

Annual report and accounts 2025 to 2026

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by Command of His Majesty

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Chair's foreword

Each year, well over a million students take regulated qualifications. Qualifications are trusted to open doors throughout students' lives, and they play a vital role in supporting productivity and economic growth. They also help people achieve the satisfaction that comes from fulfilling personal goals and ambitions. Ofqual's role is to steward the qualifications system on behalf of society and the economy. Through this annual report, I am pleased to set out more detail on our work and the role we play in promoting confidence in qualifications and securing their standards.

I joined the Ofqual Board at the start of 2025, so the reporting period covered by this report is my first full year as Chair. It has been rewarding to see the breadth of the organisation's work. This includes overseeing the delivery of regulated qualifications across a complex system involving thousands of schools and colleges; undertaking research at the leading edge of educational assessment; and engaging extensively with those passionate about education and training across the country. It also requires looking to the future – providing authoritative expertise to shape what comes next in assessment and the way qualifications are designed and delivered.

The board's role is to set and oversee Ofqual's strategic direction. Effective governance is essential to ensuring that Ofqual's regulatory powers are used appropriately

and effectively, in line with the framework and direction set by Parliament. This report accounts for how the organisation has exercised those powers to secure standards and maintain trust in our qualifications system.

During the period covered by this report, Ofqual played a role in providing assessment advice to the government's Curriculum and Assessment Review. Our work is now well under way to implement the government's policy response. New and refreshed qualifications will be taken by students over the coming years, representing the largest programme of reform for over a decade. These reforms build on the strengths of the current system and are intended to ensure clear routes for students to take high-quality qualifications and progress in their lives. Ofqual's responsibility is to safeguard high standards by stewarding the system effectively through this period of change – a responsibility that the board, the Chief Regulator and the wider organisation take very seriously.

Over the past year we have welcomed new board members and said farewell to others who have served with distinction. I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the board's work during this period, and I look forward to working with colleagues in the year ahead.

Finally, while it is right to look forward, this report shines a light on achievements over the past year. I would like to thank everyone at Ofqual for their professionalism

and commitment. Our work also depends on the engagement and support of teachers, school and college leaders, exams officers, representative bodies and many others across the system. My sincere thanks go to them all.

To those that have succeeded in their qualifications, I offer congratulations and best wishes for the future.

Dr Susan Tranter

Chair

2 July 2026

Performance report

This section outlines Ofqual's role and provides an analysis of our performance against goals and objectives, including our equality objectives, over the reporting period. Ofqual's strategic priorities were set out in the [Ofqual strategy 2025 to 2028](#).

Ofqual's role

Ofqual is the qualifications and assessments regulator for England. As a non-ministerial department, Ofqual is independent of ministers and is accountable directly to Parliament. Our independence is important in securing public confidence in the standards and validity of qualifications.

Parliament created Ofqual to:

- secure standards in qualifications so they give a reliable and consistent indication of knowledge, skills and understanding
- promote the development and implementation of national assessments that give a reliable and consistent indication of achievement
- promote public confidence in qualifications and national assessments
- promote public awareness and understanding of the range and benefits of regulated qualifications

- secure that qualifications are provided efficiently and represent value for money

Ofqual regulates **248** awarding organisations and more than **10,190 active** qualifications, for which **11.8 million** certificates were issued in the 2024 to 2025 academic year. These include vocational and technical qualifications, apprenticeship assessments, GCSEs, AS and A levels. Ofqual also regulates national assessments, produced by the Department of Education including by its executive agency – the Standards and Testing Agency.

Ofqual regulates in a range of ways:

- controlling entry of awarding organisations into the market
- reviewing the quality of qualifications and assessments
- creating general, qualification and subject-specific rules, statutory guidance and regulatory advice notes
- monitoring the application of those rules, supporting compliance and where necessary taking regulatory action
- where appropriate, working in a co-regulatory way on regulatory issues
- engaging with a wide range of stakeholders to promote understanding

Ofqual has statutory duties not to impose or maintain unnecessary regulatory burden and to have regard to the desirability of facilitating innovation.

As a non-ministerial department, Ofqual receives its core funding directly from His Majesty's Treasury (HM Treasury). Where we undertake specific activity to support the government's wide-ranging reform programmes, we receive additional funding from the Department for Education (DfE). In 2025 to 2026, our funding was secured through the 2025 Spending Review (SR25), from which we received funding of £32.449 million.

Summary of key activities

Ofqual is responsible for the stewardship of the qualifications system. In 2025 to 2026 we continued to secure the safe and fair delivery of qualifications, overseeing the awarding of over 11 million certificates across GCSEs, A levels, vocational and technical qualifications. At the same time, we have continued to strengthen the qualifications system. We have improved resilience across the different stages of qualification delivery and reduced vulnerability to cyber-attacks. We have placed increased focus on addressing malpractice and we have regulated for improvements to fairness and accessibility.

Following the publication of the Curriculum and Assessment Review (CAR), the government set out its intentions to introduce new qualifications and

make changes to existing ones. Ofqual has played an important role throughout. We provided advice to the CAR to contribute to the development of their recommendations. Following the government's response to CAR, we have now begun the necessary work to implement a broad programme of qualification reform and to secure a smooth transition.

Alongside this important work we have continued our programme of research to broaden and deepen the body of knowledge on regulated assessments to enable innovation in the sector. We have also enhanced public access to data through updated interactive visualisations across GCSEs, A levels and vocational and technical qualifications.

Throughout the year we have prioritised proportionate, efficient regulation. We have introduced a principles condition into our regulatory framework and updated our enforcement policy. Alongside this, we have also taken steps to reduce unnecessary burden on the entities we regulate, including simplifying annual compliance returns and reducing approval requirements. Together this work supports our stewardship approach, enabling growth and innovation and ensuring our regulation continues to be effective and targeted.

Chief Regulator's review of the year

It has been a privilege to lead Ofqual through another strong year for the qualifications system. Qualifications and assessment are an indispensable part of education. They accredit achievement and enable students to move on with confidence to their next destinations. They also sit in a dynamic relationship with the curriculum and with teaching. A good curriculum enables there to be meaningful qualifications, and in turn both enable teachers to plan and deliver effective teaching which facilitates strong learning.

Ofqual is entrusted with maintaining standards and public confidence in England's qualifications system. That means that grades students achieve reliably represent their actual achievement. They rise only if achievement rises. As a non-ministerial department, Ofqual provides that assurance independently from ministers and is accountable directly to Parliament for doing so. The summer 2025 assessment series provided further evidence of a system that is functioning well. Standards were maintained and students received the results they had earned. Those results matter because they are trusted – not only by students and their families, but by employers and admissions bodies who rely on them to make fair decisions about the next stage of education or employment.

Confidence in qualifications depends not just on things going right, but on knowing that issues will be taken seriously when they do not. We have made use of our regulatory powers throughout the year to achieve just that. Our regulatory activity is underpinned by a long-term emphasis on securing and improving expertise, resilience, and governance in regulated awarding organisations. Our expectations are clear, and they are high.

An effective regulator must be both evidence-led and proactive. Our stewardship of the qualifications system has included important work to look in detail at the impact of technology on qualifications and education. Education in England is valued around the world, and our qualifications are an important part of that. While we are open to the potential benefits of technology, the risks and threats are clear. Our over-riding focus as we look to the future will be on protecting standards, fairness and confidence.

We remain alert to a range of emerging risks that could threaten the integrity of assessment. Over the past year we have supported schools and colleges on issues including cyber security and continuing to tackle malpractice.

Ofqual's strong assessment expertise means that we will play a key role in qualifications reform in the years to come. I welcome particularly the opportunity, building on T Levels, to establish for the first time a strong national foundation in wider vocational education

through the introduction of new qualifications, including V Levels. Our work on qualification reform is well underway. We will ensure that the quality of new qualifications is high and that they can deliver the positive educational impact intended for them. At the same time, we will ensure that existing qualifications retain strong levels of confidence as they are refreshed over the coming years.

I want to close by thanking colleagues across Ofqual for their professionalism and commitment. Ofqual has a concentration of professionals with high levels of expertise and experience in assessment and qualifications, supported by a committed wider team. We continue to prioritise the development of all our staff, as they enable our work to meet the high expectations the public rightly has of the national asset which is England's qualifications system. I would also like to recognise the contribution of those across the education and training system whose work underpins reliable assessment each year. This report sets out the impact of those collective efforts.

Sir Ian Bauckham CBE

Chief Regulator and Accounting Officer

2 July 2026

Performance analysis

The Ofqual strategy 2025 to 2028 sets out 5 strategic objectives for the period:

1. **Steward** – secure the safe, fair and resilient delivery of qualifications and assessments
2. **Innovate** – oversee the improvement and reform of qualifications and assessments
3. **Strengthen** – strengthen the performance, capacity and resilience of the qualifications market
4. **Engage** – build confidence in qualifications
5. **Develop** – develop the skills, processes and systems needed for effective and efficient regulation

Steward

Secure the safe, fair and resilient delivery of qualifications and assessments

As in previous years, Ofqual published its annual delivery report, setting out the regulatory approach to monitoring qualification delivery across general qualifications, vocational and technical qualifications, and apprenticeship end-point assessments. The report highlighted key risks including the potential misuse of artificial intelligence, cyber security threats, potential security breaches and risks of assessment material errors, and outlined the measures taken to manage and mitigate these issues during the academic year.

GCSEs, AS and A levels

Regulating delivery

Ofqual is responsible for regulating GCSEs, AS and A levels in England, known as general qualifications. In 2025, more than 1.3 million students in over 6,000 centres took general qualifications, and more than 6.5 million certificates were awarded.

Exams and formal assessments operated in the normal way and standards remained comparable over time, aligned with 2024 and before the pandemic.

Ofqual monitored assessment delivery, marking and moderation. More detail and the analysis of the delivery of the summer 2025 series can be found in the [Ofqual delivery report 2025](#). Overall, the series was successful and there were no issues that caused significant disruption to the secure and timely delivery of qualifications.

Ofqual sets the requirements for the awarding of grades and monitored how awarding organisations implemented these requirements. As in any year, senior examiners evaluated the quality of students' work and compared it closely with that produced in previous years, then recommended grade boundaries based on a range of both judgemental and technical evidence.

Grade boundaries typically change each year to make sure the standard of work needed for each grade remains stable and to reflect any differences in the difficulty of the assessments. This meant that for 2025,

the standard of work required to achieve a particular grade was indistinguishable from 2024. Overall, results for GCSEs and A levels were similar to summer 2024.

National Reference Test

In February and March 2025, almost 14,000 year 11 students from more than 350 schools in England took the National Reference Test (NRT) in English or maths, which is administered by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). The tests are designed to provide evidence of the performance of 16-year-old students in English language and maths and were introduced to provide additional evidence to support the awarding of GCSEs in these subjects.

The results of the NRT were published in August 2025. Having analysed the results, and following application of our established principles to support our judgements, Ofqual decided not to require an adjustment to the awarding of either GCSE English language or GCSE maths in summer 2025. More details about the results of the NRT, and our decision, can be found in the NRT annual statement and results digest.

Vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs)

Arrangements for vocational and technical qualification (VTQ) examinations and assessments remained broadly consistent in 2025 to 2026 with those in place the year before. September 2025 marked the introduction of new Alternative Academic Qualifications and reformed Technical Qualifications. Ofqual engaged

with awarding organisations throughout the year, using annual review meetings to consider the implementation of these new qualifications, monitor their delivery, and identify any emerging risks to assessment and awarding.

We continued to oversee the transition to the next generation of T Level contracts to ensure this process remains smooth for students, that qualifications are high quality, and that standards are maintained throughout delivery. Our regulatory focus remained on ensuring that contractual arrangements operate effectively and that changes in delivery are well managed across the system.

Arrangements introduced in previous years to support the timely delivery of VTQ results are now fully embedded into Ofqual's ongoing monitoring and assurance processes. These measures continue to help ensure parity of treatment for VTQs alongside GCSEs and A levels.

Ofqual is the regulator for the majority of apprenticeship end-point assessments (EPAs). During 2025 to 2026, Ofqual continued to monitor awarding organisations' delivery and the quality of their EPAs, maintaining fair and reliable assessment. Following the Department for Education (DfE)'s introduction of new apprenticeship assessment principles in February 2025, Ofqual launched a consultation in December 2025 on a revised regulatory framework to support the transition to the new approach. The outcome was published on 1 April

2026. Further detail and analysis of VTQ qualifications and EPA delivery can be found in the [Ofqual delivery report 2025 – GOV.UK](#)

Certifications and outcomes data

There were 5.3 million certificates issued for vocational and other qualifications in the 2024 to 2025 academic year. For vocational and technical performance table qualifications, between 1 March and 31 August 2025 a total of 612,440 results at pass or above were issued. Across the academic year, 326,060 certificates were issued to students studying functional skills qualifications (FSQs). In addition, 11,920 students received results for the Technical Qualifications within T Levels.

Quarterly certifications data can be explored in Ofqual's quarterly certification statistics on our Ofqual Analytics app.

Ofqual published an updated report into EPA outcomes data in December 2025. Data was collected from awarding organisations to cover the period March 2024 to the end of February 2025, and showed that 153,155 EPAs were fully completed, and 168,280 regulated EPAs were taken by apprentices within this period.

Accessibility of qualifications

All students and apprentices deserve the opportunity to take trusted, reliable and fair qualifications and assessments. To this end, Ofqual has continued to

regulate to improve the accessibility and fairness of regulated qualifications.

During the reporting period, we have continued to evaluate the impact of our guidance on designing and developing accessible assessments. Our evaluation work is designed to consider whether our guidance has had a positive impact on the accessibility of assessments and will inform any future work to strengthen the guidance. We are reviewing a sample of past GCSE papers to understand more about the accessibility of exam papers. We welcomed the government's commitment in its response to the Curriculum and Assessment Review (CAR) to "work with Ofqual and awarding organisations to ensure that accessibility implications are fully considered for all young people throughout the qualification development process, including those with SEND". Ofqual's work in response to the CAR is set out here.

Our work with representative bodies and experts in accessibility

Ofqual works with organisations and experts with an interest in accessibility and equalities to help us understand the equality impact of our work and to inform our regulatory approach. This year, as in previous years, we spoke regularly with a range of such organisations and individuals, including groups that represent the interests of, or teach, students who share particular characteristics, including disabled students. We hosted 2 meetings of the Access Consultation

Forum (ACF). The forum discusses issues that affect the accessibility of Ofqual-regulated qualifications and assessments. Its focus is primarily, although not exclusively, on the accessibility of general qualifications for disabled students. The ACF also considers accessibility issues relating to vocational and technical qualifications and national assessments and can consider issues affecting students with other protected characteristics. In 2025 to 2026, the forum discussions included:

- use of British Sign Language as an access arrangement
- research into the access arrangements system in Wales
- the impact of coloured paper in assessment
- modified papers and associated assistive technologies
- research on generative artificial intelligence (AI) in Scottish education
- updates to the UK Association for Accessible Formats' (UKAAF's) Best Practice Guidance for Professionals in Schools, Modifiers and Producers
- accessibility of on-screen exams
- assistive technology research

Ahead of summer 2025 exam results, Ofqual met equalities stakeholders to support awareness of

assessment arrangements. As well as discussing the approach to grading, we emphasised the steps we and awarding organisations take to ensure that qualification results remain a reliable measure of students' knowledge, skills and understanding.

Ofqual continues to engage with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) on matters of shared interest including the provision of reasonable adjustments for disabled private candidates.

Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

Ofqual is committed to ensuring that the exam access arrangements system operates effectively and is accurately reported. In response to rising demand for access arrangements in recent years, we completed a programme of work during the reporting year to better understand this trend, the factors driving it, and whether any improvements were needed to ensure the system continues to meet our regulatory requirements. Our work focused on the approval of 25% extra time in exams, as this is the most common exam board arrangement.

We reviewed a range of evidence, carried out research and analysed more detailed data from exam boards to consider use of extra time, time in assessment, and access arrangements more generally. In July 2025, Ofqual withdrew its official statistics on access arrangements for GCSEs, AS and A levels from 2014 to

2024. This was because previously published statistics on access arrangements did not give a sufficiently accurate picture of approved access arrangements in place for the exam cohort in each year. In November 2025, we published revised ‘in development’ official statistics. Alongside these statistics, we published a regulatory report on access arrangements, including 25% extra time, that set out the findings of our work and the actions we expect exam boards to take to strengthen the system.

These actions are:

- to review the effectiveness, clarity and manageability of their requirements
- to strengthen the access arrangements inspection
- to consider the information they provide about access arrangements to support wider understanding

We are monitoring exam boards’ progress in these areas. We have also continued to work with the exam boards to strengthen the data used in our monitoring of the access arrangements system and our statistical report.

Modified papers

Ofqual takes seriously the quality of modified papers – both for students using braille and other types of modification. During the reporting period, we wrote to exam boards seeking substantive assurance on

the steps they would take to further improve quality, following an overall reduction in modified paper errors in the 2025 exam series compared to 2024. We reported on errors in modified assessment materials in our [2025 delivery report](#). We have continued to monitor exam boards' work in this area as part of our normal regulatory approach.

In March 2026, we hosted a roundtable event that brought together awarding organisations, specialist centres and accessibility experts to explore good braille modification in practice. The event also considered approaches to achieving good practice and how system-level improvements could be achieved. We wrote to the awarding organisations involved after the meeting to confirm our expectations.

Equality impact assessments

Equality impact assessments (EIAs) are an important part of our policy development process. They are part of all our public consultations and support our work towards our public sector equality duty (PSED). Between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, we published consultations, all of which included EIAs, on:

- [Introducing principles into the General Conditions of Recognition – Decisions: Introducing principles into the General Conditions of Recognition](#)
- [Amending our Taking Regulatory Action policy – Decisions: Supporting compliance and taking regulatory action](#)

- Rules for GCSE qualifications in British Sign Language – Decisions: Rules for GCSE qualifications in British Sign Language
- Regulatory framework for apprenticeship assessment – Decisions: Regulatory framework for apprenticeship assessment
- Regulatory framework for Apprenticeship Assessment – Conditions, requirements and guidance
- Regulating on-screen assessment
- Accreditation of Technical Qualifications within T Levels and other updates
- Proposed changes to the assessment of mathematics, physics and combined science GCSEs
- Ofqual's action plan for the prevention of qualification fraud
- Introducing new Criteria for Recognition

Our approach to regulating qualifications has fairness for students and apprentices at its core. This means thinking about how our regulation might affect all students taking regulated qualifications, including those who share particular protected characteristics and those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Ofqual uses EIAs to help identify the potential positive and negative impacts of a proposed policy approach for

people who share particular characteristics, including protected characteristics. This helps us to consider how we can mitigate or eliminate any negative impacts and promote equality. To make sure we have identified and considered as many of these impacts as possible, we ask consultation respondents whether there are any impacts we have not identified, and whether they have suggestions for how any negative equalities impacts could be removed or mitigated. On occasion, we might decide that such impacts are unavoidable. Where a negative impact cannot be mitigated, we set out clearly and transparently the reasons why in the EIA. Further information is available in the EIAs for the relevant consultations, both in the consultation proposals and the decisions following consultation.

Regulatory actions and interventions

The regulatory actions and interventions we take are published on our website. Table 1 summarises the interventions we have made over the reporting period for all awarding organisations.

Table 1: Interventions

Date issued	Awarding organisation	Action	Date published
27 August 2025	WJEC-CBAC Ltd	Monetary Penalty in the sum of £350,000 (Settlement) Costs Recovery in the sum of £7,151.40 Undertaking	18 September 2025
22 September 2025	ProQual AB Ltd	Monetary Penalty in the sum of £15,000 (Settlement)	30 September 2025
5 December 2025	Pearson Education Ltd	Monetary Penalty in the sum of £750,000 (Settlement) Costs Recovery in the sum of £5,000	15 December 2025
5 December 2025	Pearson Education Ltd	Monetary Penalty in the sum of £505,000 (Settlement) Costs Recovery in the sum of £20,000	15 December 2025

Date issued	Awarding organisation	Action	Date published
5 December 2025	Pearson Education Ltd	Monetary Penalty in the sum of £750,000 (Settlement) Costs Recovery in the sum of £5,000	15 December 2025
30 January 2026	University of West London	Monetary Penalty in the sum of £150,000 (Settlement) Costs Recovery in the sum of £10,000	4 February 2026

As well as the published interventions, Ofqual imposed additional conditions of recognition, known as Special Conditions, on a total of 23 occasions through the year. Special Conditions are used in a variety of ways, including to support investigations and to manage identified risks, and were imposed on 19 existing awarding organisations and on 4 newly recognised awarding organisations.

Where Special Conditions are not published, this is often because publishing may increase the risks which those conditions are intended to manage. We keep under review the possibility of publishing such interventions at a later date.

Counter-fraud

Ofqual's work to tackle qualification fraud continued throughout 2025 to 2026, building on the strengthened partnerships and commitments established in the previous year. Over this period, we maintained close engagement with awarding organisations and sector bodies to raise awareness of fraud risks and support the development of stronger capabilities to detect and prevent malpractice. In December 2025 we convened the Fraud Taskforce, bringing together representatives from across education, regulation and enforcement to discuss key issues. This included identifying, reporting, and preventing qualification and training centre fraud through intelligence sharing, analysis of fraudulent patterns, updates on enforcement activity, and horizon scanning of emerging fraud risks.

Representatives from 43 awarding organisations attended the event, reflecting the sector's ongoing commitment to collective action.

During the year, we also strengthened our communication and engagement activity to raise awareness of qualification fraud as an issue and ensure that employers, providers and learners understand how to report concerns. This included supporting a press campaign focused on fraud in the construction sector, which highlighted that although many employers feel confident in identifying suspicious activity, reporting routes are less well known. The campaign reinforced the importance of robust reporting mechanisms and emphasised that qualification fraud undermines safety, trust and competence in safety-critical industries.

We have continued to deliver the commitments set out in our qualification fraud action plan, working with awarding organisations to strengthen their own fraud prevention measures. This has included promoting the fraud prevention advice note¹, progressing data-sharing agreements with organisations in high-risk sectors, and improving public-facing information on GOV.UK to support clearer and more accessible

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1. Advice notes sit outside of Ofqual's statutory framework of Conditions and Guidance. They are designed to support awarding organisations' (AOs) understanding of both Ofqual's Conditions and, where applicable, Ofqual's operational processes

reporting routes. This programme of work will continue into 2026 to 2027, with a particular focus on strengthening intelligence sharing, enhancing cross-government collaboration, and supporting awarding organisations to embed robust and consistent approaches to identifying, preventing and responding to qualification fraud.

Resilience

Ofqual continues to work to build resilience across the exam system. There are a number of threats to the qualifications system that it is important to address – both in terms of seeking ways to prevent disruption and securing effective mitigations should incidents occur.

Through annual scenario planning activity with stakeholders and pre-series reviews of exam board and awarding organisation (AO) readiness, Ofqual seeks to identify emergent and changing risks, review the contingency plans of regulated organisations and evaluate options for sector response to mitigate disruption.

Cyber security in particular is an ongoing and increasing threat to centres, awarding organisations and related third parties and Ofqual has worked with key stakeholders such as the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) and the DfE to strengthen sector cyber resilience. As part of this activity we published guidance during Cybersecurity Awareness Month to support centres in protecting their systems against cyber attacks.

Ofqual has worked with Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) AOs and NCSC to secure implementation of common security controls and continues to monitor to ensure they remain fit for purpose. We held a cyber security workshop in December 2025 with the largest awarding organisations to discuss various cyber scenarios which could impact the sector and to better understand key issues and potential mitigations.

The focus of this work has now expanded to the resilience of AOs' supply chains. We have ensured that JCQ AOs have worked with NCSC to develop a common framework for evaluating the cyber resilience of their suppliers and ensuring appropriate controls are in place for critical exam-related services. Ofqual required the exam boards to provide assurance that these controls would be implemented ahead of the summer series.

Malpractice

Ofqual routinely works with exam boards and other AOs as part of its scrutiny of readiness to deliver the summer series to review their approach to identifying and managing the risks this posed to qualifications by malpractice and maladministration.

In March 2026, the Chief Regulator publicly wrote to exam boards highlighting the long-term rise in the number of students receiving sanctions for taking mobile phones and other devices into exam halls, as approximately half of malpractice cases reported to Ofqual relate to this. He asked exam boards to

strengthen their arrangements so that they can more effectively identify, control and reduce the incidence of this potential threat to the integrity of exams. Ofqual will be monitoring this area further in 2026.

The letter also addressed the malpractice risks posed to non-exam assessments as a result of the misuse of generative AI. Exam boards were asked to take immediate steps to improve awareness of acceptable and unacceptable use, and to strengthen deterrence, detection and prevention. To support schools and colleges, we published [classroom resources](#) to help teachers and leaders develop clear approaches to the use of AI in assessed work and to communicate expectations effectively to students.

We have continued to gather and monitor data on the misuse of AI in assessments. While the number of detected AI-related malpractice cases reported to Ofqual remains relatively low, teachers and school and college leaders have raised significant concern about the potential scale of undisclosed misuse, particularly in assessments completed outside controlled conditions. In the year ahead, we will continue work to both make clear the rules around the use of AI and strengthen arrangements to secure that students' work is their own, without inappropriate use of AI. This will also be an important design consideration in the reform of GCSEs and A Levels, and the introduction of new qualifications including V Levels.

Regulating national assessments

Ofqual's statutory objectives for the regulation of national assessments are to promote the development and delivery of tests that provide a reliable indication of pupil achievement, including over time, and to promote public confidence in those assessments. Responsibility for developing and delivering most of the national assessments, including the key stage 2 (KS2) tests, sits with the STA, an executive agency of the DfE. The early years foundation stage profile (EYFSP) also falls within Ofqual's regulatory remit, with responsibility for its development resting with the DfE.

Our regulatory approach focuses on securing assurance from responsible bodies that risks to assessment validity and public confidence are being appropriately identified, managed, and mitigated throughout assessment development and delivery. Two developments were particularly significant in shaping our priorities and monitoring in 2025.

First, Capita concluded its role as STA's primary delivery supplier, with Pearson taking over from September 2025 ahead of the 2026 cycle. We concentrated on obtaining assurance from STA regarding Pearson's readiness to assume delivery responsibilities and the effectiveness of knowledge transfer from Capita during the transition period.

Second, in September 2025 STA launched a revised version of the reception baseline assessment (RBA), delivered via a new online platform. Ahead of the RBA's

rollout, we sought evidence from STA of its operational readiness and its assessment and management of associated risks. By 17 October (the end of the first 6 weeks of the autumn term for most schools), schools had completed more than half a million assessments with their pupils.

Our ongoing and independent analyses of marking quality for KS2 mathematics, grammar, punctuation and spelling, and English reading showed a high degree of reliability again in 2025, consistent with previous years. More than 99.9% of pupils received their KS2 results on time in July. We also confirmed that the KS2 results in 2025 could be robustly linked to the standards as they were originally set in 2016. Following an announcement from the DfE about changes to the use of EYFSP data, we highlighted to DfE that the interpretation of outcomes should be consistent with the original assessment design and purpose.

Our [national assessments regulation annual report 2025](#) provides a comprehensive account of these and other regulatory activities.

Innovate

Oversee the improvement and reform of qualifications and assessment

Responding to the Curriculum and Assessment Review

Ofqual assisted the Curriculum and Assessment Review (CAR) by providing advice on the review's policy recommendations as they were developed.

Following publication of the government's response to the CAR, we have been taking forward the necessary work to respond to government policy. This includes analysing the implications of the proposed reforms for qualification design, delivery and regulation, and identifying any changes required to our regulatory frameworks. We have also engaged with awarding organisations and sector stakeholders to help ensure they understand the government's direction and the role we will play in supporting a smooth and successful transition to new qualifications. Our particular focus will be on securing high-quality qualifications that are fit for purpose and align well with good teaching practice.

Ofqual will continue to work closely with the DfE as it updates subject content, initially for a range of GCSEs, and subsequently for a number of AS and A level qualifications, to ensure that they can be regulated effectively. In line with the government's response to the review which highlighted these issues in particular, we have developed regulatory proposals

for consultation relating to volume of assessment, use of non-exam assessments, particularly in relation to the implications of generative AI, and accessibility and fairness for all students.

Reform of post-16 vocational and technical qualifications at level 3 and level 2

The Post-16 education and skills white paper set out the government's intent to introduce V Levels as a new vocational pathway at Level 3, alongside A levels and T Levels. It also introduced 2 new pathways at Level 2: a further study pathway, including a Foundation Certificate, and an occupational pathway, including an Occupational Certificate, designed to support progression to Level 3 study or employment respectively. The new qualifications will be based on subject content developed by DfE. The 'first teach' date for the first tranche of new qualifications is September 2027.

At the same time, the government set out its intention to introduce T Levels in new subjects and to continue work to enhance their deliverability. This included making changes to the way in which students can retake the core exam sub-component.

Ofqual supports the proposals set out by the government. Together they represent a strategic opportunity to create a suite of qualifications for students aged 16 that have clear purposes, nationally set content and a coherent approach to grading.

These foundations are already in place for GCSEs, A levels and T Levels. It is in the interests of students themselves, employers and the wider economy that vocational qualifications are built on the same strong foundations. Effective reform should support growth and productivity, ensuring that students are taking relevant and high-quality qualifications that enable progression into apprenticeships, employment and higher education.

Ofqual consulted on the draft regulatory frameworks for the new qualifications in April 2026, alongside DfE's consultation on their subject content. Our regulatory approach sought to ensure the consistency and comparability of the new qualifications, while reflecting their applied and vocational nature. The consultation also included proposed changes to the regulations for Technical Qualifications in T Levels to enable students to retake the core exam sub-components separately. The final regulatory frameworks and any changes to the regulations for Technical Qualifications in T Levels will be published in autumn 2026.

Following the creation of Skills England and the transfer of Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education's (IfATE) functions, the Secretary of State enabled Ofqual to consider adding the Technical Qualifications in T Levels to the list of qualifications subject to our accreditation requirement. Following consultation, we implemented this change in April 2026.

New and revised general qualifications

Ofqual consulted on and published its rules for British Sign Language GCSE, following detailed work with a range of stakeholders, including representatives across the Deaf, deaf and hard of hearing communities. This marked the completion of our role at this stage. From this point, it will be for any interested exam boards to develop their specific offers, which would then go through our accreditation process.

Ofqual has been working with the Department for Education as it develops the subject content for a new GCSE in natural history.

Alongside the developments for this new qualification, we continued to scrutinise updates and amendments to existing general qualifications, when exam boards seek to update their specifications.

Apprenticeship assessment

Ofqual regulates the majority of apprenticeship end-point assessments, covering around 600 occupational standards across a broad range of sectors.

In February 2025, the DfE introduced new apprenticeship assessment principles (since adopted by the Department for Work and Pensions [DWP]). These assessment principles indicated a move away from end-point assessment, permitting assessment to take place at the most appropriate point during the apprenticeship and allowing centres to carry out and mark assessments.

Ofqual consulted on policy proposals for the regulation of apprenticeship assessments in June 2025, followed by a consultation on the draft regulations themselves in December 2025.

While developing the revised regulatory framework, we engaged extensively with awarding organisations and apprenticeship providers to understand the practical implications of the new principles, and to gain insight into the potential risks and opportunities they perceived.

The final regulatory framework was published in April 2026. It embeds DWP's assessment principles and specifies key requirements for assessment design and delivery to ensure the reliability, validity and manageability of apprenticeship assessments. The requirement for awarding organisations to develop, maintain and keep under review an assessments strategy, explaining and justifying their assessment design and delivery decisions, also enables Ofqual to hold awarding organisations to account.

Research

Ofqual has continued its programme of research to help evaluate and continually improve qualifications and assessments. This includes how qualifications and assessments are designed and delivered, the accessibility of assessments, how standards are maintained, how results are communicated, and how certificates enable progression to further and higher education and employment. Through this work we aim to enable improvement and innovation within the sector.

Research continues to support our commitment to fulfilling our equalities objectives. We have published research into extra time as a reasonable adjustment. This included:

- a review of the effect of extra time on outcomes for different types of students
- a statistical analysis of the extent of test speededness in a series of GCSE assessments
- a review and discussion of the theoretical positions around speed of working being part of what is assessed in exams.

In December 2025, we published interactive equalities analysis for the qualification results issued in summer 2025, and briefed stakeholders on the findings. The analysis covered A levels and a subset of vocational and technical qualifications. We have conducted analysis every year since 2020 to monitor how differences in results between groups of students with different protected characteristics and socioeconomic status have changed. Since 2023 the analysis has been published as an interactive visualisation so the data can be explored in detail.

In July 2025 we published a statistical investigation of the comparability of grading standards across GCSE and A level subjects in 2024. This is a repeat of analysis that has been conducted annually since 2020.

Alongside our consultation on on-screen assessment, we published 4 research reports to support our thinking and recommendations in this area included:

- externally commissioned work examining the implications of widescale adoption of on-screen assessment for high stakes qualifications in England – the risks, benefits and challenges
- a survey of parents' and students' views of the opportunities and risks of greater adoption of on-screen assessment
- a literature review examining the impacts of on-screen assessment on levels of student engagement, cognitive demands and performance
- a proposed framework for anticipating and evaluating differences in performance on equivalent paper based and digital test items

We have engaged with the sector on numerous occasions about AI use in assessments. An important instance of this was the publication in January 2026 of our report on the principles of AI use in marking. This report considers the nature and capabilities of current AI technology, characteristics of the high stakes marking context, different models for AI integration, and frameworks for evaluating AI use in marking processes. The aim of this work was to support thinking and foster constructive discussion about the potential applications of AI in marking, while emphasising the importance of assessment validity, transparency,

fairness and accountability for maintaining the integrity of qualifications and public confidence. We continue to conduct research into the use of AI in assessment for various use cases, including item generation and marking.

In September 2025 we hosted a one-day conference titled ‘What is the future of outcome-based qualification design?’. This brought together academics, expert practitioners and policy colleagues to explore the future of outcome-based approaches to technical and vocational qualification design. The conference provided an opportunity to disseminate Ofqual’s CASLO research, published in November 2024, and to encourage renewed debate and capacity-building in an area where active research and scholarly discussion have declined in recent years.

We have continued to carry out research to help us consider the future of assessment. This includes research into the broader use of objective test questions in high stakes qualifications and the use of optionality in qualification design. We also intend to publish research into the assessment of problem solving in functional skills qualifications later in 2026.

We continue to make assessment data available to independent researchers through the GRADE dataset, available through the Office for National Statistics secure research service. This allows external research and scrutiny of England’s education and assessment systems.

Supporting innovation

Technology plays an important role across the qualifications system, supporting the design, development and delivery of qualifications. Awarding organisations use technology for activities such as setting and reviewing assessment materials, digitising scripts for marking, training and quality assuring markers, and aggregating and processing assessment data. Used appropriately, technology can support efficiency, consistency and quality, and help reduce operational risk in complex assessment systems.

Ofqual supports well-evidenced and responsible innovation in these areas, where it can be shown to support valid, reliable and fair assessment outcomes and maintain public confidence in qualifications. At the same time, we recognise that new technologies can introduce risks that need to be carefully managed through appropriate safeguards and regulatory oversight.

Building on the approach set out in our 2025 to 2028 strategy, we continued during the year to offer our Innovation Service to support safe and responsible innovation. The service is open to all regulated awarding organisations and provides a route to seek early, informal regulatory advice on novel ideas, including the use of new technologies. This helps organisations to understand how innovative approaches might interact with regulatory requirements and to identify potential risks early.

In the coming year, we will look to further develop our approach to supporting innovation across the sector, building on our existing tools and engagement with awarding organisations and the wider sector.

On-screen assessment

This year marked a significant milestone in Ofqual's work in relation to on-screen assessment, as we moved from evidence-gathering into formal consultation on our proposed regulatory approach.

In December 2025, we launched a public consultation seeking views on our proposed approach to the regulation of on-screen assessments. At the same time, we published a package of research and evidence to support the consultation, setting out the evidence base on on-screen assessment, as described earlier in this report.

Our proposed approach supports responsible innovation, while ensuring that any changes to assessment are carefully managed to protect standards, fairness, public confidence and secure delivery. In particular, we proposed a controlled introduction of on-screen assessment, with pen and paper assessments remaining central to the vast majority of GCSEs, AS and A levels. The proposals also considered the potential implications for accessibility, including for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). They recognised the importance of ensuring that any limited use of on-

screen assessment supports fairness and does not create new barriers.

The consultation focused on GCSEs, AS and A levels. As vocational and technical qualifications continue to be reformed, we will also consider the appropriate role of technology and on-screen assessment in those qualifications, taking account of qualification purpose and delivery context. Where necessary, we would propose to put in place additional regulatory requirements.

The consultation closed on 5 March 2026. We are analysing a high volume of responses and will publish our analysis, decisions and next steps in due course.

Regulating the use of artificial intelligence

We have continued to ensure the safe and appropriate use of AI in qualifications and assessments. Building on our published [approach to regulating the use of AI in the qualifications sector](#), our focus remains on protecting fairness, securing assessments and maintaining public confidence, while allowing space for responsible innovation.

During the year, we have continued to build and apply our evidence base on the use of AI in high stakes assessment. This has included publishing research on the use of AI in marking, as set out earlier in this report, which we are now drawing on alongside wider evidence and engagement to consider whether further policy clarification is needed. Our position is that, while

AI may have a role in supporting processes such as quality assurance, it cannot be used as a sole marker. We have made clear to awarding organisations that this would not comply with our rules.

Alongside our research programme, we have undertaken extensive engagement across the sector and beyond. This has included online workshops with awarding organisations focused on the innovative and responsible use of AI across the qualification lifecycle, as well as wider engagement with education stakeholders, including teachers, students and parents, and with international counterparts. This engagement has strengthened our understanding of emerging AI use cases and the opportunities and risks they present and has pointed to where further regulatory clarity or support may be needed.

Strengthen

Strengthen the performance, capacity and resilience of the market

Applications to be a recognised awarding organisation

Recognition is a statutory process that Ofqual uses carefully and effectively to make sure only organisations that meet the required standards can enter the market. This helps protect quality for learners and supports the wider economy.

Any organisation wishing to become recognised by Ofqual must submit an application that demonstrates its ability to meet the Ofqual Criteria for Recognition. All prospective awarding organisations meet Ofqual before completing an application to understand our process and requirements, both at application and following recognition.

During the reporting period, we carried out early engagement activities with 130 prospective awarding organisations. Mid-year, we moved from monthly webinars to individual calls. This change allowed us to respond more clearly and directly to organisations' questions and concerns. These calls help organisations understand at an earlier stage whether recognition is right for them. Organisations that move into the application stage have a clearer understanding of the requirements before they apply.

We received applications from 53 organisations. Of these, 8 organisations gained Ofqual recognition.

Six of the 8 awarding organisations that gained Ofqual recognition were recognised to deliver end-point assessments (EPA)/Apprenticeship Assessment Qualifications, bringing the total number of Ofqual-regulated organisations offering EPA/Apprenticeship Assessment Qualifications to 158.

Of the 83 total applications (including resubmissions) received from prospective awarding organisations, 37 were returned following an initial administrative review.

Applications are returned where the applicant has provided insufficient clear evidence with an appropriate level of detail for us to complete a full review. We also held 39 meetings with organisations whose applications we had returned. Organisations can request a meeting at any stage, and some request a meeting several months after their application was returned. In these meetings, we explain what is expected and where evidence is missing. This helps organisations strengthen a future application or decide at an earlier stage whether Ofqual recognition is right for them.

