



# **INCLUDING NON-FORMAL VET QUALIFICATIONS ON THE SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (SCQF)**

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## FOREWORD

This country report was prepared for the NQF-IN project: *Developing organisational and financial models for including non-formal sector qualifications in National Qualifications Frameworks* financed by the European Union within the framework of the Erasmus+ funds.

The NQF-IN project corresponds with policy learning and policy transfer initiatives advocated in the EU, which focus on the exchange of ideas, policies and policy instruments among different national qualifications systems. The main rationale for this project is the assumption that knowledge about policies in one national system may be used for the benefit of developing policies in another system (Dolowitz, Marsch 2000, Chakroun 2010).

The aim of the NQF-IN project is to provide evidence-based support to national governments, EU agencies and key stakeholders in developing policies for including qualifications in national qualifications frameworks, with a particular focus on qualifications awarded outside the formal education system (*non-formal sector* qualifications). This aim will be achieved by conducting two sets of activities in the project: (1) providing systematised knowledge about the organisational and financial solutions applied in seven EU countries for including non-formal sector qualifications in their NQFs, and (2) developing organisational and financial models for the inclusion of non-formal sector qualifications in NQFs.

Within the NQF-IN project, we collected the experiences of seven European countries that are at different stages of NQF implementation, namely: Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Ireland, Poland and Scotland. Each NQF-IN project partner prepared a country report that describes the systemic solutions used to include non-formal sector qualifications in the NQF. This report for Scotland is one of the seven country reports produced within this project. Based on an analysis of the content of country reports and national solutions, the NQF-IN project aims to develop organisational and financial models of the inclusion of non-formal sector qualifications in NQFs.

In order to ensure that country reports refer to the same set of themes in a comparable way, we developed a methodology of preparing country reports consisting of basic terms and concepts as well as a report structure. Each of the seven reports is structured according to the following chapters:

- Chapter 1. Historical context
- Chapter 2. National qualifications framework– basic premises
- Chapter 3. Institutional setting
- Chapter 4. Types and legal status of qualifications included in the NQF
- Chapter 5. Procedures of the inclusion of qualifications in the NQF
- Chapter 6. Quality assurance of qualifications included in the NQF
- Chapter 7. Costs of including qualifications in the NQF
- Chapter 8. Current debates on further NQF developments.

More information about the methodology of preparing country reports and the NQF-IN project outcomes can be found at the project's website [www.nqf-in.eu](http://www.nqf-in.eu).

## Abbreviations and acronyms

CLD	Community Learning and Development
CRB	Credit Rating Body
EQF	European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HND	Higher National Diploma
NFIFL	Non-Formal and Informal Learning
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
QAA	The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (in the UK)
QAA Scotland	The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in Scotland
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SCQFP	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership
SDS	Skills Development Scotland
SFC	Scottish Funding Council
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualification

## Methodology/preparation of the report

This country report has been produced by members of the SCQFP Executive team as part of Work Package 2 of the Erasmus+ funded NQF-IN project. The project has been managed by the Educational Research Institute (IBE) in Poland. The project partnership was made up of the following institutions:

- Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership, Scotland, UK
- Dublin Institute of Technology, Republic of Ireland
- University of Split, Croatia
- Center of Studies and Research on Qualifications (CEREQ), France
- The Educational Authority, Hungary
- National Institute for Education, Czech Republic

The project also involved the following silent partners who were responsible for peer review of the draft report:

- German Federal Institute of VET (BIBB)
- Dutch National Agency NCP (NLQF)
- Luxembourg Ministry of Education

Representatives from the following organisations were interviewed in the process of preparing this Scottish report:

- Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)
- Quality Assurance Agency, Scotland (QAA Scotland)
- Edinburgh Napier University
- Police College Scotland, Tulliallan
- College Development Network (CDN)
- Borders College, Scotland

In addition, questionnaires were issued to a range of organisations who have non-formal learning programmes included on the SCQF. These included a range of other Credit Rating Bodies such as the Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland (CIOBS), the Institute of Counselling (IOC) and several further education colleges. During the interviews, the detail of the credit rating processes and procedures for placing non-formal qualifications on the SCQF was discussed as well as the benefits and barriers perceived by each of the organisations. An inventory of key questions was developed internally in discussion with the SCQFP Executive Team to underpin all interviews and questionnaires. These are included at Annex 9.

Desk research was carried out to review and validate details from CRB websites and publications as well as to identify background information on individual organisations who own non formal learning programmes credit rated onto the SCQF. Other websites and publications were also consulted to obtain a detailed overview of the non-formal learning

landscape in Scotland. Some quantitative data emerged during the desk research which has also been referred to within the report.

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## Basic terms

**Non-formal sector qualifications:** The NQF-IN project acknowledges that there are different approaches and terms used across Europe to define qualifications awarded outside the traditional school system (general compulsory education, public IVET and CVET schools, higher education institutions). Within the project, a decision was taken to use the term “non-formal sector qualifications” to indicate that we are analysing the inclusion of those qualifications awarded outside traditional school systems in the NQF, i.e. those awarded in the non-formal sector of the education system.

**Formal and non-formal qualifications:** It was decided to take the following approach regarding the naming of different types of qualifications in qualifications systems:

**(a) Formal education qualifications:** qualifications awarded in the formal, state supervised education system. Within this category we distinguish:

- formal general education qualifications (e.g. matura certificate),
- formal VET qualifications (e.g. VET diplomas),
- formal HE education qualifications (e.g. Master Degree).

**(b) Non-formal education qualifications:** qualifications awarded outside the formal, state supervised system. Within this category we distinguish:

- State regulated qualifications:
  - qualifications which are regulated by legal acts or directly by ministries or governmental agencies but are not qualifications awarded in the formal education (school) system.
- Non-state regulated qualifications:
  - private / market qualifications, e.g. qualifications awarded by private training providers or other private institutions, including international qualifications to serve a particular market such as business and commercial services,
  - qualifications awarded by non-profit organisations: communities, voluntary organisations, trade unions,
  - qualifications regulated by branches/sectors of the economy, i.e. qualifications awarded by the chamber of commerce or other sectoral organisations (if they are not regulated by legal acts).

**Validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL):** VNFIL refers to the process where an authorised body confirms that an individual has acquired learning outcomes in order to achieve a qualification,<sup>1</sup> whereas non-formal education sector qualifications refer to the types of qualifications which are awarded outside the formal education system.

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<sup>1</sup> Recommendation of the Council of European Union of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (OJ C 398, 22.12.2012, pp. 1–5).



**Inclusion of qualifications on the SCQF:** Inclusion is a process leading to the assignment of a level and credit value to a qualification in order to place it on the SCQF.

## Terms specifically relating to the Scottish Context

**Articulation:** refers to a student gaining entry into either the second or third year of a university degree course after completing a Higher National Certificate (HNC) or Higher National Diploma (HND) at a further education college.

**Articulation Hubs:** colleges and universities clustered around a lead university that had a high level of articulation activity.

**Awarding Body:** In this report, the term “awarding body” means any organisation or institution which awards qualifications. It includes Universities and other higher education institutions along with more commercial organisations such as City and Guilds. Some colleges also act as awarding bodies for some qualifications or learning programmes.

**Credit Rating Body:** An organisation that carries out credit rating for the SCQF. These are Scotland’s colleges; Scottish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs); SQA; and other organisations that have been approved by the SCQF Partnership

**SCQF Credit Points:** Credit Points allocated to a qualification or learning programme indicate the typical amount of time that it would take a learner to achieve the learning outcomes of the qualification or learning programme. Ten notional learning hours equates to one SCQF Credit Point.

**Credit Rating:** The process of allocating SCQF Level and Credit Points to qualifications and learning programmes, whether formal, non-formal or informal.

**Credit Transfer:** The transfer of SCQF Credit Points from one programme into another to minimise the duplication of learning

**Further Education College:** Colleges offering courses and qualifications in a wide range of vocational and academic subjects at many levels. Some specialise in particular industry sectors such as art and design, catering, engineering or finance. They often have links with companies, so that students studying vocational courses can combine classroom learning with work experience.

**Learning Outcomes:** Statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.

**Learning programme:** A process that an individual can undertake to achieve the learning outcomes that make up a qualification.

**Learning Providers:** Organisations across all education and training sectors that provide formal, non-formal or informal learning.

**Apprenticeships:** Unlike the systems in many other countries, apprenticeships extend beyond training for skilled craftsmen or women and can include graduate apprenticeships at the top levels of the SCQF – eg in areas like financial services and engineering.

**Notional Learning Hours:** The time required for a typical learner at a specified SCQF Level to achieve the learning outcomes. Includes all the learning activities required for the achievement of the learning outcomes as well as the assessment.

**Private training providers:** Offer a wide range of work-based training for students seeking to build careers in specific industries. Private training providers work with colleges and employers to provide practical training and recognised qualifications in subjects such as engineering, construction, ICT and health and social care.

# 1. Historical Context

The SCQF was formally launched in 2001. It was originally developed between 1998 and 2001 by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and Universities Scotland, with the support of the Education and Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Departments of the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Advisory Committee on Credit and Access (SACCA). The timing of this work meant that it was possible to bring together existing systems of levels and credits which had been in operation for a number of years with the new framework of levels that had been implemented for National units, courses and group awards previously developed as part of a school reform of general and vocational qualifications between 1994 and 2000. These developments were also informed by the emerging national qualifications framework for higher education which was being developed by QAA at the time and also by information and definitions relating Scottish Vocational Qualifications and school qualifications around that time.

In essence the SCQF was constructed from existing definitions of qualifications and levels rather than creating new ones. The purpose was to make the Scottish system of qualifications and how they relate to each other easier to understand and use. It was also intended to address reforms of previous years so as to consolidate and improve on a quarter of a century of change across Scottish education where the formal qualifications in all education and training sectors were outcomes-based, made up of credit-bearing units, and subject to criterion referenced assessment. Unlike most other National Qualification Frameworks, the SCQF was intended to consolidate, rather than initiate, these reforms.

Since then the SCQF has developed to become the national language for describing the level and credit value of formal qualifications and non-formal learning programmes in Scotland. It is important to note that both the Framework and the SCQF Partnership were established on a voluntary basis and not by law, although the SCQF Partnership is a legal entity. This means that the Framework is voluntary and there is no requirement for any organisation to have their learning programmes included within the Framework. No one organisation 'owns' the Framework and the SCQF Partnership which manages the Framework is not a government department or agency. However, while the Scottish Government is content that the Framework is managed at arm's length, it contributes to the funding of the SCQF Partnership and builds the framework into its education and training plans and policies. It is also true to say that more recently some of the funding provided by the national skills agency, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has been linked more directly to ensuring that funding supports qualifications on the SCQF.

As a result the SCQF is an integrating framework constructed by bringing together existing hierarchical frameworks of general, academic, technical, vocational and professional qualifications rather than creating new levels and new categories of qualification. This meant that, in developing the SCQF, the levels were based on existing and well-known qualifications and the known and tested links between them.

The original frameworks embedded in the SCQF are for:

- National and Higher National Qualifications – the Units, Courses and Group Awards awarded by SQA under the overall direction of the Scottish Government
- the qualifications of universities and other higher education institutions in Scotland (these are now set out in The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland, published by QAA in 2014)
- Scottish Vocational Qualifications – workplace qualifications based on National Occupational Standards developed by government-sponsored Sector Skills Councils and accredited by SQA Accreditation

Each of these frameworks has its own types of qualification and its own quality assurance arrangements but all share the same levels, level descriptors and system of credit points. An explanation of the main types of formal qualification in each of these areas, is given in Chapter 4, Types and legal status of Qualifications on the SCQF.

In 2006, it was decided that the Framework should be managed by a single organisation and the SCQF Partnership was formed with an Executive Team to take forward the work of the Framework. The status and role of the Partnership is described in Chapter 3, Institutional Setting.

## **2. The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework – Basic premises**

### **2.1. Summary of the Approach Used to Recognise Non-Formal and Informal learning in Scotland**

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is a lifelong learning Framework. It was created by bringing together the majority of Scotland's mainstream qualifications into a single unified Framework. This means that the SCQF includes general, vocational and academic qualifications and a wide range of non-formal learning programmes. The Framework includes regulated and non-regulated provision and all HE qualifications. The Framework has 12 levels and was referenced to the EQF in 2009 and is planned for updating in 2018. The level to level referencing is shown in Figure 2 below.

The SCQF provides the structure to allocate levels and credit points to qualifications and learning programmes making them easier for learners, employers and the general public to understand. The process for allocating an SCQF Level and SCQF Credit Points to a programme of learning or qualification is known as credit rating after which they are included on the SCQF Database (registry). The organisations which have been given authority to carry out credit rating and therefore to place qualifications and learning programmes onto the SCQF are known as Credit Rating Bodies (CRBs). All CRBs are subject to external scrutiny and must have robust internal quality assurance systems. The process of credit rating is followed for all qualifications and learning programmes to be included in the Framework regardless of whether they are formal or non-formal or from different parts of the education system. This process also includes the use of a single set of level descriptors irrespective of the type of learning.

