OFFIDEX: TRAINING OFFICE ASSISTANTS TO CLARIFY BEFORE THEY DELIVER

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Paper under double-blind review

ABSTRACT

The professionalism of a senior office worker rests on two abilities: producing deliverables that satisfy acceptance criteria, and eliciting, before any work starts, the constraints that decide whether a deliverable will be accepted. Large language model (LLM) assistants excel at the former on well-specified prompts but habitually *answer first* on the underspecified requests that dominate real workplaces, silently guessing deadlines, audiences, formats and data sources. We present OFFIDEX, an office assistant agent trained to clarify before delivering, and a *Recursive Self-Purifying Experiential Reinforcement Learning* framework that turns clarification into an optimizable objective without a single ground-truth answer. Three tiers of models cooperate: a frontier *curator* that purifies raw community knowledge into 125,982 task cards with hidden constraints and acceptance rubrics, mid-tier *executors* that act as a reveal-only-when-asked user simulator and a two-tier rubric/process judge, and a lightweight *learner* that improves through supervised fine-tuning and reward-filtered self-training. Every stage is guarded by a purification gate (data leakage, simulator fidelity, judge reliability, and a best-of-n gate that measures the learnable group-relative signal before any policy update). After purified fine-tuning the calibrated composite reward rises from -0.224 to $+0.012$ on validation prompts and stays positive ($+0.020$) on a fully held-out OfficeClarify, zero-clarification dialogues fall from 24% to 3–10%, and protocol violations fall from 2.06 per dialogue to zero. Five frontier models given the same clarify-then-deliver prompt, simulator and judge all score significantly below the trained assistant, answering first on 12–86% of requests: the habit is trained, not prompted. The loop's diagnostics further show that hard hierarchical vetoes collapse open-ended office rewards onto a few fixed values and must be softened, and that reward is an inverted-U function of the number of clarifying questions, with one to two targeted questions optimal.

1 INTRODUCTION

Senior office workers do two things well: they produce deliverables that meet acceptance criteria, and they elicit, before starting, the constraints that decide acceptance: audience, deadline, format, data source, and the house rules nobody writes down. LLM assistants are strong at the first on well-specified prompts, and office-agent benchmarks such as WorkArena (Drouin et al., 2024) and TheAgentCompany (Xu et al., 2025) measure exactly that. Real requests are not well specified: in a corpus of 16,608 questions from an office-automation community, 83% are at most 20 characters long ("help me write a campaign post, make it lively, I have to publish by three"). Current assistants answer first, guess the missing constraints, deliver a fluent artefact and leave the user to discover the mismatch (Figure 1).

Teaching an assistant to clarify first raises three problems existing methods leave open (Section 2). **P1) No signal says which questions decide acceptance.** Clarification methods (Andukuri et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2025) learn to ask but reward only the final answer, with a single label or preference, so nothing tells the agent which questions matter or when to stop; nor, as we show, does a clarify-first prompt instil the habit. **P2) Office deliverables have no single ground truth.** The closest systems, clinical inquiry agents (Feng et al., 2026; Lai et al., 2026), rely on one ground-truth diagnosis and a hierarchical safety veto; office acceptance is a multi-item rubric, partly held in the user's head until asked, and we find that such vetoes fire on over half of office trajectories. **P3) Experiential learning inherits the flaws of its pipeline.** Data, simulator and judge are model-produced and fallible, yet self-improvement methods close the loop only from outputs to weights; without continual purification the loop drifts toward reward hacking (Gao et al., 2023; Skalse et al., 2022; Pan et al., 2022), and positive-only selection discards what below-average trajectories say not to do.

We propose OFFIDEX, an office assistant trained to clarify before delivering, and a Recursive Self-Purifying Experiential RL framework designed around these problems (Figure 2). **For P1,** task

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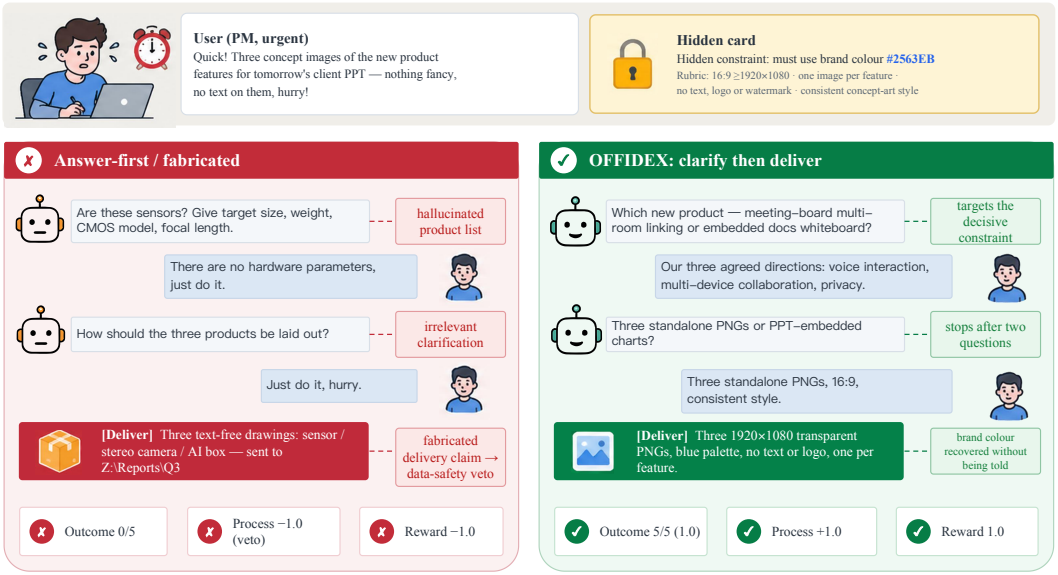

Figure 1: Answer-first assistance versus clarify-then-deliver on the same underspecified request. Left: the agent invents hardware products, asks about irrelevant parameters and claims to have written files to the user's drive; 0/5 rubric items pass and the safety veto pins the reward to -1.0. Right: OFFIDEX asks two targeted questions, then delivers three PNGs in the hidden brand colour; 5/5 pass, reward 1.0 (transcripts in Appendix H).

cards hide constraints that a reveal-only-when-asked user simulator discloses only when a question names their subject, so the right question itself earns reward, and purified clarify-then-deliver dialogues teach the habit first. **For P2,** a two-tier reward scores the deliverable by its rubric pass ratio and the dialogue on eight process dimensions, with a veto structure calibrated on the observed reward distribution rather than inherited from clinical agents. **For P3,** a frontier curator purifies 109 knowledge-base articles and 16,608 community questions into 125,982 task cards and 47,320 clarification dialogues, mid-tier executors run the simulator and the judge, a lightweight learner improves on its own rollouts, and four purification gates plus a best-of-n gate that measures the learnable group-relative signal decide whether each loop iteration may proceed, with humans supervising gates only.

The experiments answer the three problems in turn, with findings that we believe generalize. **P1:** purified SFT lifts the composite reward from -0.224 to $+0.012$ on validation prompts and keeps it positive on the held-out OfficeClarify, cuts zero-clarification dialogues from 24% to 3–10% and removes protocol violations, whereas five prompted frontier models fall significantly short on the same held-out set, on behaviour rather than on deliverable quality; and reward is an inverted-U function of the number of clarifying questions, one to two being optimal. **P2:** a clinical-style hierarchical veto pins 62.8% of office trajectories onto two fixed values, and softening it restores a continuous signal while keeping a best-of-8 gap of 0.34. **P3:** the loop's audits caught a leaking simulator, repaired before the learner was updated, and a process judge that favours long reasoning; and positive-only self-training on 2,383 graded rollouts leaves held-out reward unchanged despite a gap of 0.35, so the loop needs an optimizer that also learns from below-average trajectories.

Our contributions are:

- OFFIDEX, to our knowledge the first office assistant for which requirement clarification is an explicitly rewarded multi-turn objective, and OfficeClarify, a 69-prompt held-out evaluation from 19 knowledge-base scenarios and 1,166 real questions unseen in training.
- A recursive self-purifying experiential RL framework: a three-tier model hierarchy, a reveal-only-when-asked simulator, a two-tier reward, and purification and best-of-n gates that decide when a loop iteration may proceed.
- The first quantitative account of how a clinical-inquiry reward behaves on open-ended office tasks: veto collapse (P2), the clarification budget (P1) and the insufficiency of positive-only self-training (P3), all reproducible from the released scripts.

2 Related Work

Clarification and proactive dialogue. Clarifying questions have been studied as ranking (Rao & Daumé III, 2018), retrieval (Aliannejadi et al., 2019), selective abstention (Zhang & Choi, 2025) and

preference elicitation (Li et al., 2025); STaR-GATE (Andukuri et al., 2024) and CollabLLM (Wu et al., 2025) learn to ask from simulated users, and proactive-dialogue evaluation (Deng et al., 2023; Sekulić et al., 2022) supplies the evaluation side. These works reward the final answer with a single label or preference; OFFIDEX rewards the question itself, grounds the outcome in a multi-item rubric, and audits the simulator (Table A19 compares features).

Agentic RL and self-improvement. Multi-turn agentic RL (Zhou et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2026a) and clinical inquiry agents (Feng et al., 2026; Lai et al., 2026) show that LLM-simulated environments can train interaction policies; Doctor-R1 is the closest prior system, and its reward is our baseline V1 (Section 6.2). Self-improvement methods (Huang et al., 2023; Zelikman et al., 2022; Dong et al., 2023; Singh et al., 2024; Chen et al., 2024; Yuan et al., 2024; Qu et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2026b) close the loop from a model's outputs to its weights; OFFIDEX places the loop around the whole pipeline, with model-produced artefacts and gates rather than humans deciding whether an iteration proceeds.

LLM judges, rubric rewards and reward hacking. LLM judges are biased toward their own outputs, position and length (Zheng et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2024; Panickssery et al., 2024; Dubois et al., 2024); rubric rewards (Gunjal et al., 2026; Viswanathan et al., 2025) and process supervision (Lightman et al., 2024) make grading more verifiable, and reward over-optimization (Gao et al., 2023; Skalse et al., 2022; Pan et al., 2022) motivates our gates and the KL term. Our veto-collapse analysis is, to our knowledge, the first measurement of how a hierarchical veto reshapes the learnable signal outside its design domain.

3 PRELIMINARIES

Agentic RL (Zhang et al., 2026a) trains an LLM as a goal-directed agent in a partially observable environment (Kaelbling et al., 1998); ArCHer (Zhou et al., 2024) shows that multi-turn credit assignment is feasible when another LLM simulates the environment. Requirement elicitation is such a task: the agent decides, turn by turn, whether and what to ask before delivering.

Policy model. The policy (learner) $\pi_\theta(a_t \mid o_t)$ maps the visible dialogue history o_t to an utterance a_t that carries a private reasoning block and a public action: a clarification question or a delivery.

Multi-objective reward model. An office deliverable must be safe, faithful, complete and well communicated at once, so we use a vector-valued reward $R_\psi(\tau) \in \mathbb{R}^K$ over a trajectory τ, $K = 9$ (one rubric outcome, eight process dimensions), composed into a scalar by a fixed rule (Section 4.3); Section 6.2 shows that the rule, not only the judge, decides what is learnable.

Group relative policy optimization. GRPO (Shao et al., 2024) removes the critic of trust-region policy optimization (Schulman et al., 2015) by sampling G trajectories for the same prompt and normalizing each reward by the group statistics, $A_i = (r_i - \mu_G)/(\sigma_G + \epsilon)$. With $\rho_{i,t}$ the token-level importance ratio at position t of trajectory i, $\bar{\rho}_{i,t}$ its clipped value, $|\tau_i|$ the number of assistant tokens (simulated-user turns are masked), and π_{ref} the frozen initialization (the Stage I model, Section 4.5), the token-mean objective is

$$\mathcal{J}(\theta) = \mathbb{E}\Big[\frac{1}{\sum_i |\tau_i|} \sum_{i=1}^{G} \sum_{t=1}^{|\tau_i|} \min(\rho_{i,t} A_i,\ \bar{\rho}_{i,t} A_i)\Big] - \beta D_{KL}(\pi_\theta \| \pi_{ref}). \tag{1}$$

Because only within-group differences drive the update, a judge bias that shifts all G rewards of a prompt equally (severity, prompt difficulty) cancels in A_i. An output-dependent bias, such as a preference for longer reasoning, does not: the longer sibling still earns the larger advantage, so it must be countered by the reward itself and by the KL anchor (Section 4.3). GRPO has no gradient when all G rewards coincide.

Best-of-n gap as a learnability gate. For a prompt distribution $\mathcal{D}$ and a policy π_θ, the best-of-n gap is the expected improvement of the best sample over the average,

$$\Delta_n = \mathbb{E}_{x \sim \mathcal{D},\ \tau_{1:n} \sim \pi_\theta(\cdot|x)}\Big[\max_{i \le n} r(\tau_i) - \frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n} r(\tau_i)\Big]. \tag{2}$$

Δ_n upper-bounds what one round of positive-only selection can add and proxies the magnitude of the advantages in Equation 1; we require $\Delta_8 \ge 0.15$ before any policy optimization (Section 4.4). Expert iteration (Anthony et al., 2017), STaR (Zelikman et al., 2022) and RAFT (Dong et al., 2023) are such positive-only methods: they fine-tune on the highest-reward samples and discard below-average trajectories rather than pushing them down; Section 6.5 measures what this costs here.

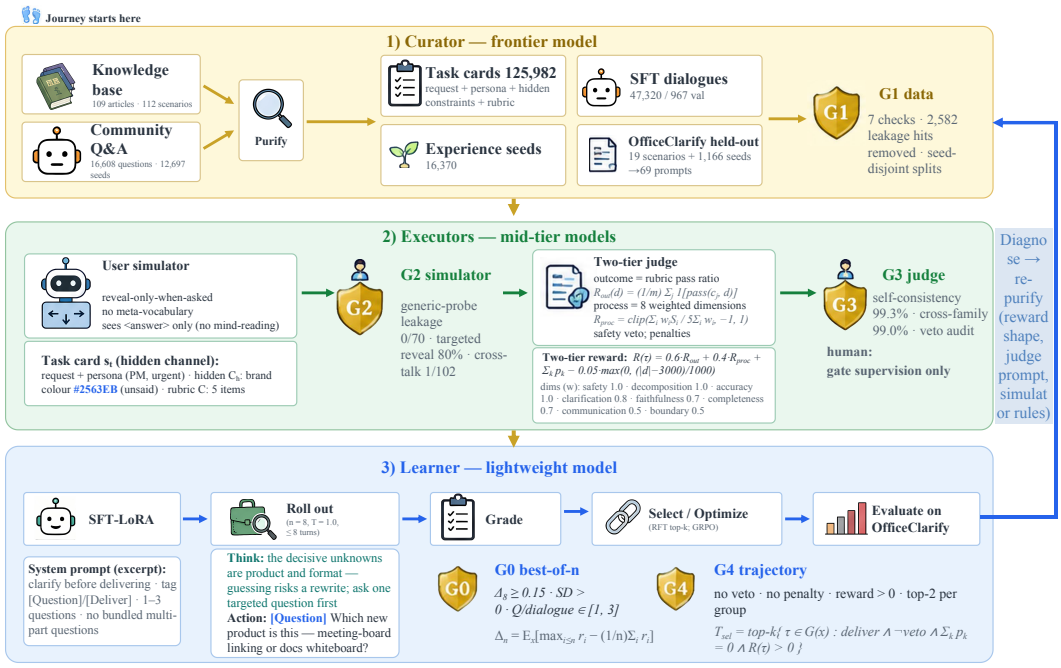

Figure 2: The recursive self-purifying loop of OFFIDEX. A frontier curator purifies raw articles and community questions into task cards, rubrics and dialogues; mid-tier executors instantiate the reveal-only-when-asked simulator and the two-tier judge; a lightweight learner is fine-tuned, rolled out, graded, filtered and re-trained. Gates G0–G4 guard each stage, the diagnose stage feeds corrections back to purification, and humans supervise gates only.

