

BACKGROUND

With increasing demand to reduce surgical waiting lists, the necessity for a skilled perioperative workforce makes training and education of practitioners to meet surgical activity of paramount importance (NHS England, 2024).

Practice placement experience is a necessary requirement for successful completion of Operating Department Practitioner (ODP) pre-registration programmes and is valued by students. Quality practice education is necessary to ensure students have safe and effective learning that helps with retention and maintaining workforce supply. Therefore, the need for appropriately skilled practice educators is required.

Previous work has helped to foreground the education pillar of practice with the development of the Allied Health Professional Educator Career Framework (Council of Deans of Health, 2023). It is unclear how this has translated in relation to the ODP workforce and NHS employers or how this aligns with the ambition of providing adequate and quality placement capacity (UK Government, 2025). Similarly, it is unclear how the profession's own standards, developed 4 years ago, have been implemented (CODP, 2021)

AIMS

Develop understanding of current ODP specific practice educator training

Provide evidence to inform co-production of updated guidance for practice educator training with the College of Operating Department Practitioners (CODP)

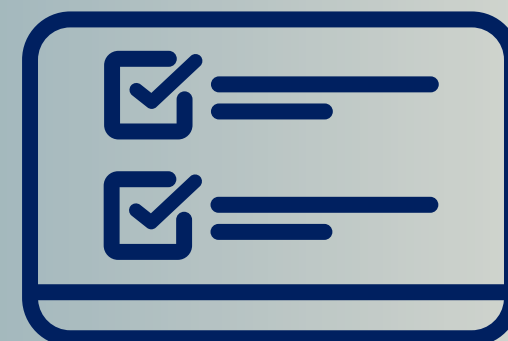
DESIGN/METHOD

A Quality Improvement approach was used. A survey was developed using MSForms to collect relevant data from Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) including training offered, content, delivery method etc. to understand the baseline for developing the methods for improvement with the aim to capitalise on digital methods where possible.

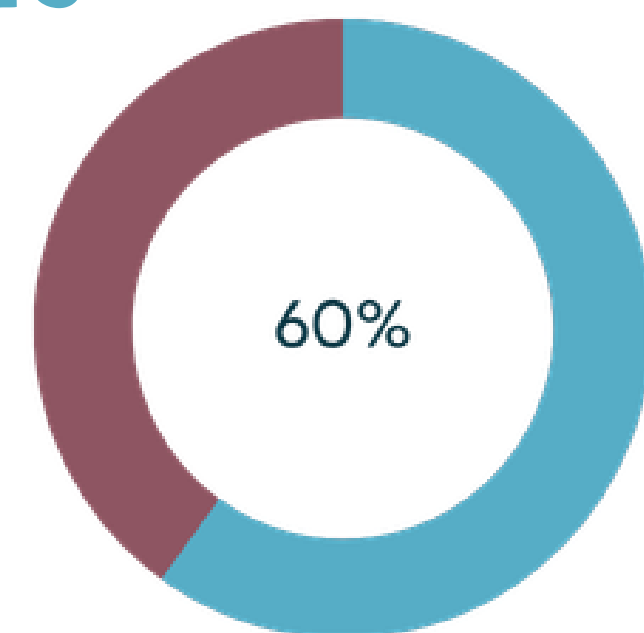
In collaboration with CODP, an email inviting survey responses was sent to all HEIs known to provide ODP pre-registration training (direct entry or apprenticeship) including *3 in Wales and *1 in Scotland.