Credit Rating Bodies include all Further Education (FE) colleges in Scotland all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the Scottish Qualifications Authority (the national awarding body in Scotland) and a number of other approved bodies detailed within this report. The SCQF is managed by the SCQF Partnership (SCQFP). The SCQF Partnership works to ensure the quality and integrity of the Framework. The Partnership also has a key role in promoting the use of the SCQF to a wide range of bodies across Scotland and beyond including schools, colleges, universities, employers, professional bodies and community organisations. The Partnership also actively promotes the value of credit rating for non-formal learning and works with a range of organisations to encourage the inclusion of non-formal learning programmes onto the Framework. At the time of writing there are more than 800 examples of non-formal learning programmes on the SCQF. Non-formal learning programmes have been placed on the Framework from levels 2 to 11 and range in size from 10 learning hours to over 1000 learning hours. The owners of these programmes include individual employers, trade associations, trade unions, professional bodies, youth organisations, community organisations and adult education organisations.

The main purpose of the SCQF is to make the Scottish system of qualifications, and the way in which they relate to each other, easier to understand and use. It is intended to:

- support lifelong learning
- clarify entry and exit points for qualifications and credit-rated learning programmes at whatever level
- show learners and others possible routes for progression and credit transfer
- show the level and credit (size) of the different types of Scottish qualification
- enable credit links to be made between qualifications and learning programmes so as to assist learners to build on previous successes

The SCQF has 12 levels and as a result differs from many other national frameworks in other EU Member States. The Framework was referenced to the EQF as part of the referencing of all of the UK Frameworks. The level to level comparison with the EQF can be seen in Table 2.

There is a single set of level descriptors for the 12 levels which apply across all qualifications and learning programmes included in the Framework regardless of whether they are formal or non-formal. The level descriptors are fundamental to the SCQF and are integral to the credit rating process. The SCQF Level Descriptors describe in broad terms what learners should be able to do or demonstrate at a particular level. Within an integrated framework, these level descriptors provide a common vocabulary to assist with the comparison of qualifications and learning programmes

Each level descriptor has five characteristics which provide a reference point for determining the level of a qualification, learning programme, module and unit of learning or for the recognition of prior learning (RPL). They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements of required learning for individual qualifications.

The five characteristics are:


- Knowledge and understanding;
- Practice: Applied knowledge, skills and understanding;
- Generic cognitive skills;
- Communication, numeracy and ICT skills; and
- Autonomy, accountability and working with others.

The Framework diagram depicting formal qualifications in Scotland is shown in Figure 1. It is important to note that the Framework includes many other types of non-formal learning programmes which are not depicted by the Framework diagram but which will be explored within this report.

**Figure 1.** The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

**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](http://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				

## 2.2. The SCQF and the EQF

The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) was formally adopted by the European Parliament and the Council for European Union at the beginning of 2008. As a common reference framework the EQF supports lifelong learning and mobility as it facilitates the recognition of learning by acting as a translation device, aiding understanding of qualifications and education systems across member states.

The EQF has 8 levels, enabling national qualifications to be compared with each other and those of other countries.

The EQF helps to:

- promote lifelong learning
- make qualifications across Europe easier to understand
- clarify the training systems across Europe
- encourage the integration of the European labour market

The SCQF was referenced to the EQF in 2008 and the following table illustrates the comparable levels:

**Figure 2. SCQF to EQF referencing**

SCQF	EQF
12	8
11	7
10	6
9	
8	5
7	
6	4
5	3
4	2
3	1
2	Not referenced
1	

In Scotland work has been ongoing to implement and promote a better understanding of the EQF. Along with other National Co-ordination Points across the UK, activities have been carried out using European funding to:

- implement a comprehensive communications strategy;
- produce an EQF digest with a commentary on the UK referencing report in light of referencing reports from other countries;
- add EQF levels to all qualifications and learning programmes on the SCQF database
- test linkages to the Learning Opportunities and Qualifications in Europe Portal
- work closely with sectors by providing support and information and promoting the recognition of prior learning in relation to the EQF; and
- facilitate technical exchanges between key EU Member States.



## 3. Institutional setting

### 3.1. The SCQF Partnership

The SCQF is managed by the SCQF Partnership (Figure 3). The Partners are:

- College Development Network (CDN); CDN supports colleges in Scotland through training, events, specialist projects and network activity.
- the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland (QAA Scotland); develops and operates quality assurance and enhancement arrangements that reflects the needs of higher education in Scotland
- Scottish Qualifications Authority; The national body in Scotland responsible for the development, accreditation, assessment, and certification of qualifications other than degrees.
- Universities Scotland (US); US is the representative body of Scotland's 19 higher education institutions.

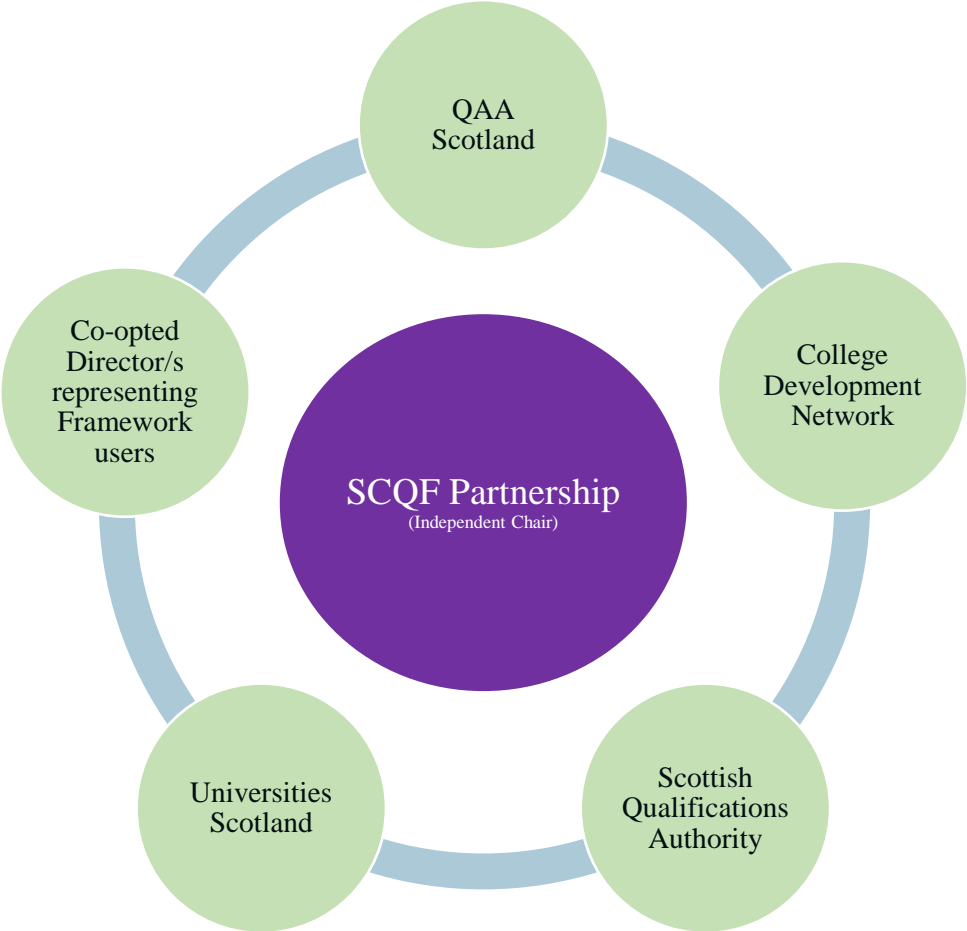
Each partner organisation is represented by a senior officer on the Board which oversees the work of the Partnership. The Board also has a chair who is independent of the interests of these bodies (Figure 2). The Board can also co-opt two additional members to represent users of the SCQF. At the time of writing, an additional member is co-opted representing employers, and the Chair of the Quality Committee is also a co-option. This partnership model is seen as having a number of advantages; the resources of the Partnership are limited and the partners, which share the common goal of wishing to see the Framework succeed, make many contributions in kind, using their resources to support the Framework and by undertaking activities which promote it.

The object of the SCQF Partnership is “to advance education through promoting and supporting the Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework as a tool to support lifelong learning in Scotland”. To meet its legal responsibilities the SCQF Partnership must

- promote wider adoption and use of the Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework as a tool to support lifelong learning in Scotland
- maintain the quality and integrity of the Framework and ensure that there is a common understanding of credit values and levels among users
- ensure that the work of the Partnership is effective.

More detailed information about the SCQF Partnership, and the SCQF Partners and structures is given in Annex 1.

**Figure 3.** The SCQF Partnership



### 3.2. The SCQF Partnership Executive Team

The SCQF Partnership Executive Team has responsibility for all matters relating to the quality and integrity of the Framework. This work is overseen by the SCQF Quality Committee which in turn reports to the SCQF Board. The Quality Committee consists of members who are experienced in quality and education and the Chair of the Quality Committee is de facto also a member of the SCQF Board.

The Executive works closely with the organisations responsible for the inclusion of qualifications and learning programmes on the SCQF and supports employers, third sector organisations and others interested in having their programmes included on the SCQF (further explained below). The Executive Team also has a responsibility to promote the Framework and support stakeholders through a wide range of communications, resources, workshops and seminars and also engages with counterpart organisations in the UK, Europe and internationally to share experiences and best practice.

### 3.3. Credit Rating Bodies

The process of preparing a qualification or learning programme for inclusion on the SCQF, by allocating it to a level in the framework and giving it a value in SCQF credit points, is known as “credit rating” and the bodies which are authorised to carry out this process are called “Credit Rating Bodies” (CRBs). This process is a devolved system and it is important to note that it is the CRBs who make the final decision as to the level and credit of a qualification or learning programme and that the SCQF Partnership does not make or ratify these decisions. However, the SCQF Partnership has the responsibility of approving organisations to become Credit Rating Bodies against three main criteria. These are that the organisation must:

- be a body of good standing with a successful track record in the design and delivery of learning provision.
- have a documented quality assurance system for the design, validation and assessment of these qualifications and learning programmes and evidenced through both internal and external reviews, that this quality assurance system is valid and reliable.
- have the capacity and commitment to operate as an SCQF credit-rating body.

An elaboration of these criteria can be found in Annex 4. In order to become approved the CRBs must be able to demonstrate that they meet these criteria through a documented submission to the SCQFP Executive and an approval visit carried out by a team of reviewers which includes SCQFP Executive Officers, members of the SCQF Quality Committee and independent educational/quality experts. The SCQF Board gives final approval for all new CRBs. All CRBs are also subject to external reviews by outside agencies to ensure the quality of the credit rating process. This is expanded on in Chapter 6.

At the time of writing, there are 55 credit rating bodies. These include all universities and higher education institutions, all further education colleges, Scottish Qualifications Authority and a number of other organisations including some professional bodies and sectoral training bodies.

A list of current Credit Rating Bodies is given in Annex 2.

Once a Credit Rating Body has been approved they can credit rate any of their programmes that meet the criteria for inclusion on the SCQF. However, some Credit Rating Bodies are allowed to credit rate learning programmes owned by other organisations. Such credit rating for external partners or organisations is referred to as Third Party Credit Rating.

Any organisation can submit a qualification or learning programme to a CRB that is approved to offer Third Party credit rating. The growing number of programmes submitted by other organisations to CRBs for credit rating suggests that these organisations see the value of their programmes being included on the national framework. In 2016 the Partnership commissioned research into the experiences of the organisations using CRBs to credit rate their programmes.

Some of the benefits that these organisations identified are as follows:

- The qualification/learning programme is visible on the SCQF database
- Relationships between qualifications can be clarified
- Learners can make the most of credit transfer opportunities
- Easier to identify progression routes between similar qualifications
- Helps learners to plan progression routes
- The organisation's learning provision will be nationally recognised
- Credit rating allows organisations to use the SCQF logo

The processes and procedures used by all CRBs for placing qualifications onto the SCQF are further explored in **Chapter 5: 'Procedure for the inclusion of qualifications in the SCQF'** and **Annex 3: SCQF Principles**.

### 3.4. The SCQF Database

The SCQF Partnership maintains and manages a register of all credit rated qualifications and learning programmes known as the SCQF Database. This is accessible through the SCQF website and is open access<sup>2</sup>. CRBs upload any qualification or learning programmes that they credit rate directly to the database. Whilst the SCQF Partnership monitor entries it is the responsibility of the CRBs to ensure that the details are accurate. It should be noted that the SCQF database is not a register of all qualifications in Scotland as not all qualifications are on the SCQF (the SCQF is a voluntary Framework).

Information on the database includes:

- Title of qualification or learning programme
- SCQF level
- SCQF Credit Points
- Programme owner
- Credit Rating Body
- Target Audience
- Description
- Skills gained
- Subject area
- EQF level

Access is given to CRBs via a secure portal which also allows the CRB to store any associated documents such as credit rating paperwork in a non-public area.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://scqf.org.uk/the-framework/search-database/>

At present, the database does not contain all learning outcomes of all learning programmes as the volume of this information is felt to be unmanageable. However work has been undertaken to explore the feasibility of including a high level summary of learning outcomes of programmes with Credit Rating Bodies and new fields have been introduced recently which will include the information normally included in a high level learning outcome. This information will be added as programmes are reviewed and updated.

