

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



scottish credit and
qualifications framework

Quality Assurance Model for SCQFP Approved Credit Rating Bodies

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

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QUALITY ASSURANCE MODEL FOR SCQFP APPROVED CREDIT RATING BODIES

SECTION 1 Overview of Quality Assurance Model



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 Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) 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 and SQA are subject to specific alternative quality assurance arrangements agreed by the SCQFP Board and are separate to this model. Colleges are subject to a sector specific review process conducted by the SCQFP which is detailed separately. However, all CRBs including HEIs, Colleges and SQA 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 9 sections:

- Section 1 Overview of Quality Assurance Model
- Section 2 Quality Assurance Model - Criteria
- Section 3 Approval
- Section 4 Annual Monitoring
- 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.

The model consists of three distinct processes:

- Approval
- Annual Monitoring
- 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 not only those approved directly by the SCQFP.

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

- An expression of interest
- An informal discussion with an Officer of the SCQFP
- 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-visit meeting
- A visit to 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 conditions¹
- Not Approved²

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

Annual monitoring takes place each year and involves:

- The completion of a submission document with accompanying evidence
- A visit to the organisation by a Review Team³
- 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
- CRB is suspended from credit rating
- 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
- A visit to 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
- CRB is suspended from credit rating
- The process for removal of credit rating authority is initiated

The SCQFP Board reserves the right to reinstate an annual visit for any CRB which had previously moved to a desk based annual monitoring activity. This decision will

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

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. However, all CRBs will receive a visit for the first annual monitoring post approval

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, 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 Executive 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 allocated a named SCQFP Officer. This Officer will be the main contact for the CRB and will manage the annual monitoring activity and the first periodic review after which the CRB will be allocated a new Officer. This is to allow a continuity of approach and to avoid repetition of discussion during annual monitoring activity.

The CRB must provide a named contact for the organisation for the purposes of the annual monitoring 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 Database 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 Database to assist in this.)

The SCQF 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 self-assessment annual monitoring process of 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 affect the integrity of the SCQF and make recommendations to the SCQFP Board; and
- 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 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 affect the integrity of the SCQF and making decisions to remove credit rating authority if required.

The Risk Matrix

The SCQFP operates a risk matrix and this will be used to ascertain the level of risk and the actions that will be taken. This will be used to:

- Make decisions as to whether a CRB receives a visit at annual monitoring;
- Identify actions arising out of scrutiny of annual 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.

The Risk Matrix⁴

High – likely indicators	Medium – likely indicators	Low – likely indicators	Very Low – likely indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues requiring quick action and resolution • Potential damage to the integrity of the SCQF • Possible impact on current learners if not resolved • Some issues which may be systemic or recurring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some issues requiring attention • Low or little risk of damage to the integrity of the SCQF • Low or little impact on current learners • Issues are resolved by the CRB when identified through external review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No or minimal concerns • No risk of damage to the integrity of the SCQF • No impact on current learners • CRB identified any issues and resolved through their internal review processes
High - likely outcomes at QC/Board	Medium –likely outcomes at QC/Board	Low –likely outcomes at QC/Board	Very Low –likely outcomes at QC/Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold placed on new credit rating activities • Visit to CRB by SCQFP CEO and Head of Service • SCQFP Quality Committee and Board Chairs alerted • Special meeting of SCQFP Quality Committee held • Next periodic review brought forward • Next annual monitoring will be a visit • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring visit to CRB by named SCQFP Officer or the bringing forward of the next periodic review • SCQFP Quality Committee Chair alerted • SCQFP Board Chair alerted • Action Plan developed and put in place by CRB and approved by SCQFP • Action plan monitored by SCQFP • Potential support arrangements put in place • Next annual monitoring may be a visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of issues by named SCQFP Officer • Action Plan developed by CRB • Actions followed up through normal QAM processes of annual and periodic review • Visit or desk activity at next annual monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No further action • CRB will continue to be subject to annual monitoring and periodic review • Potential for a desk activity only at the next annual monitoring

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

QUALITY ASSURANCE MODEL FOR SCQFP APPROVED CREDIT RATING BODIES

SECTION 2 Criteria



Quality Assurance Model

Section 2

Quality Assurance Model

- Criteria

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

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 SCQF Partnership (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 Database 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 wish to credit rate provision owned by a third party, 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, functions, aims and structures	At Approval
		Providing a constitution, strategic plans, organisational charts that explain the key function of the organisation 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
		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.
		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 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 and be able to	At Approval
		Providing evidence of an equality and diversity strategy or policies that promote equality of opportunity for both

	demonstrate this policy in action for both staff and learners	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
		Details of any material changes that have been made to any strategy or policies.
		At Periodic Review
		Evidence that there is a current equality and diversity strategy and/or policies and evidence of staff training and of review of programmes in terms of equality.
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 changes to existing staff development policy.
		At Periodic Review
		Providing evidence of the staff development policy in action i.e. plans for induction, succession planning, training for staff moving into new roles etc.