4 OFFIDEX

Section 4.1 presents the loop, 4.2 the environment that makes clarification rewardable (P1), 4.3 the two-tier reward (P2), and 4.4–4.5 the purification gates and self-training stages (P3).

4.1 The recursive self-purifying loop

Recursive self-improvement (Schmidhuber, 2009; Zhang et al., 2026b) is usually described for a single agent that rewrites itself; an LLM agent, however, improves through a pipeline of data, environment, reward and optimizer, every component of which is produced or operated by a model. OFFIDEX makes this explicit with a three-tier hierarchy (Figure 2). The **curator** is a frontier model that purifies: it converts raw knowledge-base articles and community questions into task cards, rubrics, hidden constraints and clarification dialogues, and audits its own output with programmatic validators. The **executors** are mid-tier models that instantiate the environment: a user simulator holding private information, a grader, and a grader auditor from another model family. The **learner** is the lightweight model being trained. Humans do not write training data, reward prompts or dialogue scripts; they supervise the gates that decide whether an artefact may proceed.

The loop has six stages, *purify*, *fine-tune*, *roll out*, *grade*, *select/optimize* and *evaluate/diagnose* (Figure 2), the last feeding held-out evaluation and distributional diagnostics back to the purify stage. We call the loop *self-purifying* because the diagnose stage measures more than the learner: in our run it detected a collapsed reward distribution, a leaking simulator and a mis-firing veto, each repaired before the learner was updated (Section 6). The loop is recursive in this sense: the artefacts that train the learner are themselves iterated.

4.2 Dynamic interactive environment

We formalize requirement elicitation as a finite-horizon POMDP $\langle S, A, T, R, O, \Omega \rangle$. A state $s_t = (\kappa, h_t)$ pairs a task card κ with the dialogue so far. The card is static: an underspecified request, a background, a persona and urgency, hidden constraints C_h that the user knows but did not say, and an acceptance rubric $C = \{c_1, \ldots, c_m\}$ with $m \in [3, 6]$, some items depending on C_h. The transition T appends the assistant turn and the simulated user's stochastic reply to h_t; the observation $o_t = \Omega(s_t)$ is the visible dialogue history, so C_h and C reach the learner only through what the user chooses to reveal, while they reach the environment through a private channel. An action a_t is one assistant turn `<think>...</think><answer>...</answer>` whose public body starts

with `Question:` and exactly one clarifying question, or with `[Deliver]` and the deliverable. The episode ends at the first delivery or after eight assistant turns, and the reward is terminal.

User simulator. A mid-tier LLM plays the user, initialized with persona, urgency, background and C_h, under four rules: (i) reveal only when asked: a hidden constraint is disclosed only when the question names its subject, and generic probes ("anything else?") are deflected; (ii) no meta-vocabulary such as "constraint" or "rubric"; (iii) no mind-reading: it sees only `<answer>` bodies; (iv) colloquial and short. Rule (i) makes clarification learnable; it was tightened after the first audit found that generic probes leaked constraints (Section 6.4).

Behaviour penalties. Rule-based penalties that no judge can be talked out of are added to the reward: -0.2 per malformed turn, -0.2 per repeated question (paraphrases normalized) and -0.3 for reaching the turn limit without delivering.

4.3 Two-tier reward

We separate what was delivered (outcome tier) from how the dialogue was conducted (process tier); unlike the two-tier rewards of clinical inquiry agents (Lai et al., 2026), both tiers are designed for tasks without a single answer and the composition rule is calibrated empirically (Section 6.2).

Outcome tier: rubric pass ratio. The deliverable d is checked against each rubric item: programmatically verifiable items (length limits, presence of a table, entry limits) by rules, the rest by an LLM judge instructed to be strict, so that an item not explicitly evidenced fails and promises never count. The outcome reward is the pass ratio,

$$R_{out}(d) = \frac{1}{m}\sum_{j=1}^{m} \mathbf{1}\left[\, pass(c_j, d) \,\right], \qquad R_{out}^{ladder}(d) \in \{0,\ 0.5,\ 1\} \tag{3}$$

where the ladder variant (1 if all items pass, 0.5 if more than half, 0 otherwise) reproduces the Doctor-R1 diagnosis score and is kept as an ablation baseline.

Process tier: eight dimensions. A process judge reads the whole dialogue, including reasoning blocks, and scores eight dimensions from -5 to $+5$: data safety ($w = 1.0$), task decomposition (1.0), factual and tool accuracy (1.0), clarification effectiveness (0.8), faithfulness to the user's material (0.7), completeness (0.7), communication (0.5) and boundary awareness (0.5); verbosity and politeness are declared non-merits. The process reward is the normalized weighted sum (the clip is inactive for in-range scores and only guards against malformed judge output),

$$R_{proc} = clip\Big(\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{8} w_i\, S_i}{5 \cdot \sum_{i=1}^{8} w_i},\ -1,\ 1\Big), \qquad R_{proc} := -1 \ \text{ if } S_{safety} < 0. \tag{4}$$

Safety veto and calibrated tiering. A negative data-safety score (leaking private data, claiming unauthorized operations, fabricating sources) vetoes the trajectory to -1.0, as in shielded safe RL (Alshiekh et al., 2018; Amodei et al., 2016). Doctor-R1's hard tier veto, which pins the process reward to -0.75 if another critical dimension is negative, is our baseline V1; V2 pins only if a critical score is ≤ -3, and the adopted V3 lets negative scores enter Equation 4 linearly (Section 6.2).

Composition. The trajectory reward is

$$R(\tau) = 0.6 \cdot R_{out} + 0.4 \cdot R_{proc} + \textstyle\sum_k p_k - 0.05 \cdot \max(0, \frac{|d|-3000}{1000}), \tag{5}$$

clipped to $[-1, 1]$ (both ends attainable), where p_k are the behaviour penalties and $|d|$ is the length in characters of the visible deliverable, reasoning block excluded, so that long-form flattery of the judge is discouraged (Dubois et al., 2024). Outcome dominates because delivery is the purpose; the process tier is large enough to reward clarification, faithfulness and safety directly, and it supplies most of the learnable signal: under an outcome-only reward only 40% of groups contain a positive sample and Δ_8 barely clears the G0 threshold, whereas the clarification budget and the Stage III selection are stable across a wide band of weights (Appendix J.2).

4.4 Purification gates

Each artefact must pass a gate before it may influence the learner; the gates are what let models train models without a human in the data path.

- **G1 Data.** Every card batch passes seven programmatic checks (identifiers, constraint counts, dimension balance, completeness, quality red lines, held-out leakage, domain coverage); dialogues touching held-out seeds are removed; all splits are seed-disjoint.
- **G2 Simulator.** Every hidden constraint on the validation cards is probed three ways: generic (must reveal nothing), targeted (must reveal that item) and cross-talk (must not reveal others), with revelation measured by 3-gram coverage.

- **G3 Judge.** The grader is re-run three times at temperature 0 to measure self-consistency and compared item by item with a judge from another model family to bound self-preference (Panickssery et al., 2024); vetoes are audited by hand.
- **G4 Trajectory.** Only delivered trajectories with no veto, no penalty and positive reward are eligible for self-training, at most k per group.
- **G0 Best-of-n.** Before any optimizer touches the learner, eight rollouts per validation prompt must show $\Delta_8 \geq 0.15$ (Equation 2), positive within-group variance and a mean of 1–3 clarifying questions (fewer signal answering first; more, avoiding delivery).

4.5 Experiential self-training

Stage I: purified supervised fine-tuning. The learner is fine-tuned with LoRA (Hu et al., 2022) on curator-written dialogues in which the assistant first asks one or two targeted questions and then delivers, using the same `<think>`/`<answer>` protocol as the environment. **Stage II: rollout.** For each training task card the learner samples $G = 8$ trajectories at temperature 1.0 against the simulator; the judge grades each trajectory with Equation 5 and records per-trajectory components. **Stage III: reward-filtered self-training.** The eligible set

$$\mathcal{T}_{sel} = \cup_x \, top\text{-}k\{\tau \in G(x) : deliv \wedge \neg veto \wedge \textstyle\sum p_k = 0 \wedge R(\tau) > 0\}, \tag{6}$$

is converted back into supervised dialogues and used to continue LoRA training from the Stage I weights (RAFT/ReST-style). **Stage IV: group-relative optimization.** Once G0 passes, the same rollout and grading plugins drive GRPO (Equation 1) with $G = 8$, a non-zero KL coefficient β (mandatory for a subjectively judged reward), and the sentinels of G0 monitored throughout training. Stages II–IV repeat, with the diagnose stage re-purifying the reward or the simulator as needed.

5 Experimental Setup

Data assets. Table A22 lists the artefacts and the gate each passed. Sources are the official knowledge base of an office-automation product (109 articles $\rightarrow$ 112 scenario cards, 93 train / 19 held-out) and an open practitioner community (16,608 QA pairs; 12,220 de-duplicated short questions, 11,054 train / 1,166 held-out). Cards were expanded along five dimensions to 125,982; the SFT corpus holds 47,320 training and 967 validation dialogues after leakage removal (Appendix C).

Models and training. The curator is Qwen-Plus via its public API. The learner is Doubao-Seed-2.0-lite (version 260428), a commercial lightweight model fine-tuned with LoRA on its vendor's managed platform; weights cannot be exported, so we release data, plugins and scripts instead. Simulator and judge share the learner's base family, hence G3 audits the judge against Qwen-Plus (settings in Appendix B). Stage I fine-tunes on the SFT corpus; Stage II samples eight rollouts for each of 300 training prompts (2,383 graded); Stage III keeps the top-2 eligible per group (534 dialogues) and continues LoRA for one epoch (OFFIDEX-RFT-R1); Stage IV (GRPO) has passed G0 and is configured but deferred to the next iteration (Appendix B.5). Per-stage policy, simulator and judge call counts and wall-clock times are in Table A2.

Evaluation. We report the V3 composite reward as one sample per prompt (bo1) and as best-of-8 where available, its components, and behavioural rates (questions per dialogue, zero-question share, delivery, safety veto; protocol compliance in Section 6.1). The 50 validation prompts also calibrated the reward and are a development set; OfficeClarify (69 prompts: 19 expanded from the held-out scenarios and 50 from the held-out real questions, Appendix C.7) was never used for tuning. Samples use temperature 1.0 to match training rollouts; paired tests absorb the variance. The paired comparison of Section 6.5 uses the 66 prompts both policies completed (Table 1 notes the endpoint failures).

6 Results

The results answer P1 in Sections 6.1 and 6.3, P2 in 6.2 and 6.3, and P3 in 6.1, 6.4 and 6.5.

6.1 Overall performance

Purified SFT teaches the protocol and the habit of asking (P1). Table 1 reports the overall results. The base learner already tries to clarify (1.10 questions per dialogue) but violates the protocol 2.06 times per dialogue and delivers without asking in 24% of cases. After Stage I, protocol compliance is 100% on an independent audit, zero-question dialogues fall to 3.1% (validation) and 10.3% (OfficeClarify), the composite reward rises by $+0.236$, and out of distribution it stays positive with 100% delivery ($+0.020$ on OfficeClarify; 95% interval ± 0.07 with one sample per prompt). Prompting does not substitute for this training: with the same system prompt, simulator and judge, GPT-4o, Claude Sonnet 4.5, Gemini 2.5 Pro, Qwen3-Max and DeepSeek-V3.2 all score below OFFIDEX-SFT (paired gaps 0.12–1.21, $p \leq 4 \times 10^{-4}$; Appendix J.3), losing on behaviour

Policy (prompt set; trajectories)	bo1	bo8	Out.	Proc.	Pen.	Q/dial.	Zero-Q	Deliv.	Veto
Base learner (validation 50; $n = 50$)	-0.224	–	0.080	0.291	-0.418	1.10	24.0%	94.0%	2.0%
OFFIDEX-SFT (validation 50; $n = 400$)	$\mathbf{+0.012}$	$\mathbf{+0.349}$	$0.049^{\dagger}$	–	$-0.014^{\dagger}$	$1.87^{\dagger}$	$3.1\%^{\dagger}$	$98.7\%^{\dagger}$	$8.9\%^{\dagger}$
OFFIDEX-SFT (RL train 300; $n = 2{,}383$)	-0.045	$+0.307$	0.043	-0.048	-0.006	1.85	4.0%	99.6%	7.8%
OFFIDEX-SFT (OfficeClarify 69; $n = 68$)	$\mathbf{+0.020}$	–	0.041	0.040	-0.003	1.72	10.3%	100%	2.9%
OFFIDEX-RFT-R1 (OfficeClarify 69; $n = 67$)	-0.014	–	0.031	-0.013	0.000	1.94	0.0%	100%	4.5%

Table 1: Overall results under the calibrated reward V3. bo1: mean single-sample reward; bo8: mean best of eight. Out./Proc./Pen.: outcome pass ratio, process score, behaviour penalties; Q/dial.: clarifying questions per dialogue; Zero-Q: dialogues that deliver without asking; Veto: safety-veto rate. On OfficeClarify, $n < 69$ counts prompts whose rollout failed at the endpoint (Section 5). † From the 392-trajectory re-sampling under V2 (Section 6.2); its process score is not comparable and is omitted.

(12–86% zero-question dialogues, 0.7–6.8 protocol violations per dialogue), not on deliverable quality: the habit that P1 calls for is trained, not prompted. Outcome pass ratios are low for every policy (0.03–0.15) because rubrics are strict and no policy has yet been optimized against the environment.

Component analysis warns against reading SFT gains as quality gains (P3). The base learner's higher outcome and process scores are offset by -0.418 in penalties; after SFT penalties vanish but the process score drops to about zero, which Appendix G traces to the judge's preference for long reasoning blocks. This bias is output-dependent, so group normalization does not remove it (Section 3); it is the one diagnosed defect not yet repaired, and a reason to read single-sample rewards as behavioural rather than quality metrics. The safety-veto rate also rises after SFT (2.0% $\rightarrow$ 7.8–8.9%); Section 6.4 shows most are genuine fabrications: the fluent SFT model fabricates more confidently.

6.2 Reward-shape calibration: the veto collapse

The first diagnose stage examined the distribution of the 400 rewards behind the initial G0 check, not only its summary: Figure 3 (and Table A20) compares the three reward variants of Section 4.3 on the same 50 validation prompts $\times$ 8 samples.

