Ofqual’s Chief Regulator issues first ‘rebuke’ to exam board for rule breaches

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The first ‘Chief Regulator’s Rebuke’ has been handed to WJEC CBAC Ltd for serious failures involving 4 of its Eduqas GCSE, AS and A level qualifications.

Ofqual’s Chief Regulator Sir Ian Bauckham has issued his first formal ‘rebuke’ after the new enforcement option was introduced last year.

The Chief Regulator’s Rebuke has been handed to exam board WJEC CBAC Ltd (WJEC), for serious failures concerning 4 of its Eduqas GCSE, AS and A level qualifications between 2019 and 2025.

The rebuke was introduced as a new enforcement tool when Ofqual updated its ‘Supporting compliance and taking regulatory action’ policy in October 2025, following consultation last year.

The Chief Regulator’s Rebuke is used for cases which are considered so serious that a public outcome is required, but where the circumstances fall short of meriting a fine.

WJEC admitted failing to collect and monitor centre declaration forms for the 4 qualifications - in breach of its conditions of recognition. The forms are required as statements to demonstrate centres have complied with subject content requirements. WJEC said this was an oversight – it had failed to make relevant staff aware of the requirements related to declaration forms.

The failures concerned the following qualifications offered by WJEC’s Eduqas brand in England, Wales and Northern Ireland:

- GCSE drama and GCE drama and theatre – Live Performance statements
- GCE drama and theatre – Text suitability forms
- GCSE geography – Fieldwork statements
- GCSE computer science – Practical Programming statements.

Sir Ian Bauckham said: “The Chief Regulator’s Rebuke demonstrates our commitment to taking action to protect students and uphold public confidence in qualifications. It enables us to hold an awarding organisation to account publicly for serious failings when a fine is not warranted.

“The circumstances of this case include that there was no evidence to indicate any actual adverse effects on students.

“However, these failings by WJEC represent serious breaches of Ofqual’s conditions across multiple subjects and years. The failures had the potential to prejudice students and undermine public confidence in the validity of regulated qualifications.”

The Chief Regulator’s Rebuke is designed to be a non-statutory instrument as part of our commitment to proportionate regulation while maintaining rigorous standards.

Non-statutory means can be used to influence an awarding organisation’s behaviour and to support compliance. Our policy aims to ensure awarding organisations resolve issues early wherever possible.

Ofqual took into account mitigating factors, including that WJEC accepted the breaches and agreed to the rebuke.

Ofqual has today published the Notice of Chief Regulator’s Rebuke it issued to WJEC CBAC Ltd.

Ofqual’s Supporting compliance and taking regulatory action guidance sets out how its powers are used in taking regulatory action, including more details about the Chief Regulator’s Rebuke.

Background information

Previous cases and fines can also be viewed in Regulatory actions and interventions by Ofqual - GOV.UK.

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofquals-chief-regulator-issues-first-rebuke-to-exam-board-for-rule-breaches