scqf
scottish credit and qualifications framework

Quality Assurance Model for SCQFP Approved Credit Rating Bodies

scottish credit and qualifications framework

Quality Assurance Model
Document Amendment Register

Date	Detail of Change	Page/Section
June 2025	Amendments to reflect the new Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER) process commencing May 2025.	Throughout all sections
June 2025	• Change made to incorporate the new SCQFP annual monitoring processes have now been renamed - Annual Engagement Process (AEP), subject to Quality Committee approval each year alongside the possible outcomes at each AEP. • Year 1 Professional Discussion • Year 2 Annual monitoring • Year 3 Professional discussion • Year 4 Periodic review The revision also outlines the nature of professional discussion and possible outcomes from the annual engagement process.	Throughout all sections
June 2025	A move away from the Named Officer to using the SCQFP Review inbox to enable flexibility of allocation of work.	Throughout all sections
June 2025	References to SCQFP Database renamed Register.	Throughout all sections
June 2025	Risk factors and the Risk Matrix have been amended. Wording changed to “material” impact for reputation risk to the SCQFP and Learners.	Throughout all sections
June 2025	Renamed ‘Annual Engagement’ from ‘Annual Monitoring’. CRBs will be expected to submit new evidence at each AEP, removing all references to “if changed from last review activity” where SCQFP officers would carry forward evidence from previous reviews if unchanged.	Section 4 Annual Engagements p4
June 2025	Evidence requirement for certification has been clarified asking for copies of all certificates used if different templates are used for different programmes.	Section 5 p2

June 2025	Reference made to the SCQFP Accountant carrying out the financial viability of the CRB.	Section 5 p3
June 2025	Review Team shall now consist of 2 SCQFP Officers alongside a QC member and External Reviewer.	Section 5 p4
June 2025	Sentence added to reinforce that any additional costs to the third party should be borne by the CRB.	Section 7 p4
August 2026	Changes made to reflect the Scottish Qualifications Authority renaming to Qualifications Scotland and to correct the TQER spelling error.	Throughout all sections

Approval tracker

September 2026	Changes made to replace the Scottish Qualifications Authority with Qualifications Scotland and to correct the TQER spelling error.	Approved by the Quality Committee

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

scottish credit and qualifications framework

Table of Contents

Section 1. Overview of Quality Assurance Model 5
Section 2. Quality Assurance Model - Criteria 14
Section 3. Approval 34
Section 4. Annual Engagements 41
Section 5. Periodic Review 48
Section 6. Third Party Credit Rating 53
Section 7. Removal of Credit Rating Authority and Ceasing Credit Rating 59
Section 8. Appeals 63
Section 9. Matters of Concern 66
Section 10. Ceasing Credit Rating Flowchart 69

scqf
scottish credit and qualifications framework

Section 1. Overview of Quality Assurance Model

Introduction

Credit Rating Bodies (CRBs) in Scotland include all Scottish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Scotland's colleges and the Qualifications Scotland as well as a number of other bodies which have met the criteria included in this model and have gone through a rigorous approval process conducted by the SCQF Partnership (SCQFP). These bodies are known as SCQFP Approved CRBs and come from a wide range of sectors.

HEIs, colleges and Qualifications Scotland are subject to specific alternative quality assurance arrangements agreed by the SCQFP Board and are separate to this model. HEIs and Colleges are subject to the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER). However, all CRBs including HEIs, colleges and Qualifications Scotland should adhere to the Principles within the SCQF Handbook and also the processes contained in Section 7 of this document.

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

The QAM guidance is divided into 10 sections:

Section 1 Overview of Quality Assurance Model

Section 2 Quality Assurance Model - Criteria

Section 3 Approval

Section 4 Annual Engagement Activities

Section 5 Periodic Review

Section 6 Third Party Credit Rating

Section 7 Removal of Credit Rating Authority and Ceasing Credit Rating

Section 8 Appeals

Section 9 Matters of Concern

Section 10 Ceasing Credit Rating Flowcharts

Rigour of the Quality Assurance Model

The Quality Assurance Model sets out the criteria which must be adhered to in order to ensure approval and review are transparent and robust. It is essential that the on-going quality assurance arrangements are rigorous in order to maintain partners' and stakeholders' confidence in the SCQF as Scotland's Lifelong Learning Framework.

The SCQFP has designed rigorous quality assurance processes for awarding credit rating authority to appropriate bodies. In order to demonstrate the rigour of these processes to stakeholders the SCQFP will:

- Operate the QAM under the governance of the SCQFP Quality Committee and SCQFP Board
- Ensure that the QAM is subject to regular review

As part of our existing processes, reviews have taken place in 2011, 2014 and in 2019. Each of these reviews has taken views from Quality Committee members, CRBs, and External Reviewers. In 2025, a Lean Thinking exercise was undertaken to review the efficiency of the review model in terms of resource and process and a number of changes to the annual engagement activities were agreed by SCQFP Quality Committee and Board.

The model consists of three distinct activities:

- Approval
- Annual Engagement Activities
- Periodic Review

Each of these processes is underpinned by a set of criteria. These Criteria are:

Criterion 1 Body of Good Standing
Criterion 2 Robust Quality Assurance System
Criterion 3 Capacity and Commitment
Criterion 4 Third Party Credit Rating (where applicable)

In addition, the SCQF Handbook details a set of 25 high level principles which CRBs are asked to adhere to once approved. These principles apply to all CRBs and those approved directly by the SCQFP.

Applications for **Approval** to become a CRB take a minimum of 9-12 months to fully complete the process and consist of:

- An expression of interest
- An informal discussion with an Officer of SCQFP
- A training session for the organisation on the application process and criteria

- The completion of an approval submission document with accompanying evidence which includes evidence of a trial run of the proposed credit rating process
- A Review Team pre review online meeting
- An online review meeting with the organisation by a Review Team
- A formal report
- Scrutiny of the report by the SCQFP Quality Committee and SCQFP Board
- Letter of outcome from the Chair of the SCQFP Board
- A right of appeal

Possible outcomes:

- Approved
- Approved with conditions[1]
- Not Approved[2]

Once approved, the CRB is then subject to annual engagement activities and periodic review.

Annual Engagement Activities

SCQFP Approved Credit Rating Bodies are subject to an annual engagement activity each year. This will take the form of either a Professional Discussion or Annual Monitoring. The cycle following approval will be as follows with the cycle repeating 4 yearly:

Year 1 Professional Discussion
Year 2 Annual Monitoring
Year 3 Professional Discussion
Year 4 Periodic Review.

Professional Discussion involves:

- The completion of a short report of activities and any changes in the previous year as well as addressing a number of identified risk factors
- An online meeting with an SCQFP Officer to discuss the report and any risk factors
- A short summary note of discussion
- Scrutiny of note by SCQFP Quality Committee

[1] CRB cannot start to credit rate until conditions are met
[2] After unsuccessful application, the organisation will receive feedback from SCQFP and will be allowed to resubmit on one further occasion

- Letter from the SCQFP Quality Committee of any required additional review activity and/or actions

Possible Outcomes:

CRB is allowed to continue credit rating
CRB is allowed to continue to credit rate with identification of actions
An additional annual monitoring activity is scheduled (with or without suspension of credit rating activity)

Annual monitoring involves:

- The completion of a submission document with accompanying evidence
- A potential online meeting with the organisation by a Review Team [3]
- A short action based report
- Scrutiny of the report by the SCQFP Quality Committee
- Letter of outcome from the Chair of the SCQFP Quality Committee
- A right of appeal

Possible Outcomes:

CRB is allowed to continue credit rating
CRB is allowed to continue to credit rate with conditions
Additional scrutiny recommended
CRB is suspended from credit rating (with conditions)
The CRB's Periodic Review may be brought forward
The process for removal of credit rating authority is initiated

Periodic Review takes place every 4 years following approval and involves:

- The completion of a submission document with accompanying evidence
- An online review meeting with the organisation by a review team
- A formal report
- Scrutiny of the report by the SCQFP Quality Committee and SCQFP Board
- Letter of outcome from the Chair of the SCQFP Board
- A right of appeal

Possible outcomes:

CRB can continue as a CRB
CRB can continue as a CRB with conditions

[3] Note that the format of the annual monitoring will be decided on a risk based approach and may result in a desk based monitoring activity with no need for an online review meeting with the CRB. However, all CRBs will receive an online review meeting for the first annual monitoring activity post-approval.

CRB is suspended from credit rating (with conditions)
The process for removal of credit rating authority is initiated

The SCQFP Board also reserves the right to impose a physical visit to the organisation for any CRB at any time or to ask for additional monitoring to be carried out. This decision will be made using a risk-based approach and may not necessarily indicate a poor outcome at the periodic review.

Third party credit rating

On approval, a CRB is given the authority to credit rate provision which is owned by itself. If it wishes to credit rate provision owned by a third party, then it must go through a further approval activity and the CRB will need to demonstrate that it meets Criterion 4. CRBs will normally have to have been actively credit rating for at least 1 year post approval before an application for third party approval will be considered. The SCQFP has agreed a definition of third party credit rating and this is included in Section 6.

Removal of Credit Rating Authority and Ceasing Credit Rating

Although it is unlikely that the SCQFP Board would need to remove a CRB's credit rating authority as every effort will be made to enable a CRB to continue through the monitoring and support provided by the SCQFP, there may be instances where it becomes necessary to remove credit rating authority or indeed a CRB may decide, for a range of reasons, to give up its CRB status.

A full set of procedures is available for this as well as when a CRB wishes to cease all or part of its credit rating activities, including third party credit rating. This can be found in Section 7.

Further information

Further information and detail of the component parts of the QAM can be found in Sections 2 -7 of this document.

In addition, any member of the SCQFP Quality Team can be contacted for an informal or general discussion and information is also available on the SCQF website at www.scqf.org.uk

Responsibilities

After approval, the CRB will be notified of key contacts at SCQFP and of a dedicated mailbox.

The CRB must provide a named contact for the organisation for the purposes of the annual engagement activity and periodic review processes and for any general queries that may arise. In addition, the CRB must also provide a key contact for the SCQF Register who will be responsible for ensuring that records of credit rated programmes are uploaded in a timely manner and kept up to date. (The organisation can also have additional staff with access to the Register to assist in this).

The SCQFP Quality Committee is responsible for:

- Considering applications for approval as an SCQFP CRB, and proposing any conditions and recommendations based on the outcomes of its considerations of the approval team report to the SCQFP Board;

- Overseeing the annual engagements with SCQFP CRBs and making the decision as to whether a CRB continues with its credit rating authority and agreeing any conditions and recommendations;

- Overseeing the periodic review process of SCQFP CRBs, and proposing any conditions and recommendations based on the outcomes of its considerations to the SCQFP Board;

- Considering any issues of quality assurance that have the potential to materially affect the integrity of the SCQF and make recommendations to the SCQFP Board;

- Considering any key themes arising from the operation of the QAM and make recommendations to the SCQFP Board on the need for any thematic reviews.

The SCQFP Board is responsible for:

- Considering applications for approval as an SCQFP CRB, and making the decision as to whether an organisation is given the authority as a CRB based on the recommendations from the SCQFP Quality Committee;

- Receiving Quality Committee recommendations from the periodic review process of SCQFP Approved CRBs from the Quality Committee and making the decision as to whether a CRB can continue to credit rate;

- Considering any issues of quality assurance that have the potential to materially affect the integrity of the SCQF and making decisions to remove credit rating authority if required.

The Risk Matrix and Risk Factors

The SCQFP operates a risk matrix and this will be used to ascertain the current level of risk and the actions that may be taken following all review engagements. This will be used to:

- Make decisions as to whether a CRB receives additional scrutiny, support and guidance;
- Make decisions as to whether a periodic review is brought forward;
- Identify actions arising out of scrutiny of annual engagements and periodic reviews;
- Determine if a CRB needs to be asked to suspend new credit rating activity until identified actions are resolved;
- Determine if the authority to credit rate is to be removed.

In using this risk matrix, a CRB may demonstrate all or some of the indicators under each category and the SCQFP may take some or all of the potential actions listed under the outcomes. This will be dependent on the details of each individual case**.** In addition, at any time in the process, action or inaction by the CRB may result in the risk category changing e.g. a positive action may result in the category becoming lower or inaction may result in the category being escalated.

In addition, a set of risk factors will be used to develop the reporting and dialogue for the Professional Discussion and also to determine the nature of the interaction at annual monitoring.

The risk factors are:

- Significant changes to staff involved in the credit rating process
- A significant change in credit rating activity (up or down)
- Significant changes to the credit rating process
- Matters of concern received about the CRB
- Issues still outstanding over a number of professional discussions, annual and/or periodic reviews
- Lack of required updating of the SCQF Register
- Potential for material reputational damage to the SCQF
- Potential for material impact on current learners

The Risk Matrix[4]

High – possible indicators	Medium – possible indicators	Low – possible indicators	Very Low – possible indicators

[4] This matrix will be used to identify the need for an annual monitoring visit as well as identifying actions post QC/Board. More details of this are included at Section 4 of the QAM

• Serious concerns needing immediate action and resolution • Damage to, or serious risk to, the integrity of the SCQF • Impact on current learners • Systemic and recurring unresolved issues which impact on the credit rating of programmes and/or associated quality assurance	• Issues requiring quick action and resolution • Potential for material damage to the integrity of the SCQF • Possible impact on current learners if not resolved • Some material issues which may be systemic or recurring	• Some issues requiring attention • Low risk of damage to the integrity of the SCQF • Low impact on current learners • Issues are resolved by the CRB when identified through external review including review by SCQFP	• No or minimal concerns • No or minimal risk of damage to the integrity of the SCQF • No or minimal impact on current learners • CRB identified any issues and resolved though their internal review processes
High - potential outcomes at QC/Board	Medium – potential outcomes at QC/Board	Low – potential outcomes at QC/Board	Very Low – potential outcomes at QC/Board
• Hold placed on new credit rating activities • Visit to CRB by SCQFP Head of Service • SCQFP CEO, Quality Committee and Board Chairs alerted • Special meeting of SCQFP Quality Committee held • Next periodic review brought forward • Physical visit to CRB • Action Plan developed and put in place by CRB and approved by SCQFP • Any special measures agreed • Schedule of additional monitoring and support activities/meetings put in place • Potential removal of credit rating authority	• Additional Monitoring meeting with CRB by SCQFP bringing forward the next periodic review • An additional annual monitoring engagement • SCQFP CEO alerted • Action Plan developed and put in place by CRB and approved by SCQFP • Action plan monitored by SCQFP at stages determined by Quality Committee • Support arrangements put in place • Physical visit to CRB	• Discussion of issues with SCQFP • Action Plan developed by CRB • Actions followed up through normal QAM processes • CRB will continue to be subject to professional discussions, annual monitoring and periodic review	• No further action • CRB will continue to be subject to professional discussions, annual monitoring and periodic review • Action Plan developed by CRB if required • Actions followed up through normal QAM processes if required

scqf
scottish credit and qualifications framework

Section 2. Quality Assurance Model - Criteria

The following criteria should be read in conjunction with the SCQF Handbook and the SCQF Principles contained within it. A matrix showing the relationship between the QAM criteria and the SCQF Principles is included at Annex 1.

The following three criteria must be met in full by organisations seeking approval as a CRB. It is possible for a number of organisations to come together to apply for the status of CRB *(known as a collaborative partnership),* however there needs to be evidence of robust formal arrangements and/or contracts between the partners as to how the proposed CRB as a single entity will meet the criteria and the roles and responsibilities of each partner in the operation of that single CRB. Advice should be sought from the SCQFP at an early stage in this instance as each case will be assessed individually.

Under each criterion there are a number of sub criteria:

Criterion 1: Body of Good Standing

The organisation is a body of good standing, demonstrating a commitment to, and a successful track record in, the design and delivery of learning provision for Scotland.

The organisation must:

1.1 Provide a formal constitution which describes its identity, functions, aims and structures;

1.2 Demonstrate that it is a secure, stable and viable organisation;

1.3 Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of education and training;

1.4 Provide evidence of a successful track record of, and a commitment by senior personnel to, operating in Scotland or for the Scottish market;

1.5 Provide evidence of a successful track record in devising quality assured learning provision in Scotland or for the Scottish market in relation to specific subjects/industries/sectors and levels;

1.6 Provide an effective equality and diversity policy and be able to demonstrate this policy in action for both staff and learners;

1.7 Provide an effective staff development policy and be able to demonstrate this policy in action.

Criterion 2: Robust Quality Assurance System

The organisation already has in place a documented quality assurance system for programme design, approval, validation, accreditation, assessment or other related activities and has evidence, through internal and external review, that this quality assurance system is valid and reliable.

The organisation must:

2.1 Operate a robust quality assurance system for programme design, approval, validation, accreditation, assessment or other related activities and demonstrate that the separate processes which make up the quality assurance system:

- Are operated by individuals who are experienced in the relevant process and have subject expertise where this is required;
- Are supported by appropriate management structures and have externality in decision making;
- Are benchmarked against other equivalent processes;
- Are subject to regular review to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of users.

2.2 Demonstrate that it regularly reviews and strives to improve and enhance its quality assurance systems by:

- Carrying out internal reviews on all aspects of the quality assurance systems;
- Taking action on the outcome of such internal reviews.

2.3 Ensure that its quality assurance system is subject to regular external review and provide evidence of:

- The outcome of these external reviews;
- Actions taken as a result of these external reviews.

Criterion 3: Capacity and Commitment

The organisation has the capacity and commitment to operate as a CRB and ensures that its credit rating processes and procedures link to and function within its existing quality assurance system as already defined under Criterion 2.

The organisation must:

3.1 Document a robust procedure, including pro-formas for credit rating, which sits within the existing quality assurance systems and complies with the requirements of the SCQF Handbook and the SCQF Principles;

3.2 Define the scope of credit rating authority being applied for in terms of levels, sectors, subjects and types of programmes or qualifications;

3.3 Document a robust procedure for the internal review of the proposed credit rating process showing how it sits within the existing quality assurance system;

3.4 Demonstrate the capacity and 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;

3.5 Document a robust procedure to:
- Record the outcomes of the credit rating process;
- Communicate these outcomes to users and other stakeholders;
- Keep the SCQF Register up to date by way of the SCQF portal;
- Describe the way in which the SCQF logo will be used.

3.6 Document a procedure for developing an annual self-assessment report on credit rating activity for the SCQFP and participating in SCQF annual and periodic reviews;

3.7 Show how the credit rating function and its associated quality assurance are supported by staff development, continuing professional development and /or professional development planning.

On approval a CRB is given the authority to credit rate provision which is owned by itself. If it wishes to credit rate provision owned by a third party then it must go through a further approval activity and the CRB will need to demonstrate that it meets Criterion 4. CRBs will normally have to have been actively credit rating their own provision for at least 1 year post approval before an application for third party approval will be considered. The SCQFP has agreed a definition of third party credit rating and this is included in Section 6.

Criterion 4: Third Party Credit Rating Approval

The organisation has the capacity, commitment and experience to operate as a CRB for third parties and has the structures and systems in place to carry out this function. It ensures that its systems link to and operate within its existing quality assurance system as already defined under Criterion 2 and that it has the capacity and commitment under Criterion 3 in order that it complies with the requirements of the SCQF Handbook.

The organisation must:

4.1 Define the scope of third party credit rating authority being applied for in terms of levels, sectors, subject and types of programme or qualification, and

provide information on how this extension to its credit rating authority will broaden, deepen and extend the Framework;

4.2 Provide robust, direct evidence of its ability to make valid and reliable decisions on credit rating in its own right, drawing on appropriate sector/subject/industry and level expertise and relating activities to the existing quality assurance systems;

4.3 Document a robust system for providing a quality assured third party credit rating service, which sits within the existing quality assurance system, and covers procedures for ensuring that the SCQF Principles relating to third party credit rating are complied with fully;

4.4 Document a robust procedure for the internal review of the proposed third party credit rating service showing how this procedure sits within the existing quality assurance system;

4.5 Document a procedure including standard pro-formas for making an annual self-assessment of its third party credit rating activity;

4.6 Show how the third party credit rating function and its associated quality assurance are supported by staff development, continuing professional development and/or professional development planning.

Exemplification of Criteria

This exemplification does not aim to provide an exhaustive list of evidence but provides some further information about the types of evidence that could be supplied in order to demonstrate how a CRB or applicant organisation meets the criteria. CRBs and applicant organisations should not feel constrained by this exemplification. A list of mandatory evidence to be submitted is listed on the submission form for each part of the QAM.

Criterion 1: A Body of Good Standing

The organisation is a body of good standing, demonstrating a commitment to and a successful track record in the design and delivery of learning provision for Scotland.

The organisation must:

	Criteria	Exemplification
1.1	Provide a formal constitution which describes its identity,	At Approval
		Providing a constitution, strategic plans, organisational charts that explain the key function of the organisation

	functions, aims and structures	and where the Credit Rating functions will sit within the structures.
		At Annual Monitoring
		Any information about any changes in the structure and/or plans that have or may have the potential to impact on the organisation's ability to carry out credit rating and/or using the SCQF.
		At Periodic Review
		Any information about changes in the structure and/or plans that have or may have the potential to impact on the organisation's ability to carry out credit rating and/or using the SCQF.
1.2	Demonstrate that it is a secure, stable and viable organisation	At Approval
		Providing annual accounts and business plans which demonstrate that the organisation is secure and stable and financially viable. Evidence that the organisation can fund the credit rating activities planned.
		At Annual Monitoring
		Detailing any financial or operational issues that might impact on the organisation's ability or resources to continue credit rating and/or support learners.
		At Periodic Review
		Providing the latest audited set of accounts. Detailing any financial or operational issues that might impact on the organisation's ability or resources to continue credit rating and/or support learners.
1.3	Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of education and training	At Approval
		Providing evidence that the organisation knows and understands the environment of education and training in Scotland.
		At Annual Monitoring
		Not applicable.
		At Periodic Review
		Providing evidence of any projects or initiatives which the CRB has contributed to which demonstrated their understanding of, and involvement in, education and training in Scotland.
1.4	Provide evidence of a successful track record of and a commitment by senior personnel to operating in Scotland or for the Scottish market	At Approval
		Providing evidence of a current strategy for providing education and training in Scotland or aimed at Scottish learners. Evidence that senior personnel understand the nature of the credit rating in Scotland and the particular features of the SCQF in relation to the Scottish education system.

		At Annual Monitoring
		Providing evidence of current plans for activity in Scotland and use of the SCQF and any information if there are plans to restrict or expand activities in Scotland. Details of any current initiatives the CRB is involved in in Scotland.
		At Periodic Review
		Providing evidence which demonstrates that the CRB is still demonstrating a commitment to operating in Scotland or for the Scottish market and that there has been no drift or change from that commitment. For example, has the CRB delivered the credit rated provision in its initial plans or has there been a reduction in activity in Scotland?
1.5	Provide evidence of a successful track record in devising quality assured learning provision in Scotland or for the Scottish market in relation to specific subjects/industries/sectors and levels	At Approval
		Details of any industries/sectors the organisation operates in and the necessary subject expertise in place to design, deliver and quality assure learning.
		At Annual Monitoring
		Not applicable.
		At Periodic Review
		Evidence that the CRB continues to have the necessary expertise at a subject level in design, delivery and quality assurance of learning. Details of any new initiatives that may have expanded that expertise. The CRB should also detail any other external quality assurance report which may impact on their track record which has not been resolved.
1.6	Provide an effective equality and diversity policy for and be able to demonstrate this policy in action for both staff and learners	At Approval
		Providing evidence of an equality and diversity strategy or policies that promote equality of opportunity for both staff and learners. Evidence that staff are aware of their responsibilities to learners in terms of equality and diversity. Evidence that programmes are reviewed to ensure that they are free from barriers in terms of selection, admission and assessment.
		At Annual Monitoring
		Evidence of the monitoring of equalities data to inform changes. Details of any material changes that have been made to the strategy or policy and a copy of the amended documents (if relevant).

		Evidence that staff receive training in this area and that this is regularly updated. Evidence that credit rated programmes are reviewed to ensure they are free from barriers in terms of selection, admission and assessment.
		At Periodic Review
		Evidence that there is a current up-to-date equality and diversity strategy and/or policies and that these have been reviewed to ensure that they meet any legislative requirements and are fit for purpose. Details of the system in place to review credit rated programmes to ensure that they are free from barriers in terms of selection, admission and assessment.
1.7	Provide an effective staff development policy and be able to demonstrate this policy in action	At Approval
		Providing evidence of a staff development policy which empowers staff with the support and CPD needed to perform job roles. Evidence of staff induction, CPD planning, succession planning.
		At Annual Monitoring
		Details of any material changes to the existing staff development policy/processes and a copy of the amended documents (if relevant). Evidence of the policy in action i.e. plans for induction, succession planning, training for staff moving into new roles etc.
		At Periodic Review
		Evidence of the regular review of the staff development policy together with details of any material changes that have been made and a copy of the amended policy (if relevant).

Criterion 2: Robust Quality Assurance System

The organisation already has in place a documented quality assurance system for programme design, approval, validation, accreditation, assessment or other related activities and has evidence, through internal and external review, that this quality assurance system is valid and reliable.

The organisation must:

	Criteria	Exemplification
2.1		At Approval

	Operate a robust quality assurance system for programme design, approval, validation, accreditation, assessment or other related activities and demonstrate that the separate processes which make up the quality assurance system: • Are operated by individuals who are experienced in the relevant process and have subject expertise where this is required • Are supported by appropriate management structures and have externality in decision making • Are benchmarked against other equivalent processes • Are subject to regular review to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of users	Providing a full set of processes/procedures which relate to designing and approving programmes of learning as well as the assessment and certification of programmes. This will include processes to ensure the standardisation of assessment decisions and to quality assure programmes of learning. Evidence of training of staff in design, approval and assessment. Evidence that there is an external element within the design, approval and assessment processes. Evidence of how these procedures relate to each other and where the responsibilities for each process lie. Evidence that the organisation has taken note of other similar organisations' processes.
		At Annual Monitoring
		Evidence of processes for design, approval and assessment of programmes in action. A full set of completed credit rating paperwork for at least one programme will be required to be submitted.
		At Periodic Review
		Providing a full set of processes/procedures which relate to designing and approving programmes of learning as well as the assessment and certification of programmes. This will include processes to ensure the standardisation of assessment decisions and to quality assure programmes of learning. Evidence of a review of these processes and an indication of any changes that have taken place since the approval or last periodic review. Evidence of staff training in this area.
2.2	Demonstrate that it regularly reviews and strives to improve and enhance its quality assurance system by: • Carrying out internal reviews on all aspects of the quality assurance system • Taking action on the outcome of such internal reviews	At Approval
		Evidence of a policy/procedure or arrangements in place for internal reviews of its systems, processes and arrangements for quality assurance. Details of evidence of an internal review cycle. Details of the reporting structure for the outcomes of these reviews and the arrangements for follow up actions. Evidence of improvements following internal reviews.
		At Annual Monitoring
		Copies of any internal reviews of systems (including those relating to quality assurance) which have taken place since the last review activity and details of the dissemination of action points and the progress on these.