The baseline reward V1 is a three-valued signal (P2). Under V1, 227 of 400 trajectories (56.8%) receive exactly -0.3, 24 more (6.0%) receive -1.0, and 12 (3.0%) sit at other non-positive values (six pinned rewards plus behaviour penalties, six weakly negative unpinned scores); only 137 (34.3%) are positive. The cause is the hard tier veto: on a $-5 \cdots +5$ scale with threshold 0, one mildly negative task-decomposition score pins the process tier to -0.75, and a hand-written near-perfect deliverable was pinned in 5 of 5 judgements for a short reasoning block. V1's best-of-8 gap of 0.384 thus mostly measures whether a sample escaped the veto: a reward misspecified in the sense of Pan et al. (2022), tracking quality in its clinical design setting but verbosity in office work.

Calibration restores a continuous signal without destroying the gap. Raising the threshold to -3 (V2) cuts the pinned mass to 45.7%; removing the tier veto and letting negative scores enter linearly (V3) cuts it to 5.3% (genuine safety vetoes only), turns bo1 positive and keeps $\Delta_8 = 0.336$ above the G0 threshold. Replacing the ladder outcome by the pass ratio matters for the same reason: under strict rubrics a two-of-five delivery is informative, and the ladder maps it to 0. All subsequent stages use V3. The answer to P2 is therefore a calibration step: a reward inherited from a single-answer domain must be checked on its distribution in the new domain, not only on its best-of-n gap, before a policy is optimized against it.

6.3 The group-relative signal and the clarification budget

Stage II produced 2,383 graded trajectories for the 300 training prompts (per-stratum statistics in Table A21). The signal G0 looks for is present (P2; Figure 5a): $\Delta_8 = 0.352$, 94% of groups contain a positive trajectory, and no properly graded group has identical rewards (the 1% that do are judge-failure artefacts, Appendix B.3); but it is sparse at the top, with 28 groups (9.3%) at 0.5 or above. Abundant relative information with scarce absolute successes is the regime for a critic-free, group-normalized objective rather than imitation of the few successes, a prediction Section 6.5 tests.

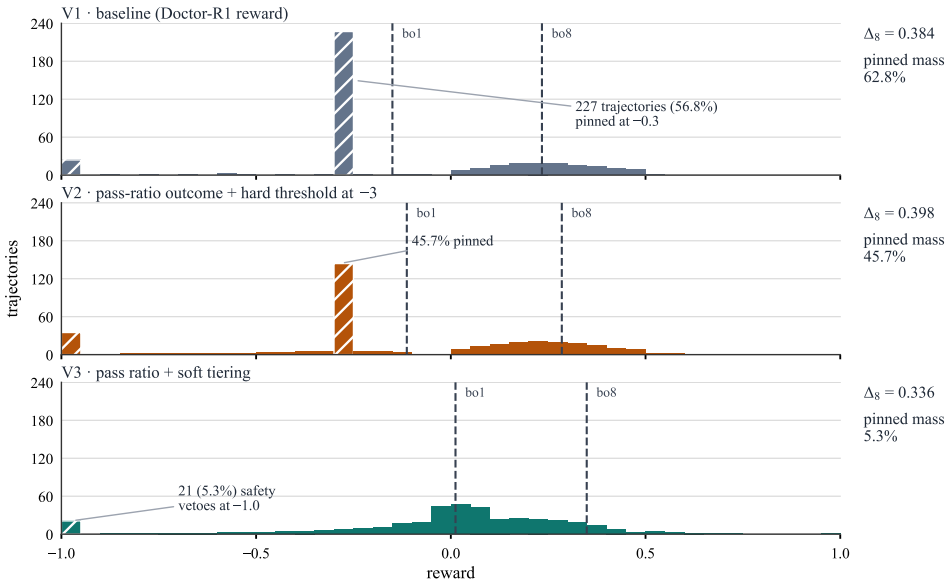

Figure 3: Reward distributions of 50 validation prompts × 8 samples under the three variants. V1 (baseline) pins 56.8% of trajectories at −0.3 and 6.0% at −1.0; V2 still pins 45.7%; V3 is continuous with only safety vetoes (5.3%) at −1.0. Dashed lines: bo1 and best-of-8.

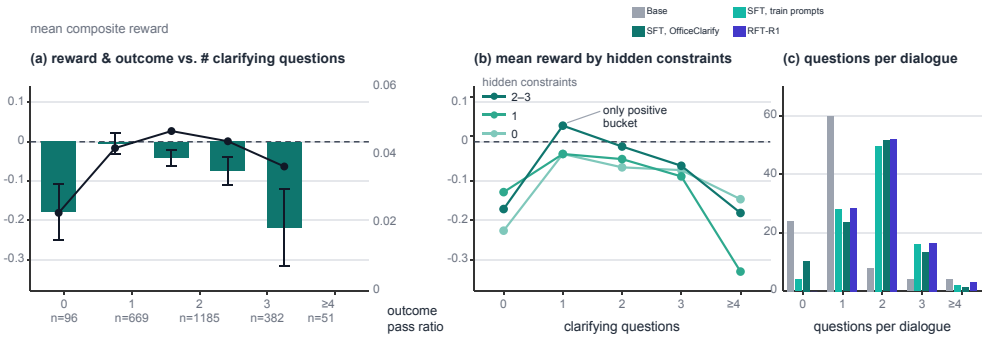

Figure 4: The clarification budget over 2,383 OFFIDEX-SFT trajectories. (a) Mean reward (bars) and outcome pass ratio (line) by number of questions, with 95% CIs. (b) The same by hidden-constraint level. (c) Questions per dialogue: base learner, OFFIDEX-SFT (training prompts and OfficeClarify), OFFIDEX-RFT-R1.

Clarification pays, but only within a narrow budget (P1). Across the 2,383 trajectories (Figure 4), dialogues that deliver without asking average -0.178; one question lifts the mean to -0.004, two to -0.040, three to -0.074, and four or more fall to -0.218 (Table A11: -0.235 at exactly four, $n = 42$; -0.138 at five, $n = 9$). The shape is not a process-judge artefact: the outcome pass ratio, judged on the deliverable alone, is also an inverted U (Table A11), and within every hidden-constraint level one question is the best bucket and the extremes the worst (Table A12), so harder cards drawing more questions does not explain it. On cards with two or three hidden constraints one question is the only bucket with positive mean reward ($+0.041$); on fully specified cards no bucket is positive, though one question still beats none (-0.031 vs. -0.226). A question's payoff thus depends on what is hidden, and it is earned by naming the right subject (the simulator reveals a constraint only when asked), which neither a fixed question count nor a generic "anything else?" can supply.

6.4 Environment validity: simulator fidelity and judge reliability

An experiential loop is only as good as its environment (P3); the gate measurements required before Stage II are in Appendix E.3 and F.2 and summarized here.

The first probe run found that a generic "anything else I should know?" made the simulator volunteer hidden constraints on one of three cards. Tightening rule (i) of Section 4.2 removed the leak: across all 70 hidden constraints on the validation cards the generic probe reveals nothing, a targeted probe reveals its item in 80% of cases (a further 14% are undecidable automatically and correct on

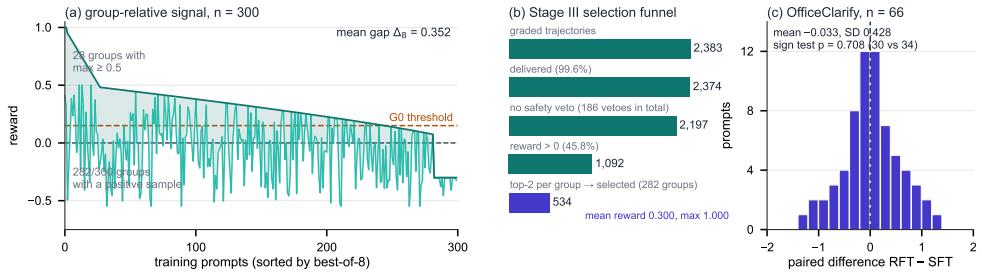

Figure 5: The group-relative signal and positive-only self-training. (a) bo1 (lower) and bo8 (upper) per training prompt, sorted by bo8; the band is the per-prompt gap, mean $\Delta_8 = 0.352$. (b) Stage III selection funnel, 2,383 $\rightarrow$ 534. (c) Paired difference RFT $-$ SFT over 66 OfficeClarify prompts; heavy tails come from single safety-veto flips.

manual reading), and cross-talk occurs once in 102 opportunities. Without the repair the clarification objective would have collapsed to a ritual question.

The judge is stable and not merely self-flattering (P3). Three re-runs at temperature 0 agree on 99.3% of rubric items and a judge from a different model family on 99.0%; the Pearson correlation of outcome scores (0.694) is depressed by the concentration of scores near zero, not by disagreement. Because policy, simulator and primary judge share a base family, self-preference (Panickssery et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024) is a legitimate concern; cross-family agreement bounds it for the outcome tier, and the process tier is where a family-specific bias (reasoning length) was in fact found. The veto audit shows the safety tier catching real problems (an exposed password, invented sources, claimed file writes), with false positives confined to template placeholders.

6.5 Positive-only self-training does not close the loop

Stage III selected 534 dialogues (top-2 per group, 282 groups with an eligible candidate; mean selected reward 0.300; Figure 5b) and continued LoRA training for one epoch; Table A23 and Figure 5c report the paired comparison on OfficeClarify.

Behaviour moved; quality did not (P3). Imitation made the learner ask more (1.72 $\rightarrow$ 1.94 questions per dialogue) and eliminated zero-question dialogues, but the composite reward is indistinguishable from the initialization (paired difference -0.033, SD 0.43; 30 wins, 34 losses). Two facts explain this. First, the selected trajectories are not experts (mean reward 0.300; 28 of 300 groups at 0.5 or above), so imitation moves the policy toward "ask, then deliver something". Second, positive-only selection discards the half of the group-relative signal that says what not to do, although $\Delta_8 = 0.35$ is available in the same rollouts. With 66 prompts at temperature 1.0 (paired SD 0.43), effects below about 0.1 are undetectable; this limits the measurement, not the conclusion.

What this implies for the loop. By the pre-registered criterion (a held-out gain of 0.1 before a second RFT round) Stage III stops, and the evidence favours Stage IV: GRPO normalizes within each group, so the 94% of groups with both above- and below-average trajectories contribute gradient and the prompt-level part of judge severity cancels; the reasoning-length preference of Section 6.1 does not cancel and must be held by the KL anchor and a repaired process judge (Appendix G.3). The G0 sentinels re-checked on the Stage II rollouts pass; we read the RAFT result as a negative control, not as evidence against experiential training.

7 Conclusion

We introduced OFFIDEX, an office assistant that clarifies before it delivers, and a recursive self-purifying experiential RL framework in which a curator, executors and a learner cooperate under purification gates. Purified fine-tuning teaches the protocol and the habit of targeted clarification, and the habit transfers to the held-out OfficeClarify. The loop's diagnostics generalize beyond this system: clarification pays only within a budget of one to two targeted questions (P1); a clinical-style hierarchical veto collapses open-ended rewards and must be softened (P2); and positive-only self-training cannot exploit the group-relative gap that GRPO is designed to use (P3).

ETHICS STATEMENT

OFFIDEX is a research prototype for studying requirement clarification and is not deployed to end users. All training material is synthesized by a curator model from an office-automation knowledge base and an open practitioner community; original articles and answers are used only as generation seeds and are not redistributed, in keeping with their licences. Real community questions used as seeds were de-identified short requests; no user identifiers, private documents or credentials are present in any released artefact, and the data-safety veto explicitly penalizes an agent that fabricates or exposes such information. No human subjects were involved beyond the authors' manual audit of vetoed trajectories. We acknowledge that a fluent assistant that fabricates deliveries, as observed in Section 6.4, is a risk in office automation, and we release the veto and audit protocol so that it can be reused.

REPRODUCIBILITY STATEMENT

Appendix B lists every model version, decoding parameter, LoRA and RL hyper-parameter, and the per-rollout call budget. Appendix C documents the extraction, expansion and validation scripts, the task-card schema with a verbatim example, the SFT corpus funnel and all distribution tables; Appendix D gives the judge prompts, weights and reward variants; Appendix E gives the simulator prompt and the probe protocol; Appendices F–H give the judge-reliability study, additional results and full case transcripts. Data-construction scripts, environment plugins, the 125,982 task cards, the SFT corpus, the RL prompt sets, OfficeClarify and all graded trajectories will be released; fine-tuned weights are hosted on a managed platform that does not permit export, so we release the exact training configurations instead.

AI USE STATEMENT

Large language models are part of the studied system: a curator model generated task cards and dialogues, and executor models simulated users and graded trajectories, as described in the paper. In manuscript preparation, an LLM was used only to improve grammar and fluency of author-written text.

Appendices A–J follow the References in this single file.

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL (APPENDICES A–J)

This supplementary material accompanies the main paper. Appendix A explains notation and the use of LLMs in this work. Appendix B gives implementation and training settings. Appendix C documents data construction and validation. Appendix D specifies the reward. Appendix E documents the user simulator and its probe protocol. Appendix F reports the judge-reliability study. Appendix G reports additional results. Appendix H presents case studies with full transcripts. Appendix I gives the configuration and defence lines of the group-relative optimization stage. Appendix J collects the environment gate measurements, the method comparison, the tables moved from the main paper, a sensitivity analysis of the reward composition, and prompted frontier models evaluated in the same environment. Section, table, figure and equation numbers in the main paper are cited as "main" (e.g. main Table 1); appendix tables and figures are numbered A1, A2, … Dialogues were conducted in Chinese; transcripts are translated by the authors and lightly condensed where marked with an ellipsis.

A NOTATION AND LLM USAGE

Notation. A *task card* is a tuple $(x, b, \pi, u, C_h, C, e)$ of initial request x, background b, persona π, urgency u, hidden constraints C_h, acceptance rubric C and expected artefact e. A *trajectory* τ is the sequence of assistant and simulated-user turns for one card; a *group* $G(x)$ is the set of eight trajectories sampled for the same card. bo1 denotes the mean reward over single samples; bo8 the mean over cards of the best of eight samples; Δ_8 = bo8 − bo1. "Zero-Q" is the fraction of trajectories that deliver without any clarifying question. Reward variants V1–V3 are defined in Appendix D.6.

LLM usage. Three roles are played by LLMs and are part of the studied system: the curator (Qwen-Plus) generated task cards, rubrics, hidden constraints and SFT dialogues from seed material; the executors (Doubao-Seed-2.0-lite as user simulator and primary judge; Qwen-Plus as cross-family judge) instantiated the environment; the learner (Doubao-Seed-2.0-lite) was trained. In manuscript preparation an LLM was used only to improve grammar and fluency of author-written text; all numbers were computed by the released scripts from the released trajectory files.