Previous development and ongoing development work with the database has been possible with the support of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. This work is ongoing and will lead to providing users with links to the Learning Opportunities and Qualifications in Europe Portal.

## 4. Types and legal status of qualifications included on the SCQF

The SCQF is a Lifelong Learning Framework and an inclusive framework. It includes formal and non formal qualifications and learning programmes. There are no restrictions to the levels non-formal programmes can be placed at so they can be placed at any appropriate level from 1-12 as long as they meet the level descriptor for that level and also meet the four criteria as described in the SCQF Handbook:

- based on learning outcomes
- at least 10 notional hours of learning
- subject to internal and external quality assurance
- formally assessed

In addition, there is no restriction as to the type of organisation which can apply to a CRB to get a programme credit rated. As a result, programmes owned by employers, trade unions, community groups, professional bodies and businesses to name but a few are all included.

Once a qualification or learning programme has been placed on the SCQF the ownership of that programme remains with the organisation who originally owned it. It does not become a national qualification nor does it mean that the organisation must open up their qualification to the public or allow other organisations to deliver it. For example, an employer can get its in-house employee training credit rated and placed on to the Framework, the employer still owns its training programme and can still only offer this exclusively to its own employees if it chooses to do so.

As stated previously all formal qualifications in the formal school, college and university system are included on the SCQF as well as a wide range of other qualifications and learning programmes. At the time of writing there are around 11,500 programmes included on the SCQF. Over 800 of these are considered to be non-formal.

Figure 4 shows some examples of non-formal learning programmes that learners may possibly take at college, university, in the workplace or in the local community that have been credit rated and placed onto the Framework.

**Figure 4.** Examples of non-formal learning on the SCQF

SCQF Level	Qualification Owner	Qualification Name	Credit Points
11	Historic Environment Scotland	Building Conservation in Context	34
11	Human Development Scotland	Being human in practice: constructing identity	20
10	Skills for Care & Development	Professional Apprenticeship in Care Services Leadership and Management	94

9	Scottish National Blood Transfusion	Acute Transfusion Reactions	2
8	Institute of Counselling	Certificate in Spiritual and Holistic Care	20
7	The Boys' Brigade	King George VI Leadership Programme	13
6	ASDAN	Certificate in Personal Effectiveness	15
5	The Duke of Edinburgh's Award	Duke of Edinburgh Leadership Programme	5
5	Outward Bound Trust	Adventure & Challenge Award (5 day)	5
4	Sports Leaders UK	Sports Leadership	7
4-7	Youth Scotland	Youth Achievement Awards Bronze - Platinum	7-16 <sup>3</sup>
3	Youth Scotland	Dynamic Youth Awards One – Five Star Awards	1-31
1	Borders College	Ready for Retail	35

This list shows examples of non-formal learning which have been credit rated from level 1 upwards on the Framework through to the higher levels of the Framework with qualifications such as the Building Conservation in Context qualification at level 11 owned by Historic Environment Scotland. This means that this non-formal learning programme is considered to be on the same level as a Masters programme but not that it is considered to be a Masters programme or equivalent to a Masters programme. It can be seen from Figure 4 that it is different in terms of the number of credit points (34 credit points compared to a minimum of 180 credit points for a Masters Programme). This indicates the size of the programme and would be indicated on any certificate issued. This programme may also be different in terms of size and structure. At the time of writing there are more than 1300 programmes credit rated at SCQF level 11 which are not Masters Programmes.

Credit points are allocated exclusively on the volume of learning and are determined by the amount of notional learning hours that are required to achieve the learning outcomes.

## 4.1. Formal Qualifications on the SCQF

### 4.1.1. The Inclusion of Formal School Qualifications on the SCQF

The main learning contexts for learning leading to qualifications in the SCQF are shown in Figure 5 below. This shows the school system, and, in broad terms, the main forms of education and training available to young people on completion of compulsory education.

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<sup>3</sup> Dynamic Youth Awards from one to five stars offer a progression route to Youth Achievement Awards at Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum levels. Each set of awards contains increasing amounts of notional learning hence the range in the amount of credit points allocated to these qualifications

**Figure 5.** Learning contexts leading to qualifications in the SCQF

Ages		Scottish Colleges	Universities and specific higher education institutions	Communities	Workplaces
17+	Secondary School Senior Phase – years S5 & S6. Mainly qualifications at SCQF levels 5-7.	Qualifications at SCQF levels 1-12.	Qualifications at SCQF levels 7-12.	Qualifications at all SCQF levels.	Qualifications at SCQF levels 3-12.
16+					
16	Secondary School Beginning of the Senior Phase – year S4 (Compulsory) Qualifications at SCQF levels 1-5.				
13-15	Secondary School – years S1-S3 (Compulsory) – broad general education Experiences and outcomes – no national qualifications.				
5-12	Primary school – years P1-P7 (national learning outcomes).				
3-4	Pre-school (national learning outcomes).				

Figure 5 shows the types of formal qualifications which are included in the Framework. Below is a brief description of each type of qualification and where it is placed. Most of these qualifications will be made up of units which will also be allocated a level and number of credit points. Units are normally considered as building blocks of qualifications and learning programmes.

#### 4.1.2. Qualifications of SQA Awarding Body<sup>4</sup>

SQA Awarding Body is responsible for the development, accreditation, assessment and certification of formal school and college qualifications other than degrees. It is the national examining body for school qualifications in Scotland.

##### National Courses

National Courses are the main qualification offered in schools in Scotland. National Courses are also offered in colleges.

<sup>4</sup> Several qualifications listed in this section can be defined as non-formal or informal as per the NQF-IN project definition (Foreword, Page 3).



These qualifications, known as National Courses, Highers and Advanced Highers are subject-based, or topic-based and are made up of units of outcomes. There are also Scottish Baccalaureates (a group award) which consist of Advanced Highers, Highers and an interdisciplinary project at SCQF level 7. These qualifications and units are recorded on the SQA's Scottish Qualifications Certificate which also denotes the SCQF level and credit value of each module or unit achieved. Awards are made on the basis of combinations of assessment, including externally verified ongoing assessment by teachers and national examinations held annually. The outcomes required by specific national qualifications are kept under review by the SQA, which is responsible for maintaining the currency of the qualifications. It does this on the basis of an annual review, with revisions where necessary. During 2017 Scottish Government has asked that SQA removes the requirement for unit assessment for some National Courses in order to reduce teacher workload. This work is still underway.

In the fourth year of secondary school – the final compulsory year – young people enter a senior phase which can continue for up to three years at school or in college, taking Highers in 5<sup>th</sup> year at age 16/17. In the senior phase, they will take national qualifications in a wide range of general and vocational subjects at SCQF levels 1-7 and may also take other qualifications offered by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) or other awarding bodies to reflect their wider achievements. Recently the Scottish Government has introduced Foundation Apprenticeships which sit at SCQF level 6. These are in specific subject areas and include work placement and are an attempt to widen the offer at this phase of school to include more vocationally relevant qualifications.

### **Wider Achievement Awards**

SQA has also developed a range of very flexible Wider Achievement Awards which are shorter than National Courses and recognise success across different levels of difficulty, meaning they are suitable for learners of all abilities. Some are endorsed by other professional bodies or government agencies. They include Personal Achievement Awards (SCQF Levels 1 and 2), Employability Awards (SCQF Levels 3 and 4), Leadership Awards (SCQF Levels 5 and 6), Volunteering Skills Awards (SCQF Levels 3, 4 and 5), Modern Languages for Life and Work Awards (SCQF Levels 3 and 4), Internet Safety (SCQF Level 4).

### **National Certificates (NCs)**

NCs are available at SCQF levels 2-6. They are aimed at 16-18 year olds or adults following full-time courses and are mainly offered in vocational colleges. They are designed to prepare people for employment, career development or progression to a higher level qualification. NCs may relate to a subject (e.g. Celtic Studies) or an occupational area (e.g. Electrical Engineering).

### **National Progression Awards (NPAs)**

NPAs are available at SCQF levels 2-6. They are designed to assess a defined set of skills and knowledge in specialist vocational areas and they link to National Occupational Standards, which are the basis of SVQs, and are used in more traditional areas such as Construction and Childcare, and in newer areas such as Digital Literacy and Social Software. They are mainly used by colleges for short study programmes, such as return-to-work

courses or part-time learning for those already in work (e.g. the NPA Enterprise and Employability).

### **Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Diplomas (HNDs)**

HNCs are available at SCQF level 7 and HNDs at SCQF level 8. Many HNCs form the first year of a HND. They focus on different occupational areas and prepare people with the knowledge and skills to work in these areas. They cover subject areas from more traditional areas (accounting, business administration, childcare, computing, engineering, hospitality) to newer areas (creative industries, paralegal, sports and leisure). They are aligned to National Occupational Standards, or other professional body standards. Many HNCs and HNDs give entry to degree courses with credit transfer or exemptions of one or two years.

### **Professional Development Awards (PDAs)**

PDAs are available at SCQF levels 6-11. In principle there could also be PDAs at SCQF level 12 although there are none currently. They are aligned to National Occupational Standards or other professional body standards and are designed to assess and certificate progression in a defined set of specialist occupational skills and are intended for individuals already in a career or vocation who wish to extend or broaden their knowledge and skills.

### **4.1.3. Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland**

The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions is an outcomes-based structure based on a consistent qualification nomenclature, qualification descriptors, and credits. Undergraduate qualifications offered in Scottish Universities are mainly modular, with each module being allocated a level on the SCQF and credit-rated. Qualifications in this section range from SCQF level 7 to SCQF level 12

### **The Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) and the Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)**

CertHEs and DipHEs may be awarded for achievement over a breadth of subject areas or for studies focused on one subject, in some cases with a strong vocational focus.

### **Ordinary degrees**

Some Scottish bachelor's (non-honours) degrees will be highly focused while others will develop greater breadth of outcomes. Many degrees that have a specific vocational focus carry recognition by the appropriate professional or statutory body. It is awarded as either a Bachelor of Science (BSc), or a Bachelor of Arts (BA). The Scottish bachelor's (non-honours) degree is a recognised 'normal' entry requirement to a number of professions across the UK.

### **Honours degrees**

The Scottish honours degree (bachelor's degree with honours) will demonstrate a balance of breadth and depth that will be clear from particular definitive records. It is awarded mainly as either a Bachelor of Science (BSc Hons), or a Bachelor of Arts (BA Hons). Many honours degrees will have a specific vocational focus, and in some cases will carry recognition by the appropriate professional or statutory body. The term "MA" will also be used here for an undergraduate degree awarded by the Ancient Universities in Scotland.

## Master's degrees

In the majority of cases, the master's degree reflects a specialised knowledge and understanding of particular areas, applications or levels of expertise in particular subject or professional areas. In some professional areas, master's degrees are linked to structures of continuing professional development.

## Doctoral degrees

Doctoral degrees reflect specialised, advanced knowledge, understanding and practice at the frontiers of the subject or professional area. The PhD is normally awarded following successful completion of a thesis which requires the equivalent of a minimum of three years' full-time research and study to complete. Professional doctorates also require the equivalent of three years' full-time research and study to complete and will frequently involve work-based, as well as institution-based, research and study.

### 4.1.4. Workbased Qualifications

SQA Accreditation approves qualifications which assess knowledge, understanding and occupational competence in the workplace. This will include regulated qualifications and other competence based qualifications, some of which are included in Scottish Modern Apprenticeship frameworks. It also accredits qualifications which assess expertise in areas which are not necessarily work related. These include exam-based qualifications such as music and dance performance. It is not compulsory for these qualifications to be credit rated for the SCQF. However most of these accredited qualifications have been credit rated and are at various levels on the SCQF.

### Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs)

Scottish Vocational Qualifications are available at SCQF levels 4-11. The size and level of SVQs varies according to the number of units which have to be achieved in each qualification. They are primarily designed as outcomes of non-formal learning although in some cases elements of the SVQ can be achieved in simulated environments. SVQs are the basis of Scottish Modern Apprenticeships. There are SVQs in most areas of the economy/labour market. SVQs are approved for use by SQA Accreditation and then awarding bodies seek accreditation to award the units and/or the full qualifications. All SVQs must be SCQF credit rated by SQA Accreditation.

### Other workbased qualifications

Modern Apprenticeships, with a focus on occupational competences, were introduced in the UK in the 1990s. They share some characteristics with more traditional apprenticeships in other countries, but are also distinctive in a number of ways. A Modern Apprentice must be employed, receiving a wage and also learning on the job. The standards to be achieved are set out in an approved Modern Apprenticeship Framework which will include at its core either an SVQ or another work-based qualification relevant to that sector. The Modern Apprenticeship Group, an independent group which draws its authority from the Scottish Government, is responsible for the approval and de-approval of all Scottish Modern Apprenticeship frameworks. The frameworks are developed by Sector Skills Councils. All Frameworks are allocated a level and a credit value on the SCQF. During 2016-17 Scottish Government also worked with the national skills body – Skills Development Scotland to introduce Higher Apprenticeships at SCQF level 8 and Graduate Apprenticeships at SCQF

levels 9, 10 and 11. Although these are delivered primarily through higher education institutions they all contain work based skills and competences.

