JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	**Head of Data and Technical Standards**
Reporting to:	**Chief Executive Officer**
Location:	**Home Based**
Date:	**January 2025**

1. About JCQ

JCQ is the representative body for the leading awarding bodies in the United Kingdom. The eight members of JCQ are leading awarding bodies offering general and vocational qualifications in the UK. They are responsible for setting and awarding qualifications, such as GCSEs, National 5s, AS and A Levels, Highers, and vocational qualifications including the newly developed T Levels. The UK awarding body sector is amongst the most diverse in the world and a vital part of the education landscape. JCQ is a not-for-profit Community Interest Company, funded by its members: AQA; City and Guilds; CCEA; NCFE; OCR; Pearson, SQA, and WJEC.

JCQ's mission is to reduce bureaucracy for schools and colleges by facilitating and delivering common administrative arrangements for examinations. JCQ helps members work collectively with UK qualification regulators and government departments and undertakes a wide range of activities including publication of national level 1, 2, and 3 VTQ and GCSE and A level results.

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.

The main objective of JCQ is to enable its members to act together by providing common administrative arrangements for examinations and communicating with a single voice to the media, regulators, government departments, and other stakeholders.

2. Job Purpose

The Head of Data and Technical Standards is responsible for leading and delivering all aspects of JCQ's Data Standards and Technical Standards work. This includes supporting the chair of the JCQ Standards Advisory Group (STAG) in leading the STAG work programme to ensure successful completion each year and effective interaction with the UK qualification regulatory groups and government departments. The role will also involve leadership and support to other data-related committees and management of key data-shared services and contracts, which help ensure JCQ members work effectively together to support UK schools and colleges. The role is responsible for the creation and delivery of JCQ data releases and supporting the understanding of the data.

The role will involve:

- Responsible for leading all JCQ data-related projects and supporting the development and delivery of JCQ's longer-term data strategy.
- Provision of written and verbal advice to the JCQ CEO, Board, and committees on JCQ data-related work.
- Extensive engagement across the UK with government officials, regulatory staff involved in UK qualification data analysis, and other organisations with an interest in JCQ's work.
- The ability to present JCQ's work at national events and be innovative in ensuring JCQ's data services continuously improve.
- Close collaboration with other heads of service and a wide network of JCQ member awarding colleagues, reporting to the CEO to deliver JCQ's short, medium, and long-term objectives.
- Management of fixed-term contractors and JCQ staff on an ad-hoc basis to provide additional data services support, providing strong leadership, and mentoring colleagues as appropriate.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, strategic thinking, an outcome focus, creativity, and the capacity to drive forward improved data services.
- Resilience and the ability to work under pressure, delivering high-quality data products to a high standard within very tight timeframes, particularly during the summer results period.
- Management of JCQ data governance policies and procedures to ensure data quality and compliance.
- Collaborate with other JCQ teams and committees to identify data needs and provide data-driven insights.
- Responsibility for integrating, storing, analysing, and reporting data related to JCQ results work, surveys, and research projects.
- Stay current with emerging trends and technologies in data management and technical standards for qualifications and ensure compliance with relevant data protection regulations and industry standards.

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3. Principal Responsibilities

- Support chairs of JCQ committees to lead key data-related groups such as STAG and the Data Protection Officer Committee, ensuring their annual programmes are completed, producing technical notes of meetings and action logs, preparing agendas and papers, identifying strategic themes for discussion and development, and secure support for common positions across members on technical and data related matters.

- Support all other JCQ committees on technical and data-related issues and lead any data-related projects.

- Manage JCQ examination data, including VTQ, GCSE, and A Level results, providing results in accessible formats suitable for communication with JCQ Stakeholders, in line with best practice.

- Conduct data analyses, reporting on and presenting trends to a range of audiences.

- Manage and develop data systems for efficient collation and comparison of qualification data, ensuring robust maintenance, continuous improvement, and seamless operation of these critical infrastructures.

- Lead data harmonisation initiatives, ensuring consistency, accuracy, and interoperability of data sets to support organisational decision-making and reporting.

- Represent JCQ at meetings with key stakeholders, provide specialist technical advice on data queries, and act on feedback to improve data and technical standards activities.

- Be the main contact between the UK regulators and awarding organisations on cross-awarding organisation data and technical information requests.

- Manage, monitor, and improve all JCQ data-related contracts and data-sharing agreements, ensuring compliance across the membership with best practice and data protection regulations.

- Lead the strategic and operational aims of the JCQ concerning data and technical standards. For example, manage the development and implementation of JCQ's data strategy in consultation with members and external stakeholders.

- Ensure appropriate data security standards and architecture are in place to support JCQ data services and research activities in terms of data integrity and accuracy.

- Deputise for the CEO as required and as an experienced member of staff contribute to the development of JCQ more widely, carrying out any other tasks to support the running of JCQ as required from time to time.

- Perform other duties as assigned that are consistent with the level and responsibilities of this position, as determined by management.