		At Periodic Review
		Evidence of a policy/procedure or arrangements in place for internal reviews of its systems, processes and arrangements for quality assurance. Details of evidence of an internal review cycle in operation. Details of the reporting structure for the outcomes of these reviews and the arrangements for follow up actions. Evidence of improvements following internal reviews.
2.3	Ensure that its quality assurance system is subject to regular external review and provide evidence of: • The outcome of these external reviews • Actions taken as a result of these external reviews	At Approval
		Demonstration of a review process which is designed to provide an external view of the organisation's quality assurance processes and system on a regular basis and the scope of which includes all the different education and training activities provided by the organisation and also credit rating. Evidence of the reporting structure for the outcomes of these reviews and the arrangements for follow up actions.
		At Annual Monitoring
		Copies of any external reviews of quality systems which have taken place (and have included credit rating) since the last review activity and details of the dissemination of action points and the progress on these.
		At Periodic Review
		Evidence of a policy/procedure or arrangements in place for external reviews of its systems, processes and arrangements for quality assurance. Details of evidence of an external review cycle in operation. Details of the reporting structure for the outcomes of these reviews and the arrangements for follow up actions. Evidence of improvements following external reviews.

Criterion 3: Capacity and Commitment

The organisation has the capacity and commitment to operate as an SCQFP Credit Rating Body and ensures that its credit rating processes and procedures link to and function within its existing quality assurance system as already defined in Criterion 2.

The organisation must:

3.1		At Approval

	Document a robust procedure for credit rating which sits within the existing quality assurance system and complies with the requirements of the SCQF Handbook and the SCQF Principles	Evidence of a documented procedure for credit rating and associated quality assurance which meets the principles within the SCQF Handbook along with associated pro-formas and paperwork. Evidence of a procedure for the regular review of individual credit rated programmes, including pro-formas and for the review at the end of a credit rating period. Details of the individual job roles involved in the process and their responsibilities. Evidence of the testing of the credit rating process using the documented procedure and supported by a full set of completed paperwork.
		At Annual Monitoring
		Evidence of a documented procedure including any changes made since the last review activity or approval. Evidence of the procedure in action. A fully completed set of credit rating paperwork for at least one programme will be required to be submitted. Evidence of the ongoing monitoring of individual credit rated programmes and of the review of programmes which have reached the end of their credit rating period. A fully completed set of paperwork for the monitoring and review of least one programme that has reached its credit rating review period will require to be submitted.
		At Periodic Review
		Evidence of a documented procedure including any changes made since the last review activity or approval. Evidence of a documented procedure for the ongoing monitoring of individual credit rated programmes and for the review of programmes at the end of their credit rating period.
3.2	Define the scope of credit rating authority being applied for in terms of levels, sectors and types of programmes or qualifications	At Approval
		Details of the scope of credit rating the organisation is seeking authority for in respect of subjects/sectors and levels.
		At Annual Monitoring
		Details of credit rating undertaken since the last review activity or approval and how this relates to the CRB's credit rating activity plan.
		At Periodic Review
		Details if the CRB expects the original scope to change in the next few years. Plans for future credit rating activity.
3.3		At Approval

	Document a robust procedure for the internal review of the proposed credit rating process showing how it sits within the existing quality assurance system	Evidence that the organisation's procedure for credit rating is covered by, and integrated with, its established internal quality assurance system. This should also demonstrate that there is a system in place to address any outcomes and progress actions. Details of the cycle for this internal review activity for credit rating including details of the responsibility for carrying out internal reviews, the reporting structure for the outcomes of these reviews and the arrangements for monitoring follow up actions.
		At Annual Monitoring
		Copies of any internal reviews of the credit rating processes and procedures which have taken place since the last review activity and details of the dissemination of action points and the progress on these.
		At Periodic Review
		Evidence of a policy/procedure or arrangements in place for internal reviews of its credit rating procedures and processes and details of any changes to this. Details of any changes to the responsibilities for the carrying out these reviews or in the reporting structure for the outcomes of the reviews. Evidence of improvements following internal reviews, e.g. action planning and monitoring.
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	At Approval
		A trial run of the credit rating procedures for at least one programme and the submission of a completed set of paperwork as evidence. Any evidence of changes made or proposed changes to the credit rating procedure, paperwork and/or reporting structures as a result of the trial run.
		At Annual Monitoring
		Evidence of the credit rating procedure in action. A fully completed set of credit rating paperwork for one programme will be required to be submitted. Evidence of the system in place to ensure appropriate expertise is used within the credit rating process.
		At Periodic Review
		Evidence that the credit rating process is working and any evidence of changes made to the process. Evidence of the checks and balances in place to ensure that consistent and robust decisions are being made in the credit rating procedure.
3.5		At Approval

	Document a robust procedure to: • Record the outcomes of credit rating processes • Communicate these outcomes to users and other stakeholders • Keep the SCQF Register up to date by way of the SCQF portal • Describe the way in which the SCQF logo will be used	Evidence of a system to record and keep the decisions and rationales for credit rating decisions. Evidence of a system to record and keep the decisions and rationales in relation to the review of a programme at the end of its credit rating period. Evidence of written procedures for updating the SCQF Register. A copy of an exemplar SCQF certificate. A plan of how the organisation will inform learners of SCQF credit rating outcomes – e.g. marketing material, prospectuses etc.
		At Annual Monitoring
		A copy of an anonymised learner certificate. A full listing of Register entries. Evidence of the CRB promoting credit rated programmes to learners, stakeholders and internally within the CRB.
		At Periodic Review
		A copy of an anonymised learner certificate. A full listing of Register entries. Evidence of a marketing plan for SCQF credit rated programmes. A sample of marketing materials for SCQF credit rated provision.
3.6	Document a procedure for developing an annual self-assessment report on credit rating activity for the SCQF Partnership	At Approval
		Evidence of how the information for the first annual monitoring submission will be gathered and who will be involved.
		At Annual Monitoring
		Not applicable.
		At Periodic Review
		Not applicable.
3.7	Show how the credit rating function and its associated quality assurance are supported by staff development, continuing professional development and/or professional development planning	At Approval
		Evidence of training provided on credit rating to individuals involved in the credit rating process. Details of the plan for ongoing provision of training for new staff or staff new to credit rating (including external members of key committees).
		At Annual Monitoring
		Details of training provided to any new staff or staff new to the credit rating process (including external members of any key committees). If training carried out by CRB staff, evidence of the CPD of those staff in relation to updating of credit rating and SCQF knowledge.

		At Periodic Review
		Evidence of the refreshment of training on credit rating for staff included in the process (including external members on key committees). A plan for future training referenced to future credit rating plans.

Criterion 4: Third Party Credit Rating

The organisation has the capacity and commitment to operate as an SCQFP third party Credit Rating Body and has the structures and systems in place to carry out this function. It ensures that its systems link to, and operate within, its existing credit rating processes and procedures link to and function within its existing quality assurance system as already defined under Criterion 2 and that they comply with the requirements of the SCQF Handbook.

The organisation must:

4.1	Define the scope of third party credit rating authority being applied for in terms of levels, sectors, subjects and types of programme or qualification and provide information on how this extension of its credit rating authority will broaden, deepen and extend the Framework	At Third Party Approval
		A business plan setting out: • why the CRB wishes to offer third party rating • the levels, sectors, subjects and types of programme it proposes to credit rate • the value of the proposed third party activity to the CRB, any particular sector and the framework as a whole • how this new activity will be funded/resourced.
		At Annual Monitoring
		Not applicable
		At Periodic Review
		Evidence of how the CRB is using its third party credit rating authority to add value to the work of the organisation and the Framework. Evidence of a plan for third party credit rating activities or service.
4.2	Provide robust, direct evidence of its ability to make valid and reliable decisions on credit rating in its own right, drawing on appropriate sector/subject/industry and level expertise and relating activities to the existing quality assurance system	At Approval
		Evidence of a critical review of the performance of the existing internal credit rating processes and of any changes made to the systems over time and as a result of any internal or external scrutiny.
		At Annual Monitoring
		Evidence of the system in place to ensure appropriate staff with relevant expertise are used within the credit rating process and within the ongoing monitoring of third parties and the delivery of the credit rated programmes.

		At Periodic Review
		Evidence that the third party credit rating process is working and any evidence of changes made to the process. Evidence of the checks and balances in place to ensure that consistent and robust decisions are being made in the third party credit rating procedure and the third party is informed of the process and outcomes.
4.3	Document a robust system for providing a quality-assured third party credit rating service, which sits within the existing quality assurance system, and covers procedures for ensuring that the SCQF Principles for third party credit rating are complied with fully	At Approval
		Evidence of a documented procedure for third party credit rating and associated quality assurance which meets the principles within the SCQF Handbook and details of how this integrates with the existing internal credit rating process. Evidence of a procedure for the review of individual credit rated programmes including the submission of an annual self-assessment report by, or visit to, the third party. Details of the individual job roles involved in the process and their responsibilities. Evidence of the guidance and support that will be given to third parties including guidance documents and pro-formas.
		At Annual Monitoring
		Evidence of a documented procedure including any changes made since the last review activity or approval. Evidence of the procedure in action. A fully completed set of credit rating paperwork for one third party programme will be required to be submitted. Evidence of the ongoing monitoring and review of individual credit rated programmes where applicable.
		At Periodic Review
		Evidence of a documented procedure including any changes made since the last review activity or approval. Evidence of ongoing monitoring of third parties and the credit rated programmes. Samples of anonymised learner certificates issued by third parties and evidence of guidance given to third parties on certification.
4.4	Document a robust procedure for the internal review of the proposed third party credit rating service showing how this	At Approval
		Evidence that the organisation's procedure for third party credit rating is covered by and integrated with its established internal credit rating system and its quality assurance system. This should also demonstrate that

	procedure sits within the existing quality assurance system	there is a system in place to address any outcomes and progress actions. Details of the cycle for this internal review activity.
		At Annual Monitoring
		Copies of any internal reviews of the third party credit rating processes and procedures which have taken place since the last review activity and details of the dissemination of action points and the progress on these.
		At Periodic Review
		Evidence of a policy/procedure or arrangements in place for internal reviews of its third party credit rating procedures and processes. Details of the reporting structure for the outcomes of these reviews and the arrangements for follow up actions. Evidence of improvements following internal reviews.
4.5	Document a procedure for making an annual self-assessment of its third party credit rating activity	At Approval
		Evidence of how the information for the first annual monitoring submission will be gathered and who will be involved.
		At Annual Monitoring
		Not applicable.
		At Periodic Review
		Not applicable.
4.6	Show how the third party credit rating function and its associated quality assurance are supported by staff development, continuing professional development and/or professional development planning	At Approval
		Evidence of training provided on third party credit rating to individuals involved in the process. Details of the plan for ongoing provision of training for new staff or staff new to third party credit rating (including external members of key committees). Details of the information and support to be supplied to third parties including how the CRB will provide information on quality assurance, reporting, marketing and certification.
		At Annual Monitoring
		Details of training provided to any new staff or staff new to the third party credit rating process (including external members of any key committees). If training carried out by CRB staff, evidence of the CPD of those staff in relation to updating of third party credit rating knowledge.
		At Periodic Review

		Evidence of the refreshment of training on third party credit rating for staff included in the process (including external members on key committees). A plan for future training referenced to future third party credit rating plans.

Annex 1 Mapping of SCQF Criteria to SCQF Principles

QAM Criteria		SCQF Principles	
1	Body of Good Standing	1	CRBs and the SCQFP have equal responsibility for ensuring the quality and integrity of the SCQF.
2	Robust Quality Assurance System	9	CRBs must establish rigorous and appropriate systems for credit rating, including systems of internal and external quality assurance and arrangements for the retention of evidence confirming decisions on level and credit.
		24	The assessment procedures for RPL including Credit Transfer should be consistent with the normal assessment and general assurance of the organisation.
		25	The process of monitoring and reviewing the operation of RPL procedures, including those for Credit Transfer, should be clearly defined and integrated with the existing quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms of the organisation.
3	Capacity and Commitment	2	All qualifications/learning programmes credit rated on to the SCQF must meet the four criteria for credit rating.
		3	A qualification/learning programme must be capable of being allocated an SCQF level and SCQF credit points in order that it can be included on the SCQF.
		4	A qualification/learning programme must have at least 10 notional learning hours (1 SCQF credit point) before it can be credit rated and considered for inclusion on the SCQF. Only full

			SCQF credit points are awarded fractions of SCQF credit points (e.g. 0.5) are not allowed.
		5	Qualifications/learning programme designers must determine the Notional Learning Hours required by a typical learner to complete all learning activities within the qualification/programme.
		6	The number of SCQF credit points allocated to a unit or a module is determined independently of the perceived importance or centrality of that unit/module within a broader programme of learning.
		7	The number of SCQF credit points allocated to a unit or module of learning is independent of the standard at which the outcomes are achieved (e.g. grading).
		8	CRBs must ensure that within the process of credit rating, and in processes for RPL, they take due cognisance of the SCQF Level Descriptors and any other reference points.
		9	CRBs must establish rigorous and appropriate systems for credit rating, including systems of internal and external quality assurance and arrangements for the retention of evidence confirming decisions on level and credit.
		10	Where assessment leads to the award of SCQF credit points then the certificates issued to learners must include the following information: • The title of the qualification/learning programme • The total number of SCQF Credit Points awarded on completion • The SCQF level of the qualification/learning programme achieved • The SCQF logo • The name of the CRB

		11	CRBs are responsible for uploading the details of all credit rated qualifications/learning programmes to the SCQF Register.
		20	The design and development of qualifications and learning programmes for the SCQF should facilitate and promote credit recognition for prior informal and non-formal learning and credit transfer.
		21	RPL is given for learning, not experience alone.
		22	SCQF Credit Points awarded as a result of RPL for informal or non-formal learning are of the same value as credit gained through formal learning.
		23	RPL for the award of SCQF Credit Points must involve a formal assessment or acceptance of evidence for learning which is quality assured.
		24	The assessment procedures for RPL including Credit Transfer should be consistent with the normal assessment and general quality assurance of the organisation.
		25	The process of monitoring and reviewing the operation of RPL procedures, including those for Credit Transfer, should be clearly defined and integrated within the existing quality assurance of the organisation.
4	Third Party Credit Rating	12	CRB must assure themselves, as far as is practically possible, of the good standing and credibility of the Third Party organisation prior to any submission for credit rating.
		13	CRBs must establish rigorous and appropriate systems for credit rating Third Party submission.
		14	CRBs must ensure that Third Party organisations submit information, and documented evidence of, their assessment

			processes, including arrangements relating to the internal and external quality assurance of assessment decisions.
		15	The CRB must ensure that the Third Party provides details of auditing/quality assurance of their systems including appropriate externality.
		16	CRBs must ensure that the Third Party organisation submits regular (e.g. annual) reports of progress in the delivery of any credit related qualifications/learning programmes and is aware that they must inform the CRB if any significant changes to these are made which may affect the SCQF level or credit points.
		17	CRBs must agree an appropriate review date for the credit rated qualification(s)/learning programme(s) with the Third Party organisation.
		18	CRBs are responsible for uploading the details of all Third Party qualifications/learning programmes which they have credit rated to the SCQF Register.
		19	CRBs are responsible for issuing the SCQF logo and Brand Guidelines to the Third Party organisation and ensuring that they are aware of the requirements for certification as outlined in Principle 10.

scqf
scottish credit and qualifications framework

Section 3. Approval

Applications for approval to become a CRB take around 9 - 12 months to fully complete the process and consist of:

- An expression of interest
- An informal discussion with an officer of SCQFP
- The completion of an approval submission with accompanying evidence which includes a trial run of proposed credit rating processes
- A review team pre review online meeting
- An online review meeting with the organisation and a Review Team
- A formal report
- Scrutiny of the report by the SCQFP Quality Committee and Board
- Letter of outcome from the Chair of the SCQFP Board
- A right of appeal

Possible outcomes:

- Approved
- Approved with conditions[5]
- Not Approved[6]

Once approved, the CRB is then subject to annual engagements and periodic review.

Expression of interest

Organisations that wish to become SCQFP approved CRBs should contact the Partnership to make an expression of interest. On receipt of this expression of interest an SCQFP Officer will arrange to meet with key personnel from the organisation.

Informal meeting with SCQFP Officer

The purpose of this meeting is to establish whether the organisation has the potential to meet the quality criteria. The SCQFP Officer will explain the criteria, the process and the responsibilities of becoming a Credit Rating Body. The SCQFP Officer will also explain the timeline of the process.

If the meeting indicates that the organisation has the potential to meet all three criteria and understands the commitment and capacity required, the organisation will be invited to make an application and will be given the submission template. If the Officer feels that the organisation does not have the potential to meet the criteria,

[5] CRB cannot start to credit rate until conditions are met

[6] After unsuccessful application, the organisation will receive feedback from SCQFP and will be allowed to resubmit on one further occasion

further advice and guidance will be given. This does not preclude the organisation from 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 organisation agrees to participate in online meetings and/or receive visits from the SCQF Partnership.

The purpose of the submission is for the organisation to explain clearly how it meets all the quality criteria and the SCQF Principles and therefore the organisation should include relevant evidence which demonstrates this. In addition, the organisation must provide evidence of its ability to credit rate. This is done by demonstrating that it has:

Conducted a trial run of its new credit rating processes by credit rating at least one of its own programmes at the same time as the approval process is in progress and has had its decisions for level and credit points confirmed through its own internal and external review processes.

Evidence from the trial run together with the final outcomes of the credit rating process should be sent with the submission. In exceptional circumstances, such as the postponement of a final sign off committee, the organisation may be allowed to submit this evidence up to the date of the online approval meeting but this must be agreed by the SCQFP Officer prior to the submission being made to allow additional time to be set aside in the review visit agenda for detailed scrutiny of this evidence. It is important to note that submitting this evidence closer to the date of the online approval meeting may result in additional discussion topics which will not have been highlighted to the organisation prior to the meeting.

Once the organisation has made its submission, it will be contacted by an SCQFP Officer to arrange a date for the online approval meeting. It will also be provided with an indication of the timeline of activities. On receipt of the application the SCQF Partnership will issue an invoice to the organisation for the full approval fee. Once approved, SCQFP Approved CRBs are required to pay an annual fee. Details of the fee are available from the SCQF Partnership and are also available on the SCQF website, www.scqf.org.uk. The SCQFP is willing to negotiate flexible payment plans for charitable and not-for-profit organisations.

The submission will be reviewed by an SCQFP Officer in the first instance to ensure that all parts of the template have been completed. An SCQFP Officer will also undertake a review of Criterion 1 and produce a report for the review team. This will include a review of the organisation's financial stability and viability.

If the SCQFP Officer feels that there is a significant lack of evidence that the organisation is meeting Criterion 1, the application may fail at that point and no online approval meeting will take place. If this is the case, a meeting will be held with the organisation to discuss next steps and possible resubmission. If the organisation has submitted sufficient evidence for Criterion 1 to move forward with the review process, the review team will then meet to review the full submission. Please note the review team may still wish to have some discussion under Criterion 1 at the online approval meeting.

The Review Team

On receipt of the application and payment of the appropriate fee[7], a Review Team will be formed which will comprise of a minimum of 3 reviewers as below:

- SCQFP Officer
- External Reviewer
- SCQFP Quality Committee member (Chair)

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 pre-visit meeting

This meeting is a private meeting of the team and does not involve any members of the applicant organisation. The Review Team will individually and collectively consider all the evidence submitted by the organisation and will identify issues from the submission 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 organisation, together with an agenda for the visit to allow time for the organisation to prepare.

Whilst every effort will be made to notify the organisation 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 which may need further clarification.

In cases where the Review Team feels that there are significant omissions in evidence for Criteria 2 & 3, and that therefore an online meeting would not be appropriate or valuable, it may be that a time extension could be granted to allow the organisation to supply the missing evidence with some additional further support to be provided. An extension of up to 3 months could be granted before the organisation would need to make a new application at further cost.

[7] For a current list of fees please contact the SCQF Partnership

The Approval Online Meeting

The Review Team will meet online with representatives of the organisation to discuss the application and the issues and points of clarification indicated in the Review Team feedback. The purpose of the online review meeting is to arrive at a judgement on each of the quality criteria.

The Quality Committee member on the Review Team will act as chair for the meeting. The External Reviewer will take 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 online meeting the Chair of 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 at the approval meeting.

The Report

After the approval meeting, the External Reviewer will write the approval report on behalf of the team which will include a narrative on the organisation, a section on each criterion, the overall findings and conclusions and the reason for those findings.

The draft report will be circulated to the Review Team members for comment and suggested amendment. During this editing process, the SCQFP Officer may contact the organisation for further clarification. When the editing process is complete, the report will be sent to the organisation for a factual accuracy check. In the event of any other amendments being suggested by the organisation it will be the responsibility of the SCQFP Officer on the team to finalise the report, to the satisfaction of the Review Team and the organisation, prior to the report being submitted to the SCQFP Quality Committee.

Scrutiny by the SCQFP Quality Committee and SCQFP Board

The SCQFP Quality Committee is responsible for making a recommendation to the Board on whether the organisation should be awarded the authority to credit rate. The report will be sent to the Quality Committee and will be scrutinised at the next meeting. The Quality Committee member on the Review Team will provide a short overall verbal summary at the meeting. The Quality Committee may amend or add any of the conditions or recommendations proposed by the Review Team before making its own overall recommendations. The overall recommendations that the SCQFP Quality Committee can make are:

- Approved
- Approved with conditions[8]
- Not approved[9]

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 organisation and to add further conditions and recommendations if deemed necessary.

When approval is given

Once an organisation has been approved there is no limit of time for that approval as long as ongoing annual and periodic reviews are satisfactory. The organisation will be added to the list of CRBs which is published on the SCQF website. SCQFP Officers will be available for support and advice.

An SCQFP Officer will contact the new CRB to discuss this new status including any recommendations, when credit rating activities can commence, using the SCQF logo and the SCQF Brand guidelines and keeping the SCQF Register up to date by way of the SCQF portal.

When approved with conditions

When an organisation is approved with conditions, an SCQFP Officer will contact the organisation to discuss the way in which the conditions can be met through the production of an action plan including the support that may be required and associated timelines. Where appropriate, this discussion may involve other members of the SCQFP Team. The organisation cannot start to credit rate until the stated conditions are met.

Once conditions are met the organisation will be added to the list of CRBs which is published on the SCQF website and an SCQFP officer will discuss the new status including carrying out credit rating activities, using the logo and keeping the SCQF Register up to date by way of the SCQF portal with the CRB.

Not approved

If an organisation fails to meet the criteria and is not approved it will be given one further opportunity to seek approval. In such circumstances the organisation will

[8] CRB cannot start to credit rate until conditions are met

[9] After unsuccessful application, the organisation will receive feedback from SCQFP and will be allowed to resubmit on one further occasion

normally be required to pay a further fee (this may be the full or a modified fee) and will need to follow the approval process again.

If after the second attempt, the organisation is not approved it will no longer be eligible to participate in the approval process again.

An organisation that fails to be approved will be informed of this formally by letter and will be given the opportunity to meet with the SCQFP CEO or a Head of Service for further clarification.

scqf
scottish credit and qualifications framework

Section 4. Annual Engagements

(including professional discussion and annual monitoring)

SCQFP Approved Credit Rating Bodies will be subject to annual monitoring and periodic reviews by the SCQFP.

Following approval, there will be a professional discussion with the CRB in year 1, followed by annual monitoring in year 2 and a further professional discussion in year 3. In year 4 a periodic review will be conducted after which the cycle of engagement will repeat. (More details on periodic review are available in Section 5.)

Both the professional discussions and annual monitoring activities will be based on the risk factors:

- Significant changes to staff involved in the credit rating process
- A significant change in credit rating activity (up or down)
- Significant changes to the credit rating process
- Matters of concern received about the CRB
- Issues still outstanding over a number of professional discussions, annual monitoring and/or periodic reviews
- Lack of required updating of the SCQF Register
- Potential for material reputational damage to the SCQF
- Potential for material impact on current learners

Professional Discussion

Professional Discussion consists of:

- The completion of a short report of activities and any changes in the previous year as well as addressing a number of identified risk factors
- An online meeting with an SCQFP Officer to discuss the report and any risk factors
- A short summary note of discussion
- Scrutiny of note by SCQFP Quality Committee
- Letter from the SCQFP Quality Committee of any required additional review activity and/or actions

Possible Outcomes:

- CRB is allowed to continue credit rating
- CRB is allowed to continue to credit rate with identification of actions
- An additional annual monitoring activity is scheduled (with or without suspension of credit rating activity)

Short Report of Activities

A template will be provided for the report which should be submitted by the date agreed with SCQFP. This report will be based around the risk factors and topics will include:

- Significant changes to staff involved in the credit rating process
- A significant change in credit rating activity (up or down)
- Significant changes to the credit rating process and/or paperwork
- Any actions from previous professional discussions, annual monitoring and/or periodic reviews
- SCQF Register entry accuracy
- Certification
- Future plans for credit rating
- Third Party Credit Rating

The professional discussion meeting

After receipt of the short report, a meeting will be held with the CRB by an SCQFP officer to have a professional discussion around the short report and the risk factors. This meeting will be conducted by an SCQFP Officer. A short summary note of the discussion including any actions agreed with the CRB will be prepared by the SCQFP Officer and agreed with the CRB.

Reporting and Outcomes

The short summary note will be shared with the Quality Committee. The Quality Committee will consider the note and decide on one of the outcomes below.

Possible Outcomes:

- CRB is allowed to continue credit rating
- CRB is allowed to continue to credit rate with identification of actions
- An additional annual monitoring activity is scheduled (with or without suspension of credit rating activity)

The CRB will receive confirmation of the outcome and, if relevant, any additional actions or monitoring activity required by the committee.

Annual Monitoring

Annual monitoring consists of:

- The completion of a submission document with accompanying evidence

- A potential online meeting with the CRB and a review team[10]
- A short action-based report
- Scrutiny of the report by the SCQFP Quality Committee
- Letter of outcome from the Chair of the SCQFP Quality Committee
- A right of appeal

Possible Outcomes:

- CRB is allowed to continue credit rating
- CRB is allowed to continue to credit rating with conditions
- Additional scrutiny could be recommended
- CRB is suspended from credit rating (with conditions)
- The CRB's Periodic Review may be brought forward
- The process for removal of credit rating authority is initiated

The Submission (self-assessment)

A template will be provided for the submission. The template should be submitted together with accompanying evidence, electronically, by the date agreed with SCQFP.

The purpose of the submission is for the CRB to clearly report on its credit rating activity and any changes to its processes, resources, staffing etc. This will normally involve describing what worked well, what did not, issues identified, and actions taken or planned to be taken.

Evidence

The following evidence **must** be submitted by the CRB for the annual monitoring:

1 CRB's credit rating process/procedure (if changed from the previous version submitted)
2 A complete list of the CRB's current credit rated provision carried out under its CRB authority
3 An anonymised certificate
4 Number of learners certificated for each programme since approval or the previous periodic review
5 Number of learners registered on current credit rated programmes
6 A full set of completed paperwork from the initial submission to the issuing of the credit rated decision for the last credit rated programme (internal)

[10] Note that the format of the annual monitoring will be decided on a risk based approach and may result in a desk based monitoring activity. However, all CRBs will receive an online meeting for the first annual monitoring post approval.

7 Completed paperwork from the review of a programme that has reached the end of its credit rating review period or paperwork supporting an extension to that period (if applicable)
8 Completed paperwork from the regular monitoring of programmes not yet reached their credit rating review date
9 Report from the last internal review of credit rating processes
10 Report from the last external review of credit rating processes (if undertaken since last SCQFP review activity)
11 A copy of the CRB's current RPL policy
12 A copy of the CRB's current Equalities and Diversity strategy or policies
13 A copy of the CRB's current Staff Development policy (or similar)

If the CRB has third party credit rating authority the following additional information must be supplied (see section 6):

14 A full set of completed paperwork from the initial submission to the issuing of the credit rated decision for the last third party credit rated programme
15 A copy of the paperwork that supports annual monitoring of third party programmes and an example of a completed report
16 Completed paperwork from the review of a programme that has reached the end of its credit rating review period (or paperwork supporting an extension to that period)
17 A copy of any guidance issued to third parties on submissions, use of the logos in certification and promotion, certification arrangements etc
18 Copies of the certificate templates agreed with each third party organisation

In addition, the CRB should ensure that it submits any other relevant evidence to support its submission indicating clearly why that piece of evidence has been submitted and which criterion it supports.

On receipt of the submission, SCQFP Officers will meet to decide, using a range of risk factors and the risk matrix, whether an online meeting with the CRB is necessary. The risk factors used include:

- Significant changes to staff involved in the credit rating process
- A significant change in credit rating activity (up or down)
- Significant changes to the credit rating process
- Matters of concern received about the CRB
- Issues still outstanding over a number of professional discussions, annual monitoring and/or periodic reviews
- Lack of required updating of the SCQF Register
- Potential for material reputational damage to the SCQF
- Potential for material impact on current learners

Reports from the SCQF Register will also be cross referenced with the data received from the CRB in the submission. An SCQFP Officer may contact the CRB for points of clarification if required, and to request any of the mandatory evidence if missing.

Desk Monitoring

If no online meeting is deemed necessary, the submission will be reviewed by at least 2 SCQFP Officers and a short report based on the submission and evidence from the CRB will be prepared. Whilst there will be no formal online meeting with the CRB, if there are a few issues which would benefit from some clarification this may be sought through email, telephone or a short online conversation.

A copy of the short report will be sent to the CRB for a factual accuracy check together with a request for an action plan to address any issues highlighted within the report.

Online Monitoring Meeting

If it is deemed that an online meeting is necessary, an SCQFP Officer will contact the CRB to organise a mutually suitable date for the meeting.

The meeting will be conducted by the review team consisting of two SCQFP Officers. An agenda will be provided by SCQFP in advance of the meeting. No formal minute of the meeting will be taken. The aim of the meeting is to discuss the issues and/or concerns arising from the CRB's submission and associated evidence and to agree an action plan. The short report will be based on the submission and evidence from the CRB and the discussion at the meeting.

A copy of the short report will be sent to the CRB for a factual accuracy check together with a request for an action plan to address any issues highlighted within the report.

Reporting and Outcomes

Following the factual accuracy check, the short report and action plan (if required) will be presented to the Quality Committee for scrutiny. A short verbal summary at the meeting will be given from the review team.

The Quality Committee will consider if the action plan is sufficient to meet the issues/concerns indicated and may recommend that the CRB adds to or amends the action plan. The Quality Committee may also, if it feels it is necessary, amend or add to the conditions and recommendations proposed by the Review Team. The CRB will then receive confirmation of its action plan or information regarding additional requirements or amendments and one of the 4 possible outcomes below:

- CRB is allowed to continue credit rating
- CRB is allowed to continue to credit rating with conditions
- CRB is suspended from credit rating
- The process for removal of credit rating authority is initiated

In addition, the Quality Committee may decide to request additional scrutiny of the CRB or to bring forward its Periodic Review.

The outcome of the process is then reported to the SCQFP Board for information.

scqf
scottish credit and qualifications framework

Section 5. Periodic Review

Periodic review takes place every four years[11] and involves:

- The completion of a submission document with accompanying evidence
- A review team pre review online meeting
- An online meeting with the CRB by a review team
- A formal report
- Scrutiny of the report by the SCQFP Quality Committee and SCQFP Board
- Letter of outcome from the Chair of the SCQFP Board
- A right of appeal

The CRB will be contacted by an SCQFP Officer to arrange a date for the periodic review and the date for the submission of the self-assessment.

The Submission (self-assessment)

A template will be provided for the submission. The template should be submitted together with accompanying evidence electronically.

The purpose of the submission is for the CRB to clearly explain how it continues to meet all the quality criteria and therefore the CRB should include relevant evidence which demonstrates this. The CRB should also report on its experience of credit rating within the 4-year period since the initial approval or last periodic review. This will normally involve describing what has worked well, what has not, issues identified and how these have been addressed. The report should also indicate the CRB's plans for using its credit rating authority in the future and the impact of this on the CRB, learners and its commitment to the SCQF. It is important that the CRB completes the submission template with a full narrative text to accompany the evidence explaining any lessons learned, changes made over the 4 years, any successes and the rationale for strategic and operational decisions taken and future plans.

Evidence

The following evidence **must** be submitted by the CRB for the periodic review:

1 CRB's current credit rating process/procedure
2 A full set of the latest published accounts
3 A complete list of programmes credit rated under your credit rating authority including archived programmes *(programmes should be clearly marked current or archived)*
4 An anonymised certificate(s) – this may be a single template but if different templates are used for different programmes, all must be supplied
5 Number of learners registered on current credit rated programmes

[11] The SCQFP Board reserve the right to bring forward a periodic review visit

6 Report from the last internal review of credit rating systems
7 Report from the last external review of credit rating systems
8 A copy of the CRB's RPL policy (if changed since the last SCQFP review activity)
9 A copy of the current CRB's equality and diversity strategy or policy
10 A copy of the current CRB's Staff Development Policy (or similar)

If the CRB has third party credit rating authority, the following additional information must be supplied (see section 6):

11 The CRB's current credit rating process/procedure for third party credit rating
12 A copy of the paperwork that supports annual monitoring of third party programmes
13 A copy any guidance issued to third parties on submissions, use of the logo, certification etc
14 Certificate templates agreed - this may be a single template however if different templates have been agreed with different organisations all of these must be supplied
15 A full list of third parties together with contact details

In addition, the CRB should ensure that it submits any other relevant evidence to support its submission indicating clearly why that piece of evidence has been submitted and which criterion it supports.

The submission will be reviewed by SCQFP in the first instance to ensure that all parts of the template have been completed. This will include a review of the CRB's financial position and viability which will be carried out by the SCQFP Accountant. In addition, a questionnaire will be sent to a sample of third parties (where relevant) to gain feedback on the level of support and guidance received from the CRB.

The Review Team will then meet to review the submission against the QAM Criteria, the SCQF Principles and the risk factors.

The risk factors used are:

- Significant changes to staff involved in the credit rating process
- A significant change in credit rating activity (up or down)
- Significant changes to the credit rating process
- Matters of concern received about the CRB
- Issues still outstanding over a number of professional discussions, annual and/or periodic reviews
- Lack of updating of the SCQF Register
- Potential for material reputational damage to the SCQF
- Potential for material impact on current learners

In addition, reports from the SCQF Register will be cross referenced with the data received from the CRB in the submission. An SCQFP Officer may contact the CRB for points of clarification if required.

The Review Team

On receipt of the submission, a Review Team will be formed which will comprise a minimum of 4 reviewers as below:

- Two SCQF officers
- External Reviewer
- SCQFP Quality Committee member (Chair)

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 and the CRB will be notified in advance of this.

The review team meeting (pre online meeting)

The Review Team will individually and collectively consider all the evidence submitted by the CRB and will identify issues from the submission 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 online meeting 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 online meeting, it should be noted that some issues may come to light during the meeting or subsequent report compilation process.

The Periodic Review Online Meeting

The Review Team will meet with representatives of the CRB to discuss the self-assessment and the issues and points of clarification indicated in the review team feedback. The purpose of the online meeting is to arrive at a judgement on whether the CRB continues to meet each of the quality criteria.

The Quality Committee member on the Review Team will act as chair for the meeting. The External Reviewer will take notes of the meeting with a view to compiling the final report on behalf of the team. No formal minute of the meeting will be taken.

At the end of the online meeting the Chair of 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 an outcome decision at the online meeting.

The Report

After the periodic review meeting, the External Reviewer will write the review report on behalf of the Review Team which will include a narrative on the CRB, a section on each criterion, the overall findings and conclusions and the reasons for those findings.

The draft report will be circulated to the Review Team members for comment and suggested amendment. During this editing process, the SCQFP Officer 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. At this stage the CRB will also be asked to respond to the report by way of an action plan. In the event of any other amendments being suggested by the CRB it will be the responsibility of the SCQFP Officer to finalise the report, to the satisfaction of the Review Team and the CRB, prior to the report and action plan being submitted to the SCQFP Quality Committee.

Scrutiny by the SCQFP Quality Committee and Board

The SCQFP Quality Committee is responsible for making a recommendation to the Board on whether the CRB should continue to credit rate. The report and action plan will be sent to the full Committee and will be scrutinised at the next meeting. The Quality Committee member on the review team will provide a short overall verbal summary at the meeting. The Quality Committee may amend or add any of the conditions or recommendation proposed by the Review Team before making its own overall recommendations. The overall recommendations that the SCQFP Quality Committee can make are:

- CRB can continue as a CRB
- CRB can continue as a CRB with conditions
- CRB is suspended from credit rating (with conditions)
- The process for removal of credit rating authority is initiated

The report, action plan and the Quality 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 if deemed necessary.

For each outcome the SCQFP Board reserves the right to impose a physical visit to the CRB or an additional online monitoring activity. This decision will be made using a risk-based approach and the risk matrix (section 1) and may not necessarily indicate a poor outcome at the periodic review.

scqf
scottish credit and qualifications framework

Section 6. Third Party Credit Rating

Credit Rating will be defined as third party where the 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.

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 SCQFP
- The completion of an approval submission with accompanying evidence
- A review team pre review online meeting
- An online review meeting with the CRB and a Review Team
- A formal report
- Scrutiny of the report by the SCQFP Quality Committee and Board
- Letter of outcome from the Chair of the SCQFP Board
- A right of appeal

Possible outcomes:

- Approved

- Approved with conditions[12]
- Not Approved[13]

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

Expression of interest

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

Informal meeting with 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 Officer will explain the criterion, the process and the responsibilities of carrying out third party credit rating. The SCQFP 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 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 participate in online meetings and/or receive visits from the SCQF Partnership.

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 SCQFP to arrange a date for the third party approval online meeting. 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.

[12] CRB cannot start to credit rate third parties until conditions are met

[13] After unsuccessful application, the organisation will receive feedback from SCQFP

Details of fees are available from the SCQF Partnership and are also available on the SCQF website, 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 of two SCQFP Officers.

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 CRB will be informed of this in advance.

The Review Team meeting (pre visit)

The Review Team will individually and collectively consider all 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 online meeting 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 meeting or subsequent report compilation process.

The Approval Online Meeting

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 online meeting is to arrive at a judgement on Criterion 4.

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 meeting, 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, SCQFP 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 SCQFP 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 Review Team 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[14]
- 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, an SCQFP 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

[14] CRB cannot start to credit rate until conditions are met

If a CRB fails to meet the criterion and is not approved, this does not preclude the CRB making 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 an SCQFP Officer for further clarification.

scqf
scottish credit and qualifications framework

Section 7. Removal of Credit Rating Authority and Ceasing Credit Rating

Introduction

The Quality Assurance Model is carried out in order to ensure that SCQFP Approved CRBs continue to carry out their responsibilities in maintaining the quality and integrity of the SCQF.

Where the processes of professional discussion, annual monitoring, periodic review or matters of concern highlighted to the Partnership expose circumstances that mean that the quality and integrity of the SCQF may be at risk, the SCQF Partnership reserve the right to remove credit rating authority.

The removal of credit rating authority is a serious matter and in most circumstances will be a last resort carried out only when the matters of concern cannot be resolved by any other means. However, a CRB may be asked to suspend new credit rating activity until the issues are resolved.

Removal of Credit Rating Authority

Although it is unlikely that the SCQFP Board will ever have to remove a CRB's credit rating authority there is a process for doing so. In most cases where there are problems and concerns these will be picked up and dealt with under the annual monitoring and periodic review activities. The SCQFP Executive Team will offer support and mentoring to CRBs experiencing difficulties to help them to return to effective working as soon as possible. However, if the CRB continues to cause concern its approval will be withdrawn.

Credit Rating authority may be removed where the CRB has:

- Failed consistently to take action required by the SCQFP Quality Committee and/or Board on a range of topics, for example:
    - Evidence of unresolved complaints
    - The loss of experienced personnel
    - Institutional or structural change leading to a serious change in roles and responsibilities of the organisation
    - Unresolved issues from SCQFP reviews
- Identified issues and is unable to make and sustain improvements
- Not suspended credit rating activity when requested
- Misused its authority
- Has no current programmes on the SCQF Register and has been dormant for a lengthy period of time
- Been given a 'High' risk rating

Process for removal of credit rating authority

Credit rating authority will only be removed when all other courses of action have been explored and no agreed resolution has been possible. The decision to remove authority will be based on evidence from self-assessment reports and meetings during annual monitoring and periodic review activity as well as special ad hoc meetings and additional review visits to deal with the specific issues.

In most cases, the SCQF Partnership will encourage the CRB itself to give up its authority (see Ceasing credit rating) but if this course of action fails, the SCQFP Board has the right to implement the process to remove the credit rating authority.

Removal of credit rating authority will require the consent of the SCQFP Quality Committee and the SCQFP Board and will only be carried out after:

- Meetings between SCQFP and the CRB
- Agreements have been made as to the timeline for the removal
- Arrangements have been made for taking over any current credit rated work and the continuing monitoring of any current programmes on the SCQF Register
- Agreement of any costs for which the CRB may be liable

If a CRB has authority to credit rate third party programmes and this is the area where the difficulties arise it may be that the CRB could have its third party authority removed whilst retaining its authority to credit rate its own programmes or alternatively the CRB may agree to give up its third party authority voluntarily whilst retaining its authority to credit rate its own programmes if this is a suitable and appropriate outcome (see Ceasing of third party credit rating).

In a case where the decision has been taken to remove a CRB's credit rating authority this process will be managed by the SCQFP to ensure that learners are not disadvantaged.

Giving Up CRB status

Where a CRB decides to give up its CRB status it should inform the SCQFP at the earliest opportunity so that the process can be managed and learners are not disadvantaged.

The SCQF Partnership has issued a set of flowcharts for a CRB to follow when giving up its CRB status. The flowcharts can be found at Section 10. If the CRB offers a third party credit rating service it should, in addition, refer to the section below and the associated flowcharts on Ceasing Third Party Credit Rating.

These flowcharts should be followed to ensure that no learners are unfairly disadvantaged and that the SCQF Partnership is kept fully informed.

Ceasing Third Party Credit Rating

This section should be read taking cognisance of any specific contract agreed between the CRB and the Third Party. Where that contract sets out arrangements for ceasing credit rating activity with the third party, this should be followed. However, any such terms in a contract for credit rating should take cognisance of the following key principles:

- A third party should not be disadvantaged or bear any additional costs over that previously agreed with them if no quality assurance breach has taken place
- Any difference in costs involved in a handover to another CRB, where this happens mid credit rating period, over and above any previously agreed annual monitoring

costs should be borne by the original CRB unless previously agreed in a contract or memorandum of understanding

- A period of notice should be agreed with a third party in the event that a CRB wishes to cease the credit rating activity which does not disadvantage any learners undertaking the programme(s) – this period of notice should take into account the duration and frequency of the delivery of the programme and be of an appropriate length
- With the exception of where there are significant quality assurance risks or reason to believe that the SCQF may be brought into disrepute, the period of notice should allow sufficient time for the programme owner to make alternative arrangements for learners
- Where there is an unresolved quality assurance breach or reason to believe that the SCQF may be brought into disrepute and the third party, given the right to respond, has not remedied the situation, the CRB may terminate the credit rating arrangement with immediate effect and it will not be liable for any resulting costs however the CRB must make every effort to ensure that any current learners are not disadvantaged **However, the CRB should inform the SCQF Partnership at the earliest opportunity and before any action is taken**
- The CRB should ensure that it has informed the third party of the situation at the earliest possible opportunity and the third party has agreed to any handover arrangements if applicable
- Best practice would be that a CRB has an exit procedure in place which ensures that as far as possible learners are safeguarded

The SCQF Partnership has issued a set of flowcharts for a CRB to follow when ceasing to carry out credit rating for a third party which can be found at Section 10. These flowcharts should be followed to ensure that no learners or third party organisation are unfairly disadvantaged and that the SCQFP is kept fully informed.

Section 8. Appeals

Following an adverse decision on approval or period review, or following suspension or removal of credit rating authority the organisation/CRB will be:

- Notified of the decision
- Informed that it has a right to appeal
- Sent information about how to appeal and the timescales for the process

The organisation/CRB will have the right to ask for information or clarification and it may also supply evidence which it ought to have submitted during the approval or review process but did not. However, it will need to explain why such evidence was not made available originally and SCQFP, in discussion with the SCQFP Quality Committee, may choose to reject the evidence. Should the discussion (and/or additional evidence if allowed) not resolve the issue the organisation/CRB will have the right to appeal.

An organisation or CRB can appeal a decision only on the grounds that the SCQFP Board, Quality Committee, the SCQFP or a member of an Approval/Review Team did not conform to due process and this had a demonstrable negative impact on the organisation or CRB.

Appeals can be made against:

- Approval decisions
- Annual Engagement decisions
- Periodic Review decisions
- Decisions to suspend credit rating authority
- Decisions to remove credit rating authority

For the original decision to be modified, the organisation/CRB would need to satisfy the appeal committee that there was maladministration or a material breach of procedural requirements

Appeals should be made in writing to reviews@scqf.org.uk by the organisation or CRB stating clearly why the SCQF Committee and/or Board should not have reached the decision which it did and providing evidence to support this. This will then be forwarded to the Chair of the SCQF Board.

If the appeal concerns the conduct of the Board and/or the Chair of the Board, the independent member will chair the Appeals Committee.

Appeals Committee

The Chair of the Board will set up a separate Appeals Committee to hear any formal appeals. The Appeals Committee will include:

The Chair of the SCQFP Board (act as Committee Chair)
1 member from the SCQFP Quality Committee (not involved in the review activity in question)
1 independent member
1 SCQFP Officer (not involved in the review activity in question)

The Appeals Committee will set a date to meet to review the documentation, to consider brief oral submissions by the two parties and to consider both the processes by which the decision in question was reached and the decision itself (i.e. was this the right decision to take in light of the evidence that was considered?). The material supplied to the Appeals Committee will include:

- The original report
- Evidence from the appellant
- Evidence from the SCQFP

The Appeals Committee will come to its decision in light of the evidence before it. The Appeals Committee can decide that the original decision should be confirmed or that it should be amended.

The decision will be notified to the appellant and the SCQFP together with the reasons underpinning the decision. The decision of the Appeals Committee is final.

Section 9. Matters of Concern

Raised concerns

The SCQFP will only deal with matters of concern about a CRB if the individual or organisation raising the concern has fully exhausted all of the CRB's internal complaints processes.

The SCQFP will only directly deal with matters of concern relating to the credit rating process itself and that a CRB has failed to:

- comply with the SCQF Principles laid out in the SCQF Handbook;
- follow its own credit rating procedures
- take account of all of the relevant information supplied by a third party during its credit rating processes

In this case, the SCQFP will inform the CRB that a matter of concern has been highlighted and the CRB will be given the opportunity to respond. The details of the matter of concern and the response from the CRB will then be sent to the Chair of the SCQFP Board who, depending on the response from the CRB, may ask the Chair of the SCQFP Quality Committee to:

- approach the relevant external accountable bodies and ask them to investigate further and report back to the Quality Committee;
  or
- refer the matter to a sub group of the Quality Committee for further investigation and report back to the full Quality Committee;
  and in both cases to
- report back to the SCQFP Board with recommendations for action.

The Chair of the Board will then ensure that the Board considers both the report and recommendations from the Quality Committee and makes a decision as to the next steps. These could include the CRB:

- being asked to complete the required actions within a specific timeline (this may also include a review of the credit rating decision(s) in question);
- having its credit rating activities suspended until the actions have been completed;
- a further meeting between the Chair of the Board, the CEO and senior representatives of the CRB;
- having its credit rating authority removed (see section 7).

Where an individual or organisation raises a matter of concern which is related to the delivery and/or quality assurance of a qualification or learning programme which has been credit rated and entered onto the SCQF these will be referred back to the CRB in the first instance and if not resolved passed to the appropriate external

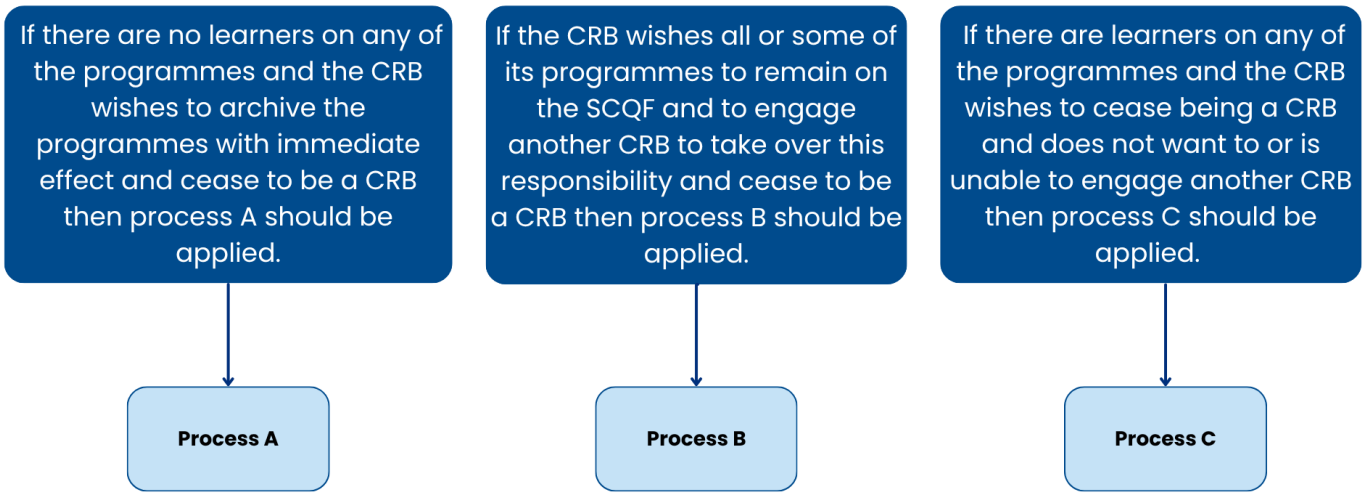
accountable body. This will include the delivery and/or quality assurance of any programme owned by a third party which has been credit rated by the CRB.

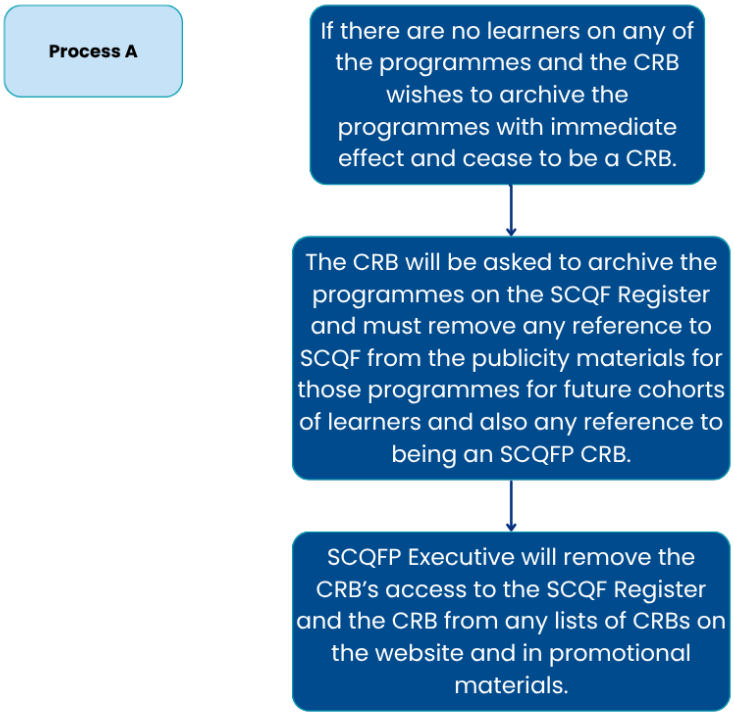
scqf
scottish credit and qualifications framework