Recently the Scottish Government has introduced Foundation Apprenticeships which sit at SCQF level 6. These are in specific subject areas and include work placement and are an attempt to widen the offer at the senior phase of school to include more vocationally relevant qualifications.

## **4.2. Non-Formal Qualifications and Learning Programmes on the SCQF**

More than 800 additional qualifications have been added to the SCQF database by CRBs alongside the formal qualifications and programmes outlined in the previous sections. These qualifications may be programmes of colleges, universities and other higher education institutions, or they may be programmes owned by other CRBs. They may also be programmes owned by other bodies who have submitted them to a CRB for credit rating. The owners of these programmes include government agencies, professional organisations, individual employers and training companies, trade unions, youth organisations, community organisations, adult education organisations and charities. The qualifications range from SCQF level 1 to SCQF level 11 and from 1 SCQF credit point to over 100 SCQF credit points.

Examples of organisations which own non-mainstream qualifications and programmes include:

SCQF Level	Qualification Owner	Qualification Name	Credit Points
3	Ayrshire College	Access to Painting & Decorating	8
4	Dumfries & Galloway College	E portfolio Award	9
5	Trade Union Congress(TUC) Education	Certificate for Health and Safety Representatives Stage 1	15
8	City of Glasgow College	Certificate in Prosecution Practice	16
9	Fife College	Certificate & Diploma in Physical Theatre Practice	120

Examples of SCQFP approved credit-rating bodies own qualifications include:


SCQF Level	Qualification Owner	Qualification Name	Credit Points
11	Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland	Chartered Accountancy qualification	480
10	Scottish Police College	Police Driving instructors	40
10	Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland	Chartered Banker Diploma	125
8	Institute of Counselling	Certificate in Youth Counselling	20
7	Scottish Prison Service College	Control & Restraint Foundation Programme	6
5	City & Guilds	Diploma in Bricklaying	49

Figure 6 provides a version of the SCQF diagram depicting a range of examples of non-formal learning programmes that have been credit rated and placed on the Framework.

**Figure 6.** Examples of Community Learning and Development and non-formal programmes on the SCQF

**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](http://www.scqf.org.uk) to view the interactive version of the Framework or search the Database.



scqf  
scottish credit and  
qualifications framework

SCQF Levels	Examples of CLD and non-mainstream programmes on the SCQF				
12					
11			Mind over Matter <i>Decision Making Processes</i>	Chartered Management Institute <i>Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership</i>	Police Scotland College <i>Strategic Community Safety</i>
10			Mercat Tours Ltd. <i>Walking Tour Guiding</i>	abdi <i>Professional Certificate in Evaluating Human Capital Investment</i>	City of Edinburgh Council (CLD) <i>Leading a Project</i>
9			Mountain Training Scotland <i>Winter Mountain Leader Award</i>	Young Enterprise Scotland <i>Can, Plan, Do: Supporting the Enterprise Journey</i>	Innovate Now Ltd <i>Innovate Leadership Programme</i>
8	COSCA <i>Certificate in Counselling Supervision Skills</i>	Deafblind <i>Diploma in Deafblind Studies</i>	The Governance Forum <i>The Governance Certificate Course</i>	College Development Network <i>Cooperative Learning Principles and Practice</i>	Listen Well Scotland <i>Effective Listening for Life, Health and Community</i>
7	The Boy's Brigade <i>George VI Leadership Programme</i>	SQA Awarding Body <i>Supporting Employment Practice</i>	Notre Dame Centre <i>Seasons For Growth</i>	Royal Conservatoire of Scotland <i>Introduction to Actor Training</i>	Community Development Foundation <i>LEAP Training</i>
6	South Ayrshire Council <i>Adult Literacy &amp; Numeracy Volunteer Tutor</i>	The British Computer Society <i>ECDL Advanced</i>	Glasgow Life <i>First Steps in Adult Literacy Tutoring</i>	TUC Education <i>Certificate for Trade Union Learning Representatives</i>	Diversity Matters <i>Everyone Together</i>
5	Cycling Scotland <i>Cycle Training Assistant</i>	Rural & Urban Training Scheme <i>Bikefix Leadership Award</i>	The Outward Bound Trust <i>Adventure &amp; Challenge Award</i>	Move On <i>Volunteer Peer Education Excellence Programme</i>	Youth Scotland <i>Youth Achievement Awards - Silver</i>
4	Calman Trust <i>Live, Learn and Work</i>	West College Scotland <i>Care Matters</i>	Learning Alliance Scotland <i>Effective Mentoring &amp; Peer Education</i>	New College Lanarkshire <i>Relationships</i>	Sports Leaders UK <i>Award in Sports Leadership</i>
3	Shetland College, UHI <i>Letters, Leaflets and Labels</i>	West Lothian Council <i>Everyday Art and Media Literacies</i>	East Ayrshire Council <i>Integrated Youth Literacies</i>	Rathbone <i>OneLife</i>	Lead Scotland <i>Community Action and Leadership</i>
2	ASDAN <i>Employability Qualification</i>	Playback ICE <i>Moving On Transition in Action</i>	Dundee and Angus College <i>Home Skills</i>	SQA Awarding Body <i>Steps to Work Award</i>	East Ayrshire Council <i>Basic Computing</i>
1	SQA Awarding Body <i>Cycling Award</i>	Borders College <i>Ready for Retail</i>		SQA Awarding Body <i>Personal Achievement Bronze, Silver and Gold</i>	Hidden Gardens Trust <i>Organic Gardening &amp; Growing Skills</i>

### 4.3. Legal status of qualifications included on the SCQF

#### 4.3.1. Overview

The Scotland Act 1998 gives the Scottish Parliament legislative control over all education matters, but much of the structure of Scottish education is set by the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. These Acts and other more recent acts are supplemented by regulations issued by the Scottish Government which have the force of law and by guidance issued by Education Scotland, which sets de facto norms and standards for the quality of teaching and learning.

Despite this legislative control very few qualifications in Scotland have a statutory or legal status. A number of qualifications are recognised by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, but not all of these bodies are themselves recognised in law. For most occupations there is no specific qualification required and it is open to employers to recruit staff on the basis of the qualification(s) they choose to recognise. The exceptions are in areas like teaching, social services, medicine and health care, but there are also specific requirements relating to health and safety in some industries and food hygiene in others. There are also

recognition schemes in some areas, such as construction, plumbing, gas fitting, and electrical work.

Ownership of non-formal qualifications on the framework remains with the original owner of the qualification or learning programme. The qualification or learning programme does not become a 'public' qualification and the owner of the programme has no obligation to allow other organisations to deliver the qualifications or programmes. Those that do are required to have the necessary quality assurance in place to monitor this delivery. However these quality assurance systems will differ from sector to sector and organisation to organisation.

Considering the situation below in context of the SCQF:

*Qualification X was included in the SCQF upon request of a branch/sectoral organisation A operating in region Y. After a year, another branch/sectoral institution B would like to become an awarding body for qualification X, is it possible for this institution to become an awarding body? If yes, under which conditions? Who makes the relevant decisions?*

The decision as to whether institution B is allowed to become an awarding body for qualification X remains entirely in the remit of organisation A. If organisation A decides that institution B can award qualification X they must have the necessary quality assurance in place to monitor this and institution B would normally have to go through an approval process before being allowed to award the qualification.

It is possible to have very similar qualifications in the SCQF for example all universities will offer very similar degree programmes but they may differ slightly in terms of subject content. However each degree programme is entered onto the SCQF database individually but are identifiable by the programme owner. CRBs are required to ensure that if they are credit rating a programme that the programme has not already been credit rated and included into the Framework.

The sub sections that follow provide more detail on the legislative and statutory aspects that govern each sector and the subsequent Case Studies provide an example of ownership of qualifications and learning programmes that have gone through the credit rating process.

#### **4.3.2. Higher Education**

Higher education is provided in sixteen universities and three other higher education institutions in Scotland. Universities are independent, self-governing bodies. They decide the degrees they offer; the conditions on which they will be awarded and the admissions arrangements. Degrees and other higher education qualifications are legally owned by the awarding institution. Universities and the other higher education institutions are all public bodies funded by the Scottish Government through the SFC on the basis of Outcome Agreements. There are no private universities and only a small number of private higher education institutions in Scotland.

#### **4.3.3. Further Education**

Scottish colleges are self-governing organisations in the public sector. The Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013 brought about significant changes to college governance and established a new legal framework for a regional structure of colleges. There are now 27 colleges arranged within 13 regions. Colleges are managed by autonomous boards of

governors and the Chairs of College Regional Boards are appointed through the public appointments process. Although they receive substantial public funds, Scottish colleges also generate their own income. Each institution is responsible for all aspects of administrative control, subject to legislative requirements and any conditions attached to the grant of public money. These conditions will reflect important aspects of government policy, including the nature of the courses which can be funded publicly.

#### **4.3.4. Community Learning and Development (CLD)**

The legal basis for CLD is established in the *Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013*. This places legal requirements on every local authority in Scotland for the delivery of CLD. Policy on CLD is set out in a number of areas, such as youth work, community regeneration, employability, tackling poverty, early years provision, the skills strategy, a greener Scotland and the SCQF.

CLD is delivered by Partnerships brought together by the thirty-two elected local councils with the aims of improving life chances for people of all ages, through learning, personal development and active citizenship and creating stronger, more resilient, supportive, influential and inclusive communities. The Scottish Government has promoted the use of the SCQF as a tool that can be used in planning and designing learning and training programmes and processes, in supporting learning progression and transition, in career development, and more generally in helping people to recognise and value their learning.<sup>5</sup>

Partnerships plans involve all kinds of organisations – from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. This means that schools, colleges, universities and other higher education institutions are part of CLD and many of the qualifications and learning programmes used in CLD are on the SCQF. This includes qualifications and learning programmes developed specifically to support CLD. For example, a recent area of action in CLD has been on continual professional development for the CLD workforce and a number of new qualifications have been developed to support this and these have been credit rated and placed on the SCQF, as have awards for youth achievement and adult achievement and for community capacity-building. Examples of these qualifications are shown in Figure 4.

One notable approach in this sector is the Awards Network<sup>6</sup>, a forum of twenty one, mainly third sector providers of non-formal learning awards in Scotland. One of the aims of the Network is to develop a Scottish framework for valuing, recognising and accrediting young people's achievements through non-formal education. They recognise young people's contributions in a variety of settings including youth work, volunteering, active citizenship, and formal education. Some youth awards have external accreditation and currency through the SCQF, while others have their own long-standing internal processes for validation and accreditation.

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<sup>5</sup> For example, in the publication *Worth Doing: Using the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework in Community Learning and Development*.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.awardsnetwork.org/>



### **4.3.5. Work Based Learning**

The main qualification for work based learning in the SCQF is the Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ). These qualifications are based on occupational standards developed by government-approved Sector Skills Councils, employer-led organisations that cover specific industry sectors in the United Kingdom. SVQs are often a requirement of registration or practice in a number of sectors, including workers in social services, health care and early years education, and construction workers, plumbers and electricians.

Modern Apprenticeships, with a focus on occupational competences, were introduced in the UK in the 1990s. They share some characteristics with more traditional apprenticeships in other countries, but are also distinctive in a number of ways. A Modern Apprentice must be employed, receiving a wage and also learning on the job. The standards which must be achieved are set out in an approved Modern Apprenticeship Framework. The Modern Apprenticeship Group, an independent group which draws its authority from the Scottish Government, is responsible for the approval and de-approval of all Scottish Modern Apprenticeship frameworks. The frameworks are developed by the Sector Skills Councils. As each framework is introduced or reviewed by the submitting body any mandatory component which is not already on the SCQF will be credit rated and placed on the Framework.

In addition however there are a number of work based programmes on the SCQF which belong to individual employers or professional bodies and which will be assessed in the workplace. These include, for example, programmes from Microsoft and Oracle and also programmes from the fire service, police service and the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service.

As well as Modern Apprenticeships at SCQF levels 5, 6 and 7, there are Technical Apprenticeships at SCQF levels 8 and 9, Graduate Apprenticeships at SCQF levels 9, 10 and 11 and Professional Apprenticeships at SCQF levels 10, 11 and (in principle) 12.<sup>7</sup> There are over 70 Modern Apprenticeship Frameworks available at present and these include craftsman qualifications in construction, manufacturing, engineering, etc but also qualifications in computing and informatics, the creative industries, business and management, financial services, and life sciences.

### **4.3.6. Learner Mobility**

The assessment and certification of non-formal (and informal) learning has been fundamental to education and training reforms in Scotland since the mid-1980s and the principle that there should be certification of achieved learning outcomes regardless of the place, pace or mode of learning has been a core value of the SCQF from its inception. This in-built flexibility of the SCQF makes the validation of non-formal and informal learning less of an issue than it may be in more regulatory frameworks.

There are many routes and pathways to progress in education and training in Scotland and the SCQF reflects this by promoting a parity of esteem across all qualifications whether they

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<sup>7</sup> There is also a “Foundation Apprenticeship” scheme for 15 and 16 year-olds, which combines college and/or workplace experience with school as a preparation for entry into a Modern Apprenticeship with exemptions.

are academic or vocational, formal or non-formal, allowing individual learners to move vertically, horizontally and diagonally around the Framework.

