

Sonia Kumar MP  
Member of Parliament for Dudley  
House of Commons  
Westminster  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Sent by email only to:  
[sonia.kumar.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:sonia.kumar.mp@parliament.uk)

Ref: PQ 63249

18 July 2025

Dear Ms Kumar,

**Re: PQ 63249 To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to ensure awarding bodies for hair and beauty qualifications update their (a) guidance and (b) training to promote inclusivity for all (i) hair and (ii) skin types.**

Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Education), Janet Daby, has asked Ofqual to respond directly to your recent Parliamentary Question. A copy of this response will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Ofqual, as the independent regulator of qualifications in England, requires all awarding organisations (AOs) to comply with its **General Conditions of Recognition**, which include provisions to ensure qualifications are accessible and inclusive.

Under **Condition D2 (Accessibility of qualifications)**, AOs must:

- Comply with Equalities Law in relation to all qualifications they offer.
- Monitor their qualifications for any features that could disadvantage learners who share a protected characteristic.
- Remove any unjustifiable disadvantage and maintain records where disadvantage is considered justifiable, including the rationale.

While Ofqual does not prescribe specific training or guidance materials, it expects AOs to take appropriate steps to ensure their qualifications are inclusive. This includes maintaining an up-to-date understanding of Equalities Law, consulting with diverse stakeholders, and using evidence such as learner feedback and statistical analysis to identify and address potential bias.

In addition, under **Condition E1 (Qualifications to have an objective and support)**, AOs must consult with users of qualifications—such as employers and training providers—when designing new qualifications. This ensures qualifications are relevant, inclusive, and reflective of the needs of the sectors they serve, including hair and beauty.

Ofqual also engages with sector representative bodies such as the National Hair and Beauty Federation who actively promote equality, diversity and inclusivity within their industries. Their insights support AOs in developing qualifications that are inclusive and reflective of current industry practises.

Although Ofqual is not a competent authority to determine breaches of Equalities Law, it expects AOs to respond appropriately to concerns raised by learners or stakeholders. Individuals with concerns may also contact the **Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS)** or use the AO's complaints process.

Yours sincerely,



**Sir Ian Bauckham CBE**

Chief Regulator, Ofqual