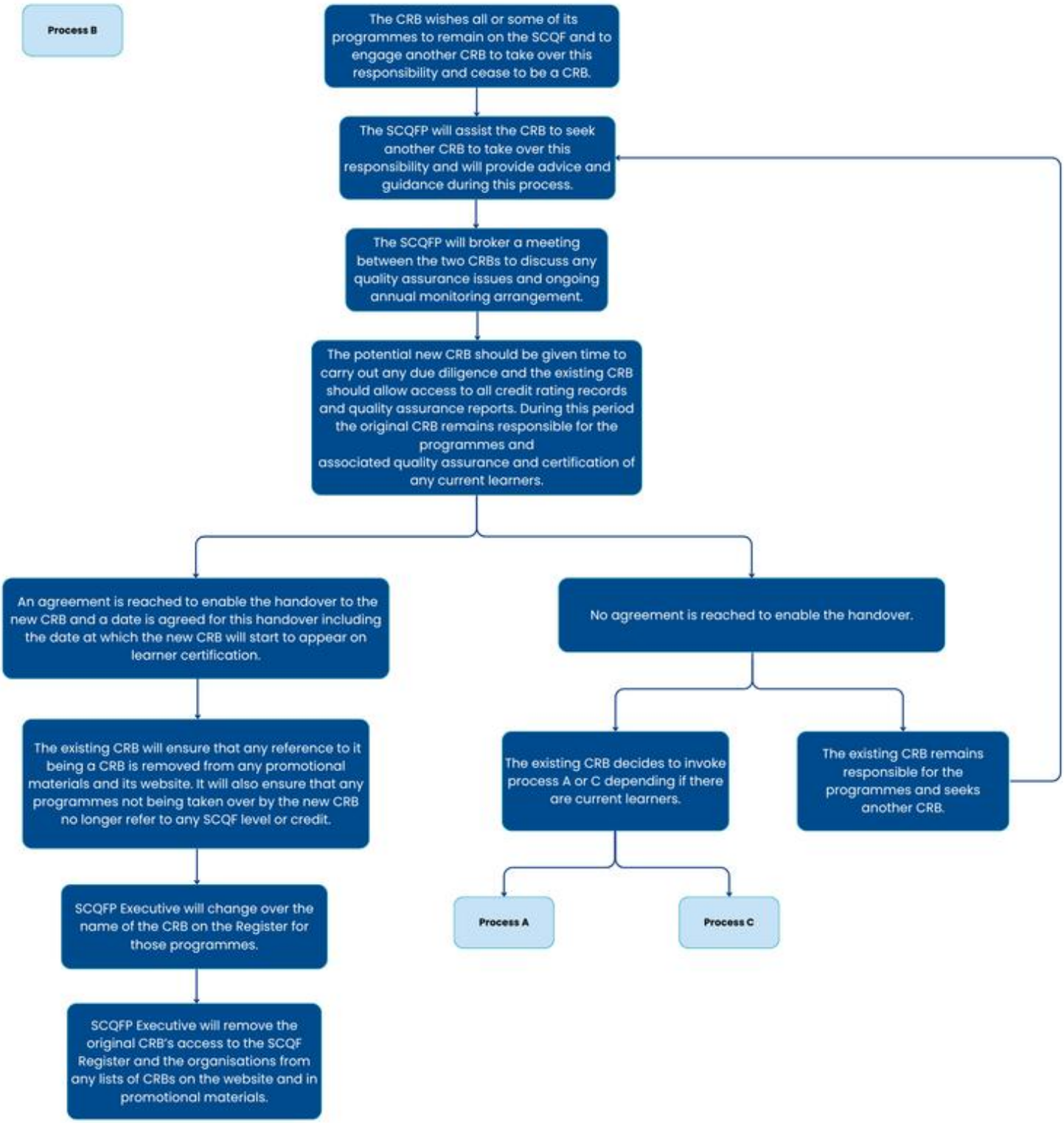
Section 10. Ceasing Credit Rating Flowchart

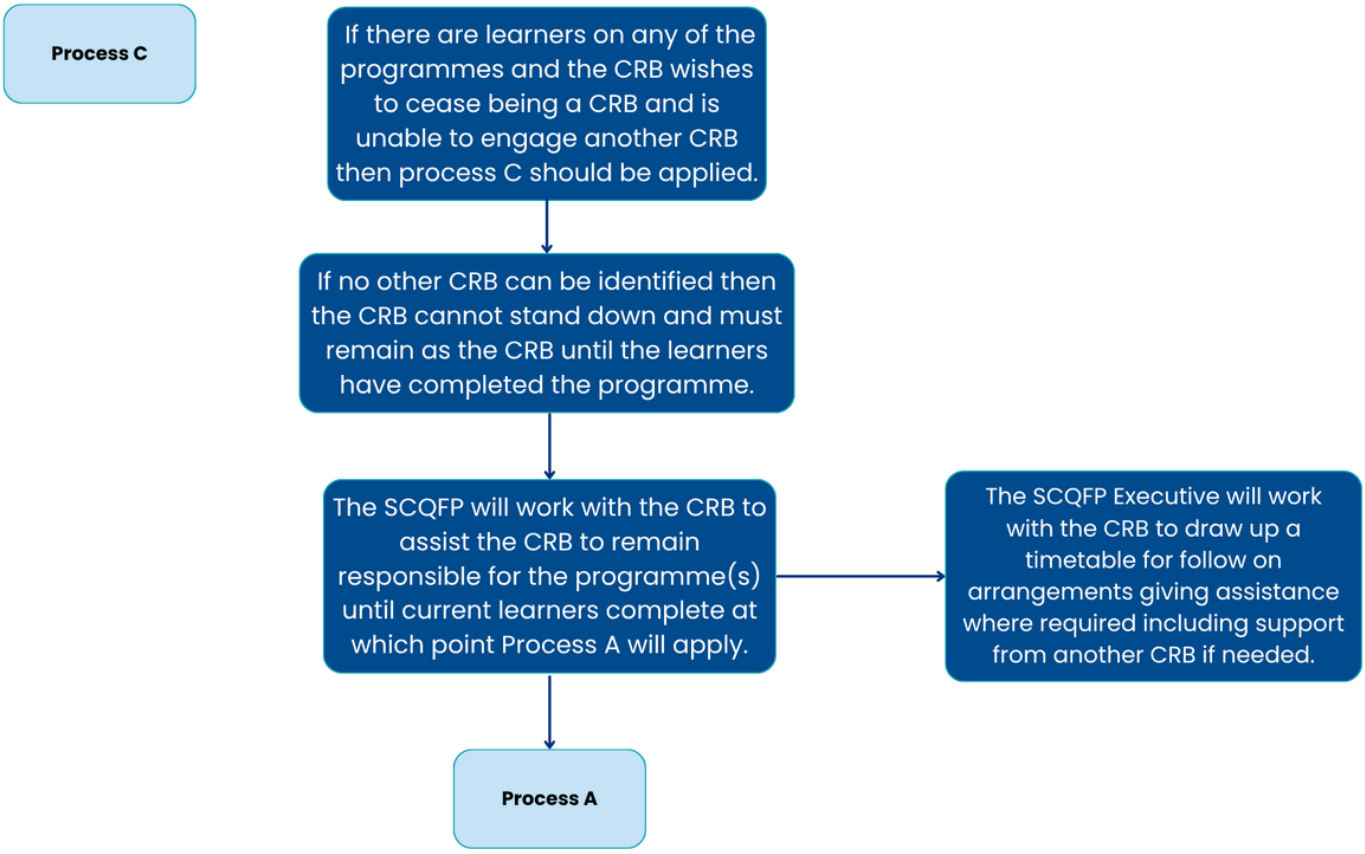
Giving Up CRB Status

- Where a CRB decides to give up its credit rating body status the following key principles should be followed:
- Where the CRB wishes to give up its CRB status it must inform the SCQFP as soon as possible and **before taking any action**
- Under Processes B and C, the CRB should provide SCQFP with the titles of all current programmes together with the number of learners on each programme and expected completion dates
- Any process to commence ceasing or removing credit rating should ensure that as far as possible learners are safeguarded
- If the CRB offers its credit rated provision by agreement through any centres or other providers, these organisations should also be informed as soon as possible to ensure they or any learners are not disadvantaged
- If the CRB also provides a third party credit rating service, it must also refer to the process and flowcharts relating to ceasing third party credit rating




Process A
If there are no learners on any of the programmes and the CRB wishes to archive the programmes with immediate effect and cease to be a CRB.
The CRB will be asked to archive the programmes on the SCQF Register and must remove any reference to SCQF from the publicity materials for those programmes for future cohorts of learners and also any reference to being an SCQFP CRB.
SCQFP Executive will remove the CRB's access to the SCQF Register and the CRB from any lists of CRBs on the website and in promotional materials.


Process B
The CRB wishes all or some of its programmes to remain on the SCQF and to engage another CRB to take over this responsibility and cease to be a CRB.
The SCQFP will assist the CRB to seek another CRB to take over this responsibility and will provide advice and guidance during this process.
The SCQFP will broker a meeting between the two CRBs to discuss any quality assurance issues and ongoing annual monitoring arrangement.
The potential new CRB should be given time to carry out any due diligence and the existing CRB should allow access to all credit rating records and quality assurance reports. During this period the original CRB remains responsible for the programmes and associated quality assurance and certification of any current learners.
An agreement is reached to enable the handover to the new CRB and a date is agreed for this handover including the date at which the new CRB will start to appear on learner certification.
The existing CRB will ensure that any reference to it being a CRB is removed from any promotional materials and its website. It will also ensure that any programmes not being taken over by the new CRB no longer refer to any SCQF level or credit.
SCQFP Executive will change over the name of the CRB on the Register for those programmes.
SCQFP Executive will remove the original CRB's access to the SCQF Register and the organisations from any lists of CRBs on the website and in promotional materials.
No agreement is reached to enable the handover.
The existing CRB decides to invoke process A or C depending if there are current learners.
The existing CRB remains responsible for the programmes and seeks another CRB.
Process A
Process C



Ceasing to Credit Rate Third Party provision

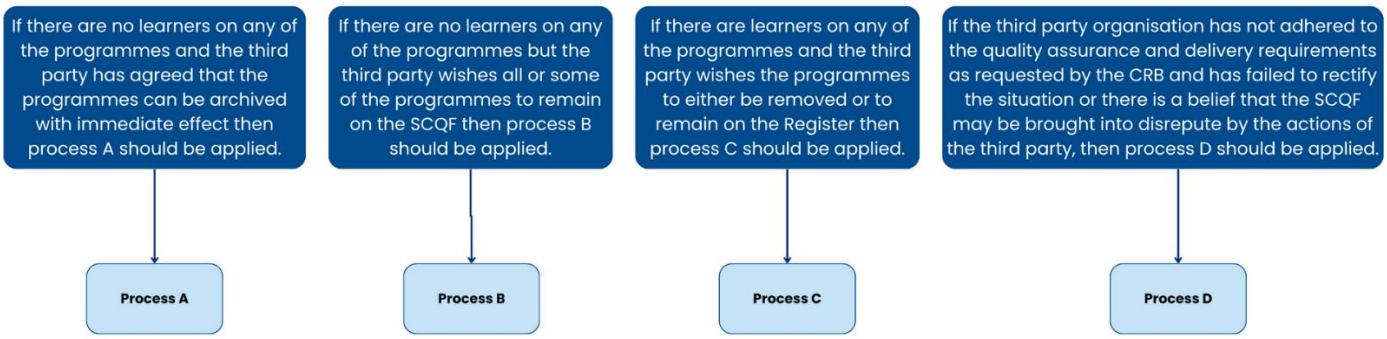
This set of processes should be read in conjunction with any specific contract agreed between the Credit Rating Body and the Third Party. Where that contract sets out arrangements for ceasing credit rating activity with the third party, this should be followed. However any such terms in a contract for credit rating should take cognisance of the following key principles:

- A third party should not be disadvantaged or bear any additional costs over that previously agreed with them if no quality assurance breach has taken place
- Any difference in costs involved in a handover to another CRB over and above any previously agreed annual monitoring costs should be borne by the original CRB unless previously agreed in a contract or memorandum of understanding
- A period of notice should be agreed with a third party in the event that a CRB wishes to cease the credit rating activity which does not disadvantage any learners undertaking the programme(s) – this period of notice should take into account the duration and frequency of the delivery of the programme and be of

an appropriate length.