Scotland has a long established approach to recognising non-formal learning using agreed systems of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Transfer. The SCQF is designed to allow greater flexibility for learners to progress through their learning journey irrespective of the nature of the learning they undertake and the sector(s) in which they undertake that learning.

The SCQF Partnership has produced tailored guidance for learners, education providers and employers on the use of RPL and the SCQF level descriptors in supporting the transition from non-formal to formal learning. For a learner seeking to make the transition from non-formal learning to formal learning, the guidance shows how the SCQF and RPL can be used to guide learners to alternative pathways using different routes to gain access to formal qualifications in another sector and also how to gain credit towards these formal qualifications using their previously gained non-formal qualifications. However, the Partnership recognises that there is still a significant amount of progress to be made in this area to ensure that all learners get recognition for learning they have already undertaken and that learners are not required to repeat learning already achieved.

In the 2014-15 Programme for Government the Scottish Government set out its ambition that every child, irrespective of socioeconomic background, should have an equal chance to access higher education. In order to identify the steps needed to achieve this ambition, a Commission on Widening Access was set up to advise government. The Commission's final report was published in 2016 and contained 34 recommendations. The report identified that there was significant variance in the level of credit awarded for prior learning between institutions and that more selective institutions tended generally to award less credit than other parts of the sector. The Commission undertook to understand why this variance existed and whether there were legitimate reasons for this. As a result, the final report included a recommendation that *'The Scottish Funding Council, working with HEIs and Colleges, should explore more efficient, flexible and learner centred models of articulation which provide learners with the choice of a broader range of institutions and courses.'* (Recommendation 10)

In addition, at the time of writing, the Scottish Government is now undertaking "The 15-24 Learner Journey Review". This is a programme of work led by the Scottish Government in partnership with key stakeholders in Scotland to review the effectiveness and efficiency of the Learner Journey for all 15 to 24 year olds. The main drivers for the review are learner personalisation and choice, and system efficiency. The review aims to consider the 15-24 Learner Journey from the senior phase in school leading to employment, including the stages of further and higher education in college, higher education in university, vocational training and apprenticeships.

The Scottish Government's vision is for a learning system which enables efficient and effective learning journeys through:

- informed decision making by the learner;
- the quality, value and reach of the provision on offer to learners;

- straightforward, seamless efficient connections between different parts of the system, including recognition of prior learning;
- equality of access to these opportunities, including suitable learner funding.

Intended key outcomes from the review include:

- Improving the design, alignment and coherence of the 15-24 learning journey
- Improving the ease with which all young people move through their learning, regardless of where they are studying.
- Evaluating the opportunities and Learner Journey choices in and across schools, colleges and community / third sector based learning to identify and consider any unnecessary duplication of learning.
- Establishing options for removing unnecessary repetition and maximising progression through levels of study in or between school, community, college, training and university.

The SCQF Partnership have been involved in the review, providing information and guidance to stakeholders to ensure that the key messages of the SCQF remain central to this work and can influence positive change in the system going forward.

## Case Study 1: Borders College and IKEA

Borders College works with organisations that support people with disabilities by developing courses for their service users within the Scottish Borders and Edinburgh areas. Using the SVQ as a model of delivery, the college developed units at basic levels that could be delivered in non-college environments, for example in supported workplaces, training establishments and other community based settings. The units were written by Borders College staff with input from staff from partner organisations and this subsequently became known as the „Skills Accreditation Programme”

In 2012-13, with funding from the Scottish Funding Council, the SCQFP established a project to support colleges that wanted to credit rate their non-recognised qualifications and put them onto the Framework. Borders College chose to credit rate the ‘Ready for Retail’ programme in order to enhance its value, to improve learners’ employability and to enable employers to measure the programme against other nationally recognised awards.

Borders College developed the programme with assistance from staff working in the Edinburgh branch of IKEA. They set about developing units that would fit around work tasks that were being carried out, providing structure to the learning that was taking place. IKEA staff members and some of the partner organisations were trained to help with the delivery and assessment of the Award.

The units for the Ready for Retail Award were validated through Borders College internal approval system. The application included general information about the award and structure, justification for developing the new provision, delivery methods, entry requirements, access routes and progression routes. Borders College, as an approved Credit Rating Body, has rigorous and robust quality assurance systems for levelling and credit rating learning programmes onto the SCQF.

Ready for Retail is now available at two levels depending on the level of support received by the candidate – SCQF level 1 or SCQF level 2 with 35 credit points awarded to those who complete the full award.

The Programme Manager at the college welcomed the opportunity to credit rate the award and said that the SCQF credit rating of the programme added value and would help improve the employment prospects of the candidates

## Case Study 2: **Scottish Police College Tulliallan**

Scottish Police College - Tulliallan acts as one of Police Scotland's key training venues. All of the courses and programmes delivered there are subject to the Police Scotland National Framework for Quality Assurance in Training and Education. Many are also credit rated on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

Up until 2011 the Probationer Training Programme (PTB) was accredited through Stirling University but once CRB status was achieved by Scottish Police College – Tulliallan, the programme was credit rated by the Police Training College Tulliallan team.

The Programme was credit rated at SCQF Level 7 with 170 credit points. Initially new recruits spend time at the College learning what is expected of them in terms of the skills, attitudes and behaviours required of a successful police officer before being allowed to undertake supervised work-based training. Additional study and assessments continue for the duration of the training period until candidates are confirmed to the rank of Police Constable.

Being awarded Credit Rating Body status by the SCQF Partnership and then successfully credit rating the Probationer Training Programme did realise a number of benefits for Scottish Police College Tulliallan. The previously existing programmes were much improved in terms of format and structure because of the thoroughness of the process. The Quality Assurance processes had to improve and this had a knock on effect on all other training programmes.

As each cohort has gone through the programme it has become clear that other opportunities have opened up for learners to use the 170 credit points at SCQF Level 7. The credits awarded for successful completion have been used by serving officers to move on to full degrees and beyond therefore new training and possible education pathways have been created for serving police officers.

Since credit rating the Ready for Retail award featured in Case Study 1, Borders College has gone on to credit rate a number of similar non-formal programmes including a 'Tenancy Award' which helps individuals who are being supported in a tenancy for the first time to understand their rights, responsibilities and other aspects of living in rented accommodation.

Another programme has also been developed in partnership with social work departments which the college has ownership of for 'Health Champions' coming from local communities to support their own community. Programmes have also been developed for organisations such as Scottish Rugby Union and the college has also provided Third Party credit rating for the College Development Network.

Speaking about the non-formal programmes they have credit rated, the college Vice-Principal said that there had been a very limited range of vocational qualifications at lower levels which added to the barriers for someone with a disability trying to gain employment. He went on to explain that the main driver for developing and credit rating such programmes was that a local need had been identified ; the college had recognised a gap in the market but they also wanted to be able to reach a specific client group and be able to open up the Framework to another audience. In doing so he said that the college had faced barriers in the process as some organisations found the cost of credit rating prohibitive but some other applications had failed because organisations underestimated the rigour of the process or the size of the task of having a programme of learning credit rated. The Vice-Principal added that the role of the SCQF Partnership was critical in terms of support, advice and guidance. He said that the vision from the beginning of the project had been broad enough to allow the college to pursue the aim of targeting programmes at the lower end of the Framework and this had been achieved.

Scottish Police College - Tulliallan (Case Study 2) is one of the CRBs that have been subject to the SCQF Partnership monitoring and review process. The Quality Assurance Manager at Police Scotland College explained that as a result of the SCQFP monitoring and review process much of the documentation used in the credit rating process had been refined, making the process less bureaucratic.

It was also explained that programmes such as the Police Youth Volunteering Programme had specifically been developed with credit rating in mind but unlike some other CRBs Scottish Police College does not actively pursue programmes of learning for credit rating for commercial purposes. The critical factors were more about what the Police Service as an organisation needed and the international recognition of Scottish Police College qualifications awarded through SCQF CRB status. He added that SCQF credit rated programmes were more appealing to international justice sector organisations and police organisations. In conclusion, it was stated that Scottish Police College continuing to be one of only a few SCQFP Approved Credit Rating Bodies meant that the profile of police training within the Scottish education system could continue to be used as an exemplar to other educational bodies and organisations beyond their own sector.

Annex 8 contains further case study examples illustrating different approaches to including non-formal VET qualifications on the SCQF

## 5. Procedure for the inclusion of qualifications in the SCQF

### 5.1. Introduction

As mentioned previously, all formal and non-formal learning is placed onto the SCQF through the process of credit rating. The process of credit rating is a devolved process carried out by approved bodies known as Credit Rating Bodies. The SCQF Partnership manages the SCQF but does not act as a Credit Rating Body nor does it 'approve' or ratify the credit rating decisions of CRBs.

There is no single mandatory national process for organisations to carry out the credit rating function, CRBs are expected to establish their own credit rating processes in accordance with the 25 SCQF principles, which are set out in the SCQF Handbook<sup>8</sup> and in line with their own robust quality assurance systems. Processes for credit rating should be explicit, reliable, valid and subject to external review.

There is no different process of inclusion for any particular types of qualifications or learning programmes. However in some cases the qualifications will be designed to a particular level and would not be accepted at another level so for example a Higher qualification is required to be at level 6 and a Honours Degree must be at level 10. The rules and regulations for these are laid down by each relevant educational sector and quality assured. In other cases credit rating may take place after a programme is designed.

There is no obligation for any qualifications and learning programmes to be included on the SCQF as inclusion is voluntary. However, the SCQFP has agreed that all formal qualifications as shown in the SCQF diagram will be credit rated. Therefore a new National 5, Higher or Honours Degree, for example, will always be credit rated and placed onto the Framework.

### 5.2. The Credit Rating Process

Credit rating is a process of professional judgement leading to a formal statement on the volume of SCQF credit points and allocation of an SCQF level for a qualification/learning programme.

Professional judgement is carried out by those qualified through experience and knowledge of the discipline, field of study, profession, trade or area of study.

The focus of credit rating is on learning outcomes and on the arrangements for assessing those learning outcomes.

For any qualification or learning programme to be credit rated, the CRB must ensure that the programme meets the following 4 criteria:

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<sup>8</sup> [http://scqf.org.uk/media/1125/scqf\\_handbook\\_web\\_final\\_2015.pdf](http://scqf.org.uk/media/1125/scqf_handbook_web_final_2015.pdf)

- written in learning outcomes;
- worth at least 1 SCQF credit point;
- formally assessed; and
- quality assured, including external quality assurance.

Each CRB will design their credit rating system to meet the 25 SCQF principles but also to fit in with their own internal design, development, approval and review processes thus resulting in different systems in different Credit Rating Bodies. It should be noted however that all processes must incorporate the use of the SCQF Level Descriptors<sup>9</sup>. In addition the SCQF Handbook states that the process should also involve the use of other reference points such as relevant qualification or learning programme descriptors, higher education subject benchmark information, awarding body specifications and other appropriate sources of information and guidance.

There are external quality assurance mechanisms to ensure that the systems designed by CRBs are in line with the SCQF principles and operating effectively. These arrangements are outlined in Chapter 6.

A flowchart is provided as guidance to CRBs outlining the possible stages of a credit rating process. This is shown in Figure 7 below. However each CRB can design and develop a credit rating process which links with their own internal structures and processes (see Annex 7).

It is normally expected that the credit rating process will consist of three stages after a submission for credit rating is received:

- Initial credit rating decision
- Vetting of the credit rating decision
- Ratification of the credit rating by senior personnel in the CRB

Some of these stages may be carried out by individuals or panels/committees.