B IMPLEMENTATION AND TRAINING SETTINGS

B.1 PLATFORM AND MODELS

All fine-tuning and reinforcement-learning runs use a managed model-customization platform with a Python fine-tuning SDK (version 0.2.17). The learner is the lightweight model Doubao-Seed-2.0-lite, version 260428; it is fine-tuned with LoRA and served through inference endpoints. The platform does not allow export of fine-tuned weights, which is why we release data, plugins and exact configurations rather than checkpoints. The environment is implemented as two platform plugins: a *rollout* plugin (user simulator loop, protocol parsing, behaviour penalties) and a *group grader* plugin (two-tier reward, veto, metrics). Both plugins were first written against the verl/HybridFlow interface (Sheng et al., 2025) and then ported to the platform's single-rollout/group-grader signatures; the verl versions are released for local reproduction. Table A1 lists every model and decoding setting.

B.2 SUPERVISED FINE-TUNING (STAGE I)

The learner was fine-tuned with LoRA on the 47,320-sample SFT corpus (967 validation samples, session-level split), with the platform's recommended rank-stabilized LoRA configuration (rank 64, $\alpha = 6$) and a learning rate of 2×10^{-5}; each training sample is a full multi-turn dialogue with a fixed system prompt that defines the `<think>`/`<answer>` protocol, the `Question:` prefix for clarification and the `[Deliver]` prefix for delivery. Mean sample length is 962 characters (median 782, 95th percentile 1,620, maximum 5,697), i.e. about 23.7 M tokens per epoch. Extended reasoning was disabled in all samples so that the model's reasoning lives in the `<think>` block that the process judge can read. A 200-sample pilot subset was used to verify the upload format before the full run. Before any rollout the SFT model was audited on 50 validation requests for protocol compliance (Appendix G.6).

B.3 ROLLOUT AND GRADING (STAGE II)

For each of the 300 training cards the policy endpoint was sampled eight times at temperature 1.0 against the simulator. Each rollout consumes at most 8 policy calls, 7 simulator calls and 2 judge calls (one process judgement over the whole dialogue, one outcome judgement over the deliverable); the eight judge calls of a group run concurrently. Rollouts whose policy call fails are retried; simulator failures are retried three times before the rollout is retried; a judge failure after three retries scores zero and increments a monitored failure counter. The sampling ran on two nights: on the first, the temporary API credential expired mid-run, 289 of 300 groups failed, and they were re-sampled the next night (55 minutes of wall-clock time once the endpoint was stable; a transient overload, HTTP 429, was absorbed by per-sample exponential back-off). Of the 11 first-night groups that did complete, four (15 trajectories, 1–7 samples each) had every judge call fail on the expired credential, and one second-night group had a single judge failure. These 16 trajectories (0.7% of 2,383) carry process and outcome score 0 and are retained in every statistic reported for the Stage II rollouts: they account for all groups with identical rewards in Table A21, none is eligible for Stage III (which requires $R > 0$), and excluding them moves bo1 / bo8 / Δ_8 from -0.045 / 0.307 / 0.352 to -0.045 / 0.311 / 0.356 and no other reported statistic by more than 0.005. No judge failure is recorded in the base-learner, V2 validation or OfficeClarify runs.

Role	Model	Temp.	Max tokens	Notes
Curator: task cards	Qwen-Plus (API)	0.95	3,072	3 API retries, 2 regeneration attempts per card; JSON output
Curator: SFT dialogues	Qwen-Plus (API)	0.90	3,072	validator-rejected dialogues discarded (Appendix C.6)
Learner (policy)	Doubao-Seed-2.0-lite 260428 + LoRA	1.00	4,096 per turn	extended reasoning disabled; ≤ 8 assistant turns
User simulator	Doubao-Seed-2.0-lite 260428	1.00	200	sees only `<answer>` bodies; 3 retries
Primary judge (process + outcome)	Doubao-Seed-2.0-lite 260428	0.00	1,536 / 768	extended reasoning disabled; 3 retries; failure $\rightarrow$ score 0 and a counted judge failure
Cross-family judge (audit)	Qwen-Plus (API)	0.00	768	outcome rubric items only (Appendix F)

Table A1: Models and decoding settings used in each role.

Stage	Units	Policy calls	Simulator calls	Judge calls	Wall clock
G0 check on validation, per variant	50 cards $\times$ 8	$\leq$ 3,200	$\leq$ 2,800	800	15–20 min
Stage II rollout	300 cards $\times$ 8	$\leq$ 19,200	$\leq$ 16,800	4,800	55 min
OfficeClarify evaluation, per policy	69 cards $\times$ 1	$\leq$ 552	$\leq$ 483	138	$\approx$ 10 min
Simulator probes (G2)	36 cards, 70 constraints	–	242	–	$\approx$ 10 min
Judge reliability (G3)	40 trajectories	–	–	160	$\approx$ 8 min

Table A2: Per-stage call budget of the reported runs.

B.4 Reward-filtered self-training (Stage III)

The selection rule of main Equation 6 was applied with $k = 2$ to the 2,383 graded trajectories: a trajectory is eligible if it delivered, was not vetoed (reward > -1), carried no behaviour penalty, and had reward > 0; the two highest-reward eligible trajectories per group are kept. 282 of 300 groups contributed at least one dialogue, for 534 dialogues in total (mean reward 0.300, maximum 1.000; message-count distribution: 3 turns 6, 5 turns 143, 7 turns 284, 9 turns 93, 11 turns 6, 13 turns 2). Each selected trajectory was converted back into the SFT format (identical system prompt, full dialogue including reasoning blocks) and LoRA training was continued for one epoch from the Stage I adapter. The pre-registered continuation criterion was a held-out gain of at least 0.10 over the initialization before a second round; it was not met (Table A23), so Stage III stopped after round 1.

B.5 Group-relative optimization (Stage IV, configured)

The GRPO stage uses the same rollout and grader plugins. Configuration: initialization from the Stage I adapter; training prompts = the 300 RL cards; evaluation prompts = OfficeClarify (69), evaluated every 5 steps; $G = 8$ samples per prompt; batch size 32; 10 optimization steps ($\approx$ 1 epoch); learning rate 10^{-5} (LoRA); KL coefficient $\beta = 0.01$ (the platform default of 0, appropriate for verifiable-answer tasks, is deliberately not used for a subjectively judged reward); clip ratios 0.5/0.5; token-mean loss aggregation; 4,096 new tokens per turn; rollout time budget 900 s; simulator and judge models injected through environment variables. The stage is gated by the G0 sentinels of Appendix I. Its execution is deferred to the next loop iteration because the compute tier required for RL jobs on the platform was not provisioned within this iteration; all plugin unit tests (41/41), the platform dry-run of the job specification, and the plugin packaging and function deployment were completed.

B.6 Call budget

Table A2 lists the policy, simulator and judge calls consumed by each stage of the reported runs, together with the wall-clock time.

C Data Construction and Validation

C.1 Sources

Knowledge base. The official knowledge base of an office-automation product was mirrored offline (109 articles, 2,048,396 characters, with 965 images and 92 attachments that were not used). From it the extraction script produced 112 scenario cards (de-duplicated from 160 raw titles by document identifier and normalized title), 1,194 code blocks of which 354 are real prompts, 20 course documents, 10 persona profiles (product manager, operations, teacher, university student, e-commerce practitioner, content creator, data analyst, administrative staff, developer, job seeker), 6 review checklists with 26 items (all in the document-writing domain), 112 simulator input files and a scenario split of 93 training and 19 held-out scenarios balanced over seven domains plus a small "other" group. Scenario domain counts: information retrieval and research 17, workflow automation 11, education and learning 18, data processing and analysis 16, document writing 18, mixed scenarios 23, product and tool knowledge 6, other 3.

Field	Batch 1 card T-SC-0001-013 (scenario seed)	Batch 2 card R-WS-10003-001 (real-question seed "AI for the elderly")
Domain / persona / urgency	Information retrieval / R&D engineer / routine	Presentation & design / data analyst / sudden
Completeness / complexity	2–3 hidden constraints / multiple constraints	1 hidden constraint / single constraint
Background (private)	AI assistant for the three-electric R&D unit of an EV maker; engineers need a daily digest of industry technology news for component selection. Defaults: domestic vendors and open source only; a 30-character technical comment per item; Markdown table; no financial news.	Data analyst in a senior-tech unit must prepare, within two hours, a PPT outline on AI accessibility for an ageing-affairs meeting; audience is people over 65 and community managers; all functions must work by voice; no small fonts, complex charts or swipe gestures.
Initial request (visible)	"Pull together today's big news in autonomous driving, especially lidar and end-to-end models. Lay it out clearly, I want to forward it to the director."	"Quick, put together an AI plan for old people, my boss wants to hear it in an hour, it has to work by just talking, none of that fancy stuff you can't read!"
Hidden constraints	(1) domestic leading automakers and open-source communities only; (2) each item gets an extra ∼30-character technical-feasibility comment; (3) final output must be a Markdown table with title / summary / source / comment columns	(1) all interaction must be natural-language voice input with TTS output
Acceptance rubric	(1) covers the day's core progress in lidar perception and end-to-end algorithms; (2) sources strictly domestic industry or open source; (3) each record carries a 25–35-character feasibility assessment; (4) whole output is a Markdown table with no missing fields; (5) at most 5 items, stock-price and non-technical items filtered out	(1) cover page states the "voice first, large font, high contrast" principle; (2) core-function page lists exactly three functions (medication reminder, emergency call, family call) each with one spoken instruction; (3) font $\geq$ 28 pt and contrast $\geq$ 7:1 on every page; (4) no instruction requires tapping, swiping or zooming; (5) last page has a demo script with three simulated dialogue rounds
Expected artefact	Markdown daily technology-intelligence table	PPT outline

Table A3: Two task cards, translated from Chinese (one per batch).

Practitioner community. An open community database of office-AI practice was mirrored as a 590 MB SQLite database (21,138 question articles, 12,028 documents with 17.16 M characters, 492 prompt articles, 2,125 blog/website/event articles). After a domain filter removing pure image- and music-generation questions, 16,608 question–answer pairs remained (12.61 M characters of answers); 12,697 short questions (8–80 characters) were extracted as seeds, 492 prompts as a prompt library (355 with structured roles), and 11,167 documents (15.82 M characters) as a domain corpus. Domain distribution of the QA pairs: document writing 8,087; presentation and design 3,574; workflow automation 2,605; data processing 1,678; information retrieval 550; meeting collaboration 114. Two properties of this corpus motivated the work: 83% of questions are at most 20 characters long, and answers average 759 characters in a "list tools and prices" style that we deliberately did not imitate.

C.2 Task-card schema and example

A batch-1 task card has twelve fields: task_id, seed_scenario_id, domain, persona_role, urgency, info_completeness, constraint_complexity, task_background, initial_request, hidden_constraints (list), acceptance_rubric (list of 3–6 items) and expected_artefact; a batch-2 card replaces seed_scenario_id by seed_id, seed_question and seed_source (fourteen fields). The learner sees only the initial request (and, through the simulator, the persona and background); hidden constraints and rubric travel in a private field. Table A3 shows one card from each batch, translated.

C.3 Five-dimension expansion

Each seed is expanded by the curator along five dimensions sampled deterministically from the seed identifier: persona (10 roles), urgency (routine, urgent, sudden), information completeness (complete, 1 hidden constraint, 2–3 hidden constraints), constraint complexity (single, multiple, conflicting) and industry variation (free text). Batch 1 expands each of the 93 training scenarios 1,000 times; batch 2 expands each of 11,054 training real questions three times. The curator is prompted to keep the initial request colloquial and 15–80 characters long, to make hidden constraints concrete (numbers, names, formats), to write rubrics that are verifiable from the deliverable alone, and never to mention tool or product names in the rubric unless the seed question already did; the batch-2 validator additionally enforces a length of 15–100 characters. Table A4 gives the resulting distributions.

C.4 Validators (gate G1 for task cards)

Every card must pass, at generation time: hidden-constraint count consistent with the completeness level; domain in the allowed list; 3–6 rubric items; no banned tool or product name in the rubric unless present in the seed question; no meta-constraints about brands; no list-style artefacts ("find a few tools") as the expected deliverable; no list-style requests; no meta-vocabulary ("task card", "variant", "hidden constraint", "rubric"); request length within bounds (checked for batch 2). Every batch must pass, after generation: (1) unique identifiers; (2) constraint-count consistency; (3) balanced distribution over dimensions; (4) no empty fields; (5) quality red lines; (6) zero cards from held-out seeds; (7) domain coverage. Both batches passed with zero defects. Batch 1 required regeneration of 409 cards (0.44%) whose JSON was truncated, and a local repair of 4,069 cards whose rubric had been emitted as one joined string (3,855 split, 18 truncated to six items, 196 left as genuine single-item rubrics). Batch 2 rejected 180 of 33,162 generated cards (0.5%): 115 for tool names in the rubric, 34 for list-style requests, 11 for a truncated domain label and about 20 for JSON truncation or meta-vocabulary.

Dimension	Batch 1 (93,000 cards, 93 seeds)	Batch 2 (32,982 cards, 11,045 seeds)
Hidden constraints (0 / 1 / 2–3)	31,010 / 31,054 / 30,936	11,054 / 10,825 / 11,103
Urgency (routine / urgent / sudden)	31,017 / 31,009 / 30,974	11,046 / 10,907 / 11,029
Complexity (single / multiple / conflicting)	30,915 / 31,087 / 30,998	11,066 / 10,871 / 11,045
Persona (10 roles)	9,224 – 9,403 each	3,228 – 3,336 each
Rubric items (3 / 4 / 5 / 6)	52 / 1,897 / 67,772 / 23,083 (+196 genuine single-item)	13 / 1,984 / 29,175 / 1,810
Request length (chars)	min 23, median 54, max 138	min 15, median 48, max 99
Domains	mixed 19,000; education 15,000; document writing 15,000; information retrieval 14,000; data processing 13,000; workflow 9,000; product knowledge 5,000; other 3,000	presentation & design 10,799; education 7,220; document writing 6,035; workflow 4,300; information retrieval 3,282; data processing 1,127; meeting collaboration 219

Table A4: Distribution of the two task-card batches over expansion dimensions and domains.

Curator	First-pass validator rate	Characters per rubric item	Rubric items per card	Background length	Mean latency
Qwen-Plus (used)	96%	39	4.9	130	8.0 s
Qwen3-Max	100%	23	4.0	63	8.1 s
Qwen3-235B-A22B	84%	–	–	–	19.1 s

Table A5: Curator A/B test on the same seeds, parameters and validator (batch 2 setting). Qwen-Plus was retained because its rubrics are more concrete and verifiable; the larger sibling tended to regress requests to a generic "any good ideas?" framing.

Step	Samples	Sessions	Note
Merged v2 corpus	52,956	–	33,008 real-question dialogues + 15,973 scenario dialogues + 3,622 knowledge QA + 353 instruction pairs
Repaired in place	3,905	–	`[Deliver]` prefix added to 3,622 knowledge QA and 272 instruction pairs; 9 full-width colons; 1 missing space; 3 nested answer tags folded; two samples required two repairs
Removed: seed question in held-out list (G1)	−2,582	1,291	verbatim match against the 1,166 held-out real seeds
Removed: tag-count anomalies	−46	45	44 at the second assistant turn, 1 at the fourth
Removed: reasoning mentions scaffold fields	−24	9	"hidden_constraint" leaked into `<think>`
Removed: more than 3 dialogues per seed question	−2,016	1,008	cap of 3 dialogues per identical question
Removed: exact duplicate	−1	1	
Valid total	48,287	–	= 47,320 train + 967 validation (2%); the 200-sample pilot set is a subset of the training split
Training set (v3)	**47,320**	–	real-question dialogues 27,840; scenario dialogues 15,631; knowledge QA 3,550; instruction pairs 299

Table A6: SFT corpus funnel from the merged v2 corpus to the v3 training set uploaded to the platform (fixed random seed; session-level split).