Responses were collected between 22/10/2026-16/12/2026

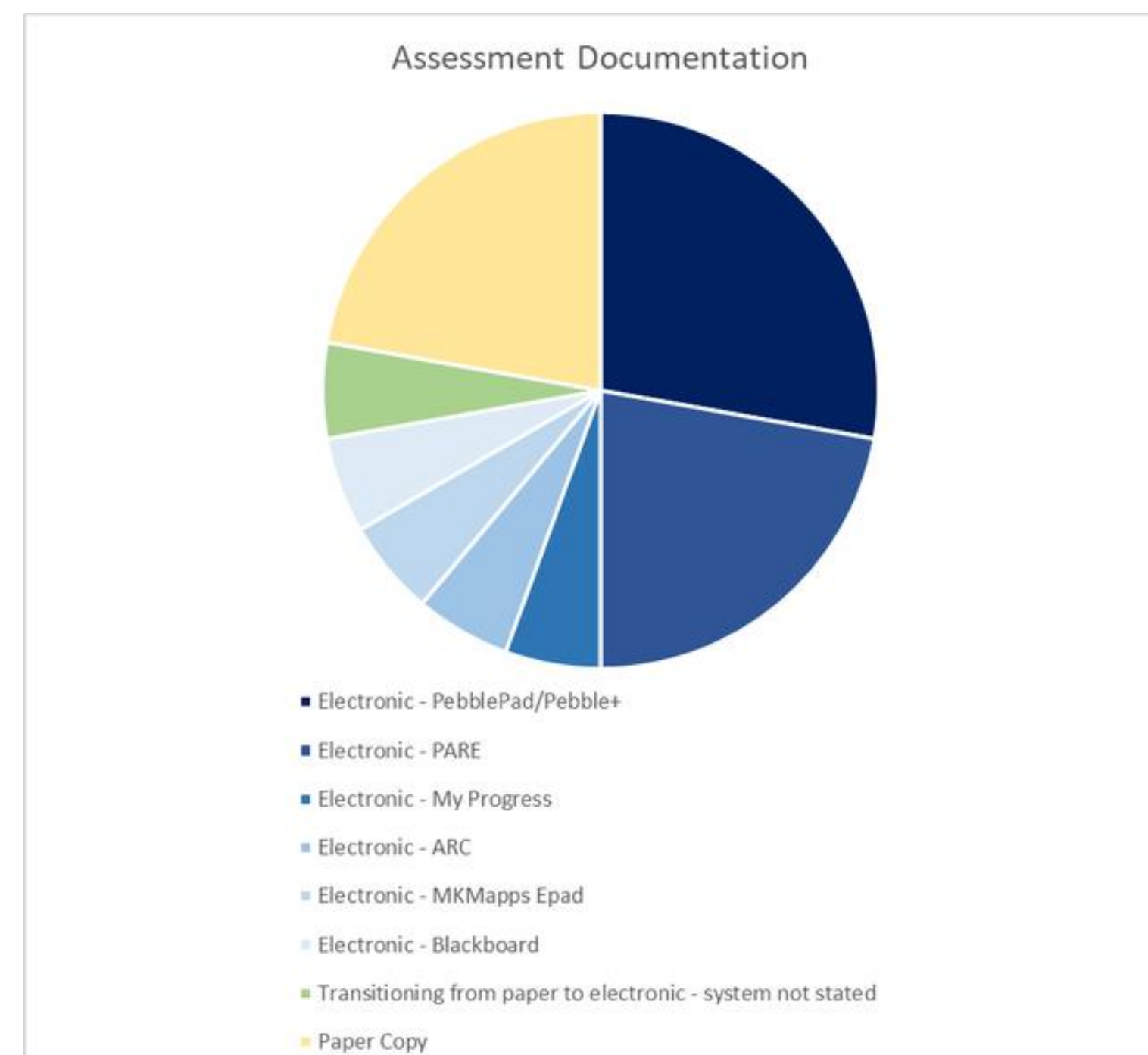
Descriptive analysis of the data was used to develop a picture of the current landscape of the ODP practice educator training.