A submission for credit rating is likely to include the following information:

- Aims and rationale of the programme
- Learning outcomes
- Assessment of learning outcomes
- Delivery details
- Entry requirements
- Breakdown of learning hours
- Criteria for pass/fail
- Quality assurance arrangements

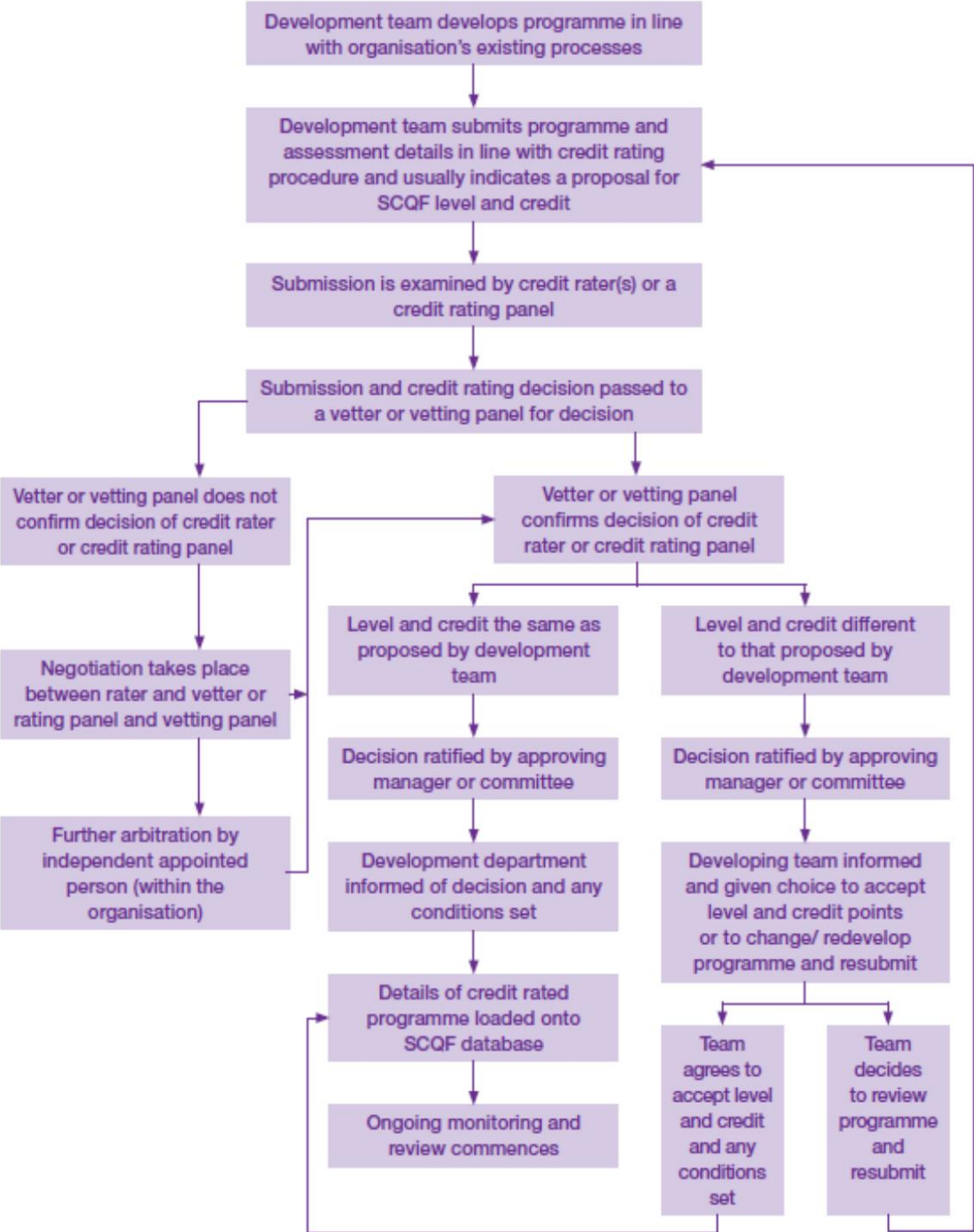
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<sup>9</sup> <http://scqf.org.uk/media/1123/scqf-level-descriptors-web-aug-2015.pdf>



Figure 7. Credit Rating Process

FLOWCHART - CREDIT RATING PROCESS



### 5.3. Certification of credit rated qualifications/learning programmes

Certificates issued to learners must include the following information:

- the title of the qualification or learning programme;
- the total number of SCQF credit points awarded on completion;
- the SCQF level;
- the SCQF logo;
- the name of the Credit Rating Body.

Where a Credit Rating Body is not able to show all of this information on the certificate, it must be produced and issued to the learner in another format (e.g. a transcript). The word “level” must only be used in relation to the SCQF level. The one exception to this is where the relevant EQF level is shown in addition to the SCQF Level.

This will be the same for both formal and non-formal learning programmes.

Annex 6 contains an example of a certificate for non-formal learning.

### 5.4. Refusal to credit rate and barriers to credit rating

A request to credit rate a programme/qualification may be refused on the grounds that the qualification/programme does not meet the 4 SCQF criteria or that the organisation asking for the programme/qualification to be credit rated does not own the programme.

It should be noted that as the SCQF already includes qualifications of all types, including non-formal qualifications there is little evidence to suggest that any types of qualifications offer particular difficulties for credit-rating. Although it is important to note that credit rating at level 1 of the SCQF where learners may require support to achieve competence is a particularly skilled activity carried out by experienced staff working with learners at that level. Level 1 of the SCQF is not referenced to the EQF as it is regarded as being below EQF level 1.

### 5.5. Credit Rating Paperwork

Each CRB will develop its own set of paperwork for credit rating including submission forms, forms to record discussions and decisions about level and credit points and forms to record the vetting and ratification of decisions. CRB's will design these to meet the needs of their own internal systems but also to meet the requirements of the principles contained in the SCQF Handbook.

It is important that all CRBs record their credit rating processes and decisions so that the integrity of the Framework can be maintained. These records may be examined during their external scrutiny processes by the relevant Quality Assurance Body.

Annex 7 contains a full set of guidance notes from an SCQF Partnership Approved CRB including flowcharts of processes, examples of submission forms and related documentation all associated with the credit rating process.

## 5.6. Third Party Credit Rating

Building on the processes described above, if a CRB is credit rating a programme owned by another organisation at their request, this is known as third party credit rating. As the CRB may not be familiar with the organisation's processes as they would when credit rating their own programmes, the CRB will need to examine the same list of information as detailed in 5.2 above but may also need to examine the organisational systems in place for:

- the design, development, approval and validation of learning programmes
- plagiarism and cheating
- appeals
- staff development

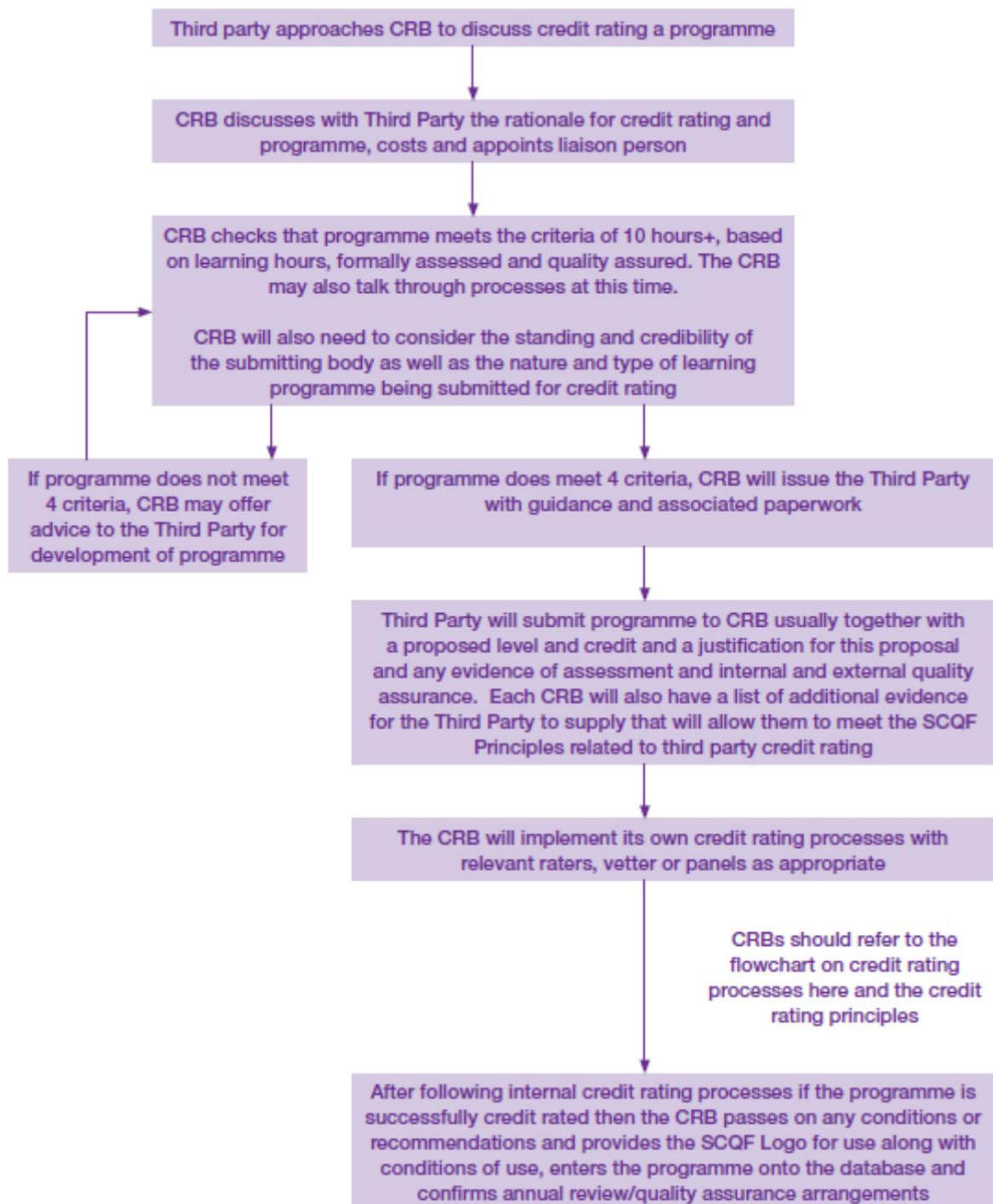
They will also want to look at the stability of the organisation, their track record in providing learning and training and the facilities and support in place for learners.

The CRB will also have systems in place for informing the other organisation of requirements of a submission including the evidence to be presented, the outcomes of the credit rating process, and for the ongoing monitoring of the third party and credit rated programme including certification.

Figure 8 outlines the key stages of this process followed by an illustrative example for clarification.

Figure 8. Flowchart for Third Party Credit Rating

**FLOWCHART – THIRD PARTY CREDIT RATING**



## Illustrative Example: **Third Party Credit Rating**

*This case study describes a fictitious situation. It does not refer to a real qualification which is in existence but is used to illustrate the process of what is referred to as ‘**third party**’ credit rating in Scotland which is a well-established process. The sections below outline the process that an organisation would go through to place a qualification onto the SCQF if they were not authorised as an SCQF Credit Rating Body.*

A small training organisation provides training and awards the qualification ‘Introduction to Car Mechanics’. This organisation is a private company and not part of the mainstream education sector (state) – they are not subject to any quality assurance review by any government body. The organisation wishes to have this qualification credit rated and placed onto the SCQF.

The organisation contacts the SCQF Partnership for advice on getting ‘Introduction to Car Mechanics’ credit rated and attends a free workshop for third party organisations on credit rating. The training organisation approaches a Credit Rating Body and discusses the suitability of ‘Introduction to Car Mechanics’ against the 4 key SCQF criteria.

The Credit Rating Body discusses details of costs and the process of credit rating with the organisation.

The organisation indicates to the CRB that they wish to submit ‘Introduction to Car Mechanics’ for credit rating. The CRB provides the organisation with the necessary paperwork and details of the information that they will need to submit. The organisation completes the paperwork, makes the submission (including their estimation of the level and credit) and pays the required fee.

The third party organisation may be asked by the Credit Rating Body to indicate an estimated SCQF level and number of credit points for the qualification ‘An introduction to Car Mechanics’ within their submission for credit rating. However, it is the sole responsibility of the Credit Rating Body to decide on the level and number of credit points. If this decision differs from the estimation received from the third party then there may be some discussion about the necessary changes to the qualification to bring it to the desired level or the third party may decide to accept the CRBs credit rating decision. If there is no resolution then the CRB is under no obligation to credit rate the qualification and it will not be placed onto the SCQF. All CRBs will decide on levels using the SCQF Level Descriptors (2015). This single set of descriptors is used irrespective of the sector, subject or level of the qualification and irrespective of the type of organisation or institution owning the programme or carrying out the credit rating.

The CRB receives the submission and reviews the submission using their internal credit rating process involving their subject experts on the vetting and approval panels. The CRB informs the organisation of the outcome of the credit rating process. This will be the level and the number of credit points allocated to ‘Introduction to Car Mechanics’ and the rationale for this decision. This outcome matches the estimation of the third party organisation.

The Credit Rating Body then enters ‘Introduction to Car Mechanics’ onto the SCQF database together with details of the period of credit rating and the date of review. The CRB issues the

## 6. Quality Assurance of non-formal sector qualifications

### 6.1. Introduction

The SCQF Handbook (SCQF Partnership: 2015) sets out 25 principles – see Annex 3. Principle 1, which underpins all of the other principles, states that the SCQF Partnership and the Credit Rating Bodies share responsibility for ensuring the quality and integrity of the SCQF. This principle underlines the duties that fall on the Credit Rating Bodies, but does not detract from the lead responsibility of the Partnership.

The Handbook states that “Safeguarding the integrity and reputation of the Framework is paramount and quality assurance systems must be strong and rigorous enough so as not to compromise this integrity.”<sup>10</sup> These systems must combine internal quality systems with external scrutiny. Robust quality assurance is essential to create trust in the SCQF among users – learners and providers. The method of application of these principles varies from sector to sector but all Credit Rating Bodies are required to operate quality assurance systems that include robust checks carried out by an independent body or someone who is not employed by, or part of, the institution or organisation. Providing clear evidence on this is a crucial part of the process of being approved to become a Credit Rating Body as outlined in Section 5.1.

### 6.2. Quality of the process of inclusion in the SCQF

Each Credit Rating Body must have a quality assurance system in place to safeguard standards, protect the integrity of the programmes and ensure consistent assessment.

Credit Rating Bodies have to demonstrate that their own internal quality assurance meets the principles set out by SCQF Handbook.

As the system of credit rating is a devolved one it is important that there is a quality assurance system to monitor this process (see the diagram below). This is carried out by a number of agencies.