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	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:	At Approval
		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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>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.</p> <p>At Annual Monitoring</p> <p>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.</p> <p>At Periodic Review</p> <p>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.</p>
2.2	<p>Demonstrate that it regularly reviews and strives to improve and enhance its quality assurance system by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrying out internal reviews on all aspects of the quality assurance system • Taking action on the outcome of such internal reviews 	<p>At Approval</p> <p>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.</p> <p>At Annual Monitoring</p> <p>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.</p> <p>At Periodic Review</p> <p>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.</p>
2.3	<p>Ensure that its quality assurance system is subject to regular external</p>	<p>At Approval</p> <p>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</p>

<p>review and provide evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outcome of these external reviews • Actions taken as a result of these external reviews 	<p>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.</p>
	<p>At Annual Monitoring</p>
	<p>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.</p>
	<p>At Periodic Review</p> <p>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.</p>

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	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	At Approval
		<p>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.</p>
		At Annual Monitoring
		Evidence of a documented procedure including any changes made since the last review activity or approval.

		<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
		At Periodic Review
		<p>Evidence of a documented procedure including any changes made since the last review activity or approval.</p> <p>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.</p>
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	Document a robust procedure for the internal review of the proposed credit rating process showing how it sits within the existing quality assurance system	At Approval
		<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
		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.

		<p>Details of any changes to the responsibilities for the carrying out these reviews or in the reporting structure for the outcomes of the reviews.</p> <p>Evidence of improvements following internal reviews, e.g. action planning and monitoring.</p>
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	<p>At Approval</p> <p>A trial run of its credit rating procedures for at least one programme and the submission of a completed set of paperwork as evidence.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>At Annual Monitoring</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Evidence of the system in place to ensure appropriate expertise is used within the credit rating process.</p> <p>At Periodic Review</p> <p>Evidence that the credit rating process is working and any evidence of changes made to the process.</p> <p>Evidence of the checks and balances in place to ensure that consistent and robust decisions are being made in the credit rating procedure.</p>
3.5	<p>Document a robust procedure to:</p> <p>Record the outcomes of credit rating processes</p> <p>Communicate these outcomes to users and other stakeholders</p> <p>Keep the SCQF Database up to date by way of the SCQF portal</p> <p>Describe the way in which the SCQF logo will be used</p>	<p>At Approval</p> <p>Evidence of a system to record and keep the decisions and rationales for credit rating decisions.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Evidence of written procedures for updating the SCQF Database.</p> <p>A copy of an exemplar SCQF certificate.</p> <p>A plan of how the organisation will inform learners of SCQF credit rating outcomes – e.g. marketing material, prospectuses etc.</p> <p>At Annual Monitoring</p> <p>A copy of an anonymised learner certificate.</p> <p>A full listing of database entries.</p> <p>Evidence of the CRB promoting credit rated programmes to learners, stakeholders and internally within the CRB.</p> <p>At Periodic Review</p> <p>A copy of an anonymised learner certificate.</p> <p>A full listing of database entries.</p> <p>Evidence of a marketing plan for SCQF credit rated programmes.</p> <p>A sample of marketing materials for SCQF credit rated provision.</p>
3.6		At Approval

	Document a procedure for developing an annual self-assessment report on credit rating activity for the SCQF Partnership	<p>Evidence of how the information for the first annual monitoring submission will be gathered and who will be involved.</p> <p>At Annual Monitoring</p> <p>Not applicable.</p> <p>At Periodic Review</p> <p>Not applicable.</p>
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	<p>At Approval</p> <p>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).</p> <p>At Annual Monitoring</p> <p>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.</p> <p>At Periodic Review</p> <p>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.</p>

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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		At Approval

	<p>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</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Details of the individual job roles involved in the process and their responsibilities.</p> <p>Evidence of the guidance and support that will be given to third parties including guidance documents and pro-formas.</p> <p>At Annual Monitoring</p> <p>Evidence of a documented procedure including any changes made since the last review activity or approval.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Evidence of the ongoing monitoring and review of individual credit rated programmes where applicable.</p> <p>At Periodic Review</p> <p>Evidence of a documented procedure including any changes made since the last review activity or approval.</p> <p>Evidence of ongoing monitoring of third parties and the credit rated programmes.</p> <p>Samples of anonymised learner certificates issued by third parties and evidence of guidance given to third parties on certification.</p>
4.4	<p>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</p>	<p>At Approval</p> <p>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 there is a system in place to address any outcomes and progress actions.</p> <p>Details of the cycle for this internal review activity.</p> <p>At Annual Monitoring</p> <p>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.</p> <p>At Periodic Review</p> <p>Evidence of a policy/procedure or arrangements in place for internal reviews of its third party credit rating procedures and processes.</p>

		<p>Details of the reporting structure for the outcomes of these reviews and the arrangements for follow up actions.</p> <p>Evidence of improvements following internal reviews.</p>
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 is 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 point(s) 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 the certificates issued to learners must include the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Database.
	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 submissions.
		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 Database.
		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.