RESULTS



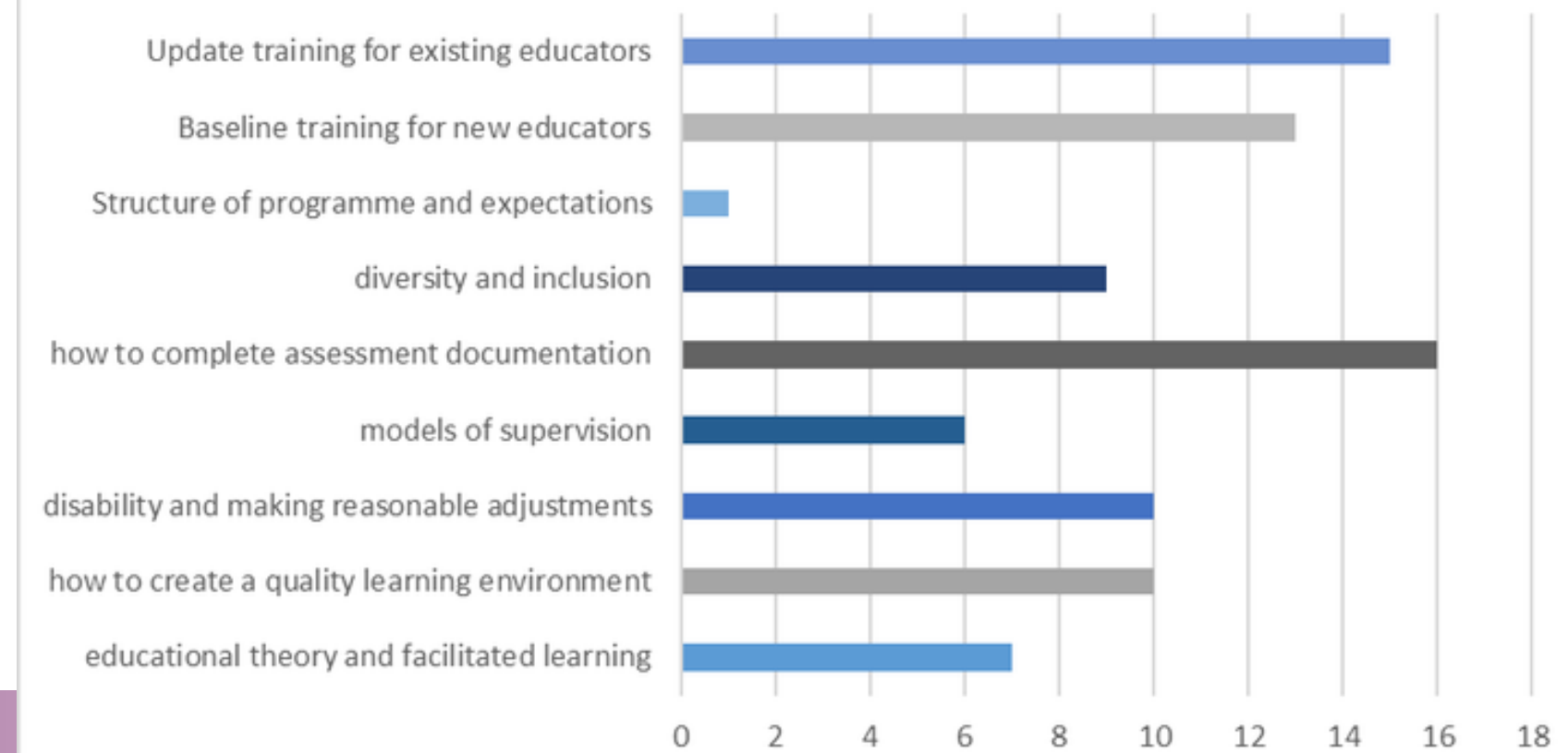
- 20 responses received from 18/30 HEIs delivering pre-registration ODP programmes = 60% HEI response rate
- All except one HEI 'share' placement providers with other HEIs



