



HOW TO GET YOUR PROGRAMME SCQF CREDIT RATED:

A GUIDE FOR THIRD PARTY PROGRAMME OWNERS



scottish credit and qualifications framework



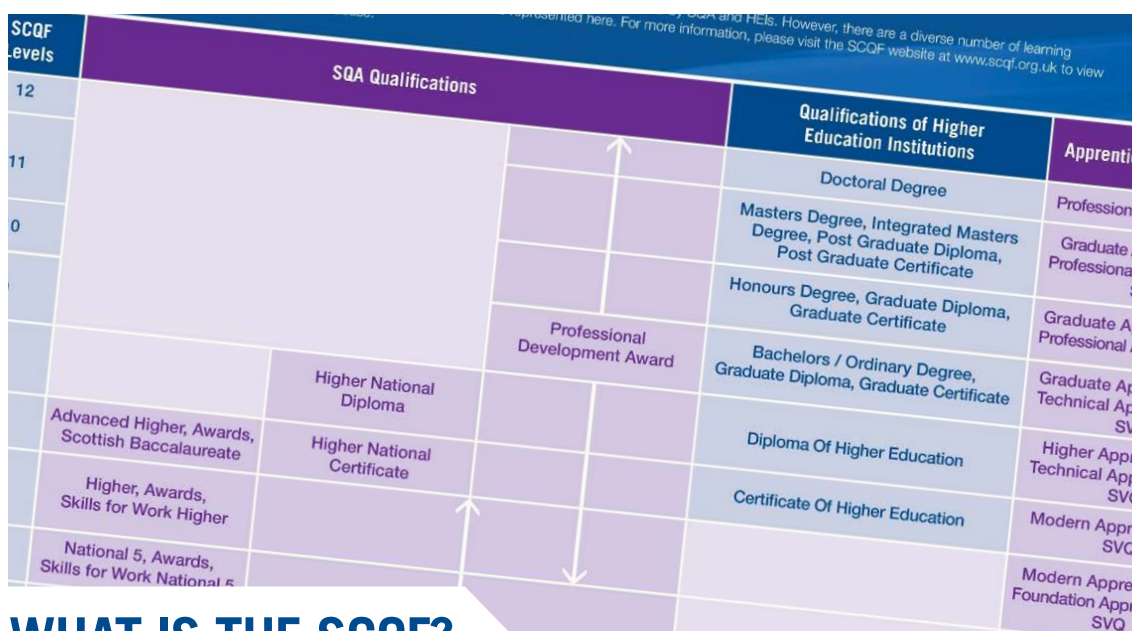
This quick guide has been written to help you get started on your journey to having your programme, course, award or qualification credit rated and placed on the SCQF. It will explain what you need to do and some of the terminology used in the process.

THE SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

This Framework diagram has been produced to show the mainstream Scottish qualifications already credit rated by SQA and HEIs. However, there are a diverse number of learning programmes on the Framework, which, due to the limitations of this format, cannot be represented here. For more information, please visit the SCQF website at www.scqf.org.uk to view the interactive version of the Framework or search the Database.



SCQF Levels	SQA Qualifications		Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	Apprenticeships & SVQs
12			Doctoral Degree	Professional Apprenticeship
11			Masters Degree, Integrated Masters Degree, Post Graduate Diploma, Post Graduate Certificate	Graduate Apprenticeship Professional Apprenticeship SVQ
10			Honours Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Graduate Apprenticeship Professional Apprenticeship
9		Professional Development Award	Bachelors / Ordinary Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Graduate Apprenticeship Technical Apprenticeship SVQ
8		Higher National Diploma	Diploma Of Higher Education	Higher Apprenticeship Technical Apprenticeship SVQ
7	Advanced Higher, Awards, Scottish Baccalaureate	Higher National Certificate	Certificate Of Higher Education	Modern Apprenticeship SVQ
6	Higher, Awards, Skills for Work Higher			Modern Apprenticeship Foundation Apprenticeship SVQ
5	National 5, Awards, Skills for Work National 5			Modern Apprenticeship SVQ
4	National 4, Awards, Skills for Work National 4	National Certificate	National Progression Award	SVQ
3	National 3, Awards, Skills for Work National 3			
2	National 2, Awards			
1	National 1, Awards			



WHAT IS THE SCQF?

The SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) is Scotland's national qualifications framework and provides a way of recognising, describing and comparing the difficulty and time taken to achieve a whole range of qualifications and learning programmes. In addition to mainstream qualifications, the SCQF also contains vocational and skills-based qualifications, and learning programmes developed and delivered in the workplace and community.

The framework promotes lifelong learning for a range of audiences with the aim to include all qualifications and assessed learning in Scotland, where appropriate, so that learners can identify their current position on the SCQF and plan their future learning.

The SCQF describes qualifications and learning programmes by giving them a level and a number of credit points. The SCQF level describes how difficult the learning is. There are 12 levels which increase in difficulty from level 1 to level 12. The number of SCQF credit points shows the length of time it takes to complete the learning. One SCQF credit point represents 10 hours of learning time.

Currently, the SCQF contains all of the standard Scottish qualifications, but there are more than 1000 other learning programmes on the SCQF, owned by a range of organisations, covering learning taking place in workplaces and in the community. These organisations, such as yourselves, are described as the Programme Owner.

WHY SHOULD I HAVE MY PROGRAMME RECOGNISED ON THE SCQF?

Learning programmes credit rated onto the SCQF are recognised not just in Scotland, but may also be recognised across the UK, Europe and beyond. Learners receive formal recognition for the learning they have achieved and can better describe the skills they have developed in order to progress in their career or into further learning. It also allows employers to relate their learning programmes to nationally recognised qualifications, helping with employee engagement, career progression routes within the organisation and providing added value to in-house training.

HOW DOES A LEARNING PROGRAMME GET ON THE SCQF?

To be placed on the SCQF, a learning programme needs to be allocated an SCQF level and a number of credit points. This process is called credit rating and is carried out by an SCQF Credit Rating Body. The SCQF Partnership does not carry out credit rating, it oversees the quality assurance processes of the Credit Rating Bodies.

Credit Rating Bodies are:

- All Scottish colleges
- All Scottish universities
- SQA
- A number of other organisations approved by the SCQF Partnership

Some of these organisations provide a third party credit rating service for organisations who would like their programmes credit rated. We can advise you on who best to approach based on your subject area, location and the expected SCQF level of your learning programme.



IS MY PROGRAMME SUITABLE FOR CREDIT RATING?

To be allocated an SCQF level and credit points, a learning programme must:

- be described in learning outcomes
- involve a minimum of 10 hours of learning
- be formally assessed
- have internal and external quality assurance processes.

HOW DO I FIND OUT MORE?

The SCQF Partnership runs a free workshop called 'Would You Credit it?' which will take you through how to get your course ready for credit rating. These are offered both online and in-person and are free of charge. For latest dates go to www.scqf.org.uk/workshops. If there are none available, sign up for our newsletter and tick the workshops box and you will be told when new dates are released.

Further information about the SCQF and the credit rating process can be found at <https://scqf.org.uk/support/support-for-employers/>



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Once you have attended a 'Would You Credit it?' course and are happy that your programme is suitable and ready for credit rating, contact us at info@scqf.org.uk for advice about which Credit Rating Bodies might be best to approach, based on the subject area and expected level of your programme. It is good to contact more than one as they may offer different services with varying costs. It is also good to think about what services you might need before you approach them.

WHAT SERVICES DO CREDIT RATING BODIES OFFER?

Credit Rating Bodies (CRBs) can offer a range of services depending on your needs. You should ask each CRB that you contact to outline what services they provide and the associated costs. Depending on systems and expertise within your own organisation you may not need all of these services, so be clear about what you want and the questions you wish to ask. Equally, any CRB you approach will have a set of questions they will wish to run through initially in order to consider whether they will be able to offer any third party credit rating service for your organisation. So, for example, they may ask for clarification around the ownership of the programme, the quality assurance you have in place and about the governance of your organisation.





