

Education Secretary selects preferred candidate for new Ofqual Chief Regulator

The Education Secretary Gavin Williamson has named Dr Jo Saxton as his preferred candidate to be the next Ofqual Chief Regulator today (18 June), following approval by the Prime Minister.

Dr Saxton will now go on to attend a pre-appointment hearing before the Education Select Committee on 6 July.

Ofqual is the independent regulator for qualifications, exams and assessments in England. It maintains standards and public confidence in GCSE, A and AS levels, as well as vocational and technical qualifications.

Dr Saxton has been selected for the role following an open recruitment competition and assessment process led by a panel, conducted in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

If appointed, she would be due to take over from the interim Chief Regulator Simon Lebus from September.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

I look forward to welcoming Jo Saxton to the role, whose wealth of experience makes her the ideal candidate to lead such an important organisation.

With a deep understanding of the education system and Ofqual, she will play a vital part in upholding standards and confidence in our exams and qualifications.

I am also grateful to Simon for his work as interim Chief this year, helping the organisation to navigate the pandemic's challenges.

Dr Saxton's previous experience includes serving as CEO of Turner Schools Academy Trust and CEO of Future Academies Trust. Prior to working with academies and schools, she taught and examined at universities in England and the United States.

More recently she has been a policy adviser at the Department for Education working on a range of policies from academy expansion to qualifications.

Dr Saxton is also a former trustee of The Brilliant Club and New Schools Network.

The Chief Regulator's role is to ensure Ofqual carries out the board's strategy and has the needed resources in place, develop policies and programmes, and maintain stakeholder relationships.

Following her pre-appointment hearing, the Education Select Committee will publish their recommendations. The Education Secretary will consider their recommendation before deciding on the final appointment which is then submitted to The Queen in Council for approval.