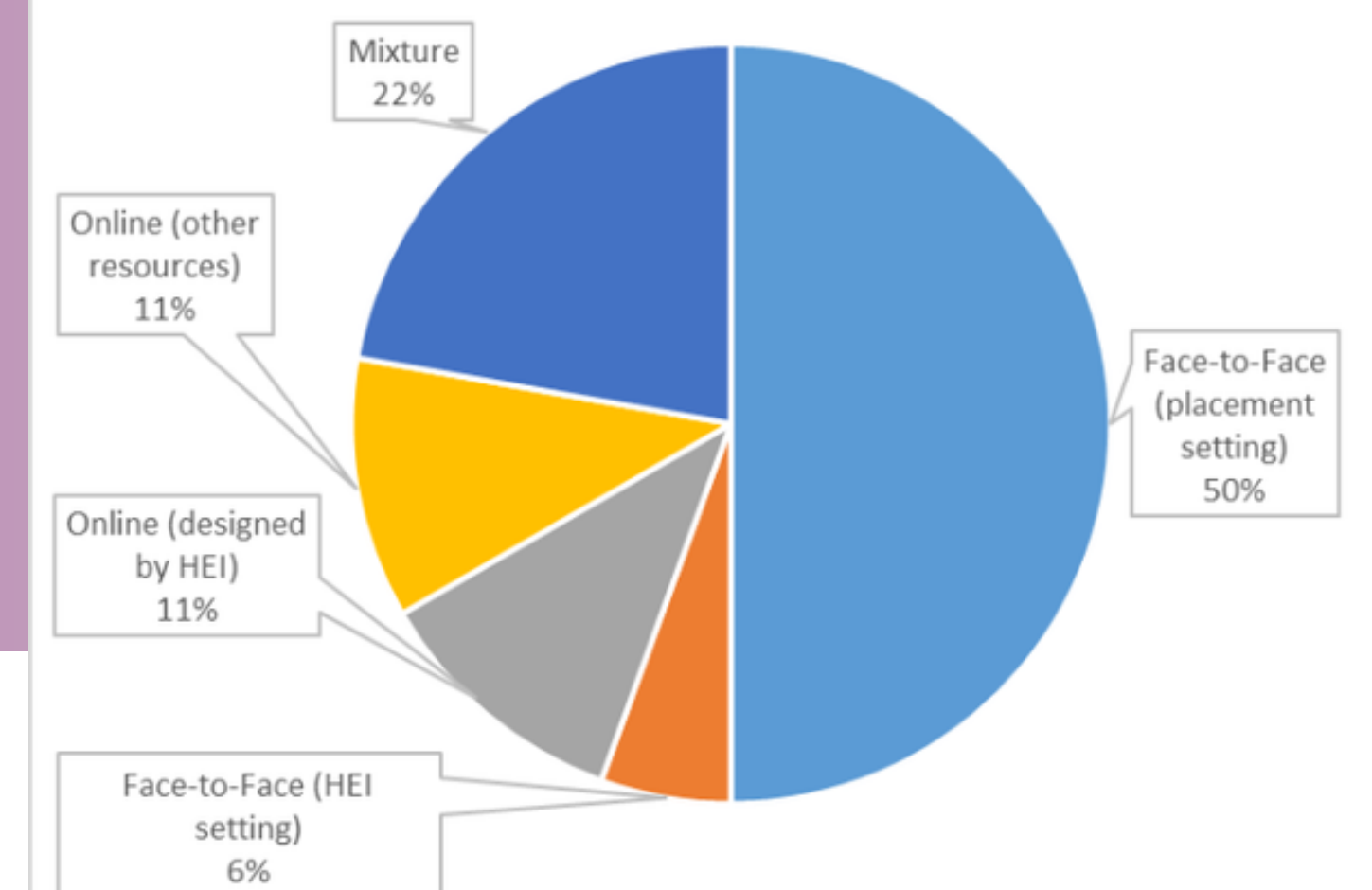
HEI responses highlight variance in:

- Training content
- Systems used for assessment
- Format of training delivery

SURVEY REPOSES: PRACTICE EDUCATOR TRAINING CONTENT



FORMAT PRACTICE EDUCATOR TRAINING



CONCLUSIONS

The findings help to provide a clearer understanding of the reality of ODP practice educator training but indicate the variance in terms of content and delivery which is reflective of different interpretations of the current CODP (2021) standards

To support the growth of the ODP workforce it is important to emphasise training and development that is evidence informed and delivered at a minimum, consistent level. The information gathered in this work will be used as a basis to inform areas of need in collaboration with stakeholders. The intention is to update the guidance to align with other AHP and NMC training.

As part of the ODP SURGE project this work will be shared and next steps undertaken to support future work.



RELATED LITERATURE

- CODP (College of Operating Department Practitioners) (2021) Standards for Supporting Pre-registration Operating Department Practitioner Education in Practice Placements
- Council of Deans of Health (2023) AHP Educator Career Framework <https://www.councilofdeans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Allied-Health-Professions-Educator-Framework.pdf>
- NHS England (2024) Theatres, Surgery and Perioperative Care <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/theatres-surgery-and-perioperative-care/#right-people>
- UK Government (Secretary of State for Health and Social Care) (2025) Fit for the Future: The 10 Year Health Plan for England, CP 1350. report. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6888a0b1a11f859994409147/fit-for-the-future-10-year-health-plan-for-england.pdf>.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks are extended to the survey respondents at the Higher Educational Institutions who provided the data and also to the College of Operating Department Practitioners for their help in disseminating the survey