Capability, capacity and governance of awarding organisations

For qualifications and assessments to be trusted, reliable and fair, awarding organisations must have sufficient resources and appropriate expertise to deliver the qualifications they offer. They must also have the appropriate governance to make sure the organisation is well run.

In 2025, we ran a programme of targeted reviews, audits and monitoring of 20 awarding organisations that issue high volumes of certificates across a range of qualifications used for progression. We assessed the extent to which the capacity, capability and governance of awarding organisations was aligned to their qualification offer. This prompted those organisations to take action to strengthen their arrangements. We also ran separate events that gathered the governing bodies, CEOs and Responsible Officers of these

awarding organisations to share and discuss strategic issues in qualifications and regulation. These were opportunities to emphasise the important role that senior leaders play in ensuring that the capability, capacity and governance of their organisations remain fit for purpose.

In addition, alongside Ofqual's 2025 Statement of Compliance exercise, we asked all 245 awarding organisations about their governance structure, overall financial resilience and cyber security arrangement. The responses will help to inform the actions we take to build and secure the capacity and capability of the market for the long term.

Principles Condition

Following consultation, Ofqual introduced a new Condition, referred to as the Principles Condition, into the General Conditions of Recognition. The Principles Condition helps ensure a consistent understanding of our rules and of our expectations of awarding organisations, by making the underlying expectations of the General Conditions clear.

We also published accompanying statutory guidance, and, in response to feedback from our consultation, 2 additional advice notes. One illustrates using case studies and examples how each principle will work in practice and how we will decide whether an awarding organisation is meeting a principle. The other provides further detail on how we investigate and take decisions

in relation to potential non-compliance with an awarding organisation's Conditions of Recognition.

The Principles Condition came into effect on 4 December 2025.

Regulatory burden

Our annual regulatory efficiency report has been published alongside this report. The regulatory efficiency report explains the steps we take to achieve maximum impact towards our statutory objectives for the lowest cost to those that we regulate. We achieve this by applying proportionate regulatory scrutiny, reducing administrative burden, and improving the way we work with other parts of government.

Among the examples set out in the regulatory efficiency report are our work to:

- make annual compliance returns simpler by removing many extended response questions and reducing the overall number of questions asked
- reduce how often awarding organisations need to apply for approval to offer apprenticeship assessments in areas closely related to their existing portfolio
- introduce policies that support a proportionate degree of regulatory scrutiny, including through our Principles Condition

Each of our consultations in the year included a regulatory impact assessment outlining the anticipated

implications of proposed changes. These assessments show how awarding organisations and other stakeholders may be affected and allow them to comment on or challenge our findings. The resulting information and responses inform final decisions that appropriately assess the increased or reduced costs that may be introduced.

Value for money

During the financial year 2025 to 2026 Ofqual supported purchasers and potential purchasers in making informed decisions about the qualifications they offer.

We continued to report the average price of qualifications and track price rises relative to inflation through the annual qualification price statistics. The report found that in the year to February 2025, headline qualification inflation rates were higher than wider consumer inflation (as measured by the Consumer Price Index including owner-occupier's housing costs – CPIH), but lower than national wage inflation. The report also examined cumulative changes in fees between 2021 and 2025, finding that they increased by less than consumer and wage inflation.

We further enhanced price transparency by publishing the fee data for more than 16,000 qualifications for the first time and will continue to do so alongside the next qualification price statistics release.

We used our perceptions of vocational and technical qualifications survey to understand views on value for money in vocational and technical qualifications. 67% of centres agreed that ‘vocational and technical qualifications’ offer value for money, 53% agreed in relation to functional skills qualifications, and 34% for apprenticeship end-point assessments. Our new regulatory framework for apprenticeship assessment, introduced this year, enables awarding organisations to consider more flexible approaches that may improve value for money in these assessments.

Engage

Build confidence in qualifications

Ofqual engages with a range of organisations to both inform them about our work and understand their views about the qualifications we regulate. It is important that all users of qualifications – including school and college leaders, teachers, exams officers, students, apprentices and their parents – have access to information about regulated qualifications so they can be confident in them.

We published our annual guide for schools and colleges and guide for students, which explain arrangements for the qualifications we regulate. We also published the VTQ information hub 2025 to 2026, to make key dates and deadlines ahead of awarding easier to find.

We have also published resources to help explain how GCSE and A level grading works. This is aimed at enabling teachers and headteachers to effectively explain to students how these qualifications are graded and includes an assembly presentation and lesson plan. These sit within a wider toolkit of resources aimed at increasing teachers' and headteachers' understanding of, and confidence in explaining, GCSE and A level grading.

We have maintained trusted relationships with influential stakeholders representing schools and colleges. We also prioritise visiting different types of providers throughout the year to gain an in-depth understanding of how qualifications are delivered. We use this intelligence to help shape policy and inform how we regulate. The Chief Regulator has visited schools and colleges and other providers located across all the regions of England.

Provider engagement on qualification reform is crucial to ensure new arrangements are both manageable and understood. We have presented at multiple national education conferences to ensure the sector understands the rationale for changes to the landscape and Ofqual's role in ensuring quality.

We have continued to attend exam officer conferences and training sessions to improve understanding of Ofqual regulation and activities to support effective administration of exams and assessments.

As in other years, we directed students seeking information and support after receiving their qualification results to the exam results helpline run by the National Careers Service. We briefed the helpline team about the arrangements in place for regulated qualifications so they could provide information and support for students. Within our student guide, we signposted students who had concerns about possible discrimination to the Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS). EASS briefed us on its remit to support with the signposting of students to its helpline, and we briefed EASS so that it could support any students who contacted it.

Ofqual's commitment to transparency and to wider engagement of the public with the data we hold continues to be facilitated by regular publication of official statistics such as the annual qualifications market report, published in March 2026. This is in addition to delivery of interactive and visual applications to provide access to key data.

Communications work

Supporting the delivery of qualifications

In September, Ofqual ran its second annual cyber security campaign aimed at teachers and senior leaders in schools, timed to the start of the academic year when the risk of cyber incidents is highest. Evaluation showed increased awareness among senior leaders of good cyber security practices and why they matter.

Malpractice communications were delivered across the coursework and exam seasons, focusing on 2 specific risks: helping teachers identify AI-generated content in non-examination assessments, and reinforcing smart device policies during exams.

From June through to results day in August, Ofqual focused on building teacher understanding of how grading works, ahead of the period when results speculation tends to increase and teachers face the most questions from students and parents.

Evaluation showed a meaningful increase in teachers' understanding of how grade boundaries are set, and teachers reported feeling more confident explaining results to students and parents.

Technology in assessment

To support understanding of its on-screen assessment consultation proposals, Ofqual undertook a wide-ranging programme of engagement with stakeholders, including consultation briefings, roundtables and webinars. Ofqual experts were visible in relevant sector and national media throughout the consultation period.

Enforcement

When Ofqual takes enforcement action, it publishes details of the case and the steps taken to address the failing. This serves 2 purposes: to provide assurance to those affected that the matter has been taken seriously and resolved appropriately; and to ensure that all regulated awarding organisations are aware of the

standards expected and the consequences of failing to meet them.

Develop

Develop the skills, processes and systems needed for effective and efficient regulation

Ofqual's regulatory activity is underpinned by the continued development of its people and technology, making sure our people have the right skills, expertise, tools and information to deliver our 2025 to 2028 Strategy, enabling us to make the best use of our resources.

Civil Service People Survey 2025

Ofqual takes part in the annual Civil Service People Survey. The survey looks at civil servants' attitudes to and experience of working in government departments. The survey ran from 23 September to 21 October 2025, with 82% of staff responding. This response rate placed us in joint 24th position out of the 104 organisations taking part.

The Employee Engagement Index (EEI) captures how staff feel about Ofqual. Ofqual's EEI was 70% this year. The benchmark score for the whole Civil Service was 65%.

Ofqual had the joint 14th highest engagement score across the 104 participating organisations, with the joint 8th highest score for inclusion and fair treatment.

Our technology

In line with our digital data and technology strategy, Ofqual continues to transform, iterate, and improve the technology that underpins our regulatory processes and intelligence, and that enables our people to work effectively and efficiently.

We have continued to focus on ensuring our digital services and technology work well for the people who use them. In doing so we have engaged with wider, cross government, initiatives including service assessments to benchmark and improve our ways of working and our services.

We have continued to review and plan improvements to our digital technology to ensure it is fit for our future needs, sustainable, and good value for money. This work will set the vision and roadmap for our technology and digital and data strategy for the next 3 years, which will be published in the next financial year.

We continue to identify opportunities to exploit AI, to improve our efficiency and effectiveness. As part of this, we are exploring and assessing tools to understand the productivity benefits and value for money that they offer. This work has been guided by the HMG Generative AI Framework and AI Playbook for UK government and has included work on personal productivity, consultation analysis, and qualifications scrutiny workstreams.

Forward look for 2026

Ofqual's activity for 2026 to 2027 will continue to be shaped by our strategy 2025 to 2028. Our strategy is framed by regulatory stewardship. This means we are committed to a whole-system, forward-looking approach and that we remain agile and responsive to changing contexts.

In the year ahead, we will continue to work within the resource constraints which, in common with other government departments, we face. We will also proactively manage the staff expertise pipeline in areas of shortage. We will continue to oversee the safe and fair delivery of qualifications, while keeping our focus on long-term improvements to fairness, resilience and market performance. We will also play an important role in supporting and guiding changes to qualifications during a period of significant government-led reform.

Alongside this, we continue to reduce unnecessary burden and improve the efficiency of our regulatory activity. We will continue to streamline our processes, make better use of data and digital systems, and ensure our requirements are proportionate and targeted.

This will help us regulate effectively while minimising demands on awarding organisations and the wider system.

Managing our resources

Estate

Ofqual continues to operate from a single office in Coventry, having relocated within the city in April 2024. Under an occupancy agreement with the Government Property Agency (GPA) we work from a modern and more energy efficient office close to amenities and public transport, at lower cost than our 2018 to 2024 accommodation.

Public enquiries

During 2025 to 2026 we received 1,824 written enquiries and 2,514 telephone calls. Of these, 989 calls were answered by a call handler and 1,525 were answered by interactive voice response, our automated telephony system, which enables the customer to route their calls to relevant information and advice or be connected to a call handler.

We aim to respond to written enquiries within 3 working days. In 2025 to 2026 we responded to 99.5% of written enquiries within that timeframe.

Whistleblowing disclosures

Ofqual is a prescribed body for whistleblowing under the Prescribed Persons (Reports on Disclosures of Information) Regulations 2017.

Workers can make whistleblowing disclosures to Ofqual about matters under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

Ofqual must report annually on whistleblowing disclosures made to us by workers. This covers the reporting period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

During this reporting period we have:

- received 72 whistleblowing disclosures
- closed 74 allegations:
 - 30 were referred to awarding organisations for further action
 - 16 were closed as no evidence was found to substantiate the claims
 - 17 were logged as intelligence and formed part of our ongoing monitoring of awarding organisations
 - 4 were referred to another body with direct responsibility for their investigation
 - 7 were investigated by Ofqual

Whistleblowing disclosures provide us with valuable information and intelligence that we use to inform our regulatory activity, taking the appropriate action in each case.

Complaints

Complaints about Ofqual

The types of complaints received under our 'Complaints about Ofqual' policy are generally about aspects of the service we have provided or about the work we

do. We received 15 complaints about Ofqual in the reporting period. None of these complaints were upheld or partially upheld during the reporting period.

Where a complainant is unhappy with the outcome of their complaint, they can request an internal review. 2 internal review investigations were requested during this period, one of which was not accepted as it did not meet the criteria. The other request was accepted, investigated and not upheld.

Complaints to the Parliamentary Ombudsman

No cases were accepted for investigation by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman during 2025 to 2026.

Complaints about awarding organisations

We also consider complaints about an exam board, awarding organisation or qualification regulated by Ofqual.

Overall, we received 737 new complaints about awarding organisations. Where there are indications of non-compliance, we classify our outcome as either 'Upheld' or 'Partly Upheld'. We upheld or partly upheld 24 complaints about awarding organisations during the year.

Where complaints were upheld or partly upheld, we took further action to consider any potential non-compliance and subsequent regulatory activity.

Where a complainant is unhappy with the outcome of their complaint, they can request an internal review. We received 16 requests for an internal review, 14 of which were not accepted as they did not meet the criteria. Two internal review investigations were undertaken during this period, of which one was upheld.

During the reporting period, we provided a final response within 40 days in 91% of cases. The average number of days to close a complaint was 9.2 days.

Statutory equalities reporting

As a public body, Ofqual is required under the Equality Act 2010 to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) both as an employer and a regulator. This means Ofqual must give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

Ofqual is required under The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 (SI 2017/353) to publish one or more equality objectives at least every 4 years and to publish annually a report explaining how we meet the PSED.

Ofqual also has a duty under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (the ASCL Act) to have regard to the reasonable requirements of students and apprentices who take regulated qualifications and national assessments, including

those with special educational needs and disabilities SEND. Ofqual must consider its equality duties alongside its other statutory objectives, including to maintain qualification and assessment standards. Our work to achieve our Equality objectives 2025 to 2028, as well as our broader work towards the PSED, is set out in this report. This is because we have embedded fairness and equality, diversity and inclusion into our strategy and work programme.

Financial review

Funding for 2025 to 2026 was agreed at the 2025 Spending Review (SR25) and updated through the Main and Supplementary Estimate processes, from which in total we received funding of £32.449 million (£31.330 million in 2024 to 2025), including capital funding of £0.45 million for the development of our digital infrastructure and an additional £0.1 million annually managed expenditure. This provision did not materialise at year end, and therefore no AME expenditure is reflected in the financial outturn for the year. Funding had also been amended to allow for potential unexpected additional costs relating to the COVID-19 Enquiry, although such costs were lower than had been anticipated and were more than balanced by savings in other spend areas.

Net operating expenditure for the year, including capital investment, was £31.28 million (£31.24 million in 2024 to 2025), giving an outturn that was £1.17 million (3.6%) under budget.

Ofqual has remained within the spending limits for both RDEL (resource departmental expenditure limit) and CDEL (capital departmental expenditure limit). RAME (resource annually managed expenditure) was also requested at Supplementary Estimates to cover the creation of a provision for litigation costs (non-cash) of £0.100 million.

Staff costs for the year remained the same as in 2024 to 2025 partly due to building capacity for VTQ reforms, and as a percentage remain at 81% of total expenditure (81% in 2024 to 2025). Contract and agency staff accounted for 0.5% of staffing costs during the year (0.7% in 2024 to 2025) to manage capacity while permanent staff were recruited.

Ofqual recorded £2.520 million income from fines in 2025 to 2026 (£805,000 in 2024 to 2025). Fines are not retained by Ofqual, and so the income in 2025 to 2026 was returned to HM Treasury. Cost recovery of £63,000 was retained by Ofqual in the financial year.

The spending limits are referred to as control totals, authorised through the Parliamentary vote process. The control totals relate to specific elements of the resource budget including income, and to capital and annually managed expenditure, as detailed in the Statement of Outturn against Parliamentary Supply.

Departmental data reporting tables

Operationally, Ofqual is required to deliver its objectives within 3 financial targets as agreed with HM Treasury.

These are set out in Table 2, which illustrates financial performance for the period 2021 to 2022 through to 2025 to 2026 compared with RDEL, CDEL and annually managed expenditure (AME).

The table shows that 98.6% of Ofqual's expenditure is incurred through its RDEL (97.7% in 2024 to 2025).

Table 2 – Annual expenditure trend

	2021-22 Outturn £000	2022-23 Outturn £000	2023-24 Outturn £000	2024-25 Outturn £000	2025-26 Outturn £000	2026-27 Planned £000	2027-28 Planned £000	2028-29 Planned £000	2029-30 Planned £000
Consumption of resources:									
Regulation of qualifications	24,772	28,376	30,391	30,506	30,850	30,395	30,337	30,177	0
Total RDEL	24,772	28,376	30,391	30,506	30,850	30,395	30,337	30,177	0
Resource AME:									
Regulation of qualifications	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total resource	24,772	28,376	30,391	30,506	30,850	30,395	30,337	30,177	0
Total CDEL	397	640	2,800	449	429	450	450	450	450
Capital AME:	0	0	0	282	0	0	0	0	0
Total public spending	25,169	29,016	33,191	31,237	31,279	30,845	30,787	30,627	450

Parliament provides the legal authority to incur expenditure through the Estimates and Supply procedure. Parliament grants statutory authority both to consume resources and to draw cash from the Consolidated Fund to pay for resources consumed by an annual Appropriation Act and the Consolidated Fund Act.

Ofqual's annual expenditure is classified as either programme or administration for the purposes of central government accounting, as defined in accounting note 1.2.5. Table 3 demonstrates that 17% of resource expenditure was incurred through the administration classification in 2025 to 2026 (21% in 2024 to 2025).

Tables 2 and 3 also reflect funding agreed at the last Spending Review (SR25) for the period 2026 to 2027 up to 2028 to 2029. In addition, CDEL funding of £450,000 has been agreed for 2029 to 2030.

Table 3 – Programme and administration resource expenditure

	2021-22 Outturn £000	2022-23 Outturn £000	2023-24 Outturn £000	2024-25 Outturn £000	2025-26 Outturn £000	2026-27 Planned £000	2027-28 Planned £000	2028-29 Planned £000
Programme:								
Expenditure								
Pay	5,855	8,636	11,599	20,505	21,711	16,441	16,570	16,501
Other expenditure	3,712	3,992	3,782	3,671	3,942	898	840	827
Total expenditure	9,567	12,628	15,381	24,176	25,653	17,339	17,410	17,328
Income			(51)	(25)	(63)	(96)	(102)	(115)
Total net programme expenditure	9,567	12,628	15,330	24,151	25,590	17,243	17,308	17,213
Administration:								
Expenditure								
Pay	12,221	12,135	11,443	4,333	3,407	13,206	13,089	13,024
Other expenditure	3,157	3,696	3,681	2,073	1,904	0	0	0
Total expenditure	15,378	15,831	15,124	6,406	5,311	13,206	13,089	13,024
Income	(173)	(83)	(63)	(51)	(51)	(54)	(60)	(60)
Total net administration expenditure	15,205	15,748	15,061	6,355	5,260	13,152	13,029	12,964
Total resource expenditure	24,772	28,376	30,391	30,506	30,850	30,395	30,337	30,177

A thorough review of the categorisation of revenue expenditure was undertaken during the year to align with the guidance set out in the 2024 to 2025 Consolidated Budgeting Guidance (CBG 2025).

This resulted in a clearer delineation of costs between programme and administration budgets, more accurately reflecting how costs are incurred. Consequently, there is a significant increase in programme costs, with a corresponding decrease in administration costs in 2024 to 2025.

The exercise was repeated in 2025 to 2026 to ensure consistency of treatment. In 2025 to 2026, programme costs accounted for 83% of total resource expenditure.

Long-term expenditure trends

Table 4 shows expenditure on Ofqual's role in major qualifications reforms. The vocational and technical qualifications reform outturn for 2025 to 2026 covered the same areas of expenditure as 2024 to 2025 including delivery of reforms to apprenticeships, T Levels, higher technical qualifications (HTQs), digital functional skills, review of qualifications at level 3 and below, strengthening performance table qualifications and the review of digital functional skills qualifications. Planned expenditure of 2026 to 2027 includes the overarching Reform programme. The Reform programme covers the following VTQ qualifications V Levels, Foundation and Occupational Certificates, post-16 English and maths and T Levels. The Reform programme also encompasses the reform of GCSEs

and AS/A level qualifications. Funding for the Reform programme has been agreed between Ofqual and the DfE. In addition to the Reform programme, the Policy directorate continue for planned expenditure on the T Levels Gen 2 Wave 3 programme and planned activity across the GQ space, including qualification redesign, post-accreditation amendments, qualification evaluation and accreditation of digital assessments.