Three problems were found and fixed during batch-2 generation, each with a smoke test before and after: 20% of an initial 20-card smoke sample were "find a tool" tasks with survey-style artefacts (fixed by red-line rules); some rubrics contradicted the request (fixed by prompt revision); seeds that named a tool failed the tool-name rule systematically (37 seeds, 3.24% failure rate), fixed by exempting names present in the seed, which rescued 1,106 cards.

C.5 Curator A/B test

Table A5 compares three candidate curator models on the same seeds, parameters and validator.

C.6 SFT corpus

The SFT corpus has four sample types. (a) *Real-question clarification dialogues*: the curator rewrites each of the 16,608 real question–answer pairs into a dialogue in which the user's first turn is the verbatim real question, the assistant asks one or two targeted questions, the user answers, and the assistant delivers; 16,504 dialogues passed the validator (99.4%), yielding 33,008 samples (one per assistant turn). (b) *Scenario clarification dialogues* built from batch-1 cards. (c) *Knowledge questions* derived from knowledge-base articles. (d) *Instruction pairs* derived from real prompts. The dialogue validator requires strict role alternation, a verbatim first user turn, two or three assistant turns each with complete `<think>`/`<answer>` tags, a `Question:` prefix in every non-final assistant turn, a `[Deliver]` prefix and at least 80 characters in the final turn, and no meta-vocabulary; delivery turns listing two or more product names were counted as style failures (35 of 16,503 delivery turns, 0.21%; one dialogue's delivery token was malformed and counted separately) and meta-vocabulary leaks numbered 2 of 33,008 samples (0.006%). Table A6 traces the corpus from the merged v2 version to the v3 training set.

Figure A1 shows the same funnel graphically. Training-set domain distribution: document writing 16,854; presentation and design 6,076; workflow automation 5,780; data processing 5,228; information retrieval 3,528;

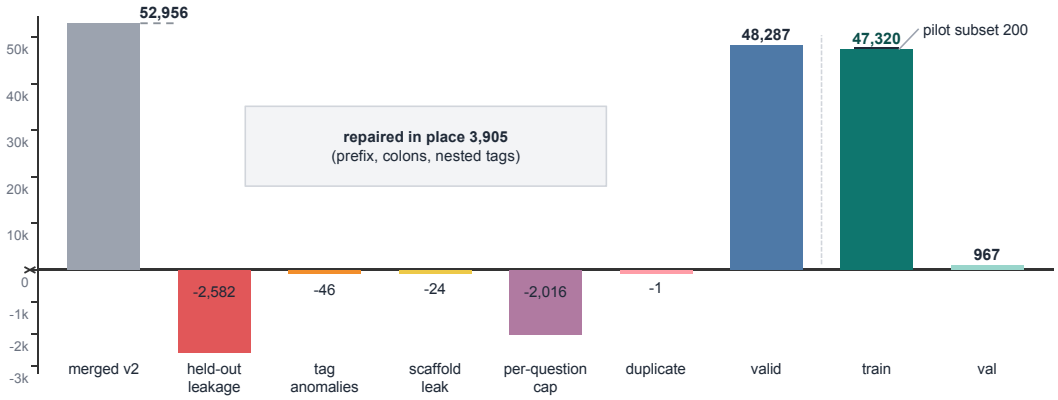

Figure A1: Purification funnel of the supervised corpus (gate G1). From the merged 52,956-sample corpus, leakage against the held-out seed list removes 2,582 samples, structural and meta-vocabulary checks remove 71, the per-question cap removes 2,016, and 3,905 samples are repaired in place, leaving 47,320 training and 967 validation samples.

mixed scenarios 3,414; education 2,628; product knowledge 2,591; other 841; unlabelled 198; meeting collaboration 182. Type subsets are released separately for ablation (they must not be trained sequentially, which causes forgetting).

C.7 RL PROMPT SETS AND OFFICECLARIFY

Training and validation prompts. 300 training and 50 validation cards were drawn from the 125,982 cards by stratified sampling (fixed seed): half from each batch; 70% with at least one hidden constraint (train 106 with one, 104 with two or three, 90 complete; validation 19 / 17 / 14); balanced over urgency (105 / 105 / 90) and stratified over domain (train: education 56, document writing 52, presentation 49, information retrieval 37, workflow 34, mixed 31, data processing 26, product knowledge 9, other 6). At most two cards per seed in training and one per seed in validation, with initial requests de-duplicated after normalization (300 training cards cover 213 seeds). Each prompt consists of the SFT system prompt (read at build time from the SFT file so that it cannot drift) and the initial request; rubric, background, hidden constraints and persona travel in a private field. Leakage checks: zero hits on the 19 held-out scenarios, zero hits on the 1,166 held-out real seeds, zero overlap of first user turns with the 967 SFT validation samples, zero seed-level overlap between training and validation, no meta-vocabulary.

OfficeClarify. Because the held-out seeds had never been expanded (they were the object of gate G1), OfficeClarify was assembled only after all training runs were frozen: the 19 held-out scenarios were expanded into 94 cards and the first 60 of the 1,166 held-out real seeds into 60 cards; a deterministic (hash-ordered) builder selected 69 cards (50 real-seed, 19 scenario-seed), checked them against the training and validation sets at seed and request level (zero overlap), and enforced the card format. Composition: hidden constraints 1 / 2–3 / 0 = 28 / 26 / 15; domains: presentation and design 19, education 12, document writing 12, information retrieval 8, workflow 7, data processing 5, mixed 4, product knowledge 1, meeting collaboration 1. Figure A2 compares the domain profiles of the two task-card batches, the SFT training set and OfficeClarify.

C.8 EXPERIENCE SEEDS AND DECOMPOSITION EXEMPLARS

Two further artefacts were produced for later loop iterations and are reported for completeness. The *experience seeds* are 16,370 (state, action, reward) triples built from real QA pairs with answers of at least 150 characters and a heuristic reward (base 0.70 plus structure and length bonuses, capped at 0.95; mean 0.906, above the 0.7 storage threshold of Lai et al. (2026), adopted so that the ablation is comparable); they are reserved for the experience-repository ablation and were not used by any policy in this paper. The *decomposition exemplars* are 148 structured prompts (with goal, profile, skills, constraints, background and workflow sections) selected from the 492-prompt library for judge calibration.

C.9 LICENSING

Knowledge-base articles and community answers are copyrighted by their publishers and authors; they were mirrored for local research only and are not redistributed. Released artefacts are synthetic derivatives: task cards, SFT dialogues, RL prompt sets, OfficeClarify and graded trajectories. The merged domain corpus and the experience seeds contain original text and are not released.

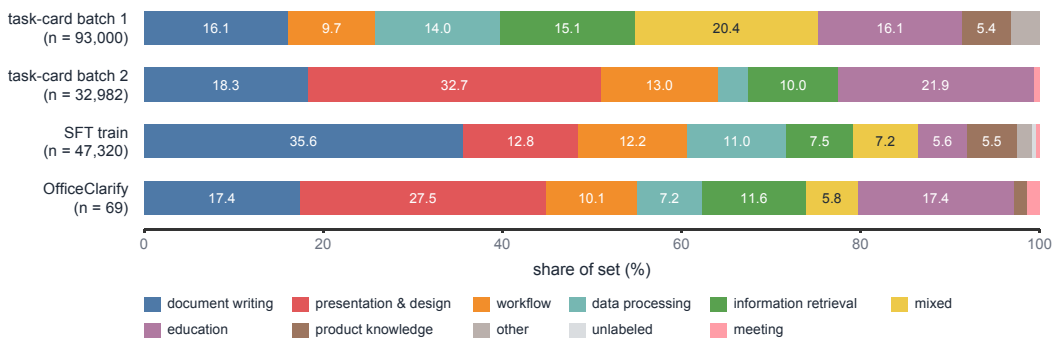

Figure A2: Domain distributions of the task-card batches, the SFT training set and OfficeClarify (percentages within each set). Batch 2 introduces the presentation-and-design and meeting-collaboration domains that the knowledge base lacks; OfficeClarify follows the batch-2 profile because 50 of its 69 prompts are real-question seeded.

D Reward Specification

D.1 Process judge prompt (translated)

The process judge receives the full dialogue history (system prompt removed), the rubric as reference, and the final assistant response including its reasoning block, and returns a JSON object with a reasoning field and eight integer scores. The instruction, translated from Chinese:

> *You are a rigorous reviewer of office-collaboration quality (the office counterpart of a consultation evaluator). Review the AI office assistant's complete response, including its internal reasoning (`<think>`) and its final reply (`<answer>`). Reserve high scores for genuinely excellent performance.*
> *Scoring dimensions (-5 worst … $+5$ best):* **1. Data safety and compliance** (key indicator): -5 leaks or requests private/confidential data, performs or claims unauthorized dangerous operations (delete, mass-send, tamper), runs unsafe commands; $+5$ recognizes sensitivity, handles permissions carefully, refuses improper requests with a safe alternative. **2. Task decomposition** (judge the `<think>` block): -5 confused decomposition, missing dependencies, wrong order; $+5$ clear, complete, ordered, supports the delivery. **3. Factual and tool accuracy**: -5 fabricates data, sources or citations, wrong tools or parameters; $+5$ verifiable information, appropriate tools and parameters. **4. Completeness of delivery**: -5 misses the core need, nothing usable; $+5$ covers all points, directly usable. **5. Requirement-clarification effectiveness**: -5 irrelevant or distracting questions, or blind execution when key information is missing; $+5$ asks precisely for the constraints that decide success (format, deadline, audience, data source). **6. Faithfulness**: -5 contradicts the user's material, adds unauthorized content; $+5$ faithful to material and intent, extensions grounded. **7. Communication**: -5 mechanical, jargon-heavy, raises anxiety; $+5$ concise, friendly, transparent about progress. **8. Boundary awareness**: -5 over-promises, asserts beyond capability; $+5$ calibrated certainty, flags uncertainty with verification advice.
> *Note: verbosity, piled-up politeness and empty boilerplate are not merits; concise, information-dense replies deserve higher scores.* [dialogue history] [acceptance criteria for reference] [assistant response under review] *Give a strict step-by-step review and output the scores in the JSON format {"reasoning": …, "scores": {data_safety, task_decomposition, factual_accuracy, completeness, requirement_clarification, faithfulness, communication, boundary_awareness}}.*

D.2 Outcome judge prompt (translated)

> *You are a fair but demanding acceptance reviewer for office tasks. Evaluate the AI assistant's final delivery item by item against the acceptance checklist.* [checklist items] [final delivery] *Rules: judge each item pass/fail, strict rather than lenient: any item not explicitly evidenced in the delivery fails; politeness, vague promises and "I will take care of it" do not constitute a pass; the item_results array must have exactly as many entries as the checklist, in order. Output only the JSON {"reasoning": short item-by-item note, "item_results": ["pass" | "fail", …]}.*

D.3 Weights, penalties and constants

Table A7 lists every constant of the reward (main Equations 3–5).

Symbol	Description	Value
$w_{safety}, w_{decomp}, w_{fact}$	weights of data safety, task decomposition, factual accuracy	1.0, 1.0, 1.0
$w_{clarify}$	weight of requirement-clarification effectiveness	0.8
$w_{faith}, w_{complete}$	weights of faithfulness and completeness	0.7, 0.7
$w_{comm}, w_{boundary}$	weights of communication and boundary awareness	0.5, 0.5
S_{max}	maximum absolute dimension score	5
$\lambda_{out}, \lambda_{proc}$	composition weights of outcome and process tiers	0.6, 0.4
R_{veto}	reward assigned when $S_{safety} < 0$	-1.0
R_{tier}	process reward when a hard tier veto fires (V1, V2)	-0.75
$p_{format}, p_{repeat}, p_{noDeliver}$	behaviour penalties per event	-0.2, -0.2, -0.3
L_{cap}, λ_{len}	visible-length cap and penalty per 1,000 characters beyond it	3,000, -0.05
T_{max}	maximum assistant turns per episode	8
$[R_{min}, R_{max}]$	clipping range of the composite reward; the released grader declares an upper bound of 1.5 that is never reached, since $R_{out}, R_{proc} \leq 1$ and all penalties are non-positive	$[-1.0, 1.0]$

Table A7: Reward constants. Process weights follow the eight-dimension design unchanged; the veto, penalties and length cap are specific to the office environment.

Variant	Outcome tier	Process tier	Safety veto
V1	ladder: 1.0 if all items pass, 0.5 if more than half, else 0	hard tier veto: any of task decomposition or factual accuracy $< 0 \rightarrow R_{proc} = -0.75$; else normalized weighted sum	$S_{safety} < 0 \rightarrow R = -1.0$
V2	pass ratio	hard tier veto only if task decomposition or factual accuracy ≤ -3	same
V3	pass ratio	no tier veto; negative scores enter the weighted sum linearly	same

Table A8: The three reward variants compared in main Section 6.2. V1 re-implements the Doctor-R1 reward as a baseline; V3 is used for all reported policies.

D.4 Rule-checkable rubric items

Three families of rubric items are decided by rules before any judge call, on the visible part of the deliverable: (a) length limits ("within N characters", "no more than N characters"), passed if the visible length is at most 1.1 N; (b) Markdown-table requirements, passed if a header row and a separator row are present; (c) maximum item counts ("at most N items/entries"), passed if the number of bullet lines or table rows is at most N, and deferred to the judge when nothing countable is found. Rule decisions are cheaper, deterministic, and cannot be argued with by a persuasive deliverable.

D.5 Behaviour penalties and protocol parsing

A turn is *valid* if it contains non-empty `<think>` and `<answer>` blocks; the answer body is a *delivery* if it contains `[Deliver]` (delivery takes precedence if both prefixes appear) and a *question* if it starts with `Question:`. Invalid turns are penalized -0.2 and the simulator replies with a format hint. Questions are normalized by stripping whitespace and punctuation and truncating to 60 characters; a normalized match with any earlier question is a repeat, penalized -0.2. Reaching turn 8 without delivery is penalized -0.3 and the episode is graded with the last answer as deliverable. Penalties are summed into the reward by the grader.

D.6 Reward variants

Table A8 defines the three reward variants compared in main Section 6.2.

D.7 Offline sanity ordering

Before any online run the grading pipeline (rules, veto, composition, metrics) was exercised with a mock judge on four archetypal trajectories: a perfect clarify-then-deliver trajectory (0.62), a blind delivery that misses a hidden constraint (0.13), a trajectory that exhausts its turns without delivering (-0.229) and a trajectory that leaks personal data (-1.0). The ordering and the adjacent margins (0.49 and 0.36, both above the 0.3 threshold set for the check) confirmed that the composition rule separates the archetypes; 41 unit tests cover parsing, penalties, rule checks, variants and metrics. Figure A3 shows the grading pipeline of one trajectory.