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4. Person Specification

The post holder will have:

Criteria	Essential (E) or Desirable (D)
Experienced data leader with the ability to work independently and proactively, handling multiple projects and devising creative solutions to improve services.	E
Deep understanding of data management best practice, regulations, and governance.	E
Demonstrable ability to think strategically, see the bigger picture, make connections, and take complex issues through to clear, practical, and implementable next steps and solutions.	D
A successful track record of influencing and working with senior stakeholders, internally and externally, to develop and maintain effective, open, and productive working relationships. Ability to win support and challenge the thinking of others.	E
Ability to analyse and critically evaluate quantitative and qualitative evidence.	E
Ability to use analytical code (for example, R or Python) to automate data processing, analysis, and reporting.	D
Resilient and resourceful – able to work under pressure in a fast-moving environment and be flexible. Manage complex problems and overcome resistance to change.	D
Successfully work with stakeholders and peers, leading by example, communicating clearly, and sharing information regularly and concisely.	E

Technical Qualifications/Knowledge and Experience:	Essential (E) or Desirable (D
A higher degree or equivalent professional qualification in a quantitative subject or related area with a significant quantitative element, or demonstrable experience in managing and analysing data, within an education environment.	E
Good understanding of the education sector, qualification delivery, and assessment, political and policy context.	E
Experience in using coding languages such as R or Python to automate data processing, analysis, and reporting.	D
Experience in a government or awarding body role directly involved with examinations or assessments.	D
Understanding of effective and strategic approaches to data management, analysis, and presentation.	E
Excellent project management skills, able to use a wide range of Microsoft tools to facilitate collaborative working.	E
Project management qualification or equivalent experience.	D

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5. JCQ value-based competencies – assessed at interview stage along with requirements in section 4

Results Focused
- Strives to meet or exceed ambitious performance objectives and quality standards.
- Has pride in the JCQ and their working practices.
- Adds value by delivering results through continually finding sustainable improvements in methods and processes.
- Seeks to improve their performance and sets themselves demanding standards.

Member and Stakeholder Focussed
- Demonstrates a desire to help and serve members and customers in a way that best meets their actual needs.
- Makes efforts to understand member and stakeholder expectations and provide a high-quality service for a long-lasting and mutually satisfactory relationship.

Team Focussed
- Personally contributes to effective teamwork by working collaboratively with others.
- Understands the needs and goals of others and adapts their views and behaviour when appropriate.
- Accepts help from others.
- 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
- Communicates and reinforces the importance of development and learning as a priority.
- Identifies and understands personal strengths and improvement areas for self and others.
- Seeks and is open to improvement in ability and skills.
- Seeks to develop the knowledge, skill, and motivation of self and others.
- Actively encourages others to exercise initiative and judgment.
- Observes others and give specific and regular constructive feedback.

Leadership
- Helps create an environment and culture that shares the vision and direction of the JCQ.
- Be a champion of diversity and inclusion consistent with the values of JCQ and its members.
- Set clear goals and work parameters for others to follow and help others to develop plans.
- Ensures expectations are clear and specific.
- Provides regular constructive feedback and recognises the accomplishment of others, privately and publicly.

Communication

- Can communicate at all levels using various, appropriate methods of communication.
- Communicates clearly and persuasively within and outside the JCQ.
- Actively listens taking others' views into account.
- Gains respect by operating professionally and credibly.

Change

- Seeks opportunities to improve processes and drive change. Proactively initiates innovative ideas and actions.
- Is flexible and open to new ideas.
- Manages or participates in the change process.
- Remains positive despite setbacks, changes, and ambiguities.

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6. Benefits

- **Salary:** £60,000 plus – competitive rate dependent on experience.
- **Annual Leave**: 25 days rising by 1 day per full year of service to a maximum of 30 days.
- **Pension**: Enrolment in the JCQ pension scheme upon joining the organisation.
- **Home Based**: with occasional travel to stakeholder and company meetings, standard travel costs reimbursed.
- **Life Cover:** 3 x annual salary
- **Family Friendly Policies:** Enhanced leave and pay available
- **Employee Assistance Programme:** 24/7 wellbeing support, counselling, mobile app promoting physical and mental wellbeing

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7. How to Apply

To apply for this exciting opportunity, please email your CV and a supporting letter outlining how your experience and skills match the requirements outlined in the job description above to recruitment@jcq.org.uk. Any applications that do not include a detailed cover letter addressing the criteria, knowledge, qualifications, and experience required for this role will be automatically rejected. The desirable requirements will be used to determine shortlisted applicants if there is considerable interest in the post.

If you wish to have a confidential discussion about this role, please contact recruitment@jcq.org.uk

- **The closing date for applications including a letter and CV is 5 pm on 31 January 2025**

- **Shortlisting will take place the week commencing 3 February 2025**

- **Interviews will be held on 19 or 21 February 2025. Unfortunately, interviews cannot be arranged for alternative dates.**