Table 4 – Expenditure on qualifications reform

	2021-22 Outturn £000	2022-23 Outturn £000	2023-24 Outturn £000	2024-25 Outturn £000	2025-26 Outturn £000	2026-27 Planned £000	2027-28 Planned £000	2028-29 Planned £000
General Qualifications	0	0	0	0	0	2,076	2,260	2,240
Vocational and technical qualifications	5,535	5,084	6,536	6,551	6,302	2,393	2,020	2,230
Total qualifications reform	5,535	5,084	6,536	6,551	6,302	4,469	4,280	4,470

Payment of suppliers

The government is committed to paying 90% of undisputed and valid invoices from small and medium-sized enterprises within 5 days, and 100% of all undisputed and valid invoices within 30 days. During the year Ofqual paid 98% of all invoices within 5 days (91% in 2024 to 2025), and 100% of all invoices within 30 days (100% in 2024 to 2025). In 2025 to 2026, no interest was payable under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 (nil in 2024 to 2025).

Sustainability

TCFD Compliance Statement

Since 2023 to 2024 Ofqual has been required to provide additional disclosures in accordance with the Financial Reporting Manual (FReM), as part of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) framework.

Ofqual has reported climate-related financial disclosures in line with HM Treasury's TCFD-aligned disclosure application guidance, which interprets and adapts the TCFD framework for the UK public sector. On this basis, Ofqual has complied with the relevant TCFD-aligned recommended disclosures in scope for Phase 3 of the central government implementation timetable, covering:

- Governance – recommended disclosures (a) and (b)

- Risk management – recommended disclosures
- Metrics and targets – recommended disclosure (b)

In line with the Phase 3 requirements, and reflecting Ofqual's assessment that climate change does not constitute a principal risk to its operation disclosures relating to Strategy, and Metrics and Targets, recommended disclosures (a) and (c) have not been made in this reporting period.

Governance

The Executive Director, Finance and Operations has delegated responsibility for overseeing the assessment of the sustainability and environmental impacts arising from Ofqual's operations. This includes ensuring that strategic and significant operational decisions with potential material sustainability risks or impacts are identified and, where appropriate, escalated to the Executive team. The Executive team provides oversight, challenge, and assurance, and makes recommendations to the Accounting Officer as necessary. Matters requiring further scrutiny or approval are reported to the board committees.

Risk management

The Executive team oversees the identification, assessment, and response to any significant climate-related risks that are identified throughout the year. This process is supported through horizon scanning activity that reviews contextual risk intelligence obtained from a

wide range of sources, including the UK Government's National Risk Register and Chronic Risks Analysis, and categorises potential threats and opportunities according to broad strategic themes. Each of these contextual risk themes is then assessed in line with the Risk Management Framework and made available to the Executive Team to inform strategic planning considerations.

We recognise that climate risk has the potential to impact significantly across the qualifications market that we regulate, primarily in terms of severe weather events that could disrupt exams and the business implications associated with rising energy costs. To address these risks, we continue to prioritise our work on resilience throughout the sector. Ofqual does not consider climate to be a principal risk to the achievement of our corporate objectives.

Metrics and targets

In April 2024 Ofqual relocated to a building with substantially different environmental properties and data collection and reporting capability. As such 2024 to 2025 is a new baseline year. The following information is provided for comparison. It is not possible to set targets based on a single year of data from the new site; therefore, we anticipate setting targets from 2027 to 2028.

Data relating to carbon emissions is included in Table 5 above.

Adapting to climate change and promoting resource efficiency

As a tenant of the GPA, Ofqual relies on the GPA's expertise and timely information to reduce the environmental impact of its main place of work. In 2022 Ofqual's headcount brought it into the scope of the Greening Government Commitments, and data is reported to the DfE, which aggregates data for education group departments, agencies and arm's-length bodies.

To minimise physical waste, Ofqual has appointed a third party to re-use and recycle IT equipment. Surplus furniture or office equipment is offered for re-use by other government bodies or donated to local not-for-profit organisations.

Ofqual uses cloud-based services. This reduces energy demand while improving resilience. To further reduce its environmental impact, Ofqual only uses recycled paper from sustainable sources and encourages a "think-before-you-print" culture. Data on Ofqual's waste is monitored to support reduction of consumption of non-recyclable materials. Dedicated bins are used to separate types of waste including non-recyclable. Confidential waste is collected and upon the satisfactory completion of the destruction process, 100% of material is recycled.

Resource consumption

Table 5 – Energy, waste and water

	2023 to 2024	²2024 to 2025	2025 to 2026
Electricity (kWh)	320,548	38,490	Full year data not available
Electricity (tCO ₂)	72.24	6.71	Full year data not available
Gas (kWh)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Gas (tCO ₂)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Water (m ³)	377	231	Full year data not available
Waste (tonnes)	10.5	1.2	Full year data not available
Metric tonnes of carbon from other sources (including staff travel)	3.11	1.5	Full year data not available

Ofqual relies on 3rd party data which is subject to correction. Full year data for 2025 to 2026 is not available at this time.

2. The large changes in resource consumption data between 2023/24 and 2024/25 are due to both a relocation and to different methods of data collection.

Table 6 – Business travel costs

Ofqual does not own a vehicle fleet and encourages staff to use public transport whenever possible.

	2022 to 2023 £	2023 to 2024 £	2024 to 2025 £	2025 to 2026 £
Rail	54,147	78,826	75,129	57,032
Hotel	46,346	39,987	45,141	43,184
Mileage	8,911	9,548	9,591	7,812
Air and ferry	2,502	4,937	6,978	4,208
Total business travel costs	111,906	133,298	136,839	112,236

Procuring sustainable products and services

Ofqual uses procurement frameworks from public and private sector buying organisations including the Government Commercial Agency (GCA) where appropriate. This enables Ofqual to benefit from prices negotiated for government and to benefit from contract terms which consider social values, including but not only environmental sustainability.

Since 2021, Ofqual has taken account of organisations' social values in the award of contracts and has included this as an explicit evaluation criterion, where relevant and proportionate, as per the Procurement Act 2023 (which supersedes the Public Services (Social Value) Act). The Procurement Act 2023 is now the primary regime governing public procurement. It reshapes how social value is measured, embedded, and enforced.

As the Procurement Act becomes more embedded in contracts awarded there will be an increased focus on social value measurement and performance in contract management.

Basis of accounts

The accounts for the year ending 31 March 2026 have been prepared under a direction issued by HM Treasury in accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000. Ofqual was the sole entity within the departmental accounting boundary during 2025 to 2026 and is not responsible for any bodies outside the departmental accounting boundary.

In common with other government departments, funding for Ofqual will be met by future Grants of Supply to be approved annually by Parliament. The Spending Review (SR25) delivered a settlement that recognised the important role Ofqual continues to play in delivering government objectives. Ofqual's settlement from His Majesty's Treasury for SR25 Phase 2 (RDEL: £29.5 million per annum between 2026 to 2027 and 2028 to 2029) will enable continued delivery of its statutory and key strategic objectives over the period covered. It is therefore considered appropriate to adopt a going concern basis for the preparation of these financial statements.

Ofqual's going concern policy is explained further in note 1, section 1.2.1.

Pension liabilities

Ofqual's employees are covered by the provisions of the Civil Service Pension Scheme. Information on pension entitlements is provided in the remuneration report section of this report. Information on pension liabilities is provided in the financial statements section.

Events after the reporting period

There have been no events after the reporting period that require an adjustment to the financial statements, nor any non-adjusting events to be reported.

Auditor

The Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000 appointed the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) as Ofqual's auditor. He has charged a fee of £118,000 for the audit in 2025 to 2026. There were no non-audit services provided by the C&AG.

Sir Ian Bauckham CBE

Chief Regulator and Accounting Officer

2 July 2026

Accountability report

The accountability report contains the following 3 sections:

- corporate governance report
- remuneration and staff report
- parliamentary accountability and audit report

The corporate governance report is divided into 3 parts: the directors' report, the statement of Accounting Officer's responsibilities, and the governance statement. The report explains the composition and organisation of Ofqual's governance structures and how they support the achievement of our objectives. It includes information regarding Ofqual's directors and their significant interests, confirms the Accounting Officer's responsibilities and how they have been assured, and outlines Ofqual's governance framework, including the board's committee structure, its attendance, and coverage of its work. The report also assesses the risks to Ofqual.

The remuneration and staff report sets out Ofqual's remuneration policy for directors, reports on how that policy has been implemented and sets out the amounts awarded to directors and the link between performance and remuneration. It includes information on the cost and composition of staff and related activities.

The parliamentary accountability and audit report brings together the key parliamentary accountability documents within the annual report and accounts. It comprises the Statement of Outturn against Parliamentary Supply and supporting notes regarding the financial outturn and information on costs, regularity of expenditure, parliamentary accountability disclosures, and the Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the House of Commons.

Corporate governance report

Directors' report

The Executive team at 31 March 2026 comprised:

Sir Ian Bauckham CBE, Chief Regulator

Michael Hanton, Deputy Chief Regulator

David Bowden, Executive Director Finance and Operations

Daniel Gutteridge, General Counsel

Catherine Large OBE, Executive Director Vocational and Technical Qualifications

Tom Bramley, Executive Director Research and Analysis

Amanda Swann, Executive Director, General Qualifications

Matt Trimmer, Executive Director, Strategy

The directorships and other significant interests of all who were members of the Executive team in 2025 to 2026 are shown in Table 7.

Table 7 Executive team directorships and other significant interests

Name	Directorships and other significant interests in 2025 to 2026
Sir Ian Bauckham CBE	Chair, Oak National Academy
Michael Hanton	Director of Institute of Regulation (unpaid)
David Bowden	Parent Governor, Henrietta Barnett School (from March 2026)
Daniel Gutteridge	Director, Better Futures Multi-Academy Trust Ltd (unpaid) Chair of Audit and Risk Committee of BFMAT
Catherine Large OBE	Trustee, Katherine Warrington School (from September 2025)
Tom Bramley	Member of (US based) National Council on Measurement in Education Study Advisory Board Member, EEF (unpaid) Honorary Research Fellow, Department of Education, University of Oxford (from December 2025)
Amanda Swann	Nothing to declare
Matt Trimmer	Nothing to declare
Ian Stockford*	Nothing to declare

*Ian Stockford resigned on 17 March 2026 and commenced 'Garden Leave' with immediate effect.

Board members

The Ofqual Board at 31 March 2026 was:

Dr Susan Tranter, Chair

Susan Barratt

Sir Ian Bauckham CBE (Chief Regulator)

Hardip Begol CBE

Jill Duffy

Mark Farrar

Kurt Hintz

Cindy Leslie

Dr Catherine McClellan

Chris Paterson

Clare Pelham

Andrea Rigamonti

Conor Ryan

The appointment dates, directorships and other significant interests of all who were members of the board in 2025 to 2026 are shown in Table 8 below.

Table 8 Board member appointments, directorships, memberships of directing bodies and other significant interests

Name	Date of appointment	Term of appointment, including extensions and departures	Employment details, directorships, memberships of directing bodies and other significant interests in 2025 to 2026
Susan Barratt	1 September 2019	Three years until 31 August 2022 as Ordinary Member Three-year re-appointment as Ordinary Member from 1 September 2022 – 31 August 2025 Two-year re-appointment as Ordinary Member from 1 September 2025 – 31 August 2027	Trustee, Nuffield Oxford Hospitals Fund Trustee, Eastleigh Youth & Community Trust (and director of wholly owned subsidiary) Trustee, Lime Walk Methodist Church Trustee, Oxford Methodist Circuit Independent member, Audit & Risk Assurance Committee, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Independent Chair of the Group Audit & Risk Committee for the Lampton Group (trading company for London Borough of Hounslow) Independent member, Audit & Risk Assurance Committee, Climate Change Committee Trustee, The Oxford Winter Night Shelter (as from April 2025)
Sir Ian Bauckham CBE Chief Regulator	6 February 2025	Appointed Chief Regulator at Ofqual on 6 February 2025	Chair, Oak National Academy Limited

Name	Date of appointment	Term of appointment, including extensions and departures	Employment details, directorships, memberships of directing bodies and other significant interests in 2025 to 2026
Hardip Begol CBE	1 July 2022	Three years until 30 June 2025 as Ordinary Member Two-year re-appointment as Ordinary Member from 1 July 2025 – 30 June 2027	Non-executive director, Oak National Academy Limited Member, International Ministerial Advisory Panel on Curriculum and Assessment for Northern Ireland Trustee, Education Policy Institute Member of Strategic Advisory Board, Observatory for Mathematical Education, University of Nottingham (until March 2026) Member, The Eden Academy Trust Director, 104 Pepys Road Management Ltd
Jill Duffy	1 January 2026	Three years until 31 December 2028 as Ordinary Member	Governor of Oxford Brookes University
Mark Farrar	1 July 2022	Three years until 30 June 2025 as Ordinary Member One year re-appointment as Ordinary Member from 1 July 2025 – 30 June 2026	Board trustee and director of WorldSkills UK Director, Nipper Skipper Limited (Dormant company)
Kurt Hintz	1 October 2025	Three years until 30 September 2028 as Ordinary Member	Interim Principal and CEO, Petroc College (until December 2025) Interim Principal and CEO, Havant and South Downs College (from January 2026) Director, Fortis Education Consulting Director, Viewsunny Property Management Ltd

Name	Date of appointment	Term of appointment, including extensions and departures	Employment details, directorships, memberships of directing bodies and other significant interests in 2025 to 2026
Cindy Leslie	1 July 2022	Three years until 30 June 2025 as Ordinary Member Three-year re-appointment as Ordinary Member from 1 July 2025 – 30 June 2028	Trustee/non-executive director/ Chair of the Audit Committee, Birbeck University Non-executive director, Architects Registration Board Trustee and non-executive director of the Royal College of Psychiatrists Trustee, non-executive director and Vice Chair, Gardeners' Royal Benevolent Society Master, Worshipful Company of Gardeners Member of Fitness to Practice Panels, Health & Care Professions Council (until June 2025) Trustee, Surrey Hills International Music Festival Trustee, Worshipful Company of Gardeners of London Charity Trustee, Future Gardeners Trustee, Metropolitan Public Gardens Association

Name	Date of appointment	Term of appointment, including extensions and departures	Employment details, directorships, memberships of directing bodies and other significant interests in 2025 to 2026
Dr Catherine McClellan	1 June 2020	Three years until 31 May 2023 as Ordinary Member Three-year re-appointment as Ordinary Member from 1 June 2023 – 31 May 2026	Member, Measurement Advisory Group, Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Member, advisory board of the Centre for Learning Analytics at Monash University (CoLAM) Principal Scientist/owner, Clowder Consulting Interim board member, Commonwealth Research Centre proposal team 'AI for LIFE' Enterprise Fellow, University of Melbourne (from 28 November 2024) Clowder contract with Karat to evaluate current reporting scale construction. Member, ANZ Language Assessment Focus Group for Duolingo English Test
Chris Paterson	1 July 2022	Three years until 30 June 2025 as Ordinary Member Three-year re-appointment as Ordinary Member from 1 July 2025 – 30 June 2028	Acting co-CEO, Education Endowment Foundation Director, Ormiston Academies Trust
Clare Pelham	1 July 2022	Three years until 30 June 2025 as Ordinary Member Two-year re-appointment as Ordinary Member from 1 July 2025 – 30 June 2027	Chief Executive of the Epilepsy Society Governor, Birmingham City University Member of MHRA Expert Working Group on Sodium Valproate

Name	Date of appointment	Term of appointment, including extensions and departures	Employment details, directorships, memberships of directing bodies and other significant interests in 2025 to 2026
Andrea Rigamonti	1 October 2025	Three years until 30 September 2028 as Ordinary Member	Videndum plc: Group Chief Financial Officer and Director of plc and subsidiaries (until October 2024) Videndum plc: Employee from October 2024 to December 2025 Member of the Board of Governors and of the Audit, Assurance and Risk Committee of Middlesex University London (from September 2025)
Conor Ryan	1 November 2025	Three years until 31 October 2028 as Ordinary Member	Non-executive director, Oak National Academy Limited Trustee / Chair of Education and Standards Committee, Futura Learning Partnership
Matt Tee End of term of office: 31 December 2025	1 September 2019	Three years until 31 August 2022 as Ordinary Member Three-year reappointment as Ordinary Member from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2025 4-month extension as Ordinary Member from 1 September 2025 – 31 December 2025	Independent consultant
Dr Susan Tranter Chair of Ofqual Board	1 January 2025	Appointed as Chair of Ofqual Board for 3 years until 31 December 2027	CEO of EdAct Trustee of Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment Member of Ofsted Reference Group Member of Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel

Name	Date of appointment	Term of appointment, including extensions and departures	Employment details, directorships, memberships of directing bodies and other significant interests in 2025 to 2026
Frances Wadsworth CBE End of term of office: 30 September 2025	1 April 2017	Three years until 31 March 2020 as Ordinary Member Nine-month extension until 31 December 2020 Two-year reappointment as Ordinary Member 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2022 Six-month extension from 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022 Three-year re-appointment as Ordinary Member from 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2025	Lay Advisor, Thames Valley Area Magistracy Deputy FE Commissioner

Personal data-related incidents reported to the Information Commissioner's Office

There have been no incidents to report to the Information Commissioner's Office during the year.

Summary of other personal data-related incidents

There have been 25 non-reportable incidents during this period. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) received 4 reports in the year to provide assurance on the process and actions taken

against themes identified. All incidents were resolved and appropriate controls were put in place where necessary.

Recruitment

The requirements of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act, which states that selection for recruitment to the Civil Service must be on merit based on fair and open competition, underpin Ofqual's recruitment practices.

In 2025 to 2026 an average of 359 whole-time equivalent staff were employed (361 in 2024 to 2025). In addition, there has been an average of 2 agency member of staff to cover vacancies, maternity leave and long-term sick leave (3 in 2024 to 2025) with one employed as of 31 March 2026.

Ofqual continues to be recognised as a Disability Confident employer, having achieved accreditation at level 2 in February 2020.

Sir Ian Bauckham CBE

Chief Regulator and Accounting Officer

2 July 2026

Statement of Accounting Officer's responsibilities

Under the Resources and Accounts Act 2000, HM Treasury has directed Ofqual to prepare for each financial year resource accounts detailing the resources acquired, held or disposed of during the year and the use of resources by the department during the year. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of Ofqual and of its income and expenditure, Statement of Financial Position and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts, the Accounting Officer is required to comply with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) and in particular to:

- observe the accounts direction issued by HM Treasury, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis
- state whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the accounts
- prepare the accounts on a going concern basis

- confirm that the annual report and accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and take personal responsibility for the annual report and accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable

HM Treasury has appointed the Chief Regulator as Accounting Officer of Ofqual. The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding Ofqual's assets, are set out in Managing Public Money published by HM Treasury.

As the Accounting Officer, I have taken all the steps that I ought to have taken to make myself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that Ofqual's auditors are aware of that information. So far as I am aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the auditors are unaware. I can confirm that the annual report and accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable. I take personal responsibility for the judgements required to ensure this.

Sir Ian Bauckham CBE

Chief Regulator and Accounting Officer

2 July 2026

Governance statement

Scope of responsibility

As Accounting Officer, the Chief Regulator is responsible for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of Ofqual's policies, aims and objectives, while safeguarding the public funds and our assets for which they are personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned in Managing Public Money. This governance statement describes how these duties have been carried out by the Accounting Officer and the supporting structure in the 2025 to 2026 financial year.

Overview

The Ofqual Board is the legal authority responsible for the regulation of qualifications, exams and assessments. The board provides leadership and direction, setting our strategic aims, values and standards. Its work is governed by the Ofqual Governance Framework. The Chief Regulator has delegated authority from the board to undertake certain statutory functions. The Chief Regulator calls upon Ofqual's executive team to advise as required in the discharge of those functions. Further details about the members and activities of the board, its sub-committees and the executive team are provided in the detailed paragraphs below.

