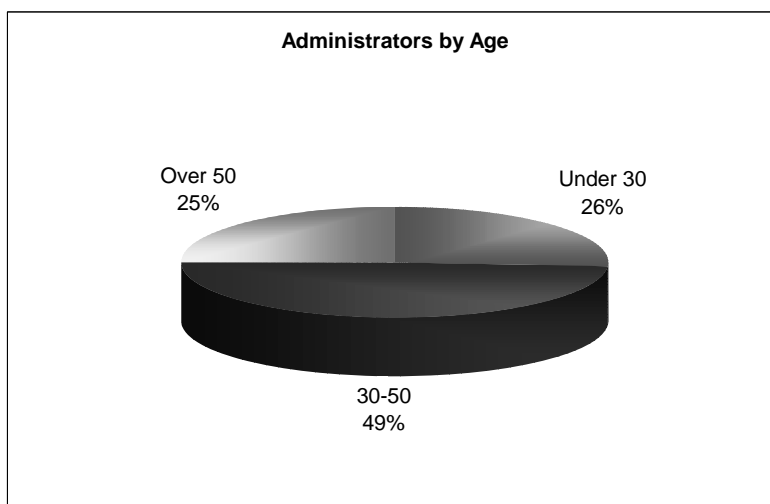
In Scotland, growth is predicted for retail and health sectors. Administrators are most likely to be employed within public administration, property or financial services sectors.

In Wales, growth is predicted for health and leisure sectors. Administrators are most likely to be employed within public administration, health or education sectors.

In Northern Ireland, growth is predicted for health and education sectors. Administrators are most likely to be employed within public administration, health and education.

The CfA is due to undertake a project to develop more specialist units within sectors that employ a large number of administrators as well as sectors that are growing in size. This ensures that all four countries have appropriate specialist standards.

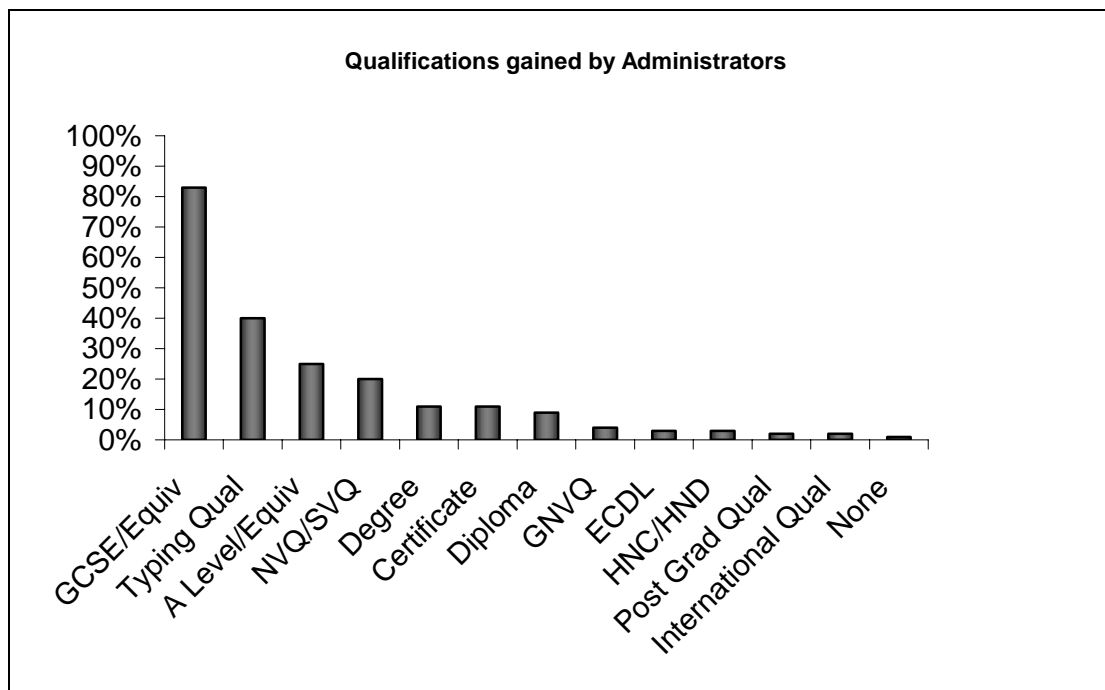
4.42 Age of Workforce



Over 25% of administrators are over the age of 50 and so are due to retire over the next 15 years. 26% of administrators are under the age of 30. The remaining 49% are aged between 30 and 50, which makes up the majority of administrators.