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

SECTION 3
Approval



Section 3

Approval

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

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

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

- An expression of [interest](#)
- An [informal](#) discussion with an officer of the SCQFP
- The completion of an approval [submission](#) with accompanying evidence which includes a trial run of proposed credit rating processes
- A review team pre-visit [meeting](#)
- A [visit](#) to the organisation by 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 conditions¹](#)
- [Not Approved²](#)

Once approved, the CRB is then subject to annual monitoring 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, 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.

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

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 receive visits from the SCQF Partnership .

The purpose of the submission is for the organisation to explain clearly how it meets all of 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 on the day of the visit 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 on the day of the visit may result in additional discussion topics which will not have been highlighted to the organisation prior to the visit.

Once the organisation has made its submission, it will be contacted by an SCQFP Officer to arrange a date for the approval visit. 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. Details of fees 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 visit 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 on the day of the visit.

The Review Team

On receipt of the application and payment of the appropriate fee³, 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 take place at the premises of the organisation. The Review Team will individually and collectively consider all of 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 a visit 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.

The Approval Visit

The Review Team will meet 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 visit 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.

³ For a current list of fees please contact the SCQF Partnership

At the end of the visit 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 on the day of the visit.

The Report

After the approval visit, the External Reviewer will write the approval report on behalf of the team which will include a narrative on the CRB, 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 SCQF 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 recommendation proposed by the Review Team before making its own overall recommendations. The overall recommendations that the SCQF Quality Committee can make are:

- Approved
- Approved with conditions⁴
- Not approved⁵

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.

⁴ CRB cannot start to credit rate until conditions are met

⁵ After unsuccessful application, the organisation will receive feedback from the SCQFP and will be allowed to resubmit on one further occasion

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. The organisation will be allocated a named Officer from the SCQFP who will be available for support and advice, and will conduct annual monitoring activities and be part of the first periodic review (after which the named officer will change).

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

When approved with conditions

When an organisation is approved with conditions, the organisation will be allocated a named SCQFP Officer who 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 Executive 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 the named officer will discuss the new status including carrying out credit rating activities, using the logo and keeping the SCQF Database up to date by way of the SCQF portal with the CRB.

The named SCQFP Officer will be available for support and advice, and will conduct annual monitoring activities and will be part of the first periodic review (after which the named officer will change).

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 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 Head of Quality and International Development for further clarification.

QUALITY ASSURANCE MODEL FOR SCQFP APPROVED CREDIT RATING BODIES

SECTION 4 Annual Monitoring



Section 4

Annual Monitoring

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

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

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

Annual monitoring takes place each year following approval until the 4th year when a periodic review will be conducted. (More details on periodic review are available in Section 5.) After the periodic review, annual monitoring will again take place for the following 3 years until the next periodic review and so on.

The annual monitoring consists of:

- The completion of a [submission](#) document with accompanying [evidence](#)
- A potential [visit](#) to the CRB by a review team ¹
- Letter of [outcome](#) from the Chair of the SCQF 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
- CRB is suspended from credit rating
- 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 indicated by the SCQFP each year (normally June). Details of fees are available from the SCQF Partnership and are also available on the SCQF website www.scqf.org.uk. For new CRBs, the first annual monitoring will take place one year after the notification of approval and the timing for the submission and visit will be indicated in that notification. After the first annual monitoring, the CRB will then follow the timeline and process for all CRBs as above.

The purpose of the submission is for the CRB to clearly report on its credit rating activity within the previous year since the approval or previous annual monitoring/ periodic review 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.

¹ 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 a visit for the first annual monitoring post-approval.

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 in last 12 months
- 5 Number of learners registered on current credit rated programmes and an indication of the number of those domiciled in Scotland
- 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)
- 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) and evidence of completed paperwork from the regular monitoring of programmes not yet reached their credit rating review date
- 8 Report from the last internal review of credit rating processes
- 9 Report from the last external review of credit rating processes (if taken place since last SCQFP monitoring activity)
- 10 A copy of the CRB's RPL policy (if changed from previous version)

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

- 11 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
- 12 A copy of the paperwork that supports annual monitoring of third party programmes (if changed from previous version) and an example of a completed report.
- 13 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)
- 14 A copy of any guidance issued to third parties on submissions, use of the logos in certification and promotion, certification arrangements etc (if changed from previous version)

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 a visit to 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)
- Changes to the credit rating process

- Matters of concern received about the CRB
- Issues still outstanding over a number of annual and/or periodic reviews
- Potential for reputational damage to the SCQF
- Potential for impact on current learners

A low or very low risk rating on the risk matrix is unlikely to result in a visit however it may be that a number of low risk issues or a number of unresolved low risk issues may escalate the rating and result in a visit.

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

A [visit](#) will always take place for newly approved CRBs for their first annual monitoring irrespective of the risk matrix.

The decisions of the SCQFP Officers will be reviewed by the Quality Committee (normally in August) after which the CRB will be informed if a visit to the CRB is required. These decisions will be informed by the SCQFP Risk Matrix (section 2) and the risk factors (above). The SCQFP will then issue an invoice to the CRB for the relevant annual monitoring fee and arrange a date if a visit is indicated. Details of fees are available from the SCQF Partnership and are also available on the SCQF website, www.scqf.org.uk.