Ofqual Board

Ofqual adheres to the Corporate Governance Code for central government bodies, and central standards of good governance practice for government boards where appropriate.

During 2025 to 2026 the board consisted of a Chair, between 9 and 11 ordinary members and the Chief Regulator. Ordinary members are appointed by the Secretary of State for Education and hold and vacate office in accordance with the terms of their appointment. Board members may be reappointed as their terms expire, but there is no automatic right to this. Ofqual runs a thorough induction programme for new board members.

Board membership and terms of appointment are detailed in board member appointments, directorships and other significant interests in the directors' report. Information about the committees on which board members served is provided in Table 9.

Table 9 Board members and the committees on which they served in 2025 to 2026 including percentage attendance

Name	Board		Audit & Risk Assurance Committee		People, Resources & Finance Committee		Technical Committee		Strategic Enforcement Committee	
	5 meetings	4 meetings	4 meetings	4 meetings	4 meetings	4 meetings	6 meetings	6 meetings	1 meeting	1 meeting
Susan Barratt Chair of People, Resources and Finance Committee	100%	–	–	100%	–	–	–	–	100%	–
Sir Ian Bauckham CBE Chief Regulator	100%*	–	–	–	–	–	84% (5 out of 6)	–	–	–
Hardip Begol CBE Chair of Technical Committee	100%	100% (until 10 December 2025)	–	–	–	–	100%*	100%	–	–
Jill Duffy Appointed 01 January 2026	100% (2 out of 2)	–	–	–	–	–	100% (from 19 January 2026)	–	–	–
Mark Farrar	100%	–	–	100%	–	–	–	–	–	–

Name	Board		Audit & Risk Assurance Committee		People, Resources & Finance Committee		Technical Committee		Strategic Enforcement Committee	
	5 meetings	4 meetings	4 meetings	4 meetings	4 meetings	6 meetings	6 meetings	1 meeting	1 meeting	1 meeting
Kurt Hintz Appointed 01 October 2025	100% (4 out of 4)	100% (from 08 October 2025)	–	–	100% (from 10 December 2025)	–	–	–	–	–
Cindy Leslie Chair of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	100%	100%*	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	100%
Dr Catherine McClellan	100%	–	–	–	84% (5 out of 6)	–	–	–	–	–
Chris Paterson Chair of Strategic Enforcement Committee	100%	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	100%*
Clare Pelham	80% (4 out of 5)	–	–	–	50% (2 out of 4)	–	–	–	–	100%
Andrea Rigamonti Appointed 01 October 2025	100% (4 out of 4)	–	–	–	100% (from 08 October 2025)	–	–	–	–	–

Name	Board 5 meetings	Audit & Risk Assurance Committee 4 meetings	People, Resources & Finance Committee 4 meetings	Technical Committee 6 meetings	Strategic Enforcement Committee 1 meeting
Conor Ryan Appointed 01 November 2025	100% (3 out of 3)	100% (from 10 December 2025)	–	–	–
Matt Tee End of term of office: 31 December 2025	100% (3 out of 3)	100%	–	–	100%
Dr Susan Tranter Chair of Ofqual Board	100%	–	–	–	–
Frances Wadsworth CBE End of term of office: 30 September 2025	100% (1 out of 1)	–	–	–	100%

The Chief Regulator, Sir Ian Bauckham, attended 4 of the 4 ARAC meetings held during 2025 to 2026, as well as 4 of the 4 PRF meetings and one SEC meeting. The Chair of the Board is not a member of any of the board committees but can be specifically invited to join the meetings. During the year, 3 ARAC meetings and 3 PRF committee meetings were attended by the Chair, as well as 3 of the Technical Committee meetings and one SEC meeting.

Executive directors are invited to attend all board meetings and relevant committee meetings. Each committee reports on its work at the board meeting following the committee meeting.

Board and committee members are required to declare potential conflicts of interest on appointment and at the beginning of each meeting they attend. They must confirm annually that the register of their interests is up to date. Where actual or potential conflicts of interests are identified, board members take no part in any discussion and are not involved in any decisions that relate to those interests. The register of interests is open to the public, and requests for information may be made in writing addressed to the board secretary. The appointments, directorships and other significant interests of board members are in Table 8.

Committees of the board

During 2025 to 2026, there were 4 committees of the board.

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) provides advice and assurance to the board, including the Chief Regulator as Accounting Officer, on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls, risk management processes, security and governance arrangements, and ensuring value for money. It also oversees internal and external audit arrangements covering both financial and non-financial systems.

During 2025 to 2026 ARAC received regular reports from Ofqual's Security Advisor, reviewed the findings of internal audit reports on a range of operational areas, which are shown in Table 10, considered the Annual Value for Money report, reviewed the Gifts and Hospitality Register, and received regular updates on complaints received by Ofqual. Each ARAC meeting includes a selection of deep dives into the risks currently held on the Strategic Risk Register. These support ARAC's role of providing assurance to the board on the adequacy of risk management at Ofqual. There was also the annual review of risk tolerance and risk assurance mapping.

The People, Resources and Finance Committee supports the board with its responsibilities in relation to human resources (including equality, diversity and inclusion), finance, information technology and asset management. In 2025 to 2026, it received key metrics on financial and people resources, reviewed the budget and management accounts, considered the Annual Value for Money report and received the results of the

Civil Service People Survey 2025. The Ofqual gender pay gap report 2025 was reviewed before publication. The committee also received regular reports on digital, data and technology with an in depth look at future technology programmes being undertaken.

The Technical Committee provides technical and strategic advice in relation to the development of policy and technical proposals for regulated qualifications and the regulated qualifications market. In 2025 to 2026, the committee agreed the policy proposals for the regulation of apprenticeship assessment and that Ofqual should proceed to public consultation on the draft rules and statutory guidance. A subsequent meeting after that consultation agreed to introduce the Conditions and requirements relating to Apprenticeship Assessment and the Qualification Level Guidance. Following a technical consultation for the proposed GCSE in British Sign Language, the committee considered the outcomes of the consultation and agreed to the publishing of the proposed Conditions, requirements and guidance. With the publication of the DfE's decision to proceed with the introduction of V Levels, Foundation Certificates and Occupation Certificates, the committee looked at the proposed regulatory approach for these. It also considered proceeding to a combined policy and technical consultation, to include proposals for the regulatory approach and draft Conditions, requirements and guidance. The endorsements received from the

committee were subsequently referred to the board for approval.

The Strategic Enforcement Committee held one meeting during the year. The meeting continued the strategic development of Ofqual's enforcement function. The committee received an overview of enforcement cases concluded during the past year and looked at any arising themes. The determination of fines and fining history was scrutinised and the committee explored the use of the recent addition to Ofqual's range of enforcement tools, the Chief Regulator's Rebuke.

Management control activities

The Chief Regulator has delegated responsibility from the board for leading the organisation on a day-to-day basis. The Chief Regulator determines which duties are discharged through members of the Executive Team individually through line management arrangements, and which are discharged collectively through the Executive Team. Management control is governed by the Executive Team. Financial approval is delegated through the Scheme of Financial Delegation, which is published in the Standing Financial Instructions.

Executive Team

The Executive Team comprises the Chief Regulator, Deputy Chief Regulator, the executive directors and General Counsel. Details of the executive directors

that served on the Executive Team in 2025 to 2026 are provided in the directors' report.

The Executive Team provides advice to the Chief Regulator in the executive decision making delegated to him in the Ofqual governance framework.

The agenda includes the regular review of strategic risks, setting and monitoring delivery against organisational priorities, and other topics for strategic discussion, direction setting or decision making.

The Executive Team reviews key organisational performance indicators, including finance, legal, information technology, regulatory compliance and strategic human resources matters, monthly.

Risk management

Our risk and internal control framework

Ofqual's Risk Management Framework ensures we comply with HM Treasury's Orange Book principles and embeds risk management in our governance, decision-making and internal controls. It sets out how we identify, assess, review and report risks, supported by practical guidance on applying the 5 Orange Book principles.

Ofqual's risk function sits within the Strategy Directorate and is resourced with sufficient seniority and influence to support strategic, directorate, programme and project level risks. The team works with a network

of risk champions and has access to learning and development through the Civil Service regulatory networks and the Government Risk Profession.

We comprehensively revised our Risk Management Framework in 2025, aligning it with the most recent version of the HMT Orange Book. Our risk registers are held centrally on an in-house platform built to support our approach.

Proportionate, risk-based decision making is embedded in our corporate strategy, business plans, and annual budget. Strategic risks are reviewed regularly by the Executive Team and reported to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) and board. Each directorate and major programmes and projects maintain their own risk registers, with escalation and delegation between registers to ensure risks are handled at the appropriate level.

The Ofqual Board sets tolerance thresholds for each strategic risk and reviews these annually. ARAC monitors the effectiveness of our risk management framework in accordance with its Terms of Reference. The committee receives regular quarterly reports from the Executive Team on strategic risks, including 'deep dive' reviews that enable committee members to challenge the effectiveness of existing risk controls and mitigation plans for risks on the Strategic Risk Register.

Managing risks to our objectives

The Executive Team oversees the most significant risks to delivering our statutory and corporate objectives, reporting to the board through the Strategic Risk Register.

During the period from 2025 to 2026, we managed a range of strategic risks that were directly linked to the achievement of our statutory objectives as a regulator and our broader corporate objectives as a non-ministerial government department. Among the most significant risks was the potential for disruption to the annual delivery of GCSEs, A levels, and high-stakes vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs). This risk remained prominent on our Strategic Risk Register throughout the year. In response, we prioritised efforts to strengthen resilience and bolster contingency arrangements across the system. To ensure our preparedness, we undertook learning exercises focused on testing the suitability and effectiveness of our crisis response and business continuity plans.

We dedicated significant resources to managing strategic risks associated with upholding standards in both general qualifications and VTQs. Using our assessment expertise and regulatory capabilities, we implemented measures to mitigate risks to standards. Our aim was to maintain public confidence in the qualifications system by ensuring qualifications are consistently designed and delivered to meet the needs of employers and other users.

Following the government's response to the Curriculum and Assessment Review, we engaged in extensive work to understand and address the risks associated with substantial sector reform. Our Strategic Risk Register reflects distinct risks arising to achieving successful reforms in general qualifications, vocational and technical qualifications, and apprenticeship assessment. This comprehensive approach enabled us to respond effectively to the evolving risk landscape presented by sector-wide changes.

We recognise that the rapid pace of technological change in education and qualifications specifically presents both threats and opportunities. Our risk management response has concentrated on key areas, including the role of artificial intelligence in non-exam assessment and issues related to delivery, standards, and public confidence arising from the increasing use of on-screen assessment.

Throughout 2025 to 2026, we closely monitored additional risks, such as the potential impact of sustained commentary on our regulatory activities on public confidence in the qualifications system. We also addressed budgetary and workforce challenges that could affect the delivery of our core business activities, as well as the persistent threats to our cyber security. We also addressed budgetary and workforce challenges that could affect the delivery of our core business activities, as well as the persistent threats to our cyber security, and will continue to monitor and mitigate these as we move forward.

Our focus for 2026 to 2027

During the year ahead we will continue to improve our risk management through:

- Introducing a risk maturity self-assessment process
- Continued development of our in-house risk register platform
- Revising our approach to second line risk assurance activity

Internal audit and the effectiveness of the internal controls framework

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee agreed the 2025 to 2026 internal audit plan on 7 March 2025. The plan encompassed securing assurance on a range of regulatory and corporate areas of work. The individual audits for 2025 to 2026 and their ratings are provided in Table 10 below.

Table 10 Internal audit report ratings

Audit title	Report rating	No of actions raised (priority)	No. of actions not / partially implemented (priority)	No of actions closed (priority)	No of actions in progress (priority)*
Corporate Governance Arrangements	Reasonable	4 (Low)	–	4 (Low)	–
Risk Management Arrangements	Reasonable	2 (low) 3 (Medium)	1 (Medium)	2 (low) 2 (Medium)	1 (Medium)
Shadow IT Review	Reasonable	1 (Low) 2 (medium)	–	1 (Low) 2 (medium)	1 (Medium)
Enforcement and Investigations Processes	Substantial	2 (Low) 1 (Medium)	–	2 (Low) 1 (Medium)	–
Procurement and Management Information Arrangements	Substantial	1 (Low) 1 (Medium)	–	1 (Low) 1 (Medium)	–
Data Protection Compliance Framework	Advisory	1 (Advisory)	–	–	1 (Advisory)
Appraisals and Performance Management Arrangements	Partial	5 (Medium)	2 (Medium)	4* (Medium)	1 (Medium)

*Two recommended actions relating to Appraisals and Performance Management were accepted in part and implemented accordingly. The other two were implemented in full.

Accounting Officer system statement

As Accounting Officer of Ofqual, the Chief Regulator is personally responsible for safeguarding the public funds for which they have been given charge in the Ofqual Estimate. To support the Accounting Officer in discharging their responsibilities, the Ofqual Governance Framework sets out the scheme of delegation under which we operate.

For the 12 months ending on 31 March 2026, the head of internal audit's opinion was that Ofqual "has an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control". Our internal auditors "identified further enhancements to the framework of risk management, governance and internal control to ensure that it remains adequate and effective".

As well as the opinion provided to the Accounting Officer by our internal auditor, each executive director and appropriate directors and associate directors have been required to review the controls they have in place to manage governance, risk and control arrangements. They must give written assurance at the end of the financial year that these controls were effective. This supplements the regular reporting to the Executive Team on the stewardship of finances and risks. These letters of assurance support the preparation of this governance statement. No control failures or additional risks have been identified from these letters of assurance.

As Accounting Officer, I am accountable for ensuring compliance with Government Functional Standards in Ofqual. I am assured that Ofqual has a high level of compliance with the required and recommended elements of each relevant standard. A plan is in place to comply with the remaining elements of each relevant standard in a way that meets business needs and priorities so that the standards are embedded into directorate business plans going forward.

All the evidence that supports this governance statement has been considered and I am assured, as Accounting Officer, that Ofqual has strong governance, risk and internal control arrangements that support the delivery of our aims and objectives.

Sir Ian Bauckham CBE

Chief Regulator and Accounting Officer

2 July 2026

Remuneration and staff report

Remuneration report

Ofqual is a non-ministerial government department with no ministerial remuneration to report.

The chair and other non-executive board members are appointed by the Secretary of State for Education for renewable terms of not more than 5 years. The King-in-Council, on the advice of the Secretary of State for Education, appoints the Chief Regulator for a fixed term.

All other permanent staff are civil servants, appointed in accordance with the Civil Service Recruitment Code, which requires appointments to be made on merit based on fair and open competition, except in specified circumstances. Unless otherwise stated, the staff covered by this report hold Civil Service appointments.

Further information about the work of the Civil Service Commission is available on its website.

The Chief Regulator, board members and directors are covered by the Civil Service Management Code, and potential and actual conflicts of interest are managed in accordance with this code. The directors' report includes a list of the directorships and other significant interests held by these individuals. Ofqual maintains a register of interests that is open to the public and accessible by written request for information addressed to the Board Secretary.

In accordance with the Cabinet Office guidance document ‘Declaration and management of outside interests,’ the relevant interests of all Ofqual Senior Civil Servants (SCS) have been declared for this reporting period. In accordance with the guidance, the data to be reported for this period is as follows:

Name of SCS	Role (in the department)	Outside employment
Matthew Humphrey	Director of Legal Moderation and Enforcement, SCS1	Deputy District Judge, Midlands Circuit

Directors are paid in accordance with the Civil Service pay structure. Any change to directors’ remuneration for the current and future years will reflect the work and recommendations of the Senior Salaries Review Body.

Remuneration (including salary and benefits in kind)

This section is subject to audit.

Tables 11 and 12 show the gross salary and other taxable allowances for Ofqual’s board members and senior executives. Full-year equivalent (FYE) salaries for those who served part of the year are shown in brackets.

Table 11 Salary of board members for year ending 31 March 2026

Board members (all figures in £'000)	Salary 2025 to 2026	Salary 2024 to 2025
Dr Susan Tranter	³ 50-55	10-15 (55-60)
Frances Wadsworth CBE	0-5 (5-10)	40-45
Susan Barratt	5-10	5-10
Matt Tee	5-10	5-10
Dr Catherine McClellan	5-10	5-10
Hardip Begol CBE	5-10	5-10
Mark Farrar	5-10	5-10
Clare Pelham	5-10	5-10
Cindy Leslie	5-10	5-10
Chris Paterson	5-10	5-10
Andrea Rigamonti	0-5 (5-10)	—
Kurt Hintz	0-5 (5-10)	—
Jill Duffy	0-5 (5-10)	—
Conor Ryan	0-5 (5-10)	—

3. The Chair's base salary has remained unchanged compared to the prior year. In the prior financial year, total remuneration included a market rate allowance. This allowance is no longer applicable in the current year and has therefore not been included in the Chair's remuneration.

The Chief Regulator is also a member of the board. Details of the Chief Regulator's and senior executives' remuneration during 2025 to 2026 are provided in Table 12.

Sir Ian Bauckham was Chair to 31 December 2023, became Interim Chief Regulator from 1 January 2024 (0.9WTE) and was appointed Chief Regulator from 6 February 2025 (1WTE).

Frances Wadsworth CBE was Interim Chair from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024 (FYE is £50k-£55k) and a board member from 1 January 2025 to 25 September 2025 (FYE is £5k-£10k).

The new chair, Dr Susan Tranter, was appointed from 1 January 2025.

Matt Tee's contract came to an end on 31 December 2025.

Table 12 Salary of senior executives for year ending 31 March 2026

Senior executive	Salary 2025 to 2026 £000	Salary 2024 to 2025 £000	Performance Pay 2025 to 2026 £000	Performance Pay 2024 to 2025 £000	Pension Benefits 2025 to 2026 £000	Pension Benefits 2024 to 2025 £000	Total 2025 to 2026 £000	Total 2024 to 2025 £000
Sir Ian Bauckham CBE Chief Regulator	180-185*	165-170* (175-180)	0-5	–	58	10	240-245	175-180
Michael Hanton Deputy Chief Regulator	130-135	120-125	0-5	0-5	51	48	180-185	170-175
David Bowden Executive Director Finance and Operations	140-145*	135-140*	0-5	0-5	53	51	195-200	185-190
Ian Stockford Executive Director, Standards, Research and Analysis	120-125	115-120	0-5	0-5	46	46	165-170	160-165
Matt Trimmer Executive Director Strategy and Communications	115-120	115-120	0-5	0-5	47	45	165-170	160-165
Catherine Large OBE Executive Director, Vocational and Technical Qualifications	125-130	120-125	0-5	0-5	49	47	175-180	165-170
Amanda Swann Executive Director, General Qualifications	105-110	105-110	0-5	0-5	43	41	150-155	145-150
Daniel Gutteridge General Counsel	115-120	110-115	0-5	0-5	42	39	155-160	150-155

Senior executive	Salary 2025 to 2026 £000	Salary 2024 to 2025 £000	Performance Pay 2025 to 2026 £000	Performance Pay 2024 to 2025 £000	Pension Benefits 2025 to 2026 £000	Pension Benefits 2024 to 2025 £000	Total 2025 to 2026 £000	Total 2024 to 2025 £000
Tom Bramley Executive Director, Research and Analysis from 9 May 2024	100-105	85-90 (95-100)	0-5	0-5	40	35	140-145	125-130

* Sir Ian Bauckham includes travel allowance of £25k-£30k. David Bowden includes travel allowance of £5k-£10k. The allowances are the same for both years. The non-consolidated performance payment payable to all eligible staff in 2025 to 2026 is £655. (2024 to 2025: £625)

Salaries are shown as **actual in-year costs** and **Annual full year equivalent (FYE) in brackets**.

Pension benefits

This section is subject to audit.

The information for the increases in pension, total accrued pension and cash equivalent transfer value (CETV) is provided by Capita plc in accordance with calculations and in the format determined by Capita plc and the Cabinet Office.