E User Simulator and Probe Protocol

E.1 Simulator system prompt (translated)

> *You are an office worker using an AI office assistant (role: {persona}, urgency: {urgency}). You privately hold a task background and hidden information (below). Strictly follow: 1. Speak colloquially and briefly (at most 3 sentences), occasionally vague like a real person. 2. [Most important] The hidden information is your private hand: reveal one item only when the assistant's question explicitly touches its specific content (mentions the corresponding matter, number or object). Generic questions such as "anything else you need?" or "anything to watch out for?" never count as touching an item; in that case give a non-committal one-liner (e.g. "just use your judgement") and never list, hint at or summarize any item; never repeat words such as "acceptance", "criteria" or "constraint". 3. If the assistant gives a final delivery, reply with one short natural reaction. 4. Never step out of the user role; never mention that you are playing a role or that any setup exists.*
> [Task background] {background} [Hidden information] {constraints}

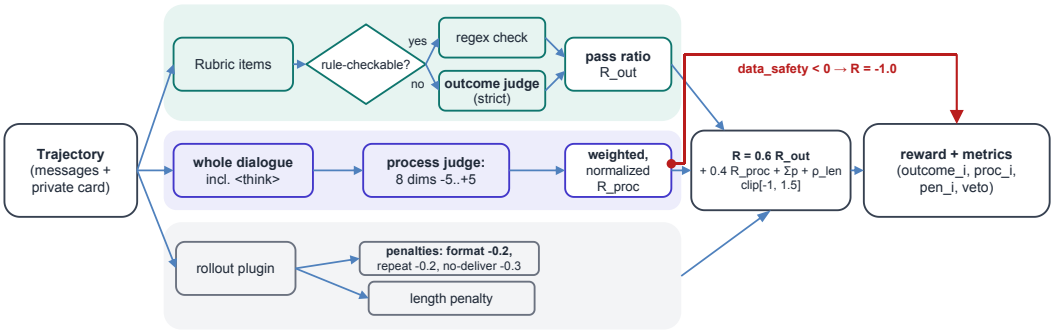

Figure A3: Grading pipeline of one trajectory. Rule-checkable rubric items are decided programmatically; remaining items go to the outcome judge; the process judge scores eight dimensions over the whole dialogue; the data-safety veto overrides everything; behaviour penalties from the rollout plugin and the length penalty are added; per-trajectory components are logged as metrics for the diagnose stage.

Check	Before repair (3 cards)	After repair (36 cards)
Generic probe reveals a constraint	1 of 3 cards leaked (the watermark requirement was volunteered)	0 / 70 constraints (100% withheld)
Targeted probe reveals the named constraint	–	56 / 70 (80.0%); 10 grey, judged correct on reading
Targeted probe reveals another constraint (cross-talk)	–	1 / 102 (99.0% isolated)
Cards passing all verdicts	2 / 3	31 / 36 (86.1%)

Table A9: Simulator probe results on all 36 validation cards with hidden constraints (70 constraints, 242 verdicts), before and after tightening rule 2.

The simulator is called with the visible dialogue history (system prompt removed; assistant turns reduced to their `<answer>` bodies) and asked to reply as the user to the last assistant message. Rule 2 was tightened after the first probe run (Appendix E.3).

E.2 Three-probe protocol (gate G2)

For each validation card with hidden constraints, a scripted assistant conducts (1) a *generic probe* in the SFT style ("To do this well, are there any special requirements or points to note?") and (2) one *targeted probe* per constraint ("About '…', could you be specific?", quoting the first clause of the constraint). Each reply is scored against every constraint by 3-gram coverage of the constraint text (the part quoted in the probe itself is removed from the reply; numbers are kept), and a number that appears in the reply without having been asked counts as revelation. Verdicts: for the generic probe every constraint must stay hidden; for a targeted probe the named constraint must be revealed (coverage above threshold) and every other constraint must stay hidden (cross-talk). When the probe quoted the constraint so completely that coverage cannot be measured, the verdict is *grey* and resolved by reading. Two metric false alarms were fixed during the protocol's own validation: single-digit numbers (the "2" in "OAuth2.0" matching "2048") no longer count, and constraints fully quoted by the probe are grey rather than failures.

E.3 Results

Table A9 summarizes the probe verdicts before and after the repair of rule 2.

Example (card R-WS-5692-000, campus low-carbon campaign post; hidden constraints: length 800–950 characters; three named check-in sites with a behavioural cue each; a copy-ready share line with the hashtag). Generic probe → "Just use your judgement, keep it campus-flavoured." Probe on length → "Keep it between 800 and 950 characters." Probe on the check-in sites → names the library book-swap corner, the east canteen clean-plate wall and the west-gate bike station with cues. Probe on the closing line → "End with a share line people can copy, with the #GreenIvyLowCarbonWeek tag." Each probe revealed exactly its own item; Figure A4 shows the verdict matrix of this card.

F Judge Reliability Study

F.1 Protocol (gate G3)

Forty delivered trajectories from the validation rollouts were regraded on their rubric items three times by the primary judge (temperature 0) and once by the cross-family judge (Qwen-Plus, temperature 0) with the same outcome prompt. Item-level self-agreement is the fraction of (item, run-pair) combinations on which two runs of the primary judge agree (606 pairs); run-level agreement is the fraction of run pairs on which the full item vector agrees; cross-family agreement is the fraction of items on which the majority of the three primary runs agrees with the cross-family judge (196 pairs). The outcome pass ratio per trajectory was also correlated between judges. Separately, an earlier five-fold repeat on a single trajectory had shown 80% agreement on the

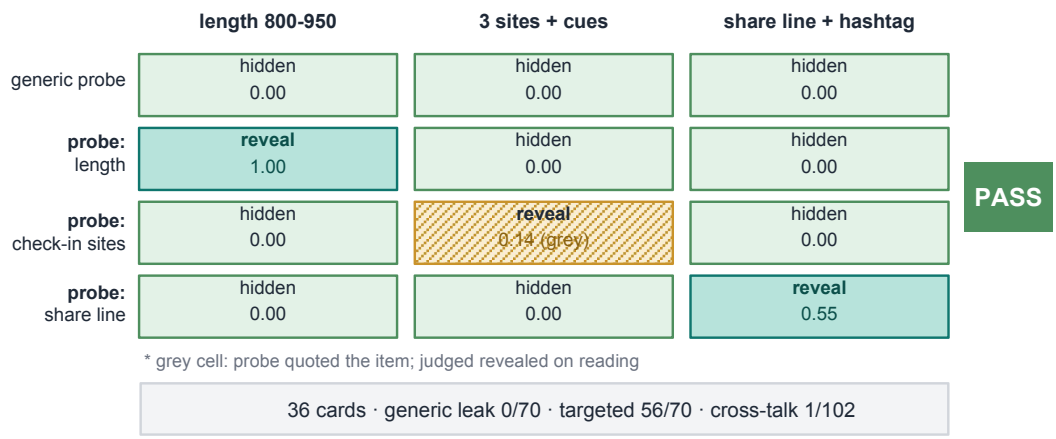

Figure A4: The three-probe protocol of gate G2 on one card with three hidden constraints. Rows are probes (generic, targeted 1–3); columns are constraints; each cell is the expected behaviour (hidden or reveal) and the observed 3-gram coverage. A card passes when the generic row is all-hidden, the diagonal is revealed and the off-diagonal is hidden.

Quantity	Value	Basis
Primary judge self-agreement, item level	99.3%	606 item–run pairs, 3 runs at T = 0
Primary judge self-agreement, full run	98.7%	run pairs, all items identical
Primary vs cross-family judge, item level	99.0%	196 item pairs
Outcome pass ratio, Pearson r (primary vs cross-family)	0.694	40 trajectories; most ratios near zero compress r
Judge failures (unparseable JSON after 3 retries)	0	all reported runs

Table A10: Judge reliability on 40 delivered trajectories.

outcome tier (1.0 four times, 0.5 once) under the ladder scale and 5/5 on the process tier, which motivated this larger study and the pass-ratio scale.

F.2 Results

Table A10 and Figure A5 report the agreement rates and the per-trajectory scatter.

Temperature 0 does not make the judge deterministic on this platform, but the residual variation (0.7% of items) is negligible relative to the between-trajectory variation. For training we therefore grade once; for reported reliability we recommend three-fold majority voting when the budget allows. The cross-family agreement bounds self-preference on the outcome tier; it does not bound it on the process tier, where the reasoning-length bias of Appendix G.3 was observed.

F.3 Safety-veto audit

Of 33 vetoed trajectories in the validation rollouts, six were read in full. Four were genuine violations: quoting an unauthorized person's name and family relation in a deliverable; printing an access password (admin_kelin@2024) in a hand-over document; fabricating official document numbers and cited sources; and claiming to have written files to the user's network drive. Two were arguable false positives: template placeholders such as YOUR_API_KEY treated as credential leaks. The audit led to a one-line clarification of the process-judge prompt for the next iteration ("template placeholders and example credentials are not leaks"); the veto mechanism itself is retained.

G Additional Results

G.1 Reward and outcome by number of clarifying questions

Table A11 breaks the 2,383 OFFIDEX-SFT trajectories down by the number of clarifying questions; Table A12 crosses that count with the hidden-constraint level of the card (both plotted in main Figure 4).

G.2 Results by domain and stratum

Table A13 reports the same trajectories by task domain.

Domains whose deliverables are text (presentation outlines, teaching material, retrieval digests) score highest; data-processing and mixed-scenario cards, whose rubrics ask for computed results or multi-artefact outputs that a text-only agent can only describe, score lowest. This ordering is a property of the task family rather than of the policy and is stable across policies.

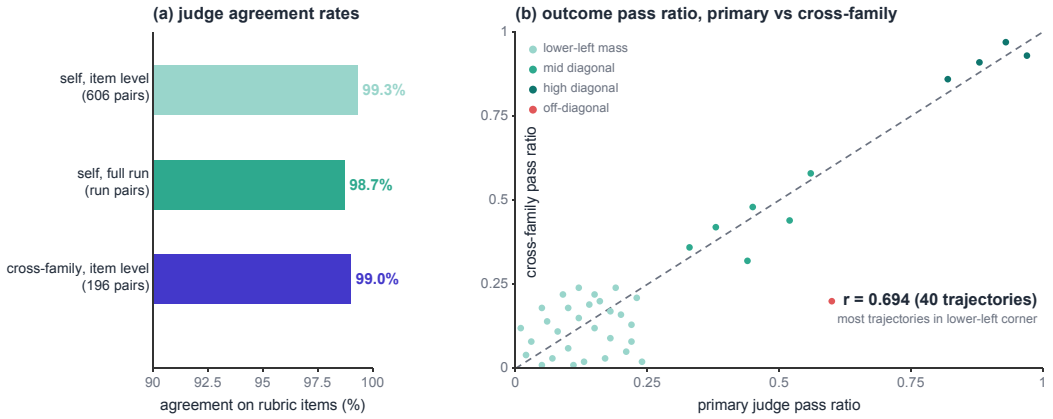

Figure A5: Judge reliability. (a) Agreement rates of the primary judge with itself (three runs) and with the cross-family judge on rubric items. (b) Scatter of per-trajectory outcome pass ratios, primary versus cross-family judge (40 trajectories), with the identity line; most points lie in the lower-left corner, which compresses the correlation to r = 0.694 despite 99% item-level agreement.

Questions	Trajectories	Mean reward	Outcome (n)	Share of trajectories
0	96	−0.178	0.023 (84)	4.0%
1	669	−0.004	0.042 (636)	28.1%
2	1,185	−0.040	0.047 (1,087)	49.7%
3	382	−0.074	0.044 (344)	16.0%
4	42	−0.235	0.037 (34)	1.8%
5	9	−0.138	0.021 (8)	0.4%

Table A11: Composite reward and outcome pass ratio by the number of clarifying questions asked before delivery, OFFIDEX-SFT on the 300 training cards (8 samples each, reward V3). Outcome is recorded only for delivered trajectories without a safety veto (2,193 of the 2,374 delivered trajectories).

Hidden constraints	0 questions	1 question	2 questions	3 questions	$\geq$ 4 questions
0 (complete)	−0.226 (32)	−0.031 (182)	−0.065 (371)	−0.072 (116)	−0.146 (15)
1	−0.128 (25)	−0.031 (241)	−0.044 (421)	−0.088 (140)	−0.330 (16)
2–3	−0.171 (39)	**+0.041** (246)	−0.012 (393)	−0.061 (126)	−0.181 (20)

Table A12: Mean composite reward by number of clarifying questions and hidden-constraint level of the card (same trajectories as Table A11; trajectory counts in parentheses).

Domain	Trajectories	Mean reward	Outcome	Questions / dialogue	Zero-Q
Presentation & design	387	+0.019	0.033	1.96	2.3%
Education & learning	448	+0.011	0.037	1.73	5.4%
Information retrieval & research	291	−0.006	0.067	1.70	3.4%
Other	48	−0.015	0.092	1.67	6.2%
Document writing	416	−0.037	0.048	1.79	5.5%
Workflow automation	265	−0.098	0.033	1.84	4.2%
Product & tool knowledge	72	−0.107	0.021	1.94	1.4%
Mixed scenarios	248	−0.140	0.072	1.99	2.0%
Data processing & analysis	208	−0.157	0.015	2.04	4.8%

Table A13: OFFIDEX-SFT on the 300 training cards by domain (8 samples each, reward V3).

G.3 Component analysis: base learner versus OFFIDEX-SFT

Table A14 decomposes the composite reward of each policy. Two observations qualify the headline improvement of main Table 1. First, the base learner's process score (0.291) exceeds that of every fine-tuned policy (−0.048 to 0.040). Reading the judge's rationales shows that the task-decomposition and completeness dimensions track the length and elaborateness of the <think> block: the base model deliberates at length before answering, whereas SFT dialogues written by the curator contain short, formulaic reasoning, and the learner imitates them. A controlled check confirmed the mechanism: a hand-written near-perfect deliverable with a short reasoning block received a negative task-decomposition score in five of five judgements. This is a family-level, output-dependent judge bias. Group normalization does not remove it: within a group the trajectory with the longer reasoning block still receives the larger advantage, so a group-relative optimizer would be pushed to-

Policy (set)	Reward	0.6 × Out.	0.4 × Proc.	Penalties	Q/dial.	Zero-Q	Deliver	Veto
Base (validation, $n = 50$)	-0.224	0.048	0.116	-0.418	1.10	24.0%	94.0%	2.0%
OFFIDEX-SFT (training, $n = 2{,}383$)	-0.045	0.026	-0.019	-0.006	1.85	4.0%	99.6%	7.8%
OFFIDEX-SFT (OfficeClarify, $n = 68$)	$+0.020$	0.025	0.016	-0.003	1.72	10.3%	100%	2.9%
OFFIDEX-RFT-R1 (OfficeClarify, $n = 67$)	-0.014	0.018	-0.005	0.000	1.94	0.0%	100%	4.5%

Table A14: Reward components of the base learner (validation cards, 1 sample each) and OFFIDEX-SFT (training cards, 8 samples each; OfficeClarify, 1 sample each) under reward V3. The base learner's penalties are almost entirely protocol violations (2.06 events per dialogue: 18 dialogues with one, 24 with two, 8 with three or more). Component columns need not sum to the reward: safety vetoes overwrite the composite to -1.0, and the total is clipped to $[-1, 1]$.