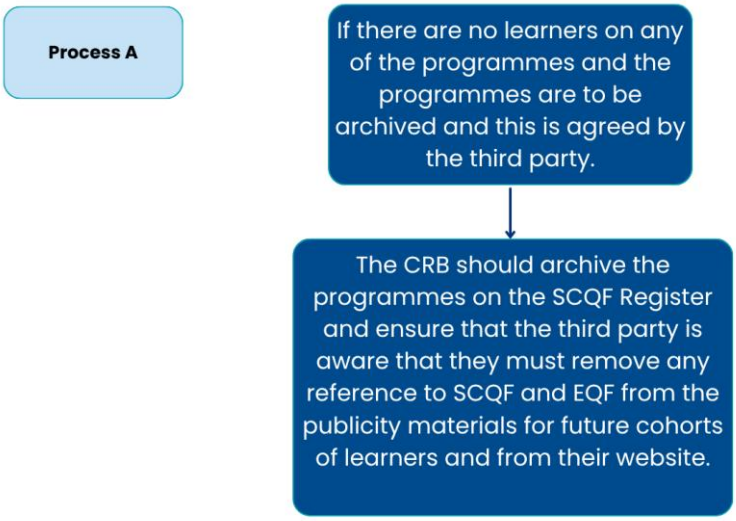
- With the exception of where there are significant quality assurance risks or reason to believe that the SCQF may be brought into disrepute, the period of notice should allow sufficient time for the programme owner to make alternative arrangements for learners
- Where there is an unresolved quality assurance breach or reason to believe that the SCQF may be brought into disrepute and the third party, given the right to respond, has not remedied the situation, the CRB may terminate the credit rating arrangement with immediate effect and it will not be liable for any resulting costs however the CRB must make every effort to ensure that any current learners are not disadvantaged
- The CRB should ensure that it has informed the third party of the situation at the earliest possible opportunity and the third party has agreed to any handover arrangements if applicable
- Best practice would be that a CRB has an exit procedure in place which ensures that as far as possible learners are safeguarded

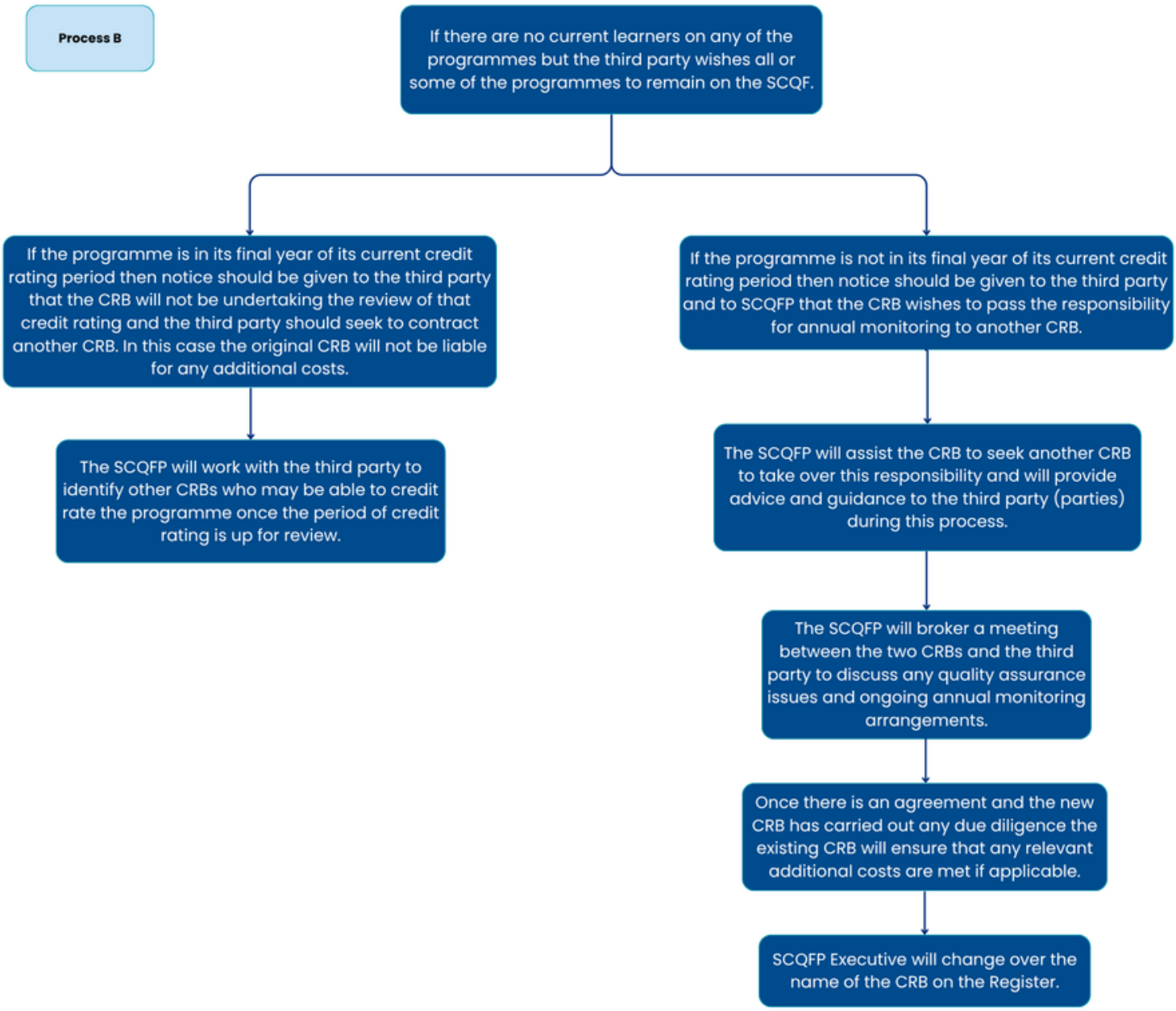
Where there has been no agreement on the process for ceasing credit rating between the CRB and the Third Party, the CRB should follow the processes below and take cognisance of the key principles outlined above:

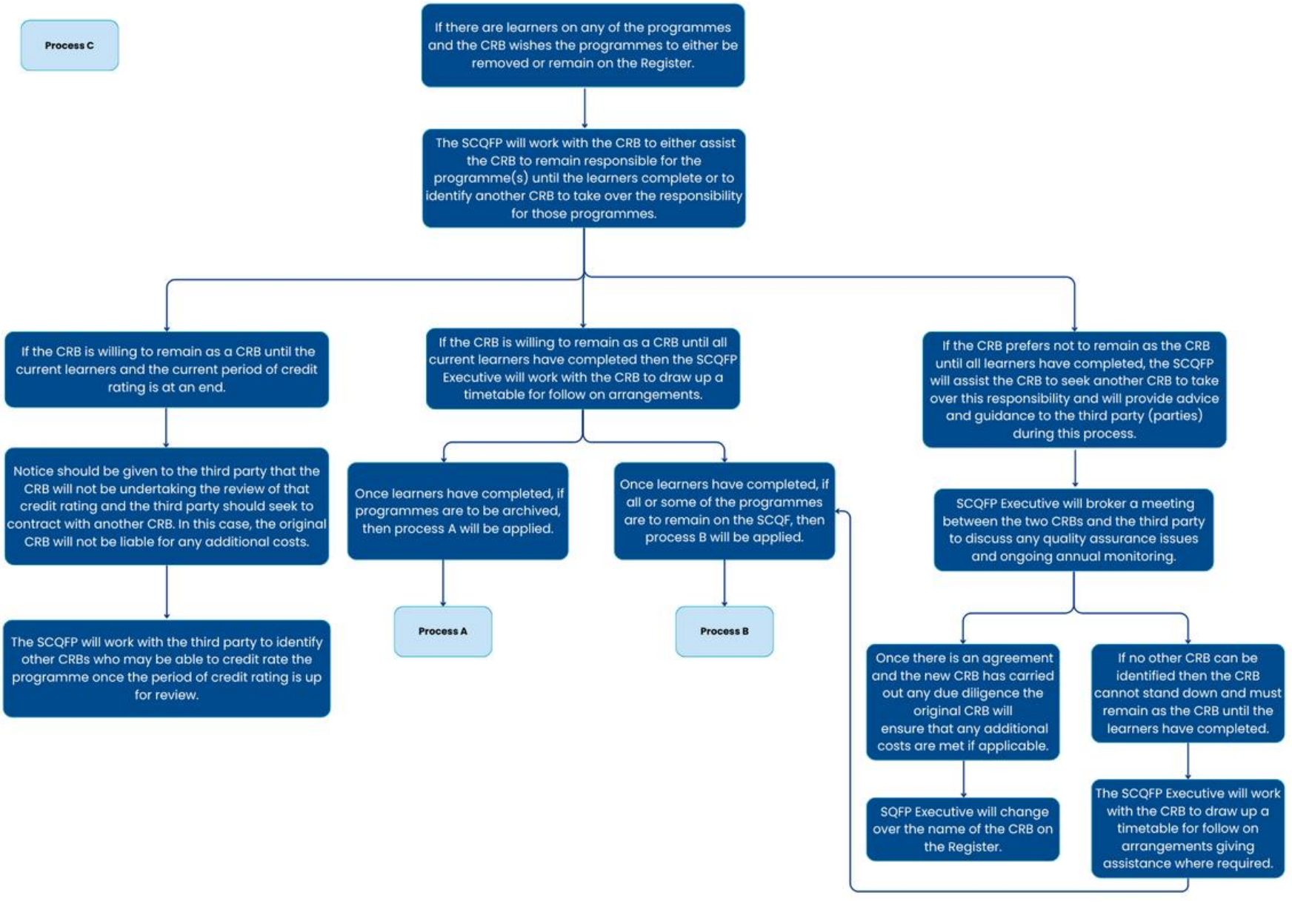


With the exception of Process A, the CRB should ensure that they inform the SCQFP of the situation at the earliest possible opportunity and they provide SCQFP with an agreed information set as follows:

- Number of learners on each programme
- The locations of delivery
- The annual monitoring arrangements in place
- The contact details for the third party (parties)


Process A
If there are no learners on any of the programmes and the programmes are to be archived and this is agreed by the third party.
The CRB should archive the programmes on the SCQF Register and ensure that the third party is aware that they must remove any reference to SCQF and EQF from the publicity materials for future cohorts of learners and from their website.

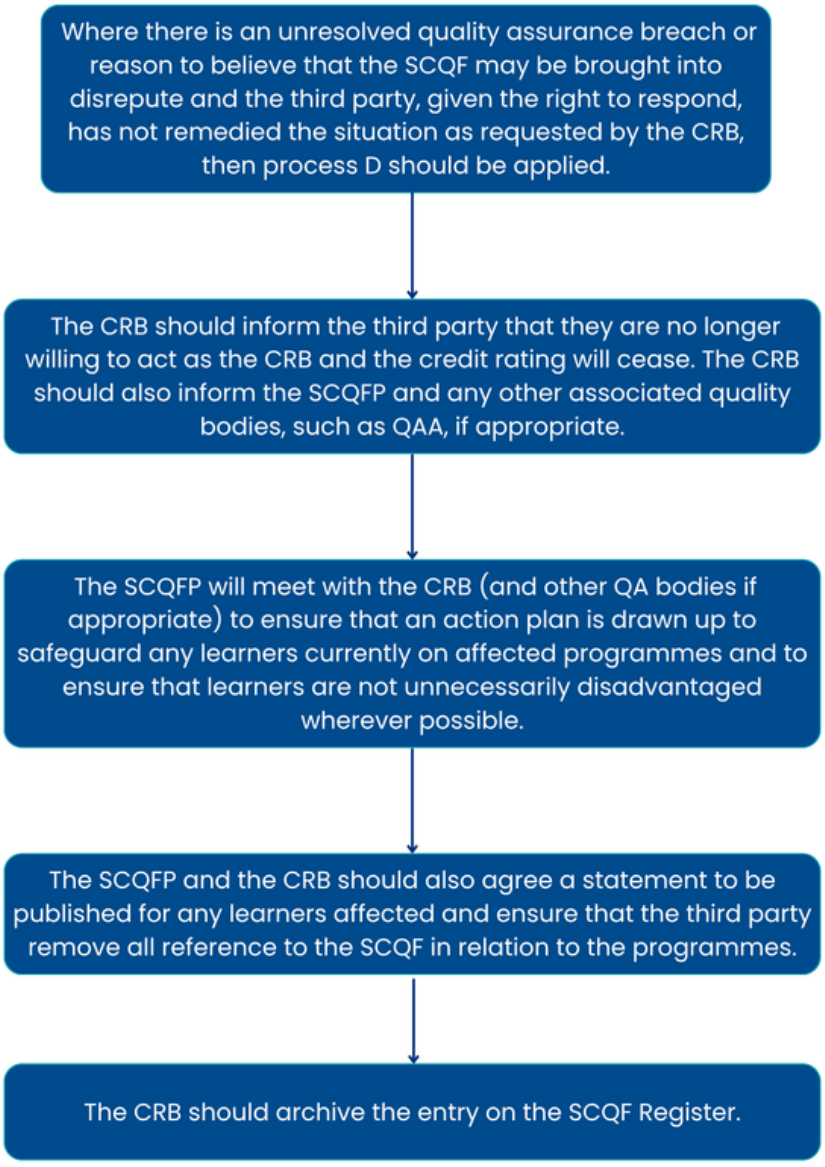

Process B
If there are no current learners on any of the programmes but the third party wishes all or some of the programmes to remain on the SCQF.
If the programme is in its final year of its current credit rating period then notice should be given to the third party that the CRB will not be undertaking the review of that credit rating and the third party should seek to contract another CRB. In this case the original CRB will not be liable for any additional costs.
The SCQFP will work with the third party to identify other CRBs who may be able to credit rate the programme once the period of credit rating is up for review.
If the programme is not in its final year of its current credit rating period then notice should be given to the third party and to SCQFP that the CRB wishes to pass the responsibility for annual monitoring to another CRB.
The SCQFP will assist the CRB to seek another CRB to take over this responsibility and will provide advice and guidance to the third party (parties) during this process.
The SCQFP will broker a meeting between the two CRBs and the third party to discuss any quality assurance issues and ongoing annual monitoring arrangements.
Once there is an agreement and the new CRB has carried out any due diligence the existing CRB will ensure that any relevant additional costs are met if applicable.
SCQFP Executive will change over the name of the CRB on the Register.



scottish credit and qualifications framework

scqf®

Process D


Where there is an unresolved quality assurance breach or reason to believe that the SCQF may be brought into disrepute and the third party, given the right to respond, has not remedied the situation as requested by the CRB, then process D should be applied.
The CRB should inform the third party that they are no longer willing to act as the CRB and the credit rating will cease. The CRB should also inform the SCQFP and any other associated quality bodies, such as QAA, if appropriate.
The SCQFP will meet with the CRB (and other QA bodies if appropriate) to ensure that an action plan is drawn up to safeguard any learners currently on affected programmes and to ensure that learners are not unnecessarily disadvantaged wherever possible.
The SCQFP and the CRB should also agree a statement to be published for any learners affected and ensure that the third party remove all reference to the SCQF in relation to the programmes.
The CRB should archive the entry on the SCQF Register.