Desk Monitoring

If no visit is to take place, the submission will be reviewed by at least 2 SCQFP Officers and a short report based on the submission from the CRB will be prepared by the named SCQFP Officer. Whilst there will be no visit to the CRB, if there are a few issues which would benefit from some clarification, a telephone or Skype call may take place at a mutually suitable time.

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.

Monitoring Visit

If it is deemed that a visit is necessary, the named SCQFP Officer will contact the CRB to organise a mutually suitable date for the visit. These visits will normally take place between September and March.

The named SCQFP Officer will conduct the visit together with another SCQFP Officer. The named SCQFP Officer will act as chair for the meeting with the other taking notes of the meeting with a view to compiling a short action based report. No formal minute of the meeting will be taken.

The aim of the visit 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 based on the submission from the CRB and the visit will be prepared by the SCQFP Officers. A copy of this short report will be sent to the CRB for a factual accuracy check and confirmation of the action plan agreed with the CRB at the visit.

Reporting and Outcomes

Following the visit or desk activity, the short report and an agreed action plan (if required) will be presented to the Quality Committee for scrutiny. The named SCQFP Officer will provide a short verbal summary at the meeting.

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

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

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

SECTION 5
Periodic Review



Section 5

Periodic Review

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

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

Periodic review takes place every four years¹ and involves:

- The completion of a [submission](#) document with accompanying [evidence](#)
- A review team [pre-visit](#) meeting
- A [visit](#) to 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 the 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 Credit rating process/procedure (if changed from the previous version submitted)
- 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 Certificate template(s) (if changed from previous version)
- 5 Number of learners certificated for each programme in last 12 months
- 6 Number of learners registered on current credit rated programmes and indication of those domiciled in Scotland
- 7 Report from the last internal review of credit rating systems

¹ The SCQFP Board reserve the right to bring forward a periodic review visit if there is a high or medium risk identified

- 8 Report from the last external review of credit rating systems (if undertaken since the previous SCQFP monitoring activity)
- 9 A copy of the CRB's RPL policy (if changed from previous version)

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

- 11 The CRB's credit rating process/procedure for third party credit rating (if changed from previous version submitted)
- 12 A copy of the paperwork that supports annual monitoring of third party programmes (if changed from previous version)
- 13 A copy of any guidance issued to third parties on submissions, use of the logo, certification etc. (if changed from previous version)
- 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 (if changed from previous versions)
- 14 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.

On receipt of the submission the SCQFP will issue an invoice to the CRB for the full periodic review fee. Details of fees are available from the SCQF Partnership and are also available on the SCQF website, www.scqf.org.uk.

The submission will be reviewed by the SCQFP named Officer 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. 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)
- Changes to the credit rating process
- Complaints received about the CRB
- Issues still outstanding over a number of annual and/or periodic reviews
- Potential for reputational damage to the SCQF
- Potential for impact on current learners

In addition, reports from the SCQF Database will be cross referenced with the data received from the CRB in the submission. The 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:

- The current named SCQFP Officer
- The planned named SCQFP Officer²
- External Reviewer
- SCQF 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-visit)

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 visit to allow time for the CRB to prepare.

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

The Periodic Visit

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 visit 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 visit 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 on the day of the visit.

² This SCQFP Officer will then become the CRB's named SCQFP Officer until the next Periodic Review

The Report

After the periodic review visit, 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 recommendations 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
- 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 insist that the next annual monitoring of a CRB takes the form of a visit in the following year or that an additional monitoring visit takes place in-year. 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.

QUALITY ASSURANCE MODEL FOR SCQFP APPROVED CREDIT RATING BODIES

SECTION 6 Third Party Credit Rating



Section 6

Third Party Credit Rating

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The approval for third party credit rating will consist of:

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

Possible outcomes:

- Approved
- Approved with conditions¹
- Not Approved²

¹ CRB cannot start to credit rate third parties until conditions are met

² After unsuccessful application, the organisation will receive feedback from SCQFP

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

Expression of interest

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

Informal meeting with the SCQFP Officer

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

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

The Submission

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

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

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

The Review Team

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

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

The Review Team meeting (pre-visit)

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

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

The Approval Visit

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

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

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

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

The Report

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

Scrutiny by the SCQF Quality Committee and Board

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

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

- Approved
- Approved with conditions³
- Not Approved

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

When approval is given

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

When approved with conditions

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

Not approved

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

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

³ CRB cannot start to credit rate until conditions are met

QUALITY ASSURANCE MODEL FOR SCQFP APPROVED CREDIT RATING BODIES

SECTION 7 Removal of Credit Rating Authority and Ceasing Credit Rating



scottish credit and
qualifications framework

Section 7

Removal of Credit Rating Authority and Ceasing Credit Rating

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

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 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 reserves 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 Database 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 SCQF Partnership 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 Database
- 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. 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 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 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 SCQF Partnership is kept fully informed.