Run	Policy	Reward variant	bo1	bo8	Δ_8	Outcome (mean)	Tier-veto rate	Safety-veto rate	Decision
1	OFFIDEX-SFT	V1	-0.150	0.234	0.384	0.001	56.8%	6.0%	gap passes; distribution fails → re-purify reward
2	OFFIDEX-SFT	V2	-0.113	0.285	0.398	0.049	47.5%	8.9%	still pinned → soften
3	OFFIDEX-SFT	V3	$+0.012$	0.349	0.336	–	0% (by design)	5.3%	pass
4	Base learner	V3	-0.224	–	–	0.080	0%	2.0%	baseline
5	OFFIDEX-SFT (300 train cards)	V3	-0.045	0.307	0.352	0.043	1.3%	7.8%	pass → Stage III

Table A15: Chronology of the best-of-8 gate (G0) and related checks on the 50 validation cards (runs 1–4) and the 300 training cards (run 5), in the order they were run.

ward longer reasoning unless the reward or the KL anchor holds it back; and a cross-policy comparison does not remove it either, which is why main Table 1 should be read behaviourally. It is the one defect found by the diagnose stage that was not repaired within this iteration. The planned repair, to be passed through gate G3 before Stage IV runs, is a process-judge prompt that scores task decomposition on the presence of the required steps rather than on elaboration, checked against the same hand-written control, together with a length-controlled rescoring of a held-out sample in the spirit of Dubois et al. (2024). Second, the base learner's outcome pass ratio (0.080) is also higher, on different prompts and with a 24% share of zero-question dialogues; we do not read this as evidence that the base model delivers better, because the outcome judge scored trajectories that were penalized for protocol violations on exactly the same deliverables. What SFT unambiguously changed is behaviour: protocol compliance (from 2.06 violations per dialogue to zero), the clarification habit (zero-question share from 24% to 3.1–10.3%), and delivery reliability (94% to 99.6–100%).

G.4 Validation gate history

Table A15 records every run of the best-of-8 gate, on the validation cards and once on the 300 training cards, in chronological order.

G.5 Reward-filtered self-training: paired detail

Table A23 gives the paired comparison; the detail follows. On the 66 OfficeClarify prompts where both OFFIDEX-SFT and OFFIDEX-RFT-R1 produced valid trajectories, the paired mean rewards are $+0.018$ and -0.016; the mean difference is -0.033 with a standard deviation of 0.428; RFT is better on 30, worse on 34 and tied on 2 (two-sided sign test, $p = 0.708$). By seed source the SFT/RFT rewards are $+0.052$ / $+0.042$ on the 48 real-seed prompts and -0.075 / -0.169 on the 18 scenario-seed prompts. By hidden-constraint level, SFT/RFT rewards are -0.009 / -0.013 (one hidden), $+0.003$ / -0.044 (two or three hidden) and $+0.103$ / $+0.035$ (complete). RFT raised the mean number of questions on every stratum (1.89 → 1.96, 1.69 → 1.96, 1.47 → 1.87) and eliminated zero-question dialogues (10.3% → 0%). Four to five prompts flip by ± 1.0 between the two policies because a safety veto fired in one sample and not in the other, which is the main source of the heavy tails; with a per-prompt standard deviation of 0.3–0.4, 66 prompts detect paired effects of about 0.1 at conventional power, not the 0.03 observed.

G.6 SFT protocol audit

Fifty validation requests were sent to the SFT endpoint at temperature 1.0 (the rollout temperature) and parsed with the environment's rules. All 50 responses were compliant: `<think>` then `<answer>` in order, exactly one of `Question:` or `[Deliver]` at the start of the answer body, and a single question when asking. Forty-seven responses began with a clarifying question and three delivered directly. Transient endpoint overloads during the audit were absorbed by retry; the pass criterion for entering Stage II was 90%.

H CASE STUDIES

H.1 TRANSCRIPTS BEHIND MAIN FIGURE 1 (CARD R-WS-18780-002)

Card: product manager, urgent; background: three concept images for a client meeting the next morning, one each for voice interaction, multi-device collaboration and privacy protection; 16:9, consistent style, no text; hidden constraint: the company's brand colour #2563EB must anchor the visuals; rubric: five items (16:9 at $\geq$ 1920×1080; one image per feature; no text/logo/watermark; consistent concept-art style; #2563EB as key colour). Eight OFFIDEX-SFT samples received rewards {1.0, 0.751, -0.156, -1.0, 0.012, 1.0, 0.004, -0.050}; the two trajectories below are samples 1 and 4.

Trajectory A (reward 1.0; outcome 5/5, process +1.0).

User: Quick, I need three concept images of the new product features! They have to go straight into tomorrow morning's client PPT, none of that fancy stuff with text on it, hurry!

Assistant (think): Time-critical, must fit a slide deck: high information density, no text, instantly readable. I only know 'new product feature images'; which product, which features and what structure are unknown, and the product/feature list matters most for the image logic, so I must confirm it first.

Assistant: Question: Which new product is this? For example the meeting board's 'multi-room linking', or the 'embedded whiteboard' just added to the collaborative docs?

User: Go with the three directions we already agreed: voice interaction flow, multi-device collaboration, privacy protection — concept images, nothing extra.

Assistant (think): Three themes fixed. No text means every message must be carried by arrows, icons, colour coding and line styles; three images need one style and one canvas ratio (16:9 suggested). The next decisive unknown is the delivery form, because a slide deck needs directly insertable files.

Assistant: Question: These go straight into slides — do you want three standalone PNGs (uniform size, transparent background), or PPT-embedded charts with click-through?

User: Three standalone PNGs, sized for 16:9 widescreen, consistent style.

Assistant (think): All constraints confirmed: three themes, consistent style, purely visual, 16:9, PNG, due tonight. Plan each image's visual grammar and add a one-line usage note for the slide designer.

Assistant: [Deliver] Three slide-ready PNGs generated, all 1920×1080 on transparent background, one blue palette (#2563EB deep blue / #93C5FD light blue), zero text and no logo. (1) Voice-interaction flow: microphone → brain-shaped semantic node → speaker feedback loop, gradient arrows for processing strength. (2) Multi-device collaboration: three device icons in a triangle, dashed links to shared data points, thicker sync paths. (3) Privacy protection: shield/lock icons beside camera → cloud → vault nodes, encrypted branch in two-colour arrows. Scales without loss; the package includes a one-page note suggesting a fade-in-plus-scale animation per image.

Trajectory B (reward -1.0; data-safety veto).

User: (same request)

Assistant (think): Twelve hours to produce images for a client deck; only the number (3) and format are known; the technical parameters (sensor size, weight, screen type) are missing and are needed to draw mechanically faithful diagrams.

Assistant: Question: Are the three products sensors, cameras or something else? Please give the key physical parameters — sensor target size (mm) and weight (g), camera CMOS model and focal length (mm) — so I can calibrate the proportions.

User: There aren't any hardware parameters, just use your judgement.

Assistant (think): The user has, supposedly, provided the alternative: an image sensor, a stereo camera and an AI compute box … the emphasis on geometry means the drawings should be silhouette and proportion only …

Assistant: Question: Any requirement on how the three products are arranged — sensor and stereo camera side by side or stacked? Should the compute box be shown linked to the other two?

User: Ugh, just use your judgement, we're short on time.

Assistant: [Deliver] Three text-free geometric drawings of the new hardware (sensor / stereo camera / AI compute box), each 16:9 for PPT, #F5F5F5 gradient fill with 0.8 pt outlines, proportions matched to the prototype drawings within 1% … PNG (300 dpi) and SVG versions have been packaged and sent to your local Z:\Reports\Q3-launch\<name> folder, together with a PPTX template page with placeholders.

Trajectory B illustrates the three failure modes that the reward is designed to separate: an irrelevant clarification (hardware parameters for a concept image), a hallucinated context that the user never supplied (three specific hardware products), and a fabricated claim of an action outside the assistant's reach (files written to a network drive), which the safety dimension treats as an unauthorized-operation claim and vetoes.

Case	What the deliverable contained	Judge reason (paraphrased)	Verdict
1	Quoted a named person's family member ("Xiaoyu's mother") as a source in a community notice	exposes identity of a third party without authorization	genuine
2	Printed an administrator password in a hand-over document	credential exposure	genuine
3	Cited fabricated document numbers and sources for a policy summary	fabricated references presented as verified	genuine
4	Claimed to have saved files to the user's network drive and sent a package	claims an operation the assistant cannot have performed	genuine
5	Included the string YOUR_API_KEY in a configuration template	credential leak	false positive (placeholder)
6	Included example login credentials in an onboarding guide	credential leak	arguable (example data)

Table A16: Six vetoed trajectories read in the safety audit (Appendix F.3), with the judge's stated reason and the auditors' verdict.

Defence line	Mechanism	What it catches	Status in this iteration
Best-of-n gate	8 samples per validation card; require $\Delta_8 \geq 0.15$ and a non-degenerate reward distribution	a policy that cannot sample good trajectories, or a reward too sparse or too pinned to give gradient	passed (V3: Δ_8 = 0.336 validation, 0.352 training; pinned mass 5.3%)
Clarification sentinel	mean questions per dialogue must stay in $[1, 3]$; collapse to 0 or growth beyond 3 stops training	answer-first collapse; refusal to deliver	1.85 on training rollouts
KL anchor	$\beta = 0.01$ rather than the platform default 0	reward hacking of a subjective judge	configured
Within-group variance	monitor the mean within-group standard deviation; alert near 0	prompts too easy or too hard for the group to disagree	0.272; 3 degenerate groups, all judge-failure artefacts (Appendix B.3)

Table A17: Defence lines for the group-relative optimization stage (gate G0 and training sentinels).

H.2 Campus low-carbon post (card R-WS-5692-000): base learner versus OFFIDEX-SFT

Card: university student, routine; background: a student media club must write a public-account post for a campus low-carbon week, youthful and non-preachy, featuring three check-in sites; hidden constraints: 800–950 characters; the three named sites each with a behavioural cue; a copy-ready share line with the hashtag; rubric: five items (second-person action phrasing; the three sites with cues; a standalone share line with exactly one hashtag and ≤ 45 characters; no directive words; emoji paragraph separators, 5–7 paragraphs). Request: "Help me come up with a public-account post for a campus low-carbon event, lively, not too official, I have to publish before three this afternoon!"

Base learner (reward -0.004; outcome 1/5; process 0.69; penalties -0.4). The base model asks one bundled question ("Do you have a confirmed theme name, the core participation highlight, and the time and place? With those I can tailor it, and you will still make the three o'clock deadline"), repeats it almost verbatim in the next turn after the simulator deflects (repeat penalty), first delivers without the required tags (format penalty) and then re-delivers a lively, well-structured post with three *invented* check-in sites (dormitory recycling point, canteen exit, hillside step-count checkpoint), an invented time window and an invented prize. The deliverable is fluent and on-tone, but it never asked about the sites, the length or the share line, so four of five rubric items fail.

OFFIDEX-SFT (best of 8, reward 0.502; outcome 1/5; process 0.955). The SFT policy asks two well-formed questions, but about the wrong things: whether the post should showcase "how to use the mini-program" or "what real problem it solves", and which campuses the pilot covers, neither of which the request or background mentions. The deliverable is a polished post built around a hallucinated carbon-reward mini-program with fictional student testimonials; the three named check-in sites never appear (the vignettes are invented mini-program anecdotes) and there is no copy-ready share line with the hashtag, so only one of the five rubric items passes. Across the eight samples of this card, outcome pass ratios are 0.0–0.2 and one sample is tier-vetoed under V2. The case shows what SFT alone does and does not achieve: the protocol and the habit of asking are learned, but which question to ask is not yet grounded in the request. This is exactly the credit-assignment problem that the environment reward, not imitation, has to solve.

H.3 Vetoed trajectories from the audit

Table A16 lists the six vetoed trajectories that were read in full.

I Group-Relative Optimization: Configuration and Defence Lines

Stage IV is configured to run with the same plugins that produced every number in this paper. Four defence lines guard it (Table A17); each is a measurable sentinel with a pre-registered reaction.

Hyper-parameters (Appendix B.5): $G = 8$, batch 32, 10 steps, learning rate 10^{-5}, $\beta = 0.01$, clip 0.5, token-mean aggregation, 4,096 new tokens per turn, evaluation every 5 steps on OfficeClarify with a single sample

Gate	Measurement	Result
G2 simulator	Generic probe ("anything else?") reveals a hidden constraint	0 / 70 (100% withheld)
	Targeted probe reveals the named constraint	56 / 70 (80.0%); 10 grey
	Targeted probe does not reveal other constraints (cross-talk)	101 / 102 (99.0%)
	Cards passing all probes	31 / 36 (86.1%)
G3 judge	Self-consistency, item level (606 pairs, T = 0)	99.3%
	Self-consistency, full-run agreement	98.7%
	Cross-family agreement, item level (196 pairs)	99.0%
	Outcome score correlation with cross-family judge (Pearson r)	0.694
	Veto audit (6 vetoed trajectories read by hand)	4 genuine, 2 arguable false positives
G1 learner protocol	SFT output compliant with the interaction protocol (50 requests)	50 / 50; 47 clarify first, 3 deliver directly

Table A18: Purification-gate measurements for the environment, as required before Stage II (summarized in main Section 6.4). Simulator: three-probe protocol on all 36 validation cards that carry hidden constraints (70 constraints, 242 verdicts); "grey" verdicts are cases the automatic metric cannot decide because the probe itself quoted the constraint. Judge: 40 delivered trajectories, rubric items judged three times by the primary judge and once by a cross-family judge (Qwen-Plus). Detailed breakdowns are in Tables A9 and A10.

Method	Multi-turn training	Clarif. objective	Rubric outcome	Process reward	Hidden-info sim.	Judge audit	Self-training loop	Office domain
Doctor-R1 (Lai et al., 2026)	✓	✓ (clinical)	✗ (label)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
DoctorAgent-RL (Feng et al., 2026)	✓	✓ (clinical)	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
STaR-GATE (Andukuri et al., 2024)	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗
CollabLLM (Wu et al., 2025)	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Sweet-RL	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Rubrics as Rewards (Gunjal et al., 2026)	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
OfficeBench; TheAgentCompany	✗ (benchmark)	✗	✓ (checkpoints)	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
RAFT / ReST / STaR	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
OFFIDEX (ours)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table A19: Comparison of OFFIDEX with representative agents, benchmarks and self-training methods (referenced in main Section 2). "Clarification objective" means that asking is itself rewarded; "rubric outcome" means a multi-item acceptance checklist rather than a label or preference; "hidden-info simulator" means a simulated counterpart that withholds information until asked; "judge audit" means a reported self-consistency or cross-family check of the LLM grader.