- SCQFP in partnership with Education Scotland for further education colleges
- QAA Scotland for Higher Education Institutions and Universities
- SCQFP for other Approved CRBs
- Scottish Government and an independent auditor in the case of SQA

All of these quality assurance arrangements include regular evaluation of the organisations, their learning programmes and their quality assurance systems.

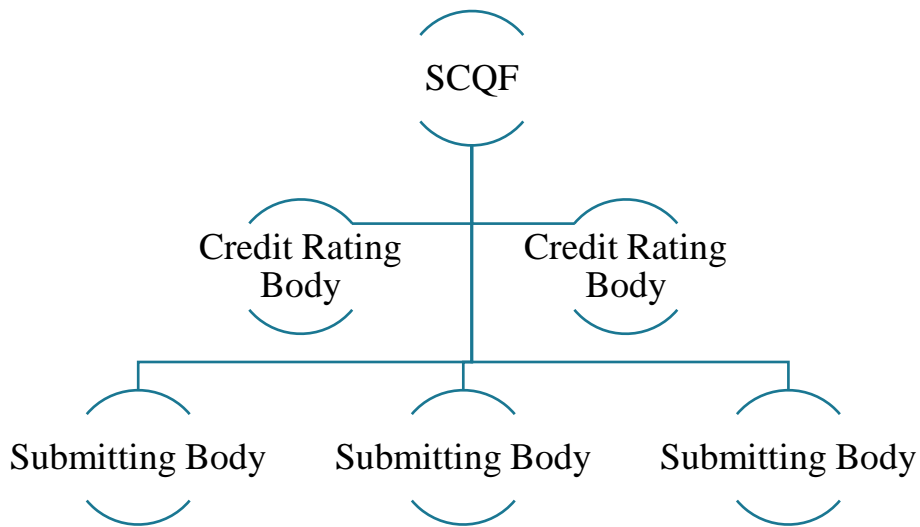
Self-assessment by organisations is integral to the monitoring processes carried out by Education Scotland, QAA Scotland and the SCQF Partnership.

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<sup>10</sup> SCQF Handbook, p 33.



**Figure 9. Quality Assurance and Credit Rating**



All of these external monitoring bodies are themselves subject to review of different kinds; QAA Scotland and Education Scotland, for example, carry out their work on the basis of renewable service level agreements with the Scottish Funding Council, which is an executive public body of the Scottish Government with a statutory duty to ensure that the quality of further and higher education in colleges and universities is assessed and enhanced; and QAA is subject to periodic review as a full member the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). SQA is also subject to a formal review by external auditors.

### **6.3. Quality Assurance within the Higher Education and Further Education sectors**

#### **6.3.1. Scottish Universities**

Higher education provision is developed within the parameters of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, The Quality Code was developed by the higher education sector and is published and maintained by QAA: it sets out a series of expectations on which all higher education providers are agreed and is subject to revision as required: it covers academic standards, the quality of provision and support for students, and communication about provision. Higher education institutions are encouraged to create their own quality codes, building on the national expectations. The main aim of the UK Quality Code is to ensure that higher education provision and outcomes are comparable and consistent at a threshold level across the UK. Scottish Universities validate their own qualifications making use of the UK Quality Code, including subject benchmarks, and the Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland, embedded within the SCQF. Universities are responsible for the quality of a range of processes: including programme design and maintenance, credit rating of their own provision, credit rating of the provision of other organisations (if they choose to offer that service), assessment of learners, and making awards to successful

learners. They do this through internal evaluation processes, in which individuals external to the institution often have a formal role – especially external examiners and professional bodies. In addition QAA Scotland carries out regular reviews of aspects of the work of these institutions and these reviews are published. The approach, which is called “Enhancement-led Institutional Review”, aligns with the European Standards and Guidelines and there are international reviewers on all teams. Particular features of Scotland’s quality assurance mechanisms are a strong element of student participation in the review process and a national programme of enhancement, aimed at developing and sharing good practice.

### **6.3.2. Scottish Colleges**

Most of the qualifications offered by Scottish colleges are validated by SQA or other awarding bodies and these awarding bodies operate quality assurance based on approval, audit and external verification. Colleges also have their own quality systems and carry out continuous self-assessment as part of a national programme of enhancement. External reviews of quality are carried out by Education Scotland on behalf of the SFC, the body which allocates public funds to colleges and universities. Additional quality assurance processes may be operated by bodies such as Skills Development Scotland for vocational education and training schemes such as Modern Apprenticeships. Quality assurance mechanisms in Scottish colleges include an active element of student participation and feedback.

### **6.3.3. Other Credit Rating Bodies**

Other Credit Rating Bodies will design their own internal quality assurance systems covering the design, approval, delivery, monitoring and review of their learning programmes. In reality many of these are very similar in some aspects to those systems in existence in colleges and universities. These Credit Rating Bodies are subject to review and monitoring carried out by the SCQF Partnership involving self-assessment, annual monitoring and a 4-yearly periodic review. In addition, these CRBs must also arrange for an independent external review of their credit rating processes.



## 7. Costs of including non-formal sector qualifications in the NQF

Including non-formal qualifications and learning programmes on the SCQF through the credit rating process already described can be carried out by CRBs themselves to place their own provision on the Framework or by carrying out credit rating for other organisations. Providing a service for other organisations may be carried out on a commercial basis. Not all CRBs offer a service for credit rating to other organisations and some may offer the service as part of a partnership on a non-commercial basis.

There is no nationally set charge for credit rating and the cost will be agreed between the CRB and the submitting organisation. Costs can currently vary, on average, between £4,000 and £7,000 (€4600 and €8000) and will depend on the size and complexity of the learning programme/qualification and the amount of support needed by the organisation. In all cases the submitting body will pay for the services of the CRB however, any costing model would take account of the following important considerations:

- Time required for release of staff in the required subject area and their availability
- Time required for liaison with submitting body
- Time required for release of panel members
- Size of programme being submitted
- State of readiness of the programme

This state of readiness of the programme can have a significant impact on the time taken to carry out the credit rating process and this can ultimately affect the cost. The SCQF Partnership runs workshops for organisations wishing to have a programme credit rated to guide them through the process.

Based on the above, organisations can sometimes negotiate the cost with the Credit Rating Body. The organisation may also be able to source some funding from another agency or organisation to cover this cost.

The CRB may also charge for the mandatory ongoing monitoring and quality assurance.

SCQFP has also worked with a range of organisations to explore options for learning to be credit rated onto the Framework and this is set out in its Strategic and Operational Plans. In the past number of years SCQFP has been:

- supporting organisations in the Community Learning and Development sector, and in further and Higher Education to have non formal programmes credit rated onto the SCQF; and
- running free to attend workshops called “Would You Credit It” specifically for those in the non- formal sectors to find out what they might need to do to have something credit rated – explaining learning outcomes, assessment and quality assurance.

One CRB interviewed as part of this project which had credit rated and placed upwards of 50 non-formal learning programmes onto the SCQF said that cost was not always an issue for submitting bodies. The institution operates a successful commercial credit rating service and

they indicated that rather than the cost being a barrier, submitting bodies often see credit rating of their programmes as a quality enhancement process that they wish to integrate into their existing systems. Additionally there has been some anecdotal evidence to suggest that some submitting bodies were of the opinion that a learning programme from a third party would not have the same prestige as a university qualification unless it had gone through the credit rating process and therefore the cost was incidental. The institution also stated that submitting bodies were aware of the many benefits of having their programmes credit rated and placed on the SCQF and so credit rating was perceived as value for money. At the same time the institution viewed commercial credit rating as a way of building partnerships, either collaborative, commercial or otherwise.

However, there is also anecdotal evidence that smaller organisations may see the cost of credit rating as a barrier. This is especially the case for charitable organisations and community groups. However many of these seek partnerships with their local college or university who may be willing to credit rate a programme as part of a partnership.

## 8. Current debate on further developments

### 8.1. Overview

Since the SCQF was launched in 2001 the Scottish Government and its agencies have worked to ensure that SCQF levels and credit values are part of everyday work and communication in schools and colleges and with learners and (for younger learners) their parents. The SCQF Partnership has also commissioned several important pieces of research with learners and stakeholders over that period looking at impact and levels of understanding of the Framework across all learning sectors.

Since 2010 a systematic programme of research has been carried out among learners, institutions and employers to gauge levels of understanding and use of the Framework. An emerging trend in this research has been that learners themselves are often using the SCQF to take more control of their own planning and progression, realising that the Framework is as amenable to recognising non formal learning as it is to recognising formal qualifications gained in schools or other formal institutions.

HEIs and Colleges have also continued to use the SCQF to inform the design and development of their curriculum portfolio and to ensure that there is a balance of provision at different SCQF levels. Colleges in particular have made use of the SCQF to inform the development of new regional curriculum portfolios, to embed new National Qualifications and to ensure a balance of provision at different SCQF levels with examples of non-formal learning in evidence. Both sectors look set to continue to credit rate their non formal qualifications and learning programmes and provision offered by third parties when there is a need or demand.

In the context of this report, one recommendation that emerged from research carried out in 2014 suggested that guidance could be strengthened to promote credit rating of non-formal learning and to further direct and encourage HEIs and colleges to reference and comply with the SCQF Credit Rating Guidelines when credit rating such learning programmes. The SCQFP has since produced updated guidance and resources for the HEI and college sectors and the increasing number of non-formal learning programmes and qualifications on the SCQF database demonstrates that institutions are increasingly aware of this guidance and are acting on it.

### 8.2. Scottish Government priorities

The Scottish Government's strategies to widen access and participation for young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds and to develop Scotland's young workforce have encouraged sectors to work more extensively with each other and with schools, Local Authorities and employers, and the SCQF can be seen as integral to this process. This work is enabling better integration of Scotland's education system and is developing both academic and vocational education and training opportunities that support youth employability and offer young people alternative progression pathways and development choices across and upwards through different SCQF levels. The SCQF is essential for informing the design, development and communication of curriculum and alternative progression pathways between different parts of Scotland's education system. In this way it

will continue to provide partners with a framework and common vocabulary, assisting in the identification of gaps in provision, informing credit rating and levelling decisions and supporting the recognition and validation of informal and non-formal learning.

These activities complement the current Government focus on education including Developing the Young Workforce<sup>11</sup>, Curriculum for Excellence<sup>12</sup>, Post 16 Education Reform<sup>13</sup> and raising educational attainment.<sup>14</sup> As well as initiatives such as 'How Good is our School' and 'Closing the Gap'. Ministers have placed the focus very firmly on education and particularly education of young people and there seems to be a clear vision that learning in many different contexts and settings should be recognised for the benefit of society as a whole. The Scottish Government is, at the time of writing, carrying out the "15-24 Learner Journey review" which is a programme of work led by the Scottish Government in partnership with others, to review the effectiveness and efficiency of the 15-24 Learner Journey for all 15 to 24 year olds in Scotland. In 2017 a Commissioner for Fair Access to Higher Education in Scotland was also appointed. This postholder will be an advocate for disadvantaged learners, working across the education system to provide strategic leadership and drive change across the system.

The SCQF Partnership will continue to give considerable thought to exactly what offers it can make which can help deliver on the pledges of Government in relation to excellence and equity in education.

The Partnership aims to continue to champion the use of the SCQF to support curriculum development, progression planning, supporting attainment and achievement and as a means of keeping learners at the forefront of our messages. For the next few years education and supporting learners to achieve their full potential will continue to be a top priority for Scottish Government and SCQFP plans to play an effective and efficient part in this.

### 8.3. The SCQFP Strategic Plan

In developing the SCQFP strategic plan, the Partnership, along with others, is fully contributing to supporting the Government agenda to deliver economic recovery. The need to support economic growth and ensure that skills are utilised fully in workforce development are very clear. The SCQFP strategic plan also acknowledges that the principles which underpin the SCQF will be fundamental to the success of Developing Scotland's Young Workforce. The Partnership recognises fully that the next few years will continue to see many changes in the education and training landscape both structural and contextual. The Strategic Plan has been developed to capitalise fully on the SCQFP's excellent partnership arrangements whilst still recognising that we will need to be flexible in order to respond to changing priorities for partners. The Partnership will continue to consult with key stakeholders on how best to support them and enhance education, learning, skills and training for individuals and employers.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/developingtheyoungworkforce>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/post16reform>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/Raisingeducationalattainment>

The vision is to ensure that the Framework provides a range of tools and solutions to support both learners and employers through extremely challenging times ahead. The Partnership will seek to add value to the strategy outlined in Developing the Young Workforce as well as those strategies and initiatives which are more closely linked to supporting the economic recovery agenda. To this end, the SCQF Partnership's Key Objectives for 2015-18 are to:

- Maintain the reputation of the SCQF as a quality framework by monitoring, supporting and enhancing the work of Credit Rating Bodies
- Create greater demand for learning to be recognised on the SCQF from learners and employers
- Provide support and guidance on the inclusion of informal and non formal learning on the Framework along with advice on the use of Recognition of Prior Learning
- Market and promote the use of the Framework and associated tools and guidance
- Cultivate new collaborative relationships with key stakeholders to further embed the SCQF across all sectors
- Promote the SCQF as a tool to support learner transitions
- Promote the experience of developing and maintaining the SCQF to an international audience

#### 8.4. Other initiatives and future plans

The SCQF Executive Team will continue to work with Skills Development Scotland (SDS), the national skills agency, SQA, Universities and relevant skills bodies to promote the use of the SCQF in non-formal/workbased qualifications/programmes and increase awareness levels of the SCQF with employers. To support this, the SCQF will:

- Continue to explore with skills bodies the value of creating contextualised framework diagrams to highlight the comparability of academic qualifications with sectoral qualifications.
- Continue to work with Colleges and Universities to develop and promote pathways for non-formal/workbased qualifications into academic qualifications.
- Continuing to work with partners to promote the value of credit rating for sector wide CPD provision.