4.43 Qualifications

In Scotland, over half of all administrators are qualified to SVQ Level 3 or above and only 1 in 7 administrators have no qualifications at all compared to 1 in 4 across all occupations.



53% of employers do not know who would be better qualified for a junior position if they had to choose between a GCSE candidate or an apprentice. Of those that did know, more felt that the apprentice would be the better candidate.

Content

Employers expect school leavers to be proficient in:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Verbal Communication skills
- IT skills
- Personal skills e.g. Good manners, common sense
- Customer service
- Time management

90% of administrators and 86% of employers said that IT should be learnt through an administration context such as learning word processing through writing a report.

85% of administrators and 89% of employers said that life skills, such as time management, should be present in admin qualifications.

91% of administrators and 92% of employers said that life skills, such as communication, be taught from the age of 12.

Awareness & Effectiveness

27% of administrators are aware of Business & Administration entry-level qualifications and 77% of these think that it is an effective provision.

87% of administrators are aware of Business & Administration NVQs and 63% of these think that it is an effective provision.

73% of administrators are aware of Business & Administration apprenticeships and 67% of these think that it is an effective provision.

64% of administrators are aware of Business & Administration higher-level qualifications and 61% of these think that it is an effective provision.

33% of employers are aware of entry-level business & administration qualifications and 59% of these considered them effective in terms of providing appropriate skills for the workplace.

94% of employers are aware of NVQ business & administration qualifications and 68% of these considered them effective in terms of providing appropriate skills for the workplace.

76% of employers are aware of business & administration apprenticeship qualifications and 64% of these considered them effective in terms of providing appropriate skills for the workplace.

64% of employers are aware of higher-level business & administration qualifications and 75% of these considered them effective in terms of providing appropriate skills for the workplace.

A Business & Administration apprentice comments:

"It would take ages to get a job even with good GCSEs. I figured that training on the job was the best of both worlds. Its not like I could leave my training now, get a job and get paid loads, there are no alternatives except to stay on in training for as long as I can."

A young apprentice gives an education perspective:

"Vocational qualifications are much more enjoyable because you physically experience work. No one doing the same course as me (Young Apprenticeship in Business & Administration) at my school has dropped out yet. We all wanted to do the course because we had decided that we all wanted to work within Business & Administration."

Employers complain that:

- there are too many qualifications covering the same subject topic making it difficult to see how one can be valued over another
- assessment is over specified making the process lengthy and costly
- some qualifications can take too long to deliver and therefore see the benefits
- it is difficult to adapt qualifications to suit individual business needs

A young apprentice admits:

"I had to explain the Young Apprenticeship programme to my family as no one understood what it was I was doing."

An office manager explains:

"People hiring are 25+ years out of school so no wonder they don't understand all the different qualifications on offer. We are forever behind in teaching. We should be teaching people now what they will need in a few years time, except that we don't know what they will need."

A Business & Administration apprentice comments:

"Academic qualifications don't prove that you can do something in the workplace. There is a lack of administration training but as an employee, you need to be proactive and take responsibility for your own development as well."

An employer reveals:

"The perception by employers of the number of people leaving education with high literacy and numeracy skills is very low."

4.44 Education Provision

The CfA have a role in various sectors within education:

Further Education Sector

The CfA E2E Guidance for Business & Administration document aims to offer wider access to quality provision at the same time closing the gap between Level 1 and Level 2 provision and increase the number of young people entering employment. Although E2E has become successful in terms of learner numbers enrolling on to the programme a significant proportion of learners failed to move on to higher levels or into employment. On closer examination the lack of sufficient good quality provision and lack of coherent pathways were identified as the key issues.