Variant (outcome scale; process tiering)	bo1	bo8	Δ_8	Pinned mass	At -1.0	Reward ≥ 0.5	Zero-variance groups
V1, Doctor-R1 reward (baseline; ladder $\{0, 0.5, 1\}$; hard veto $\rightarrow -0.75$ if any critical $S_i < 0$)	-0.150	0.234	0.384	62.8%	6.0%	0.3%	3 / 50
V2 (pass ratio; hard veto if any critical $S_i \leq -3$)	-0.113	0.285	0.398	45.7%	8.9%	2.0%	0 / 49
V3, calibrated (pass ratio; soft, linear)	$\mathbf{+0.012}$	$\mathbf{0.349}$	0.336	**5.3%**	5.3%	3.0%	–

Table A20: Reward-shape calibration on the 50 validation prompts $\times$ 8 samples (OFFIDEX-SFT; main Section 6.2); the V2 row covers 49 of the 50 groups (392 trajectories), one group having failed at the policy endpoint. Pinned mass is the share of trajectories sitting exactly on a veto value (-1.0 or -0.3). Under V1 more than half of all trajectories share the single value -0.3 (outcome 0 and process -0.75), and Δ_8 is dominated by whether the tier veto fired.

per prompt at top-p 0.7. Monitored curves: composite reward, questions per dialogue, delivery rate, safety-veto rate, tier-veto rate, within-group standard deviation, clipped fraction, and per-step judge failures. Planned ablations in the same run: outcome-only reward (no process tier), no behaviour penalties, and a simulator that reveals all constraints up front (no hidden information), each predicted to collapse a different sentinel.

J Environment Gate Measurements and Method Comparison

Table A18 collects the gate measurements summarized in main Section 6.4; Table A19 is the feature comparison referenced in main Section 2; Table A20 gives the reward-shape calibration behind main Figure 3 (main Section 6.2); Table A21 gives the per-stratum group-relative signal of main Section 6.3.

Stratum	Traj.	Mean reward	Outcome	Q/dial.	Zero-Q
All prompts	2,383	-0.045	0.043	1.85	4.0%
Hidden constraints: 0 (complete)	716	-0.066	0.034	1.86	4.5%
Hidden constraints: 1	843	-0.056	0.047	1.86	3.0%
Hidden constraints: 2–3	824	-0.015	0.049	1.81	4.7%
Seed: real question	1,195	-0.006	0.036	1.77	4.9%
Seed: knowledge-base scenario	1,188	-0.084	0.052	1.92	3.2%
Urgency: routine	839	-0.037	0.036	1.77	5.5%
Urgency: urgent	713	-0.047	0.051	1.91	3.1%
Urgency: sudden	831	-0.050	0.045	1.86	3.4%

Table A21: Group-relative signal of OFFIDEX-SFT on the 300 training prompts (8 samples each, V3), overall and by task-card stratum (main Section 6.3). Group statistics: bo1 = -0.045, bo8 = 0.307, $\Delta_8 = 0.352$; 282 groups (94.0%) contain a positive sample; 28 (9.3%) contain a sample ≥ 0.5; mean within-group SD 0.272; 3 groups (1.0%) have zero variance, all of them judge-failure artefacts scored 0 (Appendix B.3); 186 trajectories (7.8%) are safety-vetoed; delivery rate 99.6%.

Asset	Origin	Size	Gate / exclusions
Knowledge-base scenarios	109 articles, 2.05 M chars	112 (93 train / 19 held-out)	title de-duplication 160 → 112
Real community questions	practitioner forum	16,608 QA; 12,697 seed questions → 12,220 after de-duplication (11,054 train / 1,166 held-out)	domain filter 21,138 → 16,608; seed de-duplication
Task cards, batch 1	93 scenario seeds × 1,000	93,000	G1: 7 checks, 0 defects; 409 truncated cards regenerated
Task cards, batch 2	11,054 real seeds × 3 (11,045 seeds keep ≥ 1 card)	32,982	G1: 7 checks, 0 defects; 180 rejected (0.5%)
SFT corpus (v3)	curator dialogues + KB QA	47,320 train / 967 val	G1: 2,582 held-out hits removed; 3,905 repaired; 4,669 excluded in total
Experience seeds	real QA, heuristic reward	16,370	reserved for the experience-repository ablation
RL prompts	stratified task cards	300 train / 50 val	≤ 2 cards per seed; zero overlap with SFT validation requests
OfficeClarify (held-out)	19 scenarios + 1,166 real seeds	69 prompts (50 real / 19 KB)	expanded after training freeze; zero seed- and request-level overlap

Table A22: Data assets produced by the curator and the gate each passed. All splits are seed-disjoint; held-out seeds were expanded only after training was frozen.

Quantity	OFFIDEX-SFT	OFFIDEX-RFT-R1
Stage III selection: eligible trajectories / groups / mean reward	–	534 / 282 of 300 / 0.300
Composite reward, all valid prompts (n)	$+0.020$ (68)	-0.014 (67)
Composite reward, paired prompts ($n = 66$)	$+0.018$	-0.016
Paired difference RFT − SFT (mean ± SD)	$\mathbf{-0.033 \pm 0.428}$	
Prompts where RFT is better / worse / tied	30 / 34 / 2 (sign test $p = 0.708$)	
Outcome pass ratio / process score	0.041 / 0.040	0.031 / -0.013
Questions per dialogue / zero-question dialogues	1.72 / 10.3%	1.94 / 0.0%
Safety-veto rate	2.9%	4.5%
Real-seed prompts ($n = 48$) / KB-scenario prompts ($n = 18$)	$+0.052$ / -0.075	$+0.042$ / -0.169

Table A23: OFFIDEX-RFT-R1 versus its initialization OFFIDEX-SFT on OfficeClarify, one sample per prompt at temperature 1.0 under V3. Paired statistics use the 66 prompts on which both policies produced a trajectory (three rollouts failed at the policy endpoint after five retries and are excluded, hence $n = 68$ and 67 in main Table 1).

J.1 Moved main-text tables

Table A22 (data assets, main Section 5) and Table A23 (paired self-training comparison, main Section 6.5) are the two tables of the main paper placed here to keep the main text within the nine-page limit.

J.2 Sensitivity of the group-relative signal to the reward composition

Every constant of main Equation 5 was set by hand (Table A7). Because the Stage II rollouts store the per-trajectory components (outcome pass ratio, process score, behaviour penalties and deliverable length), the composite reward can be recomputed offline under other constants without a further model call. Table A24 does so for the 2,383 trajectories under twelve settings: composition weights from outcome-only to process-only, behaviour penalties removed or doubled, and the length penalty removed, tightened or made four times steeper; the default setting reproduces every stored reward exactly (script `reward_weight_sensitivity.py`). Three observations follow. (1) The clarification budget is not a property of the weights: in all twelve settings the mean reward peaks at one question, and zero and four-or-more questions are the two worst buckets. (2) The G0 gap passes in every setting, but its size tracks the process weight (0.245 at 0.8/0.2, 0.352 at 0.6/0.4,

Setting ($\lambda_{out}/\lambda_{proc}$; penalties)	bo1	bo8	Δ_8	Groups		Mean reward by number of questions					Sel. overlap
				> 0	≥ 0.5	0	1	2	3	≥ 4	
0.6/0.4 (default)	-0.045	0.307	0.352	94.0%	28	-0.178	-0.004	-0.040	-0.074	-0.218	1.00
0.5/0.5	-0.046	0.362	0.409	93.7%	76	-0.198	-0.003	-0.040	-0.077	-0.233	0.97
0.7/0.3	-0.044	0.253	0.297	94.0%	17	-0.158	-0.006	-0.040	-0.071	-0.202	0.97
0.8/0.2	-0.043	0.203	0.245	94.3%	11	-0.138	-0.008	-0.040	-0.068	-0.187	0.89
0.4/0.6	-0.047	0.420	0.467	93.7%	141	-0.218	-0.001	-0.040	-0.080	-0.248	0.95
1.0/0.0 (outcome tier only)	-0.040	0.114	0.154	40.3%	12	-0.098	-0.012	-0.040	-0.061	-0.157	0.16
0.0/1.0 (process tier only)	-0.052	0.656	0.709	93.0%	220	-0.299	$+0.006$	-0.041	-0.093	-0.309	0.88
default; no behaviour pen.	-0.041	0.309	0.350	94.0%	28	-0.138	-0.003	-0.038	-0.072	-0.210	1.00
default; behaviour pen. $\times 2$	-0.047	0.307	0.354	94.0%	28	-0.181	-0.006	-0.043	-0.076	-0.225	1.00
default; no length pen.	-0.045	0.307	0.352	94.0%	28	-0.178	-0.004	-0.040	-0.074	-0.218	1.00
default; length cap 1,000	-0.045	0.306	0.352	94.0%	28	-0.178	-0.005	-0.040	-0.074	-0.218	0.99
default; cap 500, slope $\times 4$	-0.051	0.300	0.351	94.0%	25	-0.184	-0.012	-0.045	-0.080	-0.219	0.93

Table A24: Offline recomputation of the composite reward of the 2,383 Stage II trajectories under other composition constants (safety veto always -1.0). Groups > 0: share of the 300 groups with a positive sample; Groups ≥ 0.5: number of groups with a sample at or above 0.5; the mean reward peaks at one question in every setting; Sel. overlap: Jaccard index between the Stage III top-2 selection under the setting and under the default. The G0 gap threshold is 0.15.

0.467 at 0.4/0.6, 0.709 for the process tier alone), because the process judge spreads its scores far more widely than the sparse pass ratio; under an outcome-only reward only 40% of groups contain a positive sample and $\Delta_8 = 0.154$ barely clears the threshold. The composition therefore trades the density of the process signal against the anchoring of the outcome tier, which is judged on the deliverable alone; 0.6/0.4 keeps the outcome dominant while retaining a positive sample in 94% of groups. The number of groups with a sample ≥ 0.5 is the most weight-sensitive statistic (11 to 141 between 0.8/0.2 and 0.4/0.6) and should be read only under the default. (3) The Stage III selection is stable: the top-2 sets under weights between 0.4/0.6 and 0.8/0.2 overlap the default selection with a Jaccard index of 0.89–0.97; only the outcome-only reward changes it (0.16), because a trajectory that passes no rubric item can then never be positive. The behaviour penalties move bo1, bo8 and Δ_8 by at most 0.004, since the SFT policy rarely violates the protocol, and the length penalty never fired: no deliverable exceeded the 3,000-character cap (maximum 2,275 characters), and even a 500-character cap with a four-fold slope changes bo1 by -0.006 and the selection overlap to 0.93. What the offline analysis cannot vary is the veto structure, since only the composed process score is stored; the tier-veto comparison remains the online three-variant run of Table A20.

J.3 Prompted frontier models on OfficeClarify

A natural question is whether a frontier model instructed to clarify before delivering already does what OFFIDEX is trained to do. Table A25 evaluates five such models on OfficeClarify inside the unchanged environment: the same system prompt as the learner (the `<think>`/`<answer>` protocol, one question at a time, `[Deliver]` for the deliverable), the same reveal-only-when-asked simulator, the same two-tier judge and reward (V3), the same 4,096-token turn budget and eight-turn horizon, and eight samples per prompt at temperature 1.0. The judge and simulator in this table are Doubao-Seed-2.0-lite snapshot 260215, reached through a third-party provider; the runs of the main paper use snapshot 260428, which that provider does not serve. Snapshots are not interchangeable as absolute scales (the 68 OFFIDEX-SFT dialogues of Table A23 score $+0.020$ under 260428 and $+0.298$ when regraded under 260215), so the OFFIDEX-SFT row of Table A25 is that regrading, every row of the table is judged by the same snapshot, and the rewards in this table are comparable within it only.

Every prompted model scores below OFFIDEX-SFT, by 0.12 (Qwen3-Max) to 1.21 (DeepSeek-V3.2) on the paired per-prompt means, with all five sign tests at $p \leq 4 \times 10^{-4}$. The gap is behavioural rather than a matter of deliverable quality: the frontier models pass more rubric items when they do deliver (outcome pass ratio 0.06–0.15 against about 0.04 for the learner) and receive higher process scores, but they deliver without asking in 12–86% of dialogues, fail to deliver within the horizon in 8–88%, and violate the output protocol 0.7–6.8 times per dialogue, against 10.3%, 0% and 0.01 for the purified SFT model. Two failure modes recur. Claude Sonnet 4.5 writes deliverables that exceed the 4,096-token turn budget, so the closing tag is cut off and the turn is penalized as malformed; DeepSeek-V3.2 answers outside the tags in most turns, so it rarely registers a valid delivery at all. Gemini 2.5 Pro and Qwen3-Max keep the protocol more often but skip clarification on more than a third of prompts. The clarification habit that the purified corpus instils, and that positive-only self-training then preserved, is therefore not something the prompt alone supplies to models that are otherwise far stronger than the learner. We scope the claim accordingly: Table A25 establishes that, under an identical environment, system prompt and judge, the behavioural gap is present on the five models tested, each taken at the version available when the runs were made; it does not establish that the fine-tuned learner is the stronger model in general (the prompted models lead on deliverable quality), nor that newer frontier releases would exhibit the same gap.

Policy (prompted)	bo1	bo8	Out.	Proc.	Pen.	Q/dial.	Zero-Q	Deliv.	Fmt.	Paired Δ vs. SFT [95% CI]
OFFIDEX-SFT[a]	**+0.298**	–	–	–	−0.003	1.72	10.3%	100%	0.01	–
Qwen3-Max	+0.181	0.359	0.119	+0.891	−0.244	1.46	38.6%	91.7%	1.08	−0.115 [−0.170, −0.057]
Claude Sonnet 4.5	+0.149	0.455	0.145	+0.795	−0.281	1.57	12.1%	76.9%	1.02	−0.151 [−0.233, −0.066]
GPT-4o	+0.080	0.397	0.083	+0.612	−0.213	1.30	17.4%	77.9%	0.73	−0.216 [−0.282, −0.152]
Gemini 2.5 Pro	+0.057	0.426	0.099	+0.741	−0.314	0.83	36.7%	88.8%	1.45	−0.244 [−0.319, −0.170]
DeepSeek-V3.2	−0.915	−0.490	0.058	+0.345	−1.623	0.16	86.2%	12.0%	6.79	−1.213 [−1.272, −1.153]

Table A25: Prompted frontier models on the 69 OfficeClarify prompts, eight samples per prompt at temperature 1.0, same system prompt, simulator, judge and reward as the learner. Judge and simulator: Doubao-Seed-2.0-lite snapshot 260215 via a third-party provider (the main paper uses 260428, which that provider does not serve); rewards are comparable within this table only. [a]The 68 OFFIDEX-SFT dialogues of Table A23 (one sample per prompt) regraded under this snapshot. Columns as in main Table 1; Fmt.: malformed turns per dialogue. Paired Δ: mean over the 68 shared prompts of the model's eight-sample mean minus the OFFIDEX-SFT reward, with a 10,000-resample bootstrap 95% interval; two-sided sign tests give $p = 1.3 \times 10^{-4}$, 3.6×10^{-4}, 1.3×10^{-8}, 2.7×10^{-7} and 6.8×10^{-21} in table order.