

# **QUALITY ASSURANCE MODEL FOR SCQFP APPROVED CREDIT RATING BODIES**

## **SECTION 6**

### **Third Party Credit Rating**



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**Please note that at the time of publishing in 2020 that any reference to a physical visit to an organisation or CRB within the model may be substituted by a blended approach of online meetings, email and telephone communication until further notice.**

*This Quality Assurance Model (QAM) applies specifically to those SCQFP Approved CRBs but for ease of reading the term Credit Rating Body or CRB will be used in this document*

Credit Rating will be defined as third party where programme is not owned by the CRB and:

**The CRB cannot make changes to the learning outcomes and/or assessment criteria of a programme without the specific permission of the organisation submitting the programme for credit rating. The CRB is also unable to offer that programme to any other organisation (as a product) without the permission of the organisation submitting the programme.**

Approval for third party credit rating will be undertaken as a separate exercise against Criterion 4. An additional fee will be payable. Details of fees are available from the SCQF Partnership and are also available on the SCQF website [www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk)).

A CRB must have been actively credit rating and monitoring its own provision for at least 1 year after approval, before it can apply to credit rate the provision of third parties. It will be up to the CRB to demonstrate that it is ready to meet the criterion and has the necessary experience in credit rating and monitoring in order for the submission to be considered. Submissions will not be accepted on the sole basis that a period of time has passed since initial approval.

In cases where a CRB has a very small number of programmes in its portfolio, and therefore is unable to expand its own credit rating activity, it may be allowed to apply at the discretion of the Quality Committee if it is able to demonstrate that it has the established QA systems in place which would allow it to demonstrate the evidence required to fully meet Criterion 4.

The approval for third party credit rating will consist of:

- An expression of [interest](#)
- An [informal](#) discussion with an officer of the SCQFP
- The completion of an approval [submission](#) with accompanying evidence
- A review team [pre-visit](#) meeting
- A visit to the CRB by the Review Team
- A formal [report](#)
- [Scrutiny](#) of the report by the SCQF Quality Committee and Board
- Letter of outcome from the Chair of the SCQFP Board
- A right of appeal

#### Possible outcomes:

- Approved
- Approved with conditions<sup>1</sup>
- Not Approved<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> CRB cannot start to credit rate third parties until conditions are met

<sup>2</sup> After unsuccessful application, the organisation will receive feedback from SCQFP

Once approved, any third party credit rating activities will then be included in its annual monitoring and periodic reviews.

### **Expression of interest**

CRBs that wish to have approval to carry out third party credit rating should contact their SCQFP named Officer to make an expression of interest. On receipt of this expression of interest the SCQFP named Officer will arrange to meet with key personnel from the CRB.

### **Informal meeting with the SCQFP Officer**

The purpose of this meeting is to establish whether the CRB has the potential to meet the criterion for third party credit rating. The SCQFP named Officer will explain the criterion, the process and the responsibilities of carrying out third party credit rating. The SCQFP named Officer will also explain the timeline of the third party approval process.

If the meeting is successful, the CRB will be invited to make the application and will be given the submission template. If the SCQFP named Officer feels that the CRB does not have the potential to meet the criterion, further advice and guidance will be given. This does not preclude the CRB for making another expression of interest at a later date if circumstances change.

### **The Submission**

A template will be provided for the submission. The template should be submitted electronically together with accompanying evidence. In making the submission, the CRB agrees to receive a visit from SCQF Partnership representatives.

The purpose of the submission is for the CRB to clearly explain how it meets the criterion for third party Credit Rating (Criterion 4) and therefore the CRB should include relevant evidence which demonstrates this. In addition, the CRB must provide evidence of its ability to credit rate through actively credit rating and monitoring its own programmes.

Once the CRB has made its submission, it will be contacted by the named SCQFP Officer to arrange a date for the third party approval visit. It will also be provided with an indication of the timeline of activities. On receipt of the submission the SCQF Partnership will issue an invoice to the CRB for the full third party approval fee. Details of fees are available from the SCQF Partnership and are also available on the SCQF website, [www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk).

### **The Review Team**

On receipt of the application and payment of the appropriate fee, a Review Team will be formed which will comprise two SCQFP Officers - one of which will be the current named SCQFP Officer.

In addition, the team may also include a further member for training or for shadowing purposes. This member will not play any part in the review or decision making.

### **The Review Team meeting (pre-visit)**

The Review Team will individually and collectively consider all of the evidence submitted by the CRB and will identify issues from the application that need to be investigated further or require clarification. These will be agreed by the Review Team and will be sent to the named contact within the CRB, together with an agenda for the visit to allow time for the CRB to prepare.

Whilst every effort will be made to notify the CRB of issues, or points of clarification, prior to the visit, it should be noted that some issues may come to light during the visit or subsequent report compilation process.

### **The Approval Visit**

The Review Team will meet with representatives of the CRB to discuss the submission and the issues and points of clarification indicated in the review team feedback. The purpose of the visit is to arrive at a judgement on Criterion 4.

The named SCQFP Officer will act as chair for the meeting with the other Officer taking notes of the meeting with a view to compiling the final report. No formal minute of the meeting will be taken.

At the end of the visit, the Review Team will summarise the key areas of discussion and highlight any areas where there have been concerns or possible actions indicated.

Please note that due to the governance arrangements the Review Team is unable to give a decision on the day of the visit.

### **The Report**

After the visit, the SCQFP Officers will write the report which will include the overall findings and conclusions and the reasons for those findings. During this editing process, the Officers may contact the CRB for further clarification. When the editing process is complete, the report will be sent to the CRB for a factual accuracy check. In the event of any other amendments being suggested by the CRB the SCQFP named Officer will edit and finalise the report, to the satisfaction of the Review Team and the CRB, prior to the report being submitted to the SCQFP Quality Committee.

### **Scrutiny by the SCQF Quality Committee and Board**

The SCQFP Quality Committee is responsible for making a recommendation to the Board on whether the CRB should be awarded the authority to credit rate third party provision. The report will be sent to the full Committee and will be scrutinised at the next meeting. The SCQFP Officers will provide a short overall verbal summary at the meeting. The Quality Committee may amend or add to any of the conditions or recommendations proposed by the Review Team before making its own overall

recommendation to the SCQF Board. The overall recommendations that the SCQFP Quality Committee can make are:

- Approved
- Approved with conditions<sup>3</sup>
- Not Approved

The report and the Committee's recommendation will then be presented to the SCQFP Board which will make the decision based on that recommendation. However, the Board also has the right to ask for further clarification from the Quality Committee and the CRB and to add further conditions and recommendations if deemed necessary.

### **When approval is given**

Once a CRB has been approved there is no limit of time for that approval as long as ongoing quality assurance monitoring of third party activities is conducted satisfactorily.

### **When approved with conditions**

When a CRB is approved with conditions, the SCQFP named Officer will meet with representatives from the CRB to discuss the way in which the conditions can be met through an action plan, the support that may be required and associated timelines. The CRB cannot start to credit rate any third party programmes until the conditions are met.

### **Not approved**

If a CRB fails to meet the criterion and is not approved, this does not preclude the CRB to make another application in the future. In such circumstances the CRB will normally be required to pay a further fee (this may be the full or a modified fee) and will follow the approval process again.

A CRB that fails to be approved will be informed of this formally by letter and will be given the opportunity to meet with a member of the executive team for further clarification.

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<sup>3</sup> CRB cannot start to credit rate until conditions are met