The CfA develops the standards which the NVQ and SVQ is based on. There are 3 levels of NVQ available: Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3. The CfA also designs its apprenticeship frameworks for Levels 2 and 3.

Higher Education Sector

The CfA is working in partnership with Foundation Degree Forward (fdf), Employers and Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) to design a Business & Administration Foundation Degree framework. This framework will outline the learning outcomes that employers feel are essential for graduates in Business & Administration.

The CfA also have developed a set of Level 4 NVQ standards.

Academic Sector

The CfA are working with QCA and other regulators as well as the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust and DfES Standards Unit in monitoring and advising on changes to the current specifications for the Applied GCSE in Business.

We are a key partner in the development of the Business, Administration and Finance 14-19 Specialist Diplomas and are in the second tranche developing these qualifications for 2009. The other partners are Financial Services Sector Skills Council and Skill Smart Retail.

A Young Apprenticeship scheme is available for 14 – 16 year olds to undertake alongside their GCSEs. It is essentially the apprenticeship programme at a lower level and contains 50 days of work placement. The CfA is working alongside the LSC and DfES under the remit of support and guiding established partnerships in England. Within that remit the CfA is responsible for developing and supporting a flexible framework for delivery, maintaining quality and establishing best practice amongst partnerships and engaging employers in the Business & Administration sector on to the programme. Since our involvement in September 2004 approximately 700 pupils have begun to work through the programme, with the first 300 due for completion in July 2006. The CfA has overcome initial difficulties due to the late announcement of the programme in 2004 to establish a sound programme nationally.

4.45 Current Skills within Provision

The lists below show the current skills developed in the current (2005) set of standards developed by the CfA.

Skills within Level 1 standards: communicating; managing time; team working; reading; interpersonal skills; presenting yourself; questioning; listening; checking; sorting; recording; decision making; problem solving; prioritising; planning; organising; writing; using number; using technology; summarising; analysing; working safely.

Skills within Level 2 standards: communicating; planning; managing time; solving problems; evaluating; team working; reading; interpersonal skills, questioning; listening; negotiating; analysing; organising; decision making; recording; using technology; researching; checking; managing resources; presenting yourself; using number; writing; presenting information; summarising; noting; resolving disagreement.

Skills within Level 3 standards: communicating; researching; negotiating; planning; managing time; solving problems; evaluating; team working; reading; monitoring; interpersonal skills; organising; checking; developing others; prioritising; questioning; listening; using technology; reading; recording; using number; analysing; managing resources; presenting information; communicating to groups; interpreting; designing; writing; motivating; managing conflict; empathising; networking; managing information; leading by example; valuing and supporting others; providing feedback; obtaining feedback; stress management; setting objectives; consulting; following; noting.

Skills within Level 4 standards: communicating; researching; negotiating; planning; interpreting; problem solving; critically evaluating; team working; reading; monitoring; interpersonal skills; problem solving; team working; organising; evaluating; checking; developing others; prioritising; managing time; analysing; writing; reading; listening; reporting; using number; persuading; managing resources; reviewing; consulting; presenting information; decision making; leadership; contingency planning; scenario building; involving others; thinking systematically; facilitating; managing conflict; networking; providing feedback; obtaining feedback; valuing and supporting others; setting objectives; delegating; stress management; coaching; demonstrating; mentoring; empowering; motivating.

Skills within Level 5 standards: managing risk; informing; facilitating; corporate decision making; monitoring; reviewing; implementing corporate objectives; implementing strategy; implementing policy; evaluating; promoting partnerships; formulating corporate objectives; establishing infrastructure; improving board performance; contributing to strategic direction; meeting responsibilities; improving organisational performance; selecting key personnel; managing key personnel.

4.46 Equal Opportunities

Women in business & administration roles are above the national average percentage for all job roles except at Level 5.

