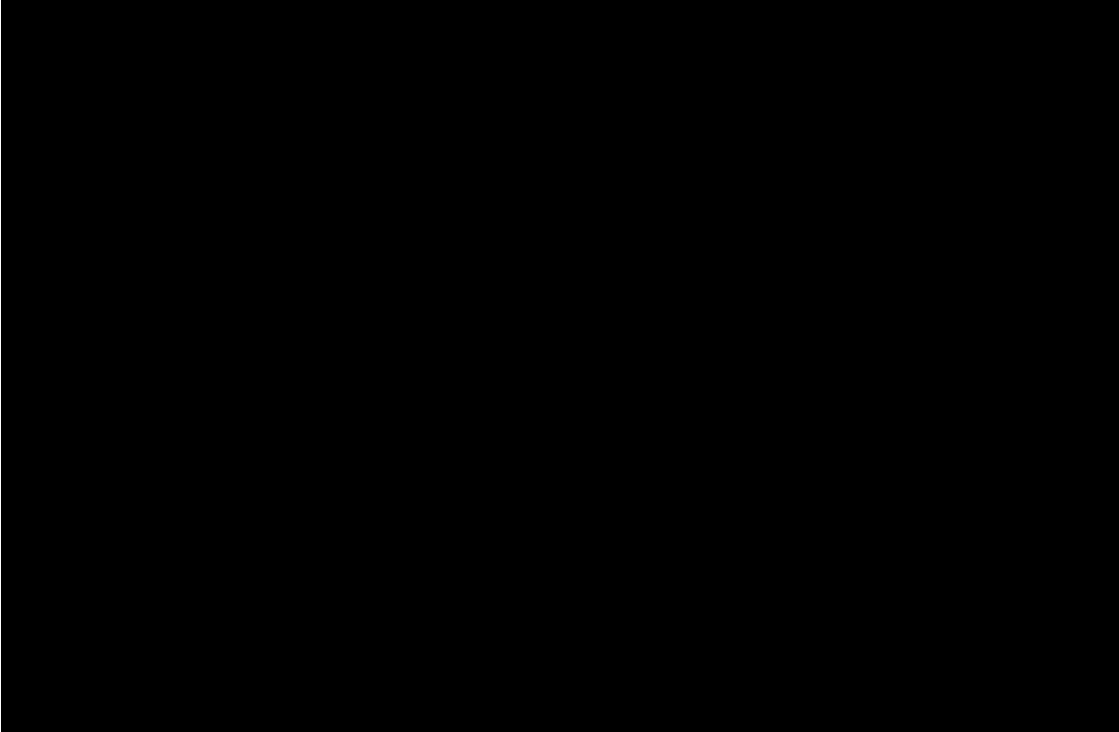


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**Introducing the new regulator  
of qualifications, exams and tests**

## About us

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Ofqual, the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator, is the new regulator of qualifications, exams and tests in England. We ensure that children, young people and adult learners get the results their work deserves, that standards are maintained and that qualifications count now and in the future. We also make sure that the qualifications available meet the needs of learners and employers.

The government will be bringing in legislation to establish Ofqual as the regulator of qualifications. Until this legislation is passed, Ofqual will operate as part of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Afterwards, Ofqual will be accountable to parliament rather than to government ministers.

Ofqual also operates in Northern Ireland. For more information about our work in Northern Ireland see 'Where to find out more'.



"If your child gets a grade A in one particular year, it's got to have the same value as a grade A in previous years."

Parent of an A level student

## What we do

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Ofqual wants to make a difference. We want to make sure that learners, parents, teachers and employers are confident that qualifications and assessments are of a high quality, and that the whole qualifications system has integrity. We will do this by:

- making sure that organisations that offer and deliver qualifications (awarding organisations) have good systems in place, and that they are held to account for their performance
- making sure that all qualifications offered by awarding organisations are fair and are comparable with other qualifications
- monitoring standards in qualifications, exams and tests, and reporting on our findings
- ensuring that there is fair access to qualifications for all candidates

- ensuring the quality of marking of exams, tests and other assessments to make sure that learners get the results they deserve
- making sure that the qualifications market provides value for money and meets the needs of learners and employers
- encouraging debate about important topics, such as standards of exams and qualifications.

As a regulator, we step in and exercise our regulatory authority where there is a risk to the integrity of the system or to a learner. We aim to be consistent in our decision making and to make our decisions clear and understandable.



"It's important that exams are regulated so that we can be confident that the people taking them are getting the results they deserve."

Parent of a GCSE student

## How we regulate

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### **Confidence in qualifications**

Ofqual and the regulators of external qualifications in Wales (DCELLS) and Northern Ireland (CCEA) publish qualification criteria. We only accredit a qualification if it meets these criteria. For example, it must cover the right content and be of the required standard.

People taking an accredited qualification can be sure that they are working towards achieving a

nationally recognised qualification offered by an awarding organisation that meets all the requirements set by the regulators.

We list all accredited qualifications in the National Database of Accredited Qualifications (NDAQ). The NDAQ website shows possible progression routes in further training, education and work, and gives information about the units in each qualification and how they are assessed.

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## Awarding organisations

Over 120 awarding organisations offer accredited qualifications.

Awarding organisations, including exam boards and recognised employers and training providers, are responsible for:

- developing and publishing qualification specifications
- providing schools, colleges and other centres with information about qualifications
- marking exams and checking coursework marks

- approving access arrangements (these include, for example, the use of a reader for a visually impaired candidate)
- awarding results and grades to candidates
- issuing candidates' certificates.

Ofqual monitors awarding organisations to make sure that the way they operate is fair, consistent and follows our regulations. We also monitor exam fees so that schools, colleges and other centres can be confident that fees are fair.

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### **National curriculum assessments**

We also monitor the National Assessment Agency's delivery of national curriculum assessments in schools. We carry out checks to ensure that standards are being maintained.

### **Reporting our findings**

Ofqual publishes its reports on qualifications, exams and assessments and the performance of awarding organisations. These can be found on our website.

If we find that an awarding organisation or the National Assessment Agency is not meeting our regulatory requirements, we will take appropriate action to ensure that learners get a fair deal.

### **Complaints**

Ofqual makes sure that there is a system for handling complaints about qualifications, exams and assessments. We require all awarding organisations to have procedures for dealing with complaints and appeals.

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## Where to find out more

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**Ofqual** [www.ofqual.gov.uk](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk)

**Ofqual Northern Ireland**

[www.ofqual.gov.uk/ni](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/ni)

**Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)** [www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk)

**Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS)**

[www.dius.gov.uk](http://www.dius.gov.uk)

**National Assessment Agency (NAA)** [www.naa.org.uk](http://www.naa.org.uk)

**Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)** [www.dcsf.gov.uk](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk)

**National Database of Accredited Qualifications (NDAQ)**

[www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk](http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk)

The website includes details for every recognised awarding organisation.

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**The regulators of external qualifications in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland:**

**Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS)** [www.wales.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gov.uk)

**Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessments (CCEA)** [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk)

**Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)** [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)

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Ofqual wishes to make its publications widely accessible. Please contact us if you have any specific accessibility requirements.

## Contact us

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