Non-executive board appointments are non-pensionable, so board members other than the Chief Regulator are excluded from this table.

Table 13 Pension benefits of senior executives for year ending 31 March 2026

Senior Executive	Accrued pension at pension age at 31 March 2026 and related lump sum £000	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age £000	CETV at 31 March 2026 £000	CETV at 31 March 2025 £000	Real Increase in CETV £000
Sir Ian Bauckham CBE	0-5	2.5-5	71	10	50
Michael Hanton	25-30	2.5-5	352	305	28
David Bowden	20-25	2.5-5	289	238	34
Ian Stockford	20-25	2.5-5	311	267	26
Catherine Large OBE	25-30	2.5-5	336	291	26
Amanda Swan	5-10	2.5-5	85	49	26
Matt Trimmer	5-10	2.5-5	85	50	25
Daniel Gutteridge	20-25	0-2.5	327	284	27
Tom Bramley	0-5	0-2.5	67	31	28

Fair pay in the public sector

This section is subject to audit.

Reporting bodies are required to disclose the relationship between the midpoint of the banded remuneration of the highest-paid director in their organisation and the remuneration of the organisation's workforce. The median pay ratio for the relevant financial year is consistent with the pay, reward and progression policies for the entity's employees taken as a whole.

Table 14 Highest paid director and lower quartile, median, and upper quartile ratio for 2025 to 2026

	25th percentile pay	Median pay	75th percentile pay
Ratio for remuneration of highest paid director and remuneration of workforce	2025 to 2026: 4.8:1 2024 to 2025: 4.9:1	2025 to 2026: 4.0:1 2024 to 2025: 4.0:1	2025 to 2026: 3.2:1 2024 to 2025: 3.1:1
Workforce Salary £	2025 to 2026: 38,122 2024 to 2025: 35,443	2025 to 2026: 46,216 2024 to 2025: 44,111	2025 to 2026: 58,852 2024 to 2025: 56,305
Total Workforce remuneration £	2025 to 2026: 38,777 2024 to 2025: 36,015	2025 to 2026: 46,871 2024 to 2025: 44,736	2025 to 2026: 59,507 2024 to 2025: 56,930

The banded remuneration of the highest-paid director in Ofqual on 31 March 2026 was £185,000 to £190,000 annual equivalent salary (2024 to 2025: £175,000 to £180,000), representing an increase of 5.6%. This was 4.0 times the median remuneration of the workforce, which was £46,871 (2024 to 2025: 4.0 times, £44,736).

In 2025 to 2026 no employees received remuneration in excess of the highest-paid director. Full-time equivalent remuneration ranged from £23,600 to £190,000 in the financial year (2024 to 2025: £6,000 to £180,000⁴). For permanent employees the range starts at £23,600 (2024 to 2025 £21,547). The average employees' salary in 2025 to 2026 is £54,169 (2024 to 2025: £50,929), an increase of 6.4% from the previous year.

Total remuneration includes salary, non-consolidated performance-related pay and benefits-in-kind. It does not include severance payments, employer pension contributions and the CETV of pensions.

Cash equivalent transfer values

A cash equivalent transfer value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's

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4. Non-Executive Director's (NEDs) are outside the scope of fair pay disclosures for 2025-26, in line with FReM.2024-26 figures have not been reinstated.

accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme, or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies.

The figures include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement the member has transferred to the Civil Service pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their buying additional pension benefits at their own cost. CETVs are worked out in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 and do not take account of any actual or potential reduction to benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

Real increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation or contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme

or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period.

Compensation for loss of office

This section is subject to audit.

No compensation for loss of office was paid to senior members of staff included in the remuneration report in 2025 to 2026 (2024 to 2025: nil). Exit payments to other staff are included in Table 18 on reporting of Civil Service and other compensation schemes – exit packages.

Civil Service Pensions

Pension benefits are provided through the Civil Service pension arrangements. Before 1 April 2015, the only scheme was the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS), which is divided into a few different sections – classic, premium, and classic plus provide benefits on a final salary basis, while nuvos provides benefits on a career average basis. From 1 April 2015 a new pension scheme for civil servants was introduced – the Civil Servants and Others Pension Scheme or alpha, which provides benefits on a career average basis. All newly appointed civil servants, and the majority of those already in service, joined the new scheme.

The PCSPS and alpha are unfunded statutory schemes. Employees and employers make contributions (employee contributions range between 4.6% and 8.05%, depending on salary).

The balance of the cost of benefits in payment is met by monies voted by Parliament each year. Pensions in payment are increased annually in line with the Pensions Increase legislation. Instead of the defined benefit arrangements, employees may opt for a defined contribution pension with an employer contribution, the partnership pension account.

In alpha, pension builds up at a rate of 2.32% of pensionable earnings each year, and the total amount accrued is adjusted annually in line with a rate set by HM Treasury. Members may opt to give up (commute) pension for a lump sum up to the limits set by the Finance Act 2004. All members who switched to alpha from the PCSPS had their PCSPS benefits ‘banked’, with those with earlier benefits in one of the final salary sections of the PCSPS having those benefits based on their final salary when they leave alpha.

The accrued pensions shown in this report are the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach normal pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are already at or over normal pension age. Normal pension age is 60 for members of classic, premium, and classic plus, 65 for members of nuvos, and the higher of 65 or state pension age for members of alpha. The pension figures in this report show pension earned in PCSPS or alpha – as appropriate. Where a member has benefits in both the PCSPS and alpha, the figures show the combined value of their benefits in the 2 schemes but

note that the constituent parts of that pension may be payable from different ages.

When the government introduced new public service pension schemes in 2015, there were transitional arrangements that treated existing scheme members differently based on their age. Older members of the PCSPS remained in that scheme, rather than moving to alpha. In 2018, the Court of Appeal found that the transitional arrangements in the public service pension schemes unlawfully discriminated against younger members (the “McCloud judgment”).

As a result, steps are being taken to remedy those 2015 reforms, making the pension scheme provisions fair to all members. The Public Service Pensions Remedy is made up of 2 parts. The first part closed the PCSPS on 31 March 2022, with all active members becoming members of alpha from 1 April 2022. The second part removes the age discrimination for the remedy period, between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022, by moving the membership of eligible members during this period back into the PCSPS on 1 October 2023.

The accrued pension benefits, CETV and single total figure of remuneration reported for any individual affected by the Public Service Pensions Remedy have been calculated based on their inclusion in the PCSPS for the period between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022, following the McCloud judgment. The Public Service Pensions Remedy applies to individuals that were

members, or eligible to be members, of a public service pension scheme on 31 March 2012 and were members of a public service pension scheme between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022. The basis for the calculation reflects the legal position that impacted members have been rolled back into the PCSPS for the remedy period and that this will apply unless the member actively exercises their entitlement on retirement to decide instead to receive benefits calculated under the terms of the alpha scheme for the period from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022.

The partnership pension account is an occupational defined contribution pension arrangement which is part of the Legal & General Master trust. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 8% and 14.75% (depending on the age of the member). The employee does not have to contribute but, where they do make contributions, the employer will match these up to a limit of 3% of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer's basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.5% of pensionable salary to cover the cost of centrally provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill health retirement).

Further details about the Civil Service pension arrangements can be found at the website www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk

For 2025 to 2026, employers' contributions of £4.91 million were payable to the scheme (2024 to 2025:

£4.92 million) at a single rate of 28.97% (2024 to 2025: 28.97%) of pensionable pay, based on salary bands.

The Scheme Actuary reviews employer contributions usually every 4 years following a full scheme valuation. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of the benefits accruing during 2025 to 2026 to be paid when the member retires and not the benefits paid during this period to existing pensioners.

Employers' contributions of £24,237 (2024 to 2025: £33,792) were paid to one of the panel of appointed stakeholder pension providers. Contributions due to the partnership pension providers at the reporting period date were £7,056 (2024 to 2025: £5,555). Contributions prepaid at that date were nil.

Staff report

The following section is subject to audit.

Staff costs excluding secondments for 2025 to 2026 were £25.28 million (£24.92 million in 2024 to 2025) of which £138,000 (£164,000 in 2024 to 2025) related to agency staff. Two staff were seconded to other departments in 2025 to 2026 totalling £157,000 (Two staff: 2024 to 2025 totalling £78,000), therefore staff costs including secondments for 2025 to 2026 were £25.12 million (£24.84 million in 2024 to 2025). Further details are shown in Note 3 of the accounts.

Table 15 Staff costs

Cost type	2025 to 2026 Permanently employed staff £000	2025 to 2026 Others £000	2025 to 2026 Total staff costs £000	2024 to 2025 Total staff costs £000
Wages and salaries	17,746	138	17,884	17,948
Social security costs	2,440	0	2,440	2,011
Pension costs	4,951	0	4,951	4,957
Sub total	25,137	138	25,275	24,916
Less recoveries in respect of outward secondments	(157)	0	(157)	(78)
Add payments in respect of inward secondments	0	0	0	0
Total costs	24,980	138	25,118	24,838

Of which:	Charged to administration budgets	Charged to programme budgets	Charged to capital budgets	2025-26 Total
Core departments	3,407	21,711	0	25,118

The tables below include both permanent and fixed term contract (FTC) staff. FTC staff provide cover for substantive posts and new short-term posts funded from project resources. Table 16 shows the average number of whole time equivalent (WTE) staff that were employed during the year.

Table 16 Average number of persons employed

Activity	2025 to 2026 Permanently employed staff WTE	2025 to 2026 Others WTE	2025 to 2026 Total persons employed WTE	2024 to 2025 Total persons employed WTE
Resource activities	346.6	1.3	347.8	361.7
Capital activities				–
Total	346.6	1.3	347.8	361.7
Of which core department	346.6	1.3	347.8	361.7
Total	346.6	1.3	347.8	361.7

The following section is not subject to audit.

The average headcount for the year is shown in Table 17, including by pay band for senior civil servants.

Table 17 Average headcount employed

Pay band	2025 to 2026 Headcount	2024 to 2025 Headcount
Senior Civil Service Payband 3	1	1
Senior Civil Service Payband 2	4	4
Senior Civil Service Payband 1	16	16
Total Senior Civil Servants	21	21
Civil Servants – other grades	336	351
Total Civil Servants	357	372
Agency staff	2	3
Total headcount	359	375

No consultants were employed in 2025 to 2026 (nil in 2024 to 2025).

The following section is subject to audit.

Table 18 Reporting of Civil Service & other compensation schemes – exit packages

Exit package cost band	2025 to 2026 Number of compulsory redundancies	2025 to 2026 Number of other departures agreed	2025 to 2026 Total number of exit packages by cost band	2024 to 2025 Number of other departures agreed	2024 to 2025 Total number of exit packages by cost band
<£10,000	–	–	–	–	–
£10,000-£25,000	–	–	–	–	–
£25,000-£50,000	–	–	–	1	1
£50,000-£100,000	–	–	–	–	–
£100,000-£150,000	–	–	–	–	–
£150,000-£200,000	–	–	–	–	–
Total number of exit packages	–	–	–	1	1
Total cost (£000)	–	–	–	30	30

Redundancy and other departure costs have been paid in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Service Compensation Scheme (CSCS), a statutory scheme made under the Superannuation Act 1972. The table above shows the total cost of exit packages agreed and accounted for in 2025 to 2026, with 2024 to 2025 included for comparison. No exit costs were incurred in 2025 to 2026 (2024 to 2025: £30,000). Where the department has agreed early retirements, the additional costs are met by the department and not by the Civil Service pension scheme. Ill-health retirement costs are met by the pension scheme and are not included in the table.

Other staff information

The following sections are not subject to audit unless otherwise stated.

Off-payroll appointments

Following the Review of Tax Arrangements of Public Sector Appointees published by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 23 May 2012, departments must publish information on their high paid and/or senior off-payroll engagements.

Table 19 Off-payroll engagements at 31 March 2026, for more than £245 per day

Description	Number of engagements
Number of existing engagements at 31 March 2026	1
Of which:	
Number that have existed for less than one year at time of reporting	1
Number that have existed for between one and two years at time of reporting	—
Number that have existed for between two and three years at time of reporting	—
Number that have existed for between three and four years at time of reporting	—
Number that have existed for four or more years at time of reporting	—

Government departments are required to obtain assurances from individuals on contracts of more than 6 months' duration, where the annual cost is greater than £63,700, that tax due on contract payments will be paid. At 31 March 2026, all such contractors engaged by Ofqual met these conditions.

Ofqual holds contracts with the agency not the individual. The agencies are asked to seek assurances from the individuals before they are engaged by Ofqual. The agencies have provided evidence of clauses included within the agency contract with the individual stating the individual should ensure they correctly account for their tax and National Insurance liability.

Table 20 New off-payroll engagements, or those that reached 6 months in duration, between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, for more than £245 per day

Description	Number of engagements
Number of new engagements between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026	1
Of which:	
Number assessed in scope of IR35	—
Number assessed as not within scope of IR35	1
Number engaged directly (via PSC contracted to department) and are on the departmental payroll	—
Number of engagements reassessed for consistency or assurance purposes during the year	—
Number of engagements that saw a change to IR35 status following the consistency review	—

Table 21 Off-payroll engagements of board members, and, or, senior officials, with significant financial responsibility, between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026

Description	Number of engagements
Number of off-payroll engagements of board members, and, or, senior officials, with significant financial responsibility, during the financial year	—
Total number of individuals on payroll and off-payroll who have been deemed ‘board members and, or, senior officials, with significant financial responsibility’, during the financial year. This figure should include both on payroll and off-payroll engagements	23

Sickness absence

In 2025 to 2026, 2,106 days were lost to sickness absence (2,675 days in 2024 to 2025), representing 2.4% (2024 to 2025: 2.9%) of available staff working days. This is an average of 6.2 days per employee (7.6 days per employee in 2024 to 2025). An average of 4 staff were long-term sick (6 staff in 2024 to 2025), these accounted for 1,004 days of absence (1,234 days in 2024 to 2025).

Staff turnover

The figures below show the number of leavers within the reporting period divided by the average staff in post over the reporting period presented as a percentage.

	2025 to 2026	2024 to 2025	2023 to 2024	2022 to 2023
Ofqual turnover	12%	10%	16%	11%

Health, safety and wellbeing

Ofqual is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for staff. This includes involvement in a health and safety forum for all government bodies represented in Friargate. All employees have access to a confidential 24 hours a day, 7 days a week employee assistance programme and are offered the opportunity to take part in a variety of health screening and workplace wellness programmes, including mental health awareness sessions, flu vaccinations and free eyecare vouchers.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Ofqual promotes equality for all regardless of status, including age, disability, gender status, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Ofqual included Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as a core element of our People strategy 2022 to 2025 which embeds the commitment to enable all staff to realise their potential and for Ofqual to be an organisation that represents the diversity of the qualifications community we regulate and the Midlands community where we are based. Progress of our EDI work is reported to the People, Resources and Finance Committee. The gender breakdown of staff, which includes both permanent and fixed-term contracts, at 31 March 2026 was 214 women

and 119 men (230 and 128 respectively in 2024 to 2025).

Table 22 Staff gender breakdown

Staff grade	2025 to 2026 Women	2025 to 2026 Men	2024 to 2025 Women	2024 to 2025 Men
Senior Civil Servants	6	15	6	16
Civil Servants – other grades	208	104	224	112
Total	214	119	230	128

Ofqual publishes information on the gender pay gap annually.

Table 23 Staff profile

	2025 to 2026	2024 to 2025	2023 to 2024	2021 census England & Wales
Sex:				
Female	64.3%	64.2%	66.6%	46.2%
Male	35.7%	35.0%	33.4%	53.8%
Declared disability				
Disabled	11.1%	13.5%	14.3%	17.8%
Not declared	8.1%	7.3%	7.1%	
Declared ethnicity				
Ethnic minority group	21.0%	21.7%	19.3%	18.3%
Undeclared	1.8%	2.0%	1.7%	

	2025 to 2026	2024 to 2025	2023 to 2024	2021 census England & Wales
Declared sexual orientation				
Lesbian, gay, bisexual, other (LGBQ)	4.2%	4.9%	4.9%	3.1%
Declared religion:				
Christian	33.9%	34.0%	33.9%	46.2%
Buddhist	0.6%	0.6%	0.0%	0.5%
Hindu	2.7%	2.8%	2.0%	1.7%
Jewish	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.5%
Muslim	5.1%	5.0%	4.5%	6.5%
Sikh	3.6%	3.6%	3.1%	0.9%
Other	1.8%	1.7%	1.7%	0.6%
Undeclared	8.1%	7.8%	9.6%	6.0%
Average age	44	43	42	40

Parliamentary Accountability and Audit Report

Statement of Outturn against Parliamentary Supply

In addition to the primary statements prepared under IFRS, the government FReM requires Ofqual to prepare a Statement of Outturn against Parliamentary Supply (SOPS) and supporting notes. The SOPS and related notes are subject to audit, as detailed in the Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the House of Commons.

The SOPS is a key accountability statement that shows, in detail, how Ofqual has spent against its Supply Estimate. Supply is the monetary provision for resource and capital purposes and cash, drawn primarily from the Consolidated Fund, that Parliament gives statutory authority for Ofqual to use. The Estimate details Supply and is voted on by Parliament at the start of the financial year.

Should Ofqual exceed the limits set by its Supply Estimate, called control totals, the accounts will receive a qualified opinion.

The format of the SOPS mirrors the Supply Estimates, published on GOV.UK, to enable comparability between what Parliament approves and the final outturn. The SOPS contains a summary table, detailing performance against the control limits that Parliament have voted on, cash spent (budgets are compiled on an accruals basis

and so outturn will not exactly tie to cash spent) and administration.

The supporting notes detail the following:

- Outturn by Estimate line, providing a more detailed breakdown (Note 1)
- a reconciliation of outturn to net operating expenditure in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure (SOCNE), to tie the SOPS to the financial statements (Note 2)
- a reconciliation of net resource outturn to net cash requirement (Note 3)
- an analysis of income payable to the Consolidated Fund (Note 4)

The SOPS and Estimates are compiled against the budgeting framework, which is similar, but different, to IFRS. An understanding of the budgeting framework and an explanation of key terms is provided in the financial review section of the performance report. Further information on the Public Spending Framework and the reasons why budgeting rules are different to IFRS can also be found in chapter 1 of the Consolidated Budgeting Guidance.

The SOPS provides a detailed view of financial performance, in a form that is voted on and recognised by Parliament. The financial review section of the performance report also provides a summarised discussion of outturn against Estimate and functions as an introduction to the SOPS disclosures.

Summary table – amounts approved in accordance with Parliamentary expenditure limits

Type of spend	SOPS Note	2025 to 2026 Outturn voted £000	2025 to 2026 Outturn non-voted £000	2025 to 2026 Outturn total £000	2025 to 2026 Estimate voted £000	2025 to 2026 Estimate non-voted £000	2025 to 2026 Estimate total £000	2025 to 2026 Voted outturn compared with Estimate: saving or (excess) £000	2024 to 2025 Outturn £000
DEL									
– Resource	1.1	30,850	0	30,850	31,899	0	31,899	1,049	30,506
– Capital	1.2	429	0	429	450	0	450	21	449
Total DEL		31,279	0	31,279	32,349	0	32,349	1,070	30,955
AME									
– Resource	1.1	0	0	0	100	0	100	100	0
– Capital	1.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	282
Total AME		0	0	0	100	0	100	100	282
Total budget		31,279	0	31,279	32,449	0	32,449	1,170	31,237
Non-budget		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total budget & Non-Budget		31,279	0	31,279	32,449	0	32,449	1,170	31,237

Ofqual requests resources to undertake our statutory duties as the regulator of qualifications, exams and statutory assessments. The figures described as ‘voted’ in the table above are totals subject to Parliamentary control. The [Supply Estimates guidance manual](#), contains further detail about the control limits voted by Parliament.