SERVICES OFFERED BY CRBS INCLUDE:

Credit Rating Only

When getting your programme ready for credit rating, you will normally be asked to estimate the SCQF level and number of credit points for your programme and to provide the rationale for that estimation. Your CRB will support you through the credit rating process and should let you know what information they need and if there is a particular format they require. They will then go through a quality assured process involving panels of credit rating and subject matter experts who will review your submission and decide whether or not they agree with your estimate. If they do not agree, they will provide feedback on their decision to help you decide what to do next for example to accept the decision of the CRB or redesign your programme and resubmit it.

Once the programme has been credit rated the CRB will upload your programme details to the SCQF database and set a review date for the period of credit rating, which is usually between three to five years. The CRB will also provide you with guidance on referring to the SCQF and using the SCQF logo in relation to your programme, marketing materials and on certificates.

Each year the CRB is likely to ask you to provide an annual update on your programme for review purposes. They will also ask you to inform them of any changes you plan to make to the programme during the credit rated period. This is very important to ensure that the changes you plan to make do not affect the SCQF level or credit points.

When the review date comes, at the end of the credit rating period, the CRB will let you know the process for renewing the credit rating of your programme and what information about your programme you will need to submit. There will be a cost associated with the initial credit rating process and again with each subsequent renewal of the credit rating. There may also be a cost attached to the review of your annual update each year. These costs vary with the size and complexity of the programme and between CRBs.



Programme Development

If you need help with the structure, content, learning outcomes or assessment methods for your programme, then your CRB might be able to support you with these. It is important to note that there may be additional costs for this support and this will depend on how much and what type of support you need.

External Quality Assurance

Credit Rating Bodies may offer to help you with your external quality assurance process if you do not have one in place. This is likely to have associated costs and the type of review a CRB might provide, and the charge for that, may differ from CRB to CRB.

Other services offered by CRBs

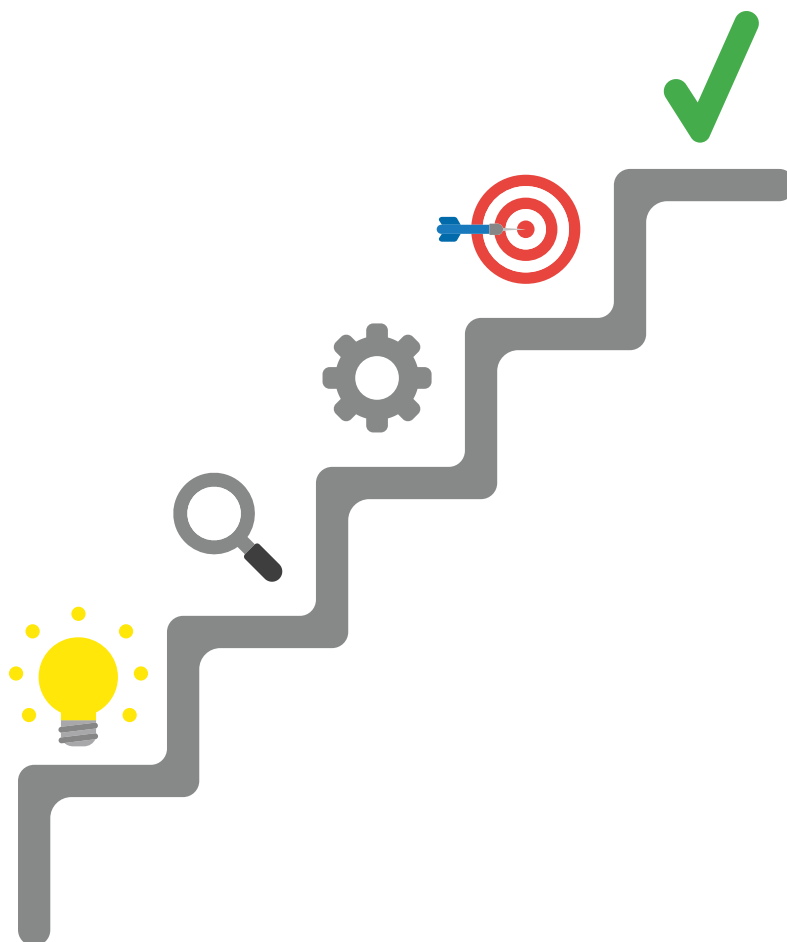
Credit Rating Bodies may offer to carry out administration on a per student basis, including registration and certification. This is not part of their work as a Credit Rating Body and any arrangement will be separate to the credit rating process. This will tend to come with a cost per student.