There is an acknowledgement that further work is needed across all sectors to ensure that messages about non-formal qualifications on the SCQF are signposted and communicated consistently and that any non-formal provision that is publicised as being SCQF credit rated has followed SCQF credit rating guidelines. The SCQF Executive Team aims to continue to provide enhanced guidance to HEI and College Marketing and Quality Assurance Teams as well as to employers and practitioners in the CLD sector and to parents of learners to ensure that these key messages continue to be delivered and understood.

In keeping with the theme of this report, the SCQF Partnership will also continue to embody a fully collaborative approach by bringing together employers, colleges, universities, providers of learning and public agencies in order to maintain and promote a Framework that helps to promote opportunity and reduce inequality by recognising all kinds of learning.

Particular in 2018, the SCQF Partnership Executive Team will also lead on a key project looking at the inclusion of non-formal learning programmes into the SCQF to assist with the transition/employment of Armed Forces Veterans.

The SCQF Partnership also intends to update its report of the referencing of the SCQF to the EQF by the end of 2018.

## 9. Literature

### SELECTED REFERENCES

SCQF Partnership publications

*Quality Assurance Model for SCQF Partnership Approved Credit Rating Bodies.* (2014)

*SCQF Credit Rating: Criteria Explained.* (2010)

*SCQF Handbook.* (2015)

*The SCQF Database Explained – A Guide for Credit Rating Bodies.* (2012)

*SCQF Level Descriptors* (2012)

*A Blueprint for Fairness: The Final Report of the Commission on Widening Access* (The Scottish Government. Crown Copyright 2016)

### RELATED REPORTS AND GUIDANCE

Scotland's Colleges. 2014. *Guidelines to Promote and Support the Credit Rating Process in Colleges in Scotland.* Stirling: Scotland's Colleges.

Scottish Government. 2008. *Worth doing: Using the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework in Community Learning and Development.* Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

2016 Update to the European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning – Country Report: Scotland.

### WEBSITES

College Development Network: [www.collegedevelopmentnetwork.ac.uk](http://www.collegedevelopmentnetwork.ac.uk)

Education Scotland: [www.educationscotland.gov.uk](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk)

The Higher Education Academy: [www.heacademy.ac.uk](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk)

QAA Scotland: [www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/scotland](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/scotland)

Scotland's Colleges: [www.scotlandscolleges.ac.uk](http://www.scotlandscolleges.ac.uk)

Scottish Funding Council: [www.sfc.ac.uk](http://www.sfc.ac.uk)

SCQF: [www.scaf.org.uk](http://www.scaf.org.uk)

SQA: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa)

SQA Accreditation: <http://accreditation.sqa.org.uk/accreditation/home>

Universities Scotland: [www.universities-scotland.ac.uk](http://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk)

## 10. About the authors

**Anthony O'Reilly** is a member of the Executive Team within SCQFP. His role has included leading on and participating in projects promoting the use of the Framework as well as activities which build and maintain relationships with UK, European and International partners. Anthony has also worked on a number of research projects evaluating the use and impact of the SCQF in Higher and Further Education, among training providers, schools, learners and employers. Anthony has been involved in a number of groups concerned with the implementation of UK and European VET initiatives such as ECVET, EQAVET, ESCO and Europass.

Anthony has worked with the national skills agency as an Enterprise in Education Adviser, working with schools, colleges and employers across a range of sectors. He led on the development of a Supported Employment initiative in the Glasgow region to enable people with learning difficulties to enter mainstream employment. He implemented and managed a union upskilling initiative in the south west of Ireland; training and coaching a network of Union Learning Representatives and marketing the project to business and enterprise as well as education providers. This led to his involvement in a number of European projects where Anthony worked with partners involved in Recognition of Prior Learning, Learning Mentors programmes, European Qualifications Framework (EQF) projects and a European VET network.

Anthony has been involved in the design, delivery and assessment of a range of training and educational resources in the UK and Ireland and has been involved in the field of education, training and qualifications for over 20 years in a range of posts. More recently he has worked on a number of European projects based on implementing National Qualifications Frameworks and promoting the benefits and synergies of the various European VET initiatives as part of his role within the Executive Team at the SCQFP. He has participated in a number of Transversal and Erasmus+ projects both as a participant and an organiser with partners from Italy, Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Macedonia, Malta and others.

Anthony graduated with a BA in Business Organisation and Management and holds a postgraduate certificate in Management Studies.

**Sheila Dunn** is currently Head of Quality and International Development at the SCQF Partnership which she joined in May 2012. She has responsibility for the quality and integrity of the framework including direct support for new and existing Credit Rating Bodies and is also involved in activities relating to the SCQF and its relationship to other frameworks in the UK, Europe and beyond. She has participated in a number of European Funded Projects during her time with the Partnership and most recently was an International Expert on an E-Twinning Project in the FYR Macedonia along with partners from Poland and Croatia.

Sheila has worked in education in Scotland for over 20 years starting her career as a Research Fellow working in Higher Education researching Quality Systems in Education. She then moved to take up a role as Quality Manager at a vocational education college responsible for setting up and monitoring quality systems and then as a Development Officer



with The Quality Assurance Agency, Scotland managing and facilitating reviews of learning and teaching in Higher Education Institutions across Scotland.

Prior to joining the SCQF Partnership, Sheila was Head of Learner Enhancement at Kilmarnock College in Ayrshire, Scotland, a vocational education college. During this time she was responsible for the strategic leadership of a range of services including Quality Enhancement, Learner Resources, Learner Services and Marketing ensuring that the College met the needs of all learners during their learning journey. Sheila also managed the College's credit rating of non-formal learning for inclusion within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

Sheila graduated with a BA (Hons) in Business Studies and holds a Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Studies in Education.

# ANNEXES

## Annex 1. The SCQF Partnership

The SCQF Partnership has ultimate responsibility for the Framework and was set up in 2006 as a company limited by guarantee. This means that it has corporate status and can contract for services in relation to the development and maintenance of the SCQF. The SCQF Partnership is also a charity, which gives it certain legal rights and obligations. It is not a government agency or a public body of the Scottish Government.

Although the Scottish Government has no direct role in the functioning of the SCQF, much of the funding for the Partnership's activities comes from the Scottish Government. A proportion of funding also comes from the Scottish Funding Council and the Partnership will regularly report on progress towards objectives to them.

The work of the SCQF Partnership includes maintaining linkage with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and other national frameworks, commissioning developmental and research projects, disseminating information about the Framework and supporting individuals and organisations to use the Framework and the associated SCQF level descriptors. The overall aim of the Partnership is to ensure that, as far as possible, all assessed qualifications and learning programmes in use in Scotland are included on the Framework.

The SCQF Partnership's status as a company places it under a number of legal obligations, under the Companies Act. The Partnership must, for example practice clear and credible company decision-making processes; provide good quality and timely information about the Partnership's work and about the SCQF; ensure that appropriate lines of communication are maintained between the company and its stakeholders; and take due account of any strategies, policies or recommendations emerging from these communications.

### The SCQF Partners

#### **The College Development Network**

The College Development Network is an independent company and a registered charity. Its mission is to support Scottish colleges to deliver good practice. It provides advice, guidance and support, learning materials and professional development events on curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment, leadership, organisational development and governance.

#### **The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in Scotland (QAA Scotland)**

QAA Scotland is part of the UK-wide Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), the independent body entrusted with monitoring, and advising on, standards and quality in UK higher education. QAA is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. QAA Scotland has devolved responsibilities for the work of QAA in Scotland. Much of its work relates to the Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF) which has been developed since 2003 under the guidance of the Universities' Quality Working Group. QAA Scotland undertakes a broad range of review and enhancement activity aimed at supporting the quality assurance and enhancement of higher education in Scotland. QAA Scotland is a member of the European Quality Audit Network.

## **The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)**

SQA is an executive non-departmental public body of the Scottish Government, responsible for the development, accreditation, assessment and certification of qualifications other than degrees. SQA Accreditation is a distinct, autonomous arm of the SQA. The SQA's functions and responsibilities are laid out in the Education (Scotland) Act (1996) as amended by the Scottish Qualifications Authority Act (2002).

## **Universities Scotland**

Universities Scotland is an unincorporated membership body and a registered charity. It is the representative body of Scotland's higher education institutions. Its mission is to develop policy on behalf of the university sector and campaign on higher education issues.

## **SCQF Structures**

### **The EQF National Co-ordination Point for Scotland**

The SCQF Partnership is the EQF National Co-ordination Point for Scotland. It works closely with the Co-ordination Points in the UK, which are The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation for England (Ofqual), the accreditation division of The Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment for Northern Ireland (CCEA), and Colleague Cymric/Colleges for Wales.

### **SCQF Quality Committee**

The SCQF Partnership Board established the SCQF Partnership Quality Committee to provide it with recommendations on all issues concerning the ongoing maintenance and quality assurance of the Framework and its relationship to other Frameworks. The Quality Committee comprises around 15 experts in the development and quality assurance of credit, qualifications and frameworks from a range of sectors, awarding and quality assurance bodies associated with the SCQF. Its Chair is nominated by the Board.

The Committee meets four times a year. It reports to the SCQF Board on applications for recognition as an SCQF credit-rating body and manages the monitoring and review of organisations which are approved by the SCQF Partnership to act as Credit Rating Bodies.

### **SCQF Forum**

The SCQF Partnership has also established a Forum to advise the Partnership on the continuing development and maintenance of the SCQF. The Forum is a national committee of key organisations with responsibility for providing or supporting education and training in Scotland. Its members are senior representatives from 24 organisations representing the main providers, users and funders of qualifications in Scotland and it is chaired by the Chief Executive officer of the SCQF Partnership.

The Forum enables key organisations, and the sectors they represent, to work together to make full use of the SCQF in meeting needs for access and participation in lifelong learning and to engage in wider debate about the use of the SCQF as a tool which underpins, supports and influences Scottish lifelong learning policies. The Forum meets twice a year and advises the SCQF Partnership on the continuing development and maintenance of the SCQF.

## Annex 2. Credit Rating Bodies in Scotland

List of Credit Rating Bodies as of April 2018.

Argyll College	Abertay University	SQA Accreditation
Ayrshire College	Edinburgh Napier University	SQA Awarding Body
Borders College	Glasgow Caledonian University	SQA Credit Rating Service
City of Glasgow College	Herriot-Watt University	City and Guilds
Dumfries and Galloway	Queen Margaret University	The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland
Dundee and Angus	Robert Gordon University	Institute of Counselling
Edinburgh College	The Open University in Scotland	Scottish Police College
Fife College	University of Aberdeen	The Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland
Forth Valley College	University of Dundee	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Glasgow Clyde College	University of Edinburgh	Scottish Prison Service College
Glasgow Kelvin College	University of Glasgow	
Inverness College (UHI)	University of St Andrews	
Laws Castle College (UHI)	University of Stirling	
Moray College (UHI)	University of Strathclyde	
New battle Abbey College	University of the Highlands and Islands	
New College Lanarkshire	University of the West of Scotland	
North East Scotland College	Glasgow School of Art	
North Highland College (UHI)	Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	
Orkney College (UHI)		
Perth College (UHI)		
Sabhal Mor College (UHI)		
Scotland's Rural College		
Shetland College (UHI)		
South Lanarkshire College		
West College Scotland		
West Highland College (UHI)		
West Lothian College		

## Annex 3. SCQF Principles

SCQF principles	Details
1	Credit Rating Bodies (CRBs) and the SCQF Partnership have equal responsibility for ensuring the quality and integrity of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.

### Principles related to Learning Arrangements and Credit Rating

SCQF principles	Details
2	All qualifications/learning programmes credit rated on to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework must meet the 4 criteria for credit rating.
3	A qualification/learning programme must be capable of being allocated an SCQF level and SCQF credit points in order that it can be included on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.
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 Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. Only full SCQF credit points are awarded – fractions of SCQF credit points (e.g. 0.5) are not allowed.
5	Qualification/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 module of learning 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/module of learning is independent of the standard at which the outcomes are achieved (e.g. grading).
8	Credit Rating Bodies must ensure that within the process of credit rating, and in processes for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), they take due cognisance of the SCQF Level Descriptors and any other relevant reference points.
9	Credit Rating Bodies must establish rigorous and appropriate systems for credit rating, including systems of internal and external quality assurance and arrangements for the retention of evidence confirming decisions on

	level and credit.
10	Where assessment leads to the award of SCQF credit points then the certificates issued to learners must include the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the title of the qualification/learning programme;</li> <li>• the