



The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP
Secretary of State for Education

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/contactus/df

Rt Hon Robin Walker MP
Chair, Education Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

09 October 2023

Dear Robin,

INTENTION TO APPOINT INTERIM CHIEF REGULATOR

I am writing to inform you of my plans to appoint an interim Chief Regulator following notification from Dr Jo Saxton, the current Chief Regulator, that she intends to step down at the end of the year.


I am grateful to Dr Saxton for the commitment that she has shown since assuming this role in 2021, and in particular for overseeing the successful return of exams and normal grading post-pandemic, whilst continuing to deliver on a major programme of reforms to vocational and technical qualifications. Her leadership has been invaluable in stabilising Ofqual following a challenging few years. I know you will share my desire to minimise the period of uncertainty for the organisation as it comes out of this year's results season and looks to set future direction, including responding to the Prime Minister's recent announcement of the government's intention to introduce a new Advanced British Standard. The coming year will be a challenging period for Ofqual which will require continuity and stability of leadership.

I intend to carry out a full and open public appointments process for a permanent successor, in line with the Governance Code of Public Appointments, and will aim to complete that process as soon as possible. However, we will not be able to complete a competition by the time Dr Saxton stands down in December 2023. Given this, I intend to appoint an interim Chief Regulator on an exceptional basis for a period of 12 months from 1 January 2024, pending appointment to the substantive post through an open competition. As well as providing continuity and stability over the coming year, a 12-month interim appointment term takes account of the challenge of recruiting an experienced suitable candidate to such a high profile and challenging role on a short-term basis.

As you know, the Chief Regulator is one of the central leadership roles in education in England, and I understand the Committee therefore has a particular interest in this

appointment. I would be grateful for your thoughts as soon as possible on how the Committee would like to engage with the process of appointing the interim Chief Regulator. In considering this I would be grateful if you would bear in mind the importance of confirming an appointment urgently – not least because a candidate leaving another substantive role to take up the post may well need to give 3 months' notice to their current employer.

I will, of course, also keep the Committee fully informed about the process to recruit a permanent successor to Dr Saxton and will consult you in due course about the Committee's engagement in that process too.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gillian Keegan', with a stylized, flowing script. The signature is centered horizontally and occupies the middle of the page.

**The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP
Secretary of State for Education**