NEXT STEPS

We hope this has helped to make the credit rating process clearer. If you have any more questions, please have a look at our FAQs and further resources below. If you need any further advice, please contact us at info@scqf.org.uk

We look forward to seeing your learning programme on the SCQF.



USEFUL RESOURCES AND LINKS

SCQF workshops

www.scqf.org.uk/workshops

Here you will be able to see and book on to our 'Would You Credit It?' workshop. If there are none available, sign up for our newsletter and tick the workshops box and you will be told when new dates are released.



Recognising your training programme

www.scqf.org.uk/support/support-for-employers/recognising-your-training-programmes

Here you will find more information about how to have your programme credit rated and our publications SCQF Level Descriptors, SCQF Credit Points Explained: Notional Learning Hours and SCQF Credit Rating: Criteria Explained which will take you through the process in more depth.

SCQF resources

www.scqf.org.uk/resources

Here you will find all our various resources covering a wide range of topics.

Introduction to the SCQF

<https://youtu.be/8eEbZCIFLlo>



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the difference between SCQF Credit Rating and accreditation?

SCQF Credit Rating is the formal process that allocates an SCQF level and SCQF credit points to a programme and allows it to be added on to the SCQF.

In general terms, accreditation is a quality assurance process under which a programme is evaluated and verified by an external body to determine whether applicable and recognised standards are met.

In Scotland, the term accreditation is sometimes used to refer to the process where awarding bodies approved by SQA Accreditation can submit qualifications for formal recognition (approval) provided that they meet the requirements as specified by SQA Accreditation.

[SQA Accreditation - About Us](#)

What is the difference between SCQF Credit Rating and an SQA Customised Award?

SCQF Credit Rating is the formal process that allocates an SCQF level and SCQF credit points to a programme and allows it to be added on to the SCQF.

A customised award is a charged-for SQA product that can include a number of services including qualification development, credit rating, quality assurance and certification.

[Customised awards - SQA](#)

How much does it cost to have learning programmes credit rated?

This will very much depend on how ready your programme is to be credit rated (e.g. are there already learning outcomes, assessments and quality assurance in place?), and also the size of the programme in terms of notional hours of learning. We always recommend you speak to a few different credit rating bodies as the price/services they can offer will differ and there are no standard prices set by SCQFP.



How long does it take to have a programme credit rated?

Again this depends how ready your programme is. If you already have learning outcomes, assessment and quality assurance in place, it will take a shorter time to credit rate the programme than if these elements still need to be completed. An average timeline could be 3-6 months. Much of this will depend on the availability of CRB staff who have completed SCQF training and who also hold relevant subject expertise. The frequency of panel meetings to sign off the credit rating decision can also impact on the timeline. Each CRB should be able to advise its average credit rating timeline.

Is there any support with writing learning outcomes for my learning programme?

Yes, we have a number of resources that will help. Our SCQF Credit Rating: Criteria Explained booklet provides information and examples of effective learning outcomes and this will also be covered in the Would You Credit It? workshop.

We deliver a programme through another organisation whose name appears on the certificates/course specifications etc, can I get it credit rated?

You need to be the owner of the programme to take it forward for credit rating. One way to check if you are the owner is to ask yourself if you can make changes to the learning outcomes and/or assessment criteria without permission from another organisation. If you do have to ask another organisation then it is likely that you are not the owner and therefore couldn't ask for it to be credit rated,

Is it possible to develop our own HNC or SVQ and have it credit rated by a CRB?

These are qualifications that can only be developed and credit rated by SQA Awarding Body/SQA Accreditation so no it would not be possible however both organisations would seek sectoral input at the start of a new qualification being designed/developed.

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