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Our Ref: RO45/2016

Dear Responsible Officer

Changes to the regulation of vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland

We are writing to inform you about changes to how vocational qualifications will be regulated in Northern Ireland.

Following a review of current arrangements, the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) in Northern Ireland intends to move to a single Northern Ireland-based qualifications regulator. CCEA will become the single qualifications regulator. DEL and the Department for Education in Westminster are seeking to amend the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act to remove Ofqual's statutory responsibilities to regulate vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland. The aim is to do this by 1 April 2016, subject to Parliament passing the necessary legislative amendments and these coming into force by this date. This process will not result in any changes to Ofqual's statutory duties in England.

As you may already know, there are currently two qualifications regulators in Northern Ireland: Ofqual, which regulates vocational qualifications and CCEA, which regulates general qualifications. These arrangements were put in place in 2010 as Ofqual was established, with a review scheduled so that the Northern Ireland Government could consider long-term arrangements.

Ofqual and CCEA are working together with DEL to make sure that the necessary transition arrangements are put in place. Our aims are to secure a smooth and orderly transition to protect the interests of learners and others who rely on regulated qualifications and to minimise unnecessary burden on awarding organisations through any transition process. As part of this, CCEA and Ofqual have already agreed to continue to use a shared IT platform and Register for the qualifications and awarding organisations that we each regulate.

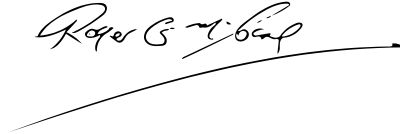
We will provide you with more information about the changes, transition arrangements and how we plan to work together on qualifications in due course, and we will be communicating separately and in more detail with those awarding organisations based

in Northern Ireland. In the meantime, if you have any questions about this please contact regulatory.relationships@ofqual.gov.uk. If you have questions about CCEA's future regulatory approach, please contact Cathy Heathwood at CCEA, cheathwood@ccea.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Benson', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jeremy Benson
Executive Director for Vocational Qualifications
Ofqual

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roger McCune', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Roger McCune
Head of Regulation
CCEA