Men in business & administration roles are below the national average percentage for all job roles except at Levels 4 & 5.

Both nationally and educationally, ethnic minorities are represented in proportion to national demographics in business & administration.

The Business & Administration sector is one of the most popular sectors providing employment to disabled people.

4.47 Credit Frameworks

CfA is due to undertake a credit framework project in order to create a credit system for all Business & Administration standards as well as ensuring that standards can be used easily within other sectors using the same credit framework. This creates a menu of standards for learners to choose a 'best fit' qualification against their personal career criteria. This should ultimately ensure that less skills gaps are produced.

In 2006, the CfA is also due to conduct an international benchmarking project with Germany and Australia to see how the UK standards fit against other international standards in Business & Administration.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Skills & Provision within Sectors

Employees with 'administration only' roles are able to use CfA standards in levels 1-4, apprenticeships and VRQs to develop and train their skills. The CfA needs to ensure that the current standards are reviewed (through incremental change funding) and changes made as necessary; that awarding bodies develop appropriate VRQs that the CfA support and that apprenticeship frameworks are constantly reviewed to ensure that they are appropriate in developing skills.

Employees with specialist administration roles have specialist standards that have been developed as well as new standards that are being developed in 2006 for sectors such as local government, health and education.

Employees with roles that require them to undertake their own administration duties are able to use meta standards which were developed in 2005 for this purpose.

5.2 Current & Future Skills Needs

The CfA will ensure that those skills that are currently demanded of administrators are present within the current version of standards as a part of the incremental change project. The CfA is also currently undertaking an employability project to decide which skills are those that made a candidate employable within administration, both in the short term and the long term.

Future skills demanded of administrators will also be developed within current standards to ensure that skills are developed now for when they are required in the future.

5.3 Skills Gaps

Skills that been identified as lacking will be developed within current standards as part of the incremental change process and the employability project.

5.4 Needs of Employers

The CfA will ensure that standards are available for those administration roles that are becoming more specialist.

The CfA will promote the use of standards for recruitment purposes within employers.

Time management skills need to be developed within current standards as it becomes more important for administrators to undertake administration duties for more than one person.

The CfA will develop adult and distance learning training packages for employees to develop adult administrators to be delivered in house and tailored to the organisation and the learner.

5.5 Needs of Employees and Learners

The CfA have set up a careers website www.breakinto.biz to ensure that administrators have a resource to make career and learning decisions and can plan their careers accordingly.

The CfA wants to work towards encouraging a period of work placement for all students before qualifications or career paths need to be decided.

The CfA needs to ensure that more young people take up Business & Administration qualifications and that those administrators that are between 30 and 50 have the chance to progress. This could mean creating more adult provisions, which are already in the process of being developed.

5.6 Qualifications & Education Provision

The CfA needs to ensure that typing and text processing is covered sufficiently within the current standards as traditional typing qualifications are decreasing.

An international benchmarking project is due to be undertaken to ensure that administration qualifications are suitable for any candidate wishing to use their qualifications to gain employment in another country or to enable internal promotion within a global organisation.

The success of foundation degrees will show over time a slow increase in more candidates undertaking a level 4 qualification and therefore increasing promotion prospects.

Skills thought essential for school leavers should be integrated into standards suitable for this age group and within programmes such as the Young Apprenticeship.

The CfA is due to work with E-Skills to develop IT standards written within an administration context.

The CfA needs to look at promoting and developing standards for entry-level provisions with both employers and employees. With the development of the Foundation Learning Tier, the CfA hope to use our E2E framework to offer entry-level provision in administration.

6. Recommendations

The next stage for the development of a vision for the CfA is to disseminate this report including its findings and its recommendations to stakeholders such as employers, awarding and professional bodies, sector bodies and potential learners for consultation.

A completed CfA Vision report will be submitted for Milestone 4 in March.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Interviewees Data Set

Appendix 2 – Discussion Questions

Appendix 3 – Employer Questionnaire

Appendix 4 – Employee Questionnaire