Explanations of variances between Estimate and outturn are given in SOPS Note 1.1. Departmental expenditure limits cover all programme and administration costs.

The net cash requirement is the amount of cash that Ofqual requires to support expenditure. It excludes non-cash items such as depreciation and notional charges.

Net cash requirement

Item	SOPS note	2025 to 2026 Outturn £000	2025 to 2026 Estimate £000	2025 to 2026 Outturn compared with Estimate: saving or (excess) £000	2024 to 2025 Outturn £000
Net cash requirement	3	30,808	31,288	480	29,705

In addition, although not a separate voted limit, any breach of the administration budget will also result in an excess vote.

Administration costs

Item	SOPS note	2025 to 2026 Outturn compared with			
		2025 to 2026 Outturn £000	2025 to 2026 Estimate £000	Estimate: saving or (excess) £000	2024 to 2025 Outturn £000
Administration Costs	1.1	5,260	17,381	12,121	6,355

A thorough review of the categorisation of revenue expenditure was conducted during the year to bring it in line with the guidance provided in the 2024 to 2025 Consolidated Budget Guidance (2025 CBG). This resulted in clearer delineation of costs between programme and administration budgets more accurately reflecting the way they are actually incurred, hence the significant variance in the 2025 to 2026 Estimate and Outturn of £12.12 million.

SOPS 1.1 Analysis of resource outturn by Estimate line

[illegible]

Type of spend (Resource)	2025 to 2026 Resource Outturn Admin Gross £000	2025 to 2026 Resource Outturn Admin Income £000	2025 to 2026 Resource Outturn Admin Net £000	2025 to 2026 Resource Outturn Prog Gross £000	2025 to 2026 Resource Outturn Prog Income £000	2025 to 2026 Resource Outturn Prog Net £000	2025 to 2026 Resource Outturn Total £000	2025 to 2026 Resource Estimate Total £000	2025 to 2026 Resource Outturn compared with Estimate: saving or (excess) £000	2024 to 2025 Resource Outturn Total £000
Total Spending in DEL	5,311	(51)	5,260	25,653	(63)	25,590	30,850	31,899	1,049	30,506
Spending in Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)										
Voted expenditure:										
Depreciation and Amortisation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Provisions Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	100	0
Non-voted expenditure:										
Depreciation and Amortisation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Spending in AME	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	100	0
Total resource	5,311	(51)	5,260	25,653	(63)	25,590	30,850	31,999	1,149	30,506

Provisions other within AME funding include £100,000 to cover an anticipated staff settlement that did not materialise in 2025 to 2026. AME funding is ring-fenced and cannot be used for any other purpose.

An explanation of the outturn compared with Estimate is provided in the financial review section of the performance report.

SOPS 1.2 Analysis of capital outturn by Estimate line

Type of spend (Capital)	2025 to 2026 Capital Outturn Prog Gross £000	2025 to 2026 Capital Outturn Prog Income £000	2025 to 2026 Capital Outturn Prog Net £000	2025 to 2026 Capital Estimate Prog Net £000	2025 to 2026 capital outturn compared with Estimate: saving or (excess) £000	2024 to 2025 Capital Outturn Total £000
Spending in DEL – Voted						
A. Regulation of qualifications and statutory assessments	429	0	429	450	21	449
Spending in AME – Voted						
A. Regulation of qualifications and statutory assessments	0	0	0	0	0	282
Total Voted expenditure	429	0	429	450	21	731
Non-Voted expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Capital	429	0	429	450	21	731

Annually Managed Expenditure (AME) for 2024 to 2025 included the increase in the Friargate dilapidations provision (£311,000) offset by the release of the Earlsdon Park provision (£29,000).

SOPS Note 2: Reconciliation of resource outturn to net operating expenditure

Item	SOPS Note	2025 to 2026 Outturn £000	2024 to 2025 Outturn £000
Total resource outturn	1.1	30,850	30,506
Less: Dilapidations provision release Earlsdon Park	1.2	0	(29)
Net Operating Expenditure in Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure	SOCNE	30,850	30,477

As noted in the introduction to the SOPS above, the Estimates and outturn are compiled using the budgeting framework, which is similar to, but different from, IFRS. Therefore, this reconciliation bridges the resource outturn to net operating expenditure, linking the SOPS to the financial statements.

The £29,000 provision release relating to Earlsdon Park in 2024 to 2025 was disclosed under CAME (Capital Annually Managed Expenditure) within SOPS1.2 Capital outturn instead of SOPS1.1 Resource Outturn.

SOPS Note 3: Reconciliation of net resource outturn to net cash requirement

Item	SOPS Note	2025 to 2026 Outturn £000	2025 to 2026 Estimate £000	2025 to 2026 Outturn compared with estimate: saving or (excess) £000
Resource outturn	1.1	30,850	31,999	1,149
Capital outturn	1.2	429	450	21
Adjustments to remove non-cash items:				
Depreciation		(863)	(946)	(83)
Other non-cash items		(214)	(215)	(1)
Adjustments to reflect movements in working balances:				
Increase or (decrease) in receivables		(312)	0	312
(Increase) or decrease in payables		784	0	(784)
Adjustments to reflect movements in leases during the year:				
Lease rental payments		134	0	(134)
Net cash requirement		30,808	31,288	480

SOPS Note 4: Analysis of income due to the Consolidated Fund

SOPS 4.1 Analysis of income payable to the Consolidated Fund

Item	2025 to 2026 Outturn accruals Basis £000	2025 to 2026 Outturn cash basis £000	2024 to 2025 Outturn accruals Basis £000	2024 to 2025 Outturn cash basis £000
Income outside the ambit of the Estimate	—	—	—	—
Excess cash surrenderable to the Consolidated Fund	—	—	—	—
Total amount payable to the Consolidated Fund	—	—	—	—

Consolidated Fund income shown in SOPS Note 4.1 above does not include any amounts collected by Ofqual where it was acting as agent for the Consolidated Fund rather than as principal. The amounts collected as agent for the Consolidated Fund, which are otherwise excluded from the financial statements, are shown in SOPS Note 4.2 below.

SOPS 4.2 Consolidated Fund Income

Item	2025 to 2026 Outturn £000	2024 to 2025 Outturn £000
Fines and penalties	2,520	805
Other income	0	0
Amount payable to the Consolidated Fund	2,520	805
Balance held at the start of the year	305	-
Payments into the Consolidated Fund	(2,775)	(500)
Balance held on trust at the end of the year	50	305

In 2025 to 2026 Ofqual received £2,583,000 fines and penalties income (2024 to 2025: £515,000), comprising of £2,520,000 (2024 to 2025: £500,000) in monetary penalties and £63,000 (2024 to 2025: £15,000) in cost recovery; Ofqual retained the cost recovery and paid the monetary penalty to the consolidated fund.

SoPS4.2 also includes £50,000 for fines which were imposed in 2024 to 2025, for which the cash was not received by 31 March 2026.

Parliamentary Accountability Disclosures

Losses and special payments

The following sections are subject to audit.

Losses

During 2025 to 2026, Ofqual incurred no losses above reporting threshold (nil in 2024 to 2025).

Special payments

Ofqual did not make any special payments during 2025 to 2026 (2024 to 2025: £30,000).

Fruitless Payments

Ofqual has no fruitless payments in 2025 to 2026.

Gifts

No gifts above reporting threshold were given during 2025 to 2026 (nil in 2024 to 2025).

Fees and charges

This section is subject to audit.

No material fees and charges income was received during 2025 to 2026 (nil in 2024 to 2025).

Remote contingent liabilities

This section is subject to audit.

In addition to contingent liabilities reported within the meaning of International Accounting Standard (IAS) 37, Ofqual also reports liabilities for which the likelihood of a transfer of economic benefit in settlement is too remote to meet the definition of contingent liability. Ofqual has no remote contingent liabilities that require disclosure under Parliamentary Reporting requirements.

Sir Ian Bauckham CBE

Chief Regulator and Accounting Officer

2 July 2026

The Certificate of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the House of Commons

Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation ('the Department') for the year ended 31 March 2026 under the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000.

The financial statements comprise the Department's;

- Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2026;
- Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Statement of Cash Flows and Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for the year then ended; and
- the related notes including the significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in the preparation of the financial statements is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards.

In my opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Department's affairs as at 31 March 2026 and its net operating expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000 and HM Treasury directions issued thereunder.

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects:

- the Statement of Outturn against Parliamentary Supply properly presents the outturn against voted Parliamentary control totals for the year ended 31 March 2026 and shows that those totals have not been exceeded; and
- the income and expenditure recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Basis for opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs UK), applicable law and Practice Note 10 Audit of Financial Statements and Regularity of Public Sector Bodies in the United Kingdom (2024). My responsibilities under those

standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my certificate.

Those standards require me and my staff to comply with the Financial Reporting Council's Revised Ethical Standard 2024. I am independent of the Department in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK. My staff and I have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the Department's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Department's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this certificate.

The going concern basis of accounting for the Department is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual, which requires entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it is anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

Other information

The other information comprises information included in the Annual Report but does not include the financial statements and my auditor's certificate and report thereon. The Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information.

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my certificate, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion the part of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with HM Treasury directions issued under the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000.

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the parts of the Accountability Report subject to audit have been properly prepared in accordance with HM Treasury directions issued under the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000;
- the information given in the Performance and Accountability Reports for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with the applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Department and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Performance and Accountability Reports.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the Department or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my staff; or
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
- the financial statements and the parts of the Accountability Report subject to audit are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual have not been made or parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited is not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with HM Treasury's guidance.

Responsibilities of the Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Accounting Officer is responsible for:

- maintaining proper accounting records;
- providing the C&AG with access to all information of which management is aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other matters;
- providing the C&AG with additional information and explanations needed for his audit;
- providing the C&AG with unrestricted access to persons within the Department from whom the auditor determines it necessary to obtain audit evidence;
- ensuring such internal controls are in place as deemed necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view, in accordance with HM Treasury directions issued under the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000;
- preparing the annual report, which includes the Remuneration and Staff Report, in accordance

with HM Treasury directions issued under the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000; and

- assessing the Department's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by the Department will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a certificate that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud. The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud is detailed below.

Identifying and assessing potential risks related to non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, I:

- considered the nature of the sector, control environment and operational performance including the design of the Department's accounting policies and key performance indicators.
- inquired of management, the Department's head of internal audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to the Department's policies and procedures on:
 - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations;

- detecting and responding to the risks of fraud; and
- the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations including the Department's controls relating to the Department's compliance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000 and Managing Public Money;
- inquired of management, the Department's head of internal audit and those charged with governance whether:
 - they were aware of any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations;
 - they had knowledge of any actual, suspected, or alleged fraud,
- discussed with the engagement team how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud.

As a result of these procedures, I considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the Department for fraud and identified the greatest potential for fraud in the following areas: posting of unusual journals, complex transactions and bias in management estimates. In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), I am required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override.

I obtained an understanding of the Department's framework of authority and other legal and regulatory frameworks in which the Department operates. I focused on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of the Department. The key laws and regulations I considered in this context included Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000, Managing Public Money, Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Act 2025, employment law, pensions legislation, tax legislation and the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

Audit response to identified risk

To respond to the identified risks resulting from the above procedures:

- I reviewed the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with provisions of relevant laws and regulations described above as having direct effect on the financial statements;
- I enquired of management, the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and in-house legal counsel concerning actual and potential litigation and claims;
- I reviewed minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the Board; and internal audit reports;

- I addressed the risk of fraud through management override of controls by testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements on estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.
- I communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential risks of fraud to all engagement team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my certificate.

Other auditor's responsibilities

I am required to obtain appropriate evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the Statement of Outturn against Parliamentary Supply properly presents the outturn against voted Parliamentary control totals and that those totals have not been exceeded. The voted Parliamentary control totals are Departmental Expenditure Limits (Resource and Capital), Annually Managed Expenditure (Resource and Capital), Non-Budget (Resource) and Net Cash Requirement.

I am required to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control I identify during my audit.

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

Gareth Davies
Comptroller and Auditor General

Date 3 July 2026

National Audit Office
157-197 Buckingham Palace Road
Victoria
London
SW1W 9SP

The financial statements

The notes following the financial statements form part of these accounts.

Statement of comprehensive net expenditure

For the year ended 31 March 2026

All income and expenditure relate to continuing operations and is consumed on an accruals basis.

Item	Note ⁵	2025 to 2026 £000	2024 to 2025 £000
Other operating income	5	(114)	(76)
Total operating income		(114)	(76)
Staff costs	3	25,118	24,838
Purchase of goods and services	4	3,605	3,263
Depreciation and amortisation	6,7,8	863	800
Other operating expenditure	4	1,378	1,681
Release of unused provision	14	0	(29)
Total operating expenditure		30,964	30,553
Net operating expenditure		30,850	30,477
Other comprehensive net expenditure		0	0
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		30,850	30,477

5. The notes on pages 183 to 196 form part of these accounts.

Statement of financial position

As at 31 March 2026

This statement presents the financial position of Ofqual at the end of the financial year. It comprises 3 main components: assets owned or controlled, liabilities owed to other bodies, and equity, the remaining value of the entity.

Item	Note ⁶	31 March 2026 £000	31 March 2025 £000
Non-Current Assets:			
Property, plant and equipment	7	221	344
Right of use asset	6	2,030	2,286
Intangible assets	8	892	947
Total non-current assets		3,143	3,577
Current Assets:			
Trade and other receivables	10	554	866
Cash and Cash Equivalents	9	1	476
Total current assets		555	1,342
Total Assets		3,698	4,919
Current liabilities:			
Trade and other payables	11	(1,915)	(3,174)
Lease Liability	12	(470)	(291)
Total current liabilities		(2,385)	(3,465)
Total Assets less current liabilities		1,313	1,454
Non-Current Liabilities:			

6. The notes on pages 186 to 194 form part of these accounts.

Item	Note ⁶	31 March 2026 £000	31 March 2025 £000
Provisions	14	(375)	(375)
Lease Liability NCL	12	(1,803)	(2,020)
Total Non-current liabilities		(2,178)	(2,395)
Total assets less total liabilities		(865)	(941)
Taxpayers' equity and other reserves:			
General Fund		(865)	(941)
Total Equity		(865)	(941)

Sir Ian Bauckham CBE

Chief Regulator and Accounting Officer

2 July 2026

Statement of cash flows

For year ended 31 March 2026

The Statement of Cash Flows shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of Ofqual during the reporting period. The statement shows how Ofqual generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities. The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of service costs and the extent to which these operations are funded by way of income from the recipients of services provided by Ofqual. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash inflows and outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to Ofqual's future public service delivery.

Item	Note ⁷	2025 to 2026 £000	2024 to 2025 £000
Cash flows from operating activities:	—	—	—
Net operating expenditure	SoCNE	(30,850)	(30,477)
Adjustment for non-cash transactions	4	1,077	1,028
Decrease or (increase) in trade and other receivables	10	312	(440)
(Decrease) or increase in trade and other payables	11	(1,259)	1,257
Release of unused provisions	14	0	(29)

7. The notes on pages 184 to 196 form part of these accounts.

Item	Note ⁷	2025 to 2026 £000	2024 to 2025 £000
Less movements in payables relating to items not passing through the SOCNE	—	475	(475)
other	—	0	(1)
Net cash inflow or (outflow) from operating activities	—	(30,245)	(29,137)
—	—		—
Cashflows from investing activities:			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	7	(40)	(124)
Purchase of intangible assets	8	(389)	(325)
Net cash inflow or (outflow) from investing activities	—	(429)	(449)
—	—		—
Cash flows from financing activities:			
Payment of lease liabilities	12	(134)	(119)
From the Consolidated Fund (Supply) – current year	—	30,333	30,180
Net financing	—	30,199	30,061
—	—		—
Net increase or (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period (no adjustments are required for payments to the Consolidated Fund)	—	(475)	475
—	—		—
Cash and cash equivalents at the start of the period	9	476	1
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	9	1	476

Statement of changes in taxpayers' equity

For year ended 31 March 2026

Item	Note ⁸	General fund £000	Total reserves £000
Balance at 31 March 2024	–	(299)	(299)
Net Parliamentary funding drawn down	–	30,180	30,180
Net Parliamentary funding deemed supply	–	1	1
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year	SOCNE	(30,477)	(30,477)
Auditor's remuneration	4	130	130
Supply payable adjustment	–	(476)	(476)
Consolidated Fund Extra Receipts payable to the Consolidated Fund	–	–	–
Balance at 31 March 2025	–	(941)	(941)
Net Parliamentary funding drawn down	–	30,333	30,333
Net Parliamentary funding deemed supply	–	476	476
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year	SOCNE	(30,850)	(30,850)
Auditor's remuneration	4	118	118
Supply payable adjustment	–	(1)	(1)
Consolidated Fund Extra Receipts payable to the Consolidated Fund	–	0	0
Balance at 31 March 2026	–	(865)	(865)

8. The notes on pages 164 to 184 form part of these accounts.

Notes to the financial statements

Note 1 – Statement of accounting policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2025 to 2026 government FReM issued by HM Treasury. The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply IFRS as adapted or interpreted for the public sector. Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy that is judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of Ofqual for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by Ofqual are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts.

In addition to the primary statements prepared under IFRS, the FReM also requires Ofqual to prepare an additional primary statement. The Statement of Outturn against Parliamentary Supply and supporting notes showing outturn against Parliamentary Estimate in terms of the net resource requirement and the net cash requirement.

1.1 Accounting convention

These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. Ofqual has a small asset base, and property, plant, equipment and intangible assets are held at depreciated historic cost as a proxy for current value, as permitted by the 2025 to 2026

FReM. No revaluation adjustments have been made in these accounts.

1.2 Accounting policies

1.2.1 *Going concern*

In common with other government departments, funding for Ofqual will be met in the main by future Grants of Supply to be approved annually by Parliament. The 2025 Spending Review delivered a settlement for 2025 to 2026 that recognised the important role that Ofqual plays in delivering government objectives, with additional baseline budget being provided to support increased capacity for Ofqual's core business and reformed qualifications.

The 2025 Spending Review (SR25) was launched in 2 phases, the first allocated funding for the year 2025 to 2026 and the second for a further 3 years for Revenue Expenditure and 4 years for Capital Expenditure. Ofqual's settlement from His Majesty's Treasury for SR25 Phase 2 (RDEL: £29.5m per annum between 2026 to 2027 and 2028 to 2029, and CDEL of £0.45m per annum over the period) will enable continued delivery of its statutory and key strategic objectives over the period covered. It is therefore considered appropriate to adopt a going concern basis for the preparation of these financial statements.

1.2.2 *Valuation of non-current assets*

Property, plant and equipment and intangible assets are recognised as non-current assets where they

are held for use in the delivery of services or for administrative purposes on a continuing basis and are expected to be utilised for more than one year. Such assets are measured initially at cost and subsequently carried at depreciated historic cost. The capitalisation threshold for individual non-current assets is £2,000.

Grouped assets are capitalised where individual items have a minimum value of £500, form a single asset grouping, and have an aggregate value of £5,000 or more.

1.2.3 Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation and amortisation are provided on all non-current assets on a straight-line basis to write off cost (less any estimated residual value) evenly over the asset's anticipated useful life. Asset lives are in the following ranges:

- information technology (hardware) – 3 to 5 years
- furniture – 5 years
- software licenses & IT developments – 5 years

1.2.4 Operating and other income

Ofqual's primary source of operating income comes from a contract with the Council for Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment (CCEA), for the collection of examinations data from awarding organisations. Income is recognised net of VAT. The contract is renewed annually. Income is recognised in line with

FReM and IFRS15 (15a) Revenue from contracts with customers

Income also includes cost recovery related to fines imposed. This is recognised in SoCNE. Further detail is provided in Note 5. Income from fines and penalties is not retained by Ofqual and is paid into the Consolidated Fund on receipt as shown in SOPS 4.2 in line with FReM and the Consolidated Budgeting Guidance.

