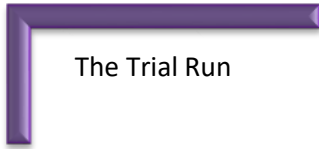


Information Note Series 5:

Becoming an SCQFP Approved Credit Rating Body

5.2 Conducting the trial run of credit rating processes



The Trial Run

This is the second note in a series about Becoming an SCQFP Approved Credit Rating Body.

This note aims to provide some further guidance to organisations who are applying to become an SCQFP Approved Credit Rating Body (CRB) by providing further details about the trial run of credit rating systems required to be submitted during the Approval process.

Organisations should also refer to the SCQF Quality Assurance Model (QAM) available from <https://scqf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/handbook.pdf>

The Trial Run

As part of your application to become an SCQF Credit Rating Body you are asked to conduct a trial run of your proposed credit rating processes. The reason for this is to satisfy Criterion 3.4:

Demonstrate the ability to make valid and reliable decisions on credit rating, drawing on appropriate sector/subject/industry and level expertise and relating activities to the existing quality assurance system

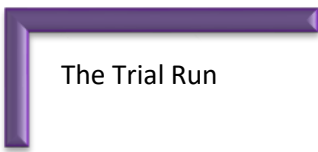
The approval team will want to reassure themselves that your credit rating processes include the necessary checks and balances to produce robust decisions when operational. They will also want to see that your process records the rationales behind the decisions being made and that good record keeping is in place. Another factor is ensuring that the staff involved in the process understand the SCQF, its level descriptors and the credit rating process.

To this end, we ask you to credit rate at least one programme, taking it through all the stages of your proposed credit rating procedures up to and including the final sign off within your organisation. The full set of completed paperwork that your process generates should then be included with your submission.

In exceptional circumstances, such as the postponement of a final sign-off committee, you may be allowed to submit this evidence up to or on the day of the approval meeting, but you must get this agreed by SCQFP prior to making your submission to allow additional time to be set aside in the approval meeting agenda for detailed scrutiny of this evidence.

It is important to note that submitting this evidence on or close to the day of the approval meeting may result in additional discussion topics at the meeting which will not have been highlighted to you prior to the meeting or indeed a need for an additional meeting or further questions from the team by email after the approval meeting. This might mean that the overall approval process may take longer.

If the trial run highlights any parts of your process that may not be working the way you envisaged, then this should be highlighted within your submission with details of the actions you have taken together with your revised process or an action plan with key dates and responsibilities indicated if changes are planned but have not been implemented at the time of your approval submission.



Frequently Asked Questions

My organisation already has a number of programmes credit rated for the SCQF by another CRB, do we still need to carry out a trial run of our credit rating processes or will you accept confirmation from that CRB that we suggested the correct level and credit for the programmes when we submitted them for credit rating?

The trial run is a mandatory part of the approval process. While the fact that you have suggested the correct level and credit for programmes to another CRB would demonstrate that your staff understand the SCQF level descriptors and the process of allocating level and credit. However, it wouldn't demonstrate that the credit rating processes and associated quality assurance you are proposing in order to carry out credit rating as a CRB work successfully. Therefore, we will always require an organisation to carry out a trial run of their proposed processes. If your application is successful, this means you will have already credit rated your first programme onto the SCQF at the end of the approval process!

Could we use one of the programmes we have credit rated for the SCQF by another CRB but put it through our proposed credit rating process?

You could do this; however, you would need to be able to evidence that those involved in the credit rating processes had no knowledge of the existing levels and credit points allocated to the programme in order to demonstrate that those involved in your process have the ability to make valid and reliable decisions. If those involved already know the level then it is likely that this would influence their decisions and rationales. For this reason, we would not recommend this approach.

We are not sure what programme to use for our trial, we have an exciting new development just starting which we could use as we would be keen to get it on the database but we also have a small programme which has successfully been running for a few years now. Which one would be best to use?

Try to use a programme that is fully developed rather than one that is in the early stages of development as if you have to spend time developing or re-developing a programme this can mean it takes you longer to get to the submission stage.

If possible, identify a programme that is not too large or complex so that those involved in the trial run are not overwhelmed if this is the first time they have been involved in credit rating or following your proposed processes.

How much information about the programme itself do we need to submit along with the completed credit rating paperwork?

Ensure that you give the approval team enough information about the programme to enable them to review the completed paperwork. The team will not be 're credit rating' your programme and will not make a judgement on the level and credit you have allocated so they do not need copies of items such as learning materials, learner handbooks etc. The team need sufficient information to be able to decide if your credit rating process generates sufficient robust justification for the level and credit points allocated and that you, as a CRB, would be able to be comfortable with the decisions and be able to justify these if required.

We have designed our credit rating process so that final decisions are signed off by our Quality and Improvement Committee however it only meets 3 times per year and we would like to submit our application before it meets next. Can we just get our CEO to sign off the decisions?

No, as this does not test if that part of your process works. If your committee can't meet additionally outside their schedule you should consider if the members could consider and confirm decisions electronically. Alternatively you could submit the process without this final sign off but with a clear note to the approval team as to when the credit rating decisions would have their final sign off. However you should be aware that this will result in a condition on any approval decision until that final sign off is satisfactorily completed.

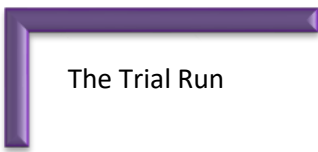
We have completed our trial run but we realised that we needed to change our proposed process significantly and we have detailed all of that in our submission and included a revised version of our process. However we now feel that our trial run doesn't reflect our new proposed process. Can we submit a second trial run with our submission?

Yes of course. This would enhance your submission and provide evidence that your changes have had the necessary impact on the outcomes. Depending on what parts of the process you felt were not working you may wish to put your programme through the revised process.

We have designed our credit rating process but we feel our staff need some training and/or support before they carry out the trial run. Where could we get assistance with this?

The SCQFP run a schedule of workshops on a range of topics related to credit rating each year for CRBs - visit [SCQF Partnership workshops](#). Once you have formally indicated to us that you intend to make a submission then you can attend these workshops, which are free of charge. If you have a number of staff you wish to access the training we can also offer a tailored and bespoke session for your organisation – again online and free of charge. Just get in touch with us if this is something that you think you might be interested in.

The other thing you might want consider is asking an existing CRB to be your buddy to discuss their experiences of setting and operating their systems. We can help with this by putting you in touch with some CRBs.



You can contact us at info@scqf.org.uk. Please let us know your organisation and a link to your website and information about your qualifications/learning programmes to help us provide the most relevant advice.

Useful Links and Resources

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| About us | About Us - Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework v |
| News and blogs | News & Blog - Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework v |
| SCQF resources | SCQF Partnership resources |
| SCQF workshops | SCQF Partnership workshops |
| Becoming a CRB | Becoming a credit rating body - Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework |
| Support for CRBs | Resources for Credit Rating Bodies - Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework |
| FAQs | SCQF Partnership FAQs |

Further Reading

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| SCQF Quality Assurance Model | QAM-full-updated-June-2025.pdf |
| SCQF Handbook | handbook.pdf |
| SCQF Level Descriptors | SCQF Level Descriptors - Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework |
| SCQF Credit Points Explained | credit-point-explained-march-2017-web.pdf |
| Naming Qualifications and Programmes for the SCQF | naming-qualifications-guide-a4-final-web-may-2023.pdf |
| Credit Rating Criteria Explained | criteria-explained-final-web-oct-2017.pdf |
| Additional Notes in this series | Resources for Credit Rating Bodies - Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework |