



Job Title:	Associate Director - Strategic Change
Reporting to:	Chief Executive
Salary:	£65,000 – £87,000, plus benefits
Location:	Home Based
Date:	March 2026

1. About JCQ

JCQ is a membership organisation for awarding bodies offering general, vocational and technical qualifications. As a community interest company, funded by its members: AQA; Cambridge OCR; CCEA; City & Guilds; NCFE; Pearson; WJEC and associate member OCN NI, JCQ’s vision is to set the benchmark in qualifications administration, making guidance and processes clear, equitable and accessible. This matches our mission to provide clear and consistent arrangements for qualifications and to streamline processes for schools, colleges and other education establishments offering qualifications.

JCQ’s core aims are:

1. Reduce bureaucracy for schools and colleges by facilitating and delivering common administrative arrangements for examinations.
2. Provide a forum for strategic debate, information exchange and expression of common interest amongst awarding bodies.
3. Enable member awarding bodies to jointly express views and collectively respond to national issues.
4. Provide a channel for collective discussion with key stakeholders including schools and colleges, the HE sector, teachers, lecturers, examination officers, heads of centres and their representative organisations.

More information on JCQ can be found on our website and in the [JCQ-Strategic-Plan-2025-2030.pdf](#).

2. Job purpose

JCQ’s Associate Director - Strategic Change role is a key senior leadership role, working with members and external stakeholders, including regulators and government departments across the UK to develop and implement programmes of work to improve JCQ’s shared services, lead key strategic programmes and manage new emerging risks. Areas of work will include high profile qualification topics such as cyber security, malpractice, AI, VTQ reform and delivery, technology developments and managing relationships within a complex environment. Ideally, the candidate will have proven experience in national programme management involving qualifications policy, regulation and or delivery. The candidate will be confident in leading programmes involving senior colleagues across a range of awarding organisations, covering specialist areas which could be outside of their immediate zone of



expertise. They will be resilient and resourceful in navigating new projects, and able to draw on the wide range of expertise that exists across the JCQ membership.

The candidate should be able to work collaboratively with all JCQ staff, its members and a wide range of stakeholders to achieve JCQ’s objectives. As Associate Director – Strategic Change, the postholder will be responsible for monitoring and updating JCQ’s strategic plan and will work with other senior leaders to report on progress to the CEO and Board. The role involves supporting designated committee chairs to deliver JCQ’s objectives and collaborating with all 20-plus JCQ committees, adapting to emerging priorities as needed.

3. Principal responsibilities / objectives

- Provide strategic leadership on JCQ’s change programmes, ensuring alignment with organisational strategy, regulatory expectations and long-term sector developments.
- As a senior leader support effective organisational risk management, ensuring robust controls, escalation routes and assurance processes.
- Communicate effectively in writing and verbally with the Board to advise on the transformation of JCQ shared services and any new risks that arise in the UK qualification system that impact on JCQ’s work.
- Represent JCQ at senior level national forums on all aspects of JCQ’s work. Influence effectively, making the case for change initiatives such as digital transformation of JCQ shared services. Build positive relationships with senior leaders across the education system.
- Lead on consultation and evidence gathering activities to support implementation of JCQ’s strategic plan. Work effectively with a range of JCQ members, who have specialist expertise, special interest groups and legal advisers as appropriate on complex qualification systems.
- As a member of JCQ’s senior team contribute to the strategic leadership and development of the organisation acting as a positive role model for all team members, willing to work across projects and committees as and when required.
- Deputise for the JCQ Chief Executive and Deputy CEO as necessary from time-to-time.

4. Person specification

The post holder will have:

Criteria	Essential (E) or Desirable (D)
Experience/ability	
Experience operating at a senior leadership level, contributing to organisational strategy and long-term planning.	E
Experience advising Boards, committees or senior governance bodies on systemic risk, strategic change and qualification system reform.	E
Experience leading organisational risk frameworks, assurance processes and crisis response.	D

Experience representing an organisation at national level.	E
Demonstrable ability to think strategically, see the bigger picture, make connections and translate complex issues into clear, practical and implementable next steps and solutions.	E
Able to communicate complex concepts and conclusions to a range of audiences and stakeholders, using evidence and expert opinion to influence others.	E
Experience of leading transformational change programmes with successful outcomes.	D
Experience in interrogating intelligence and qualitative and quantitative evidence, undertaking innovative analysis and problem solving to formulate regulatory strategy.	E
Proven ability to lead by example, inspire, motivate and develop staff at all levels, providing vision, strategic direction and demonstrating integrity and professionalism.	E
Strong track record in developing and maintaining effective stakeholder relations internally and externally at senior level to achieve organisational outcomes.	E

Technical qualifications/knowledge	
Knowledge of qualifications and assessment delivery and qualification systems in the UK.	E
Degree or equivalent level of attainment or experience.	E
Understanding of the education, qualifications and assessment, political and policy context.	E
Project management qualification or equivalent experience.	E

5. JCQ values based competences

Results focused

- Strives to meet or exceed ambitious performance objectives and quality standards.
- Adds value by delivering results through continually finding sustainable improvements in methods and processes.

Member and team focussed

- Demonstrates a commitment to support members and customers in a way that best meets their needs.
- Makes efforts to understand member and stakeholder expectations and providing a high quality service for a long-lasting and mutually satisfactory relationship.
- Personally contributes to effective team working by working collaboratively with others and accepts support from others.
- Understands the needs and goals of others and adapts their own views and behaviour when appropriate.
- Communicates constructively, honestly and openly with colleagues.
- Takes responsibility for events or outcomes. Holds self and others accountable for decisions, actions and commitments.

Development focussed

- Identifies and understands personal strengths and improvement areas for self and others.
- Seeks and is open to improvement in ability, skills and knowledge, and motivation of self and others.
- Actively encourages others to exercise initiative and judgment, gives specific and regular constructive feedback.

Leadership

- Helps create an environment and culture that shares the vision and direction of JCQ.
- Is a champion of diversity and inclusion consistent with the values of JCQ and its members.
- Ensures expectations are clear and provides regular constructive feedback and recognises the accomplishment of others.

Communication

- Communicates effectively at all levels using various appropriate methods of communication.
- Actively listens taking others' views into account, is able to put forward arguments and influence decisions and achieve positive outcomes.
- Gains respect by operating in a professional and credible manner.

Change

- Seeks opportunities to improve processes and drive change. Proactively initiates innovative ideas and actions, is flexible and open to new ideas.
- Effectively engages or leads change programmes, remains positive despite setbacks and ambiguities.