1.2.5 Administration and programme expenditure

Costs have been separated between programme and administration. Programme costs are chiefly the costs associated with Ofqual's delivery of frontline reform activities and include certain staff and information systems costs. Administration costs are the costs incurred in running Ofqual.

1.2.6 Pensions

Past and present employees are covered by a mixture of the provisions of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) and the Civil Servant and Other Pension Scheme (CSOPS). Both schemes are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes. Ofqual accounts for its participation in the schemes as if it were a defined contribution scheme. Annual contributions payable to the scheme are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure. Further pension details are contained in the remuneration report and staff report.

1.2.7 Leases

IFRS 16 requires a lessee to recognise a right-of-use asset representing its right to use the underlying leased asset and a lease liability representing its obligations to make lease payments. This applies to all leases with a term of more than 12 months unless the underlying asset is worth less than £5,000.

Lease liabilities are measured at the present value of the contractual payments due to the lessor over the lease term. The service element and VAT is excluded, whereas residual value guarantees, exercise price of purchase options and termination penalties are included in the measurement. The lease liabilities are discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease or where that is not readily determinable, the discount rate as provided by HM Treasury. Lease liabilities will increase as a result of interest charged at a constant rate on the balance outstanding and will reduce for the cash lease payments made.

Right-of-use assets are initially measured at the amount of the lease liability, reduced for any lease incentives received, and increased for:

- lease payments made at or before commencement of the lease
- initial direct costs incurred
- the amount of any provision recognised where an entity is contractually required to dismantle, remove or restore the leased asset (typically dilapidations)

Right-of-use assets are depreciated on a straight-line from the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the underlying asset, or the end of the lease term.

The definition of a contract is expanded under the FReM to include intra-UK government agreements where non-performance may not be enforceable by law. This includes, for example, Memorandum of Terms of Occupation (MOTO) agreements.

1.2.8 Financial instruments

Financial instruments are recognised at fair value and charged to SOCNE in line with IFRS 9 Financial instruments and Note 1.2.9 below. Ofqual does not have any complex financial instruments. Ofqual determines the classification of its financial instruments at initial recognition.

1.2.9 Financial assets

Ofqual holds the following financial assets:

- cash and cash equivalents
- trade receivables – current

Cash and cash equivalents comprise Ofqual's closing bank account balance and are recognised in the Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Cashflow at fair value and charged to SOCNE.

Trade and other receivables have fixed or determinable amounts that are not quoted on an open market. Trade

and other receivables do not carry any interest and are recognised at fair value and charged to SOCNE in the Statement of Financial Position.

Financial assets are recognised when a contractual provision arises, and derecognised when the contractual rights to the cash flows from the financial asset expire.

1.2.10 Financial liabilities

Trade and other payables including accruals are generally not interest bearing and are recognised in the Statement of Financial Position at fair value and charged to SOCNE on initial recognition. Financial liabilities are recognised when a contractual provision arises and are derecognised when the obligation specified in the contract has been discharged, cancelled or has expired.

1.2.11 Value Added Tax

Many of Ofqual's activities are outside the scope of Value Added Tax (VAT) and, in general, output tax does not apply and input tax on purchases is often not recoverable. Irrecoverable VAT is charged to the relevant expenditure category or included in the capitalised purchase cost of fixed assets. Where output tax is charged or input VAT is recoverable, the amounts are recorded net of VAT.

1.2.12 Contingent liabilities and contingent assets

In addition to contingent liabilities disclosed in accordance with IAS 37, Ofqual discloses

for parliamentary reporting and accountability purposes certain statutory and non-statutory contingent liabilities where the likelihood of a transfer of economic benefit is remote, but which have been reported to Parliament in accordance with the requirements of Managing Public Money.

Where the time value of money is material, contingent liabilities, which are required to be disclosed under IAS 37, are stated as discounted amounts and the amount reported to Parliament separately noted. Contingent liabilities that are not required to be disclosed by IAS 37 are stated at the amounts reported to Parliament and included in the Parliamentary and Accountability Report.

1.3 IAS 8 Changes in accounting policy and disclosures

There are no changes in accounting policy and disclosures in the current financial year.

1.4 Impending application of newly issued accounting standards not yet effective

IFRS 18 Presentation and disclosure in financial statements

IFRS 18 will replace IAS 1 Presentation of Financial Statements and is effective for annual reporting periods beginning on or after the 1 January 2027 in the private sector. The impact of IFRS 18 on the Public Sector is

still being assessed, and a decision has not yet been taken on an implementation date.

IFRS 19 Subsidiaries without public accountability: disclosures

IFRS 19 allows eligible subsidiaries to apply IFRS Accounting Standards with reduced disclosure requirements and is effective for annual reporting periods beginning on or after the 1 January 2027 in the private sector. The impact of IFRS 19 on the Public Sector is still being assessed, and a decision has not yet been taken on an implementation date.

It is not envisaged that the expected changes to the standards above will have any impact on Ofqual

1.5 Judgements and estimates

In preparing these financial statements, management has made judgements and estimates that affect the application of accounting policies and the reported amounts of assets, liabilities, income, and expenditure. These judgements and estimates are based on historical experience, current operational data, and other relevant factors. Key sources of estimation uncertainty, which may give rise to a material adjustment within the next financial year, are set out below:

- **Holiday pay accrual**

In accordance with IAS 19 Employee Benefits and the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM), the Department recognises a liability for annual leave

accrued by staff but not taken as at the reporting date. This is recognised as a short-term employee benefit and measured at the undiscounted amount expected to be paid when the liability is settled.

The estimate is derived from HR records and payroll data, using the number of untaken leave days multiplied by each employee's daily pay rate. It includes associated employer costs such as National Insurance and pension contributions. The methodology is reviewed annually to ensure it reflects current workforce patterns and pay structures.

- Building management costs

An estimate was recognised for 2025 to 2026 in respect of building management costs due to late receipt of supplier invoices. The estimate was based on information provided by the facilities management contractor and reflects services rendered by the reporting date.

- Legal costs

A provision was estimated for legal services not yet invoiced at year end. This estimate was based on a detailed work-in-progress schedule supplied by the contracted legal provider.

- Other estimates

Additional accruals and provisions were estimated using historical invoicing patterns and management's assessment of services delivered up to 31 March 2026.

Note 2 – Statement of operating costs by operating segment

IFRS 8 requires operating segments to be identified on the basis of internal reports about components of an organisation that are regularly reviewed by the Chief Operating Decision Maker, which is the Chief Regulator in Ofqual, in order to allocate resources to the segments and to assess their performance.

The following table presents gross expenditure, income, depreciation and net expenditure regarding the operating segments, regulation, standards and other directorates, based on management information produced in accordance with IFRS 8. Assets and liabilities are not reported separately to the Chief Operating Decision Maker and so are not disclosed separately by operating segment.

Item	2025 to 2026 General Qualifications £000	2025 to 2026 Vocational and Technical Qualifications £000	2025 to 2026 Standards, Research and Analysis £000	2025 to 2026 Regulatory and Corporate Services £000	2025 to 2026 Strategy £000	2025 to 2026 Legal £000	2025 to 2026 Total £000
Gross expenditure	3,180	7,811	2,923	9,448	4,438	2,301	30,101
Income	0	0	0	(51)	0	(63)	(114)
Depreciation	0	0	0	863	0	0	863
Net expenditure	3,180	7,811	2,923	10,260	4,438	2,238	30,850

Item	2024 to 2025 General Qualifications £000	2024 to 2025 Vocational and Technical Qualifications £000	2024 to 2025 Standards, Research and Analysis £000	2024 to 2025 Regulatory and Corporate Services £000	2024 to 2025 Strategy £000	2024 to 2025 Legal £000	2024 to 2025 Total £000
Gross expenditure	2,860	8,130	2,781	9,550	4,720	1,712	29,753
Income	0	0	0	(51)	0	(25)	(76)
Depreciation	0	0	0	800	0	0	800
Net expenditure	2,860	8,130	2,781	10,299	4,720	1,687	30,477

Ofqual has **6** directorates in 2025 to 2026:

- **General Qualifications** provides dedicated resources for this specific qualification area
- **Vocational and Technical Qualifications** provides dedicated resources for this specific qualification area including continued delivery of the reform programme of vocational and technical qualifications
- **Standards, Research and Analysis** is responsible for the research and analysis functions to underpin the regulatory approach
- **Regulatory and Corporate Services** comprises management of the National Reference Test, collecting evidence and intelligence from awarding organisations and auditing their compliance with Ofqual's regulations, public facing services, and business support services including finance, commercial, HR, information management
- **Strategy** (previously Chief Regulator's Office) includes the strategy team, communications, and the private office.
- **Legal** was previously part of Chief Regulator's Office.

Note 3 – Staff costs

	2025 to 2026 Permanently employed staff £000	2025 to 2026 Others £000	2025 to 2026 Total staff costs £000	2024 to 2025 Total staff costs £000
Description				
Wages and salaries	17,746	138	17,884	17,948
Social security costs	2,440	0	2,440	2,011
Pension costs	4,951	0	4,951	4,957
Sub total	25,137	138	25,275	24,916
Less recoveries in respect of outward secondments	(157)	0	(157)	(78)
Add payments in respect of inward secondments	0	0	0	0
Total costs	24,980	138	25,118	24,838

Of Which:	Charged to Administration budgets	Charged to Programme budgets	Charged to capital budgets	2025-26 Total
Staff costs	3,407	21,711	0	25,118
Total	3,407	21,711	0	25,118

Note 4 – Expenditure

Description	SoCNE	2025-26 Core department £000	2024-25 Core department £000
Non-cash items:			
Depreciation	Depreciation	419	433
Amortisation	Amortisation	444	367
Auditor's remuneration	Other Op Exp	118	130
Interest charges on lease	Other Op Exp	96	98
Non-cash items		1,077	1,028
AME Provision for dilapidations: release of unused provision		0	(29)
Total non-cash items		1,077	999
—			
Other expenditure:			—
Direct operational expenditure	Other Op Exp	515	593
Rent and accommodation	Other Op Exp	383	507
Recruitment, training and staff-related	Other Op Exp	255	350
Finance costs	Other Op Exp	11	3
IT	Purchase of goods	868	904
External Advice & Experts	Purchase of goods	937	558
Research	Purchase of goods	1,800	1,801

Description	SoCNE	2025-26 Core department £000	2024-25 Core department £000
Total other expenditure		4,769	4,716
–			–
Total other Administration costs		5,846	5,715

Note 5 – Income

Description	2025 to 2026 Core department £000	2024 to 2025 Core department £000
Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment	45	45
Other income	6	6
Fines and penalties (cost recovered as an agent)	63	25
Total	114	76

Fines and penalties are collected as an agent for HM Treasury and so are disclosed in SOPS 4.2 Consolidated Fund Income.

Note 6 – Right of use assets

Description	2025 to 2026 Total £000
Cost or valuation:	
At 1 April 2025	2,564
Additions	0
Disposals	0
At 31 March 2026	2,564
-	
Depreciation:	
At 1 April 2025	278
Charged in year	256
Disposals	0
At 31 March 2026	534
-	
Carrying amount at 31 March 2026	2,030
Carrying amount at 1 April 2025	2,286
-	
Asset financing:	
Leased under IFRS 16	2,030
Carrying amount at 31 March 2026	2,030

Description	2024 to 2025 Total £000
Cost or valuation:	
At 1 April 2024	2,253
Additions	311
Disposals	0
At 31 March 2025	2,564
-	
Depreciation:	
At 1 April 2024	19
Charged in year	259
Disposals	0
At 31 March 2025	278
-	
Carrying amount at 31 March 2025	2,286
Carrying amount at 1 April 2024	2,234
-	
Asset financing:	
Leased under IFRS 16	2,286
Carrying amount at 31 March 2025	2,286

Right of use assets includes the buildings lease for Friargate only in 2025 to 2026.

The lease for Friargate commenced 1 March 2024 and is an agreement with the Government Property Agency (GPA). The new lease runs for 10 years to 2034. In 2024 to 2025 GPA informed Ofqual of a revised estimate for dilapidation costs related to Friargate.

The existing provision of £64,000 was increased by £311,000 to the new total of £375,000.

Note 7 – Property, plant and equipment

Description	2025 to 2026 Information technology £000	2025 to 2026 Furniture £000	2025 to 2026 Total £000
Cost or valuation:			
At 1 April 2025	528	139	667
Additions	40	0	40
Disposals	(100)	0	(100)
At 31 March 2026	468	139	607
Depreciation:			
At 1 April 2025	276	47	323
Charged in year	135	28	163
Disposals	(100)	0	(100)
At 31 March 2026	311	75	386
Carrying amount at 31 March 2026	157	64	221
Carrying amount at 1 April 2025	252	92	344
Asset financing:			
Owned	157	64	221
Carrying amount at 31 March 2026	157	64	221

Description	2024 to 2025 Information technology £000	2024 to 2025 Furniture £000	2024 to 2025 Total £000
Cost or valuation:			
At 1 April 2024	651	133	784
Additions	118	6	124
Disposals	(241)	0	(241)
At 31 March 2025	528	139	667
Depreciation:			
At 1 April 2024	368	20	388
Charged in year	147	27	174
Disposals	(239)	0	(239)
At 31 March 2025	276	47	323
Carrying amount at 31 March 2025	252	92	344
Carrying amount at 1 April 2024	283	113	396
Asset financing:			
Owned	252	92	344
Carrying amount at 31 March 2025	252	92	344

The disposals include IT assets which had a net book value of zero by year end.

Note 8 – Intangible assets

Description	2025 to 2026 Software licenses £000	2025 to 2026 Total £000
Cost or valuation:		
At 1 April 2025	1,996	1,996
Additions	389	389
Disposals	0	0
At 31 March 2026	2,385	2,385
-		
Amortisation:		
At 1 April 2025	1,049	1,049
Charged in year	444	444
Disposals	0	0
At 31 March 2026	1,493	1,493
-		
Carrying amount at 31 March 2026	892	892
Carrying amount at 1 April 2025	947	947
-		
Asset financing:		
Owned	892	892
Carrying amount at 31 March 2026	892	892

Description	2024 to 2025 Software licenses £000	2024 to 2025 Total £000
Cost or valuation:		
At 1 April 2024	1,671	1,671
Additions	325	325
Disposals	0	0
At 31 March 2025	1,996	1,996
-		
Amortisation:		
At 1 April 2024	682	682
Charged in year	367	367
Disposals	0	0
At 31 March 2025	1,049	1,049
-		
Carrying amount at 31 March 2025	947	947
Carrying amount at 1 April 2024	989	989
-		
Asset financing:		
Owned	947	947
Carrying amount at 31 March 2025	947	947

Note 9 – Cash and cash equivalents

Description	2025 to 2026 £000	2024 to 2025 £000
Balance at 1 April	476	1
Net change in cash and cash equivalents	(475)	475
Balance at 31 March 2025	1	476
The following balances at 31 March were held at:		
Government Banking Service	1	476
Balance at 31 March	1	476

Note 10 – Trade receivables

Description	2025 to 2026 £000	2024 to 2025 £000
Amounts falling due within 1 year:		
Trade receivables	5	46
Other receivables	60	307
Prepayments	410	424
Accrued income	44	16
VAT	35	73
Total at 31 March 2026	554	866

Other receivables includes £50,000 fines income which was imposed in 2024 to 2025 but cash was not received at 31 March 2026. This income is paid over to the Consolidated Fund on receipt and is not retained by Ofqual.

Note 11 – Trade payables, financials and other liabilities

Description	2025 to 2026 £000	2024 to 2025 £000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Other taxation and social security	509	477
Trade payables	37	(124)
Other payables	9	59
Accruals	1,305	1,977
Deferred income	4	4
Amounts issued from the Consolidated Fund for supply but not spent at the year end	1	476
Consolidated Fund extra receipts due to be paid to the Consolidated Fund	0	0
- received	0	0
- receivable	50	305
Total at 31 March 2026	1,915	3,174

Consolidated Fund extra receipts includes £50,000 fines income which was not received by 31 March 2026 although the fines were imposed in 2024 to 2025. The cash will be paid over to the Consolidated Fund as soon as it is received.

Trade payables for 2024 to 2025 are negative due to an outstanding credit note from GPA for £125k. Invoices were received in April 2025 to offset this.

Note 12 – Lease liabilities

Maturity analysis	2025 to 2026 Buildings £000	2025 to 2026 Equipment £000	2025 to 2026 Total £000	2024 to 2025 Total £000
Less than one year	470	0	470	291
Between 2 and 5 years	1,065	0	1,065	1,020
Later than 5 years	738	0	738	1,000
Total present value obligations	2,273	0	2,273	2,311
Lease liabilities included in the balance sheet				
Current	470	0	470	291
Non-current	1,803	0	1,803	2,020
Total present value obligations	2,273	0	2,273	2,311
Movement in lease during the year				
As at 1 April 2025	2,311	0	2,311	2,335
Interest charged to the income statement	96	0	96	98
Lease liability in relation to new leases	0	0	0	0
Lease rental payments	(134)	0	(134)	(119)
Lease write off at termination	0	0	0	(3)
Total present value obligations	2,273	0	2,273	2,311

This year's cash payments are shown in the cashflow statement.

The lease liability at year end relates only to the Friargate buildings lease. Obligations relating to Earlsdon Park were cleared at the beginning of the year. The Friargate lease runs for 10 years to 2034.

Note 13 – Commitments under operating leases

The total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable leases not accounted for under IFRS 16 are:

Description	2025 to 2026 £000	2024 to 2025 £000
Buildings:		
Not later than one year	0	127
Later than one year and not later than 5 years	0	0
Later than 5 years	0	0
Total	0	127
Equipment:		
Not later than one year	2	2
Later than one year and not later than 5 years	2	2
Later than 5 years	0	0
Total	4	4

The minimum lease payments are determined from the relevant lease agreements. The lease expenditure charged during the year is shown in SoCNE. 2025 to 2026 commitments relate to the photocopier leases

only. Commitments relating to the Earlsdon Park lease were fully paid in 2025 to 2026.

Note 14 – Provisions for liabilities and charges

Description	Friargate Dilapidations £000	2025 to 2026 Total £000	2024 to 2025 Total £000
At 1 April 2025	(375)	(375)	(93)
Provided in year	0	0	(311)
Release on unused provision	0	0	29
At 31 March 2026	(375)	(375)	(375)

Ofqual held a provision of £29,000 for dilapidations on the Earlsdon Park offices for several years. This amount was released in 2024 to 2025 after the contract exit date of July 2024 had elapsed. The dilapidations provision in relation to Friargate was increased by £311,000 to £375,000 in 2024 to 2025 with no further movement in 2025 to 2026 (total provisions in 2024 to 2025: £375,000).

Note 15 – Financial risks

As Ofqual's cash requirements are met through the estimates process, Ofqual's exposure to credit, liquidity or market risk is minimal. Financial instruments do not have a role in creating and managing risk that they would for a non-public sector organisation of a similar size.

Note 16 – Contingent liabilities

Ofqual is involved in an employment-related claim. The outcome is uncertain therefore no provision has been recognised. Further disclosure has not been made as it could prejudice Ofqual's position. (£nil: 2024 to 2025).

Note 17 – Related-party transactions

Ofqual had payment transactions with the following government departments and other central government bodies and organisations during the year:

- Cabinet Office
- Department for Education
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Government Legal Department
- Government Property Agency
- Ministry of Justice

Income was received from the following government departments and other central government bodies and organisations during the year:

- CCEA (Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment)

No Board member, key management staff or other related party has undertaken any material transactions with the department during the year. The remuneration report lists all members of the management Board

having authority or responsibility for directing or controlling the major activities of the entity during the year.

Note 18 – Entities within the department boundary

Ofqual is the only body within its department boundary.

Note 19 – Events after the reporting period

In accordance with the requirements of IAS 10, events after the reporting period are considered up to the date that the Annual Report and Accounts were authorised for issue of certification by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

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