QUALITY ASSURANCE MODEL FOR SCQFP APPROVED CREDIT RATING BODIES

SECTION 8 Appeals



Section 8

Appeals

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

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 the SCQFP Executive Team, 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, SCQFP Executive Team or a member of an Approval/Review Team did not conform to due process and this had a demonstrable negative impact on the organization/CRB.

Appeals can be made against:

- Approval decisions
- Annual Monitoring 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 appeals@scqf.org.uk by the organisation/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 SCQF Board (act as Committee Chair)

1 member from the SCQF Quality Committee (not involved in the review activity)

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 SCQF Partnership

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 SCQF Partnership together with the reasons underpinning the decision. The decision of the Appeals Committee is final.

QUALITY ASSURANCE MODEL FOR SCQFP APPROVED CREDIT RATING BODIES

SECTION 9 Matters of Concern



Section 9

Matters of Concern

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

Raised concerns

The SCQF Partnership 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 *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.

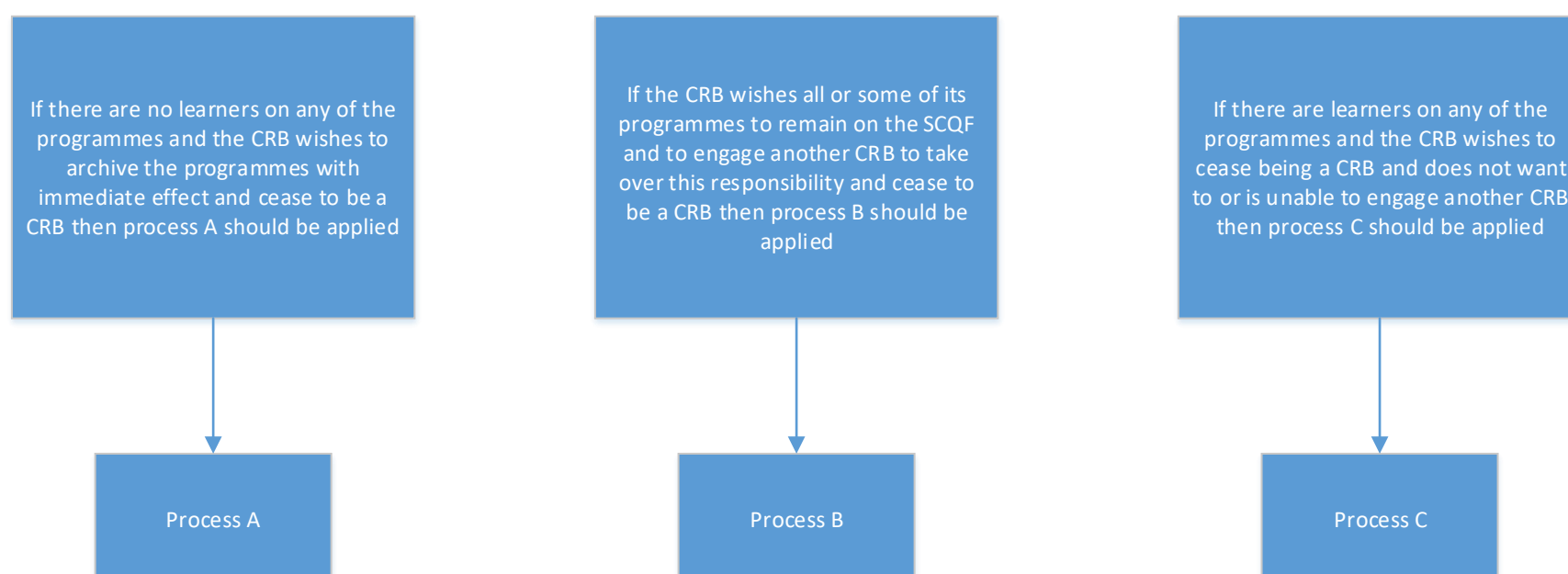
QUALITY ASSURANCE MODEL FOR SCQFP APPROVED CREDIT RATING BODIES

SECTION 10 Ceasing Credit Rating Flowcharts



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 database 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 SCQF CRB

SCQFP Executive will remove the CRB's access to the SCQF database 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 database for those programmes

SCQFP Executive will remove the original CRB's access to the SCQF database and the organisations from any lists of CRBs on the website and in promotional materials

No agreement is reached to enable the handover.

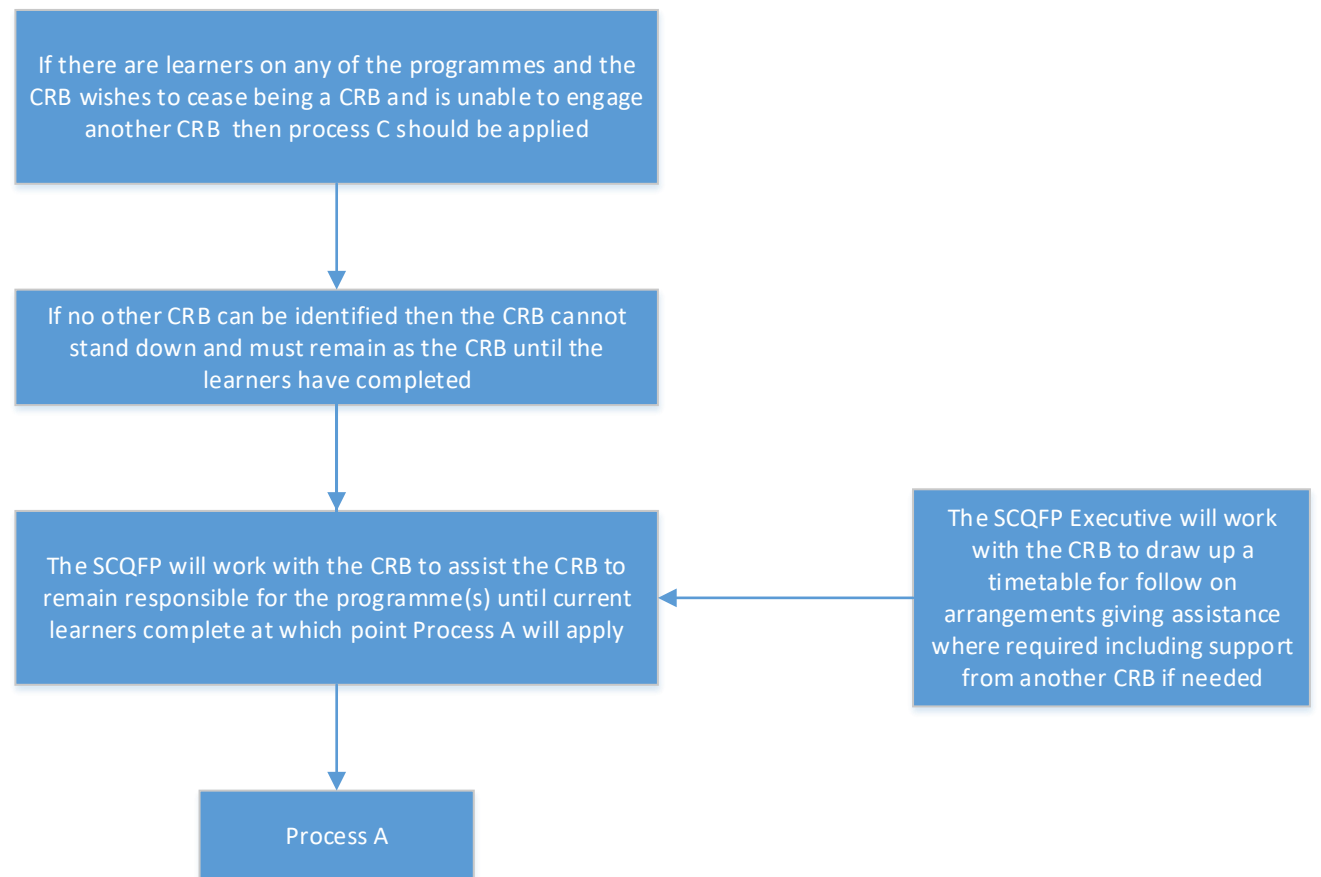
The existing CRB decides to invoke process A or C depending if there are current learners

The existing CRB remains responsible for the programmes and seeks another CRB

Process A

Process C

Process C

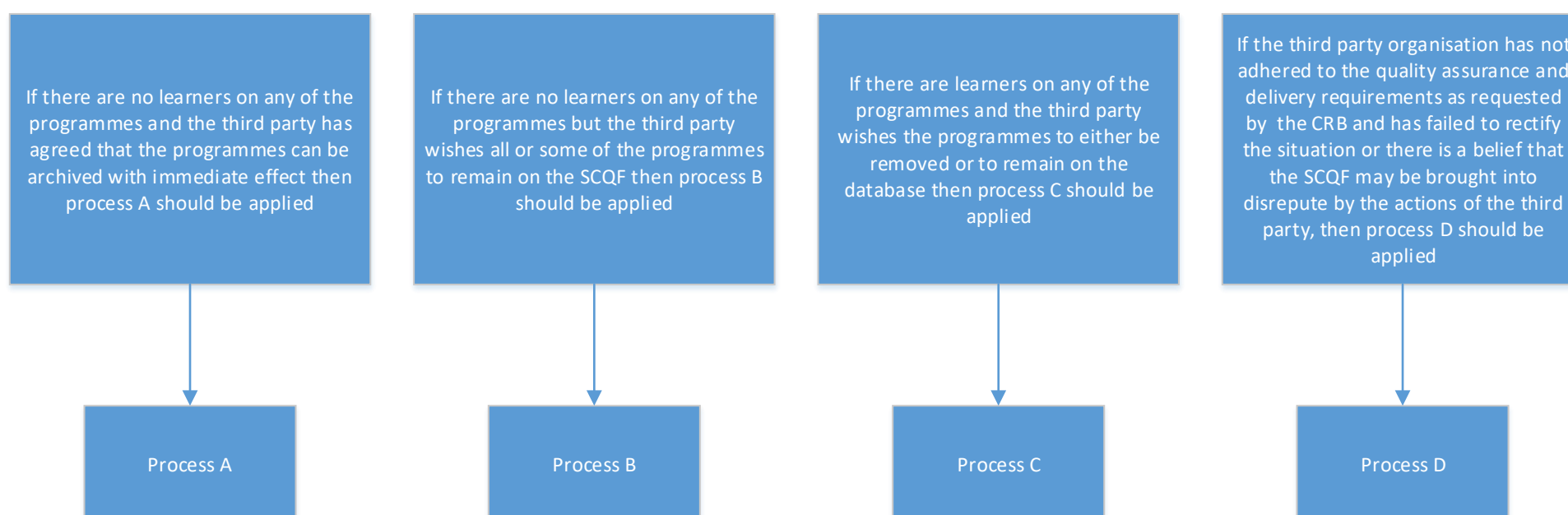


Ceasing to Credit Rate Third Party provision

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

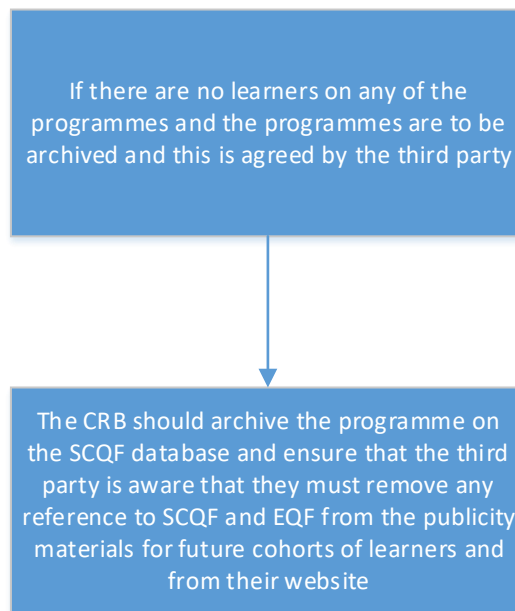
Where there has been no agreement on the process for ceasing credit rating between the CRB and the Third Party, the CRB should follow the processes below and take cognisance of the key principles outlined above:



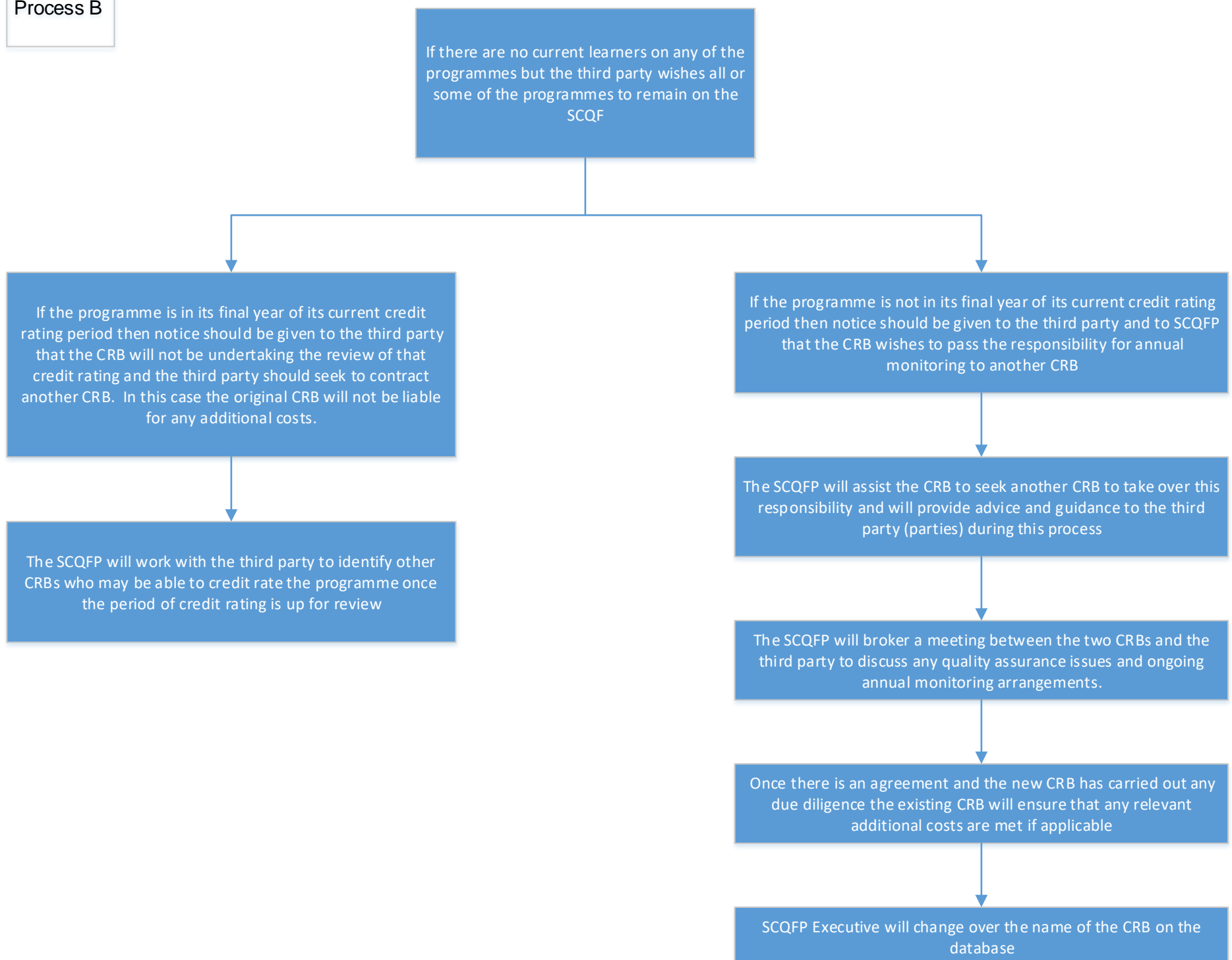
With the exception of Process A, the CRB should ensure that they inform the SCQFP of the situation at the earliest possible opportunity and they provide SCQFP with an agreed information set as follows:

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

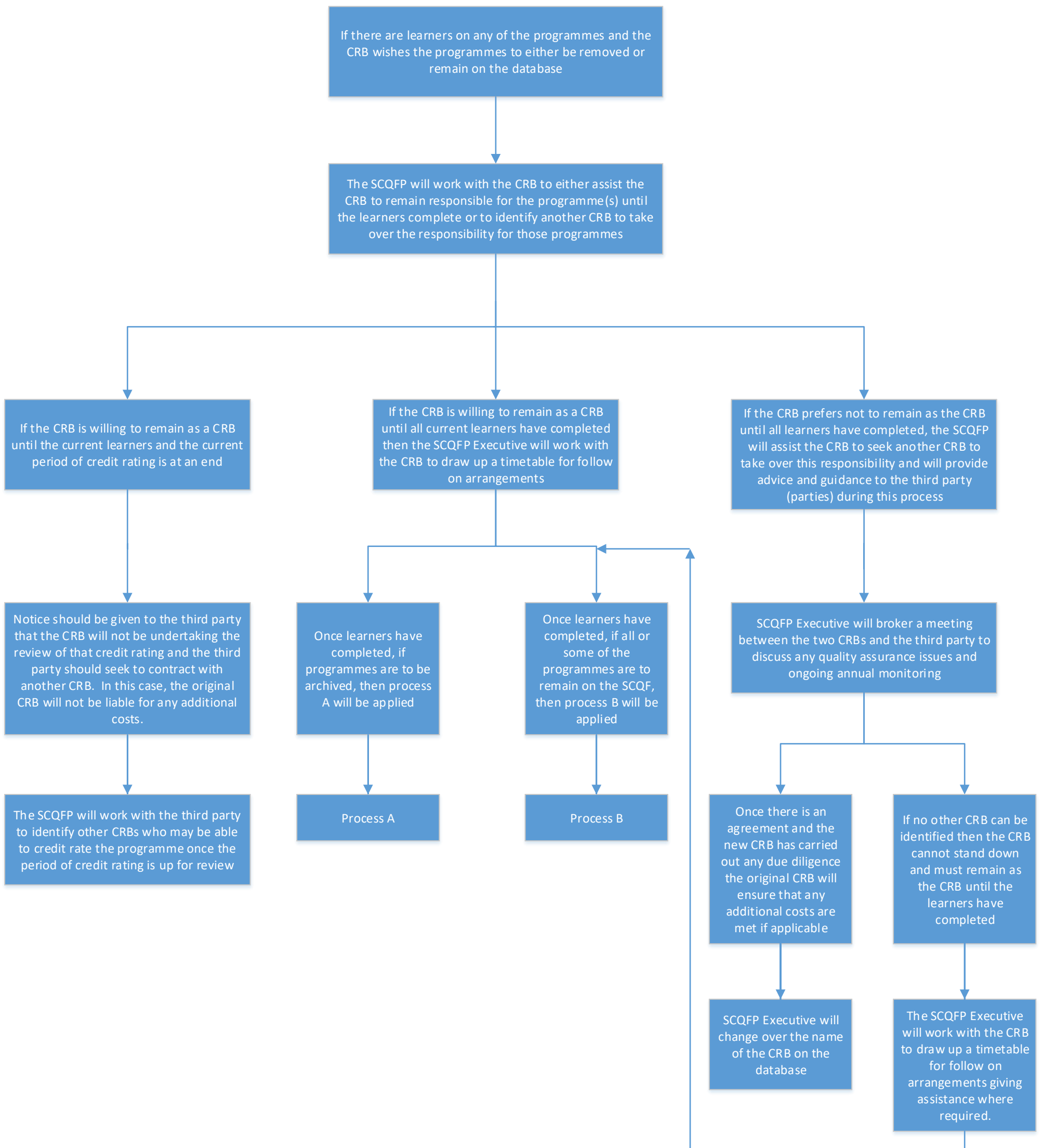
Process A



Process B



Process C



Process D

