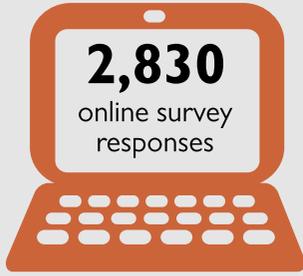


The research programme



between November 2021 and January 2022



Quality professionals from **117 countries** participated



3 online focus groups held with quality professionals

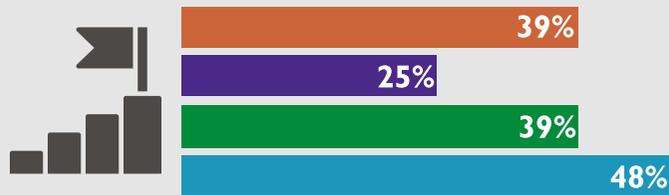


15 in-depth interviews held with quality professionals and stakeholders

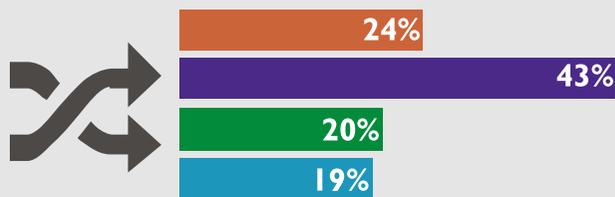
Entering the quality profession

Entry route by age

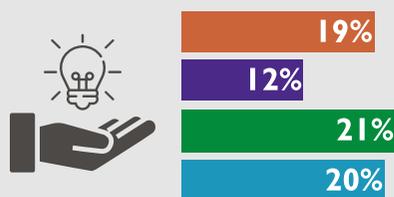
All respondents | 16-34 | 35-54 | 55+



Quality evolved as part of my work



Career choice after working in a different job/area



A chance opportunity



Career choice at the start of working life

Entry qualifications



Qualitative feedback

There is room to increase the proportion of those who choose quality at the start of their working life

"[Quality] can be a first choice career because there are more entry routes. It tended to be a second career for people, rather than a first choice, but now there's more emphasis on younger people joining the profession."

Corporate Partner employee & SIG member, defence

Raising the profile of quality will encourage more people to join the profession

"Quality professionals are contributing to the success of a business, the actual income of the business and the income of colleagues. If there is a way to improve the image of the quality profession, I think that would be the most productive way of recruiting into the profession."

Focus group participant, IRCA member

Career progression and development

Skills development

Top skills and knowledge the workforce intends to acquire in the next 24 months



Intended next career stage



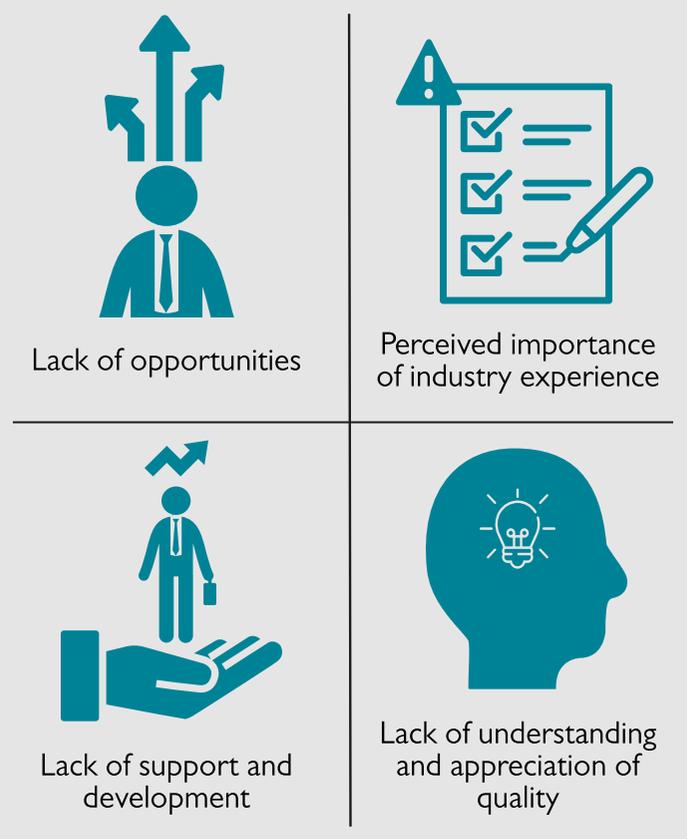
Qualitative feedback

Quality professionals can develop wide-ranging knowledge and experience across a business or organisation, allowing them to work across multiple roles and sectors, both inside and outside quality

"Quality has become more cross functional...If you are a quality manager in a certain sector, that does not mean that you will always stay in that sector."
Focus group participant, CQI & IRCA member

"Quality management gives you the whole breadth of the business and a good understanding of business management. You might go on to become a specialist, like a leader in finance or in HR, because you've got a really good understanding of what it's all about."
Corporate Partner employee & SIG member, transportation

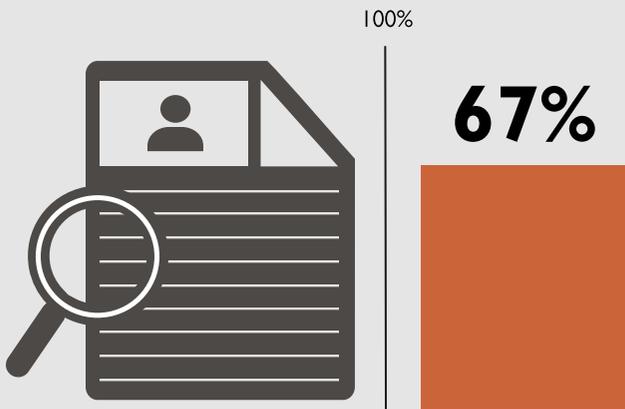
Common barriers to career progression



"Career progression can be very difficult in a lot of organisations...If you are not looking to move outside of the quality management function within whatever business it is, it's very difficult to move up until that other person has moved out...Therefore, if you're ambitious, the best way is to go somewhere else."
Corporate Partner employee & SIG member, transportation

Recruitment and skills gaps

Recruiting competent staff



Two-thirds said their organisation had struggled to recruit **sufficiently competent people** to quality or audit roles in the last two years

Qualitative feedback

There are mixed perceptions on the importance of industry experience



"If I am recruiting new people for the business, the most important one is industry experience. Someone who is good in a steel foundry would not be much use in a car factory. It would be the same with something like defence and then moving to aviation. There are so many differences in the industry itself. Industry experience is the most important one to me."

Focus group participant, CQI & IRCA member

"Industrial experience is helpful, but not important. The most important thing is, for most organisations, internal interpersonal skills and leadership skills. Quality is about influencing, changing or maintaining behaviours. You can learn the industry knowledge, if you're a good practical person."

Corporate Partner employee & SIG member, transportation



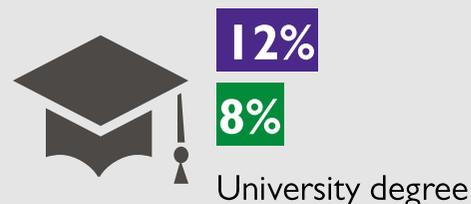
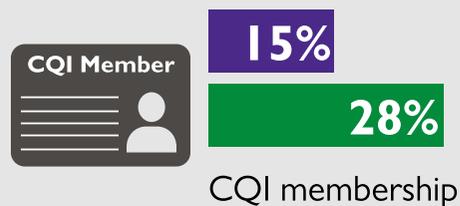
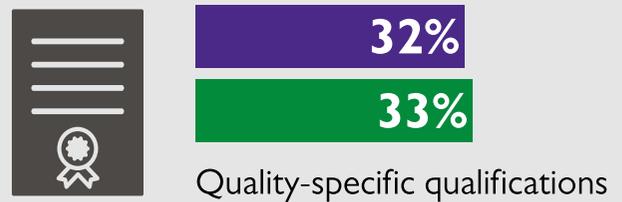
Interpersonal skills and leadership behaviours are widely viewed as very important

"Interpersonal skills are sometimes even more important than the knowledge... You are seen like the enemy, so if you're not able to interact in a way where they can trust you, you're going to have a tough time."

SIG member, nuclear

Important and missing attributes when recruiting

Most important (purple) Frequently missing (green)

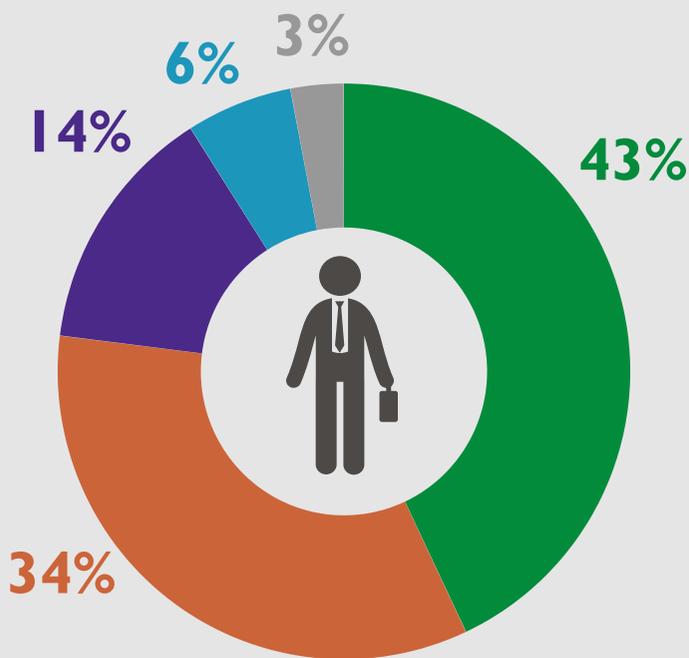


Perceptions of quality management

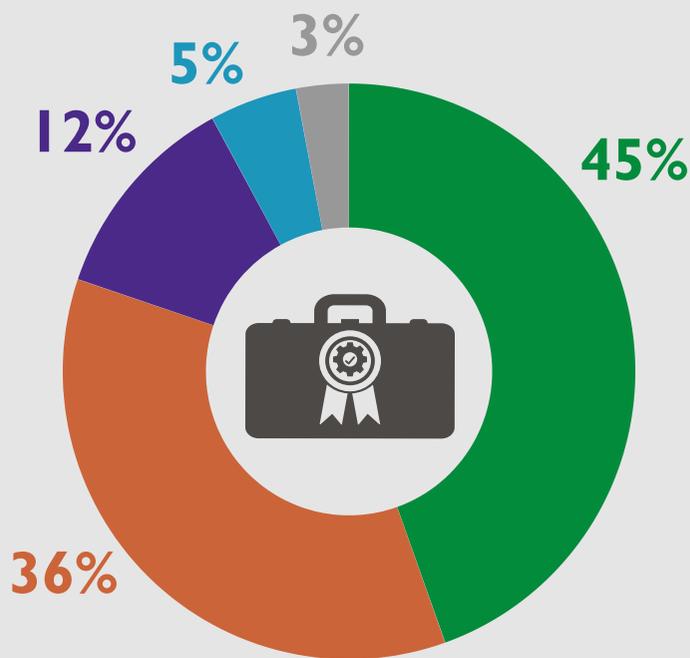
How employers perceive the value of quality

■ Highly valued
 ■ Somewhat valued
 ■ Hardly valued / not valued at all
 ■ It varies from time to time
 ■ Don't know

How much do you feel your employer values **you** as a quality professional?



How much do you feel your employer values **quality management in general**?



Qualitative feedback

The perception of quality is improving

"Slowly but surely over the years, quality has risen to be respected, and people working in quality add value...I do see that quality is not just 'tack it on at the end' at long last, but now it's part of the management team, a crucial part."

Focus group participant, IRCA member

"As other industries are adopting quality much more, and as the older managers move out through retirement and natural wastage, you will see the value increase because the younger generation coming through will have much greater quality awareness and a higher value and understanding of what quality actually brings."

Focus group participant, CQI member

Value is dependent on the industry and organisation

"Part of an organisation like manufacturing are definitely going to see quality as a very important part of the business, but the commercial and finance departments may see it as a cost and getting in the way of getting products to market. It depends on what part of the business you're talking to."

Focus group participant, CQI member

Low value is linked to a lack of awareness and understanding of quality

"They see it as a necessary evil, rather than adding value. How do we convert people's thinking? If you put quality first, everything else is going to follow. The safety is going to follow, the time is going to follow, your costs are going to follow. And they're the other three parts of the big four KPIs that everybody tracks."

Corporate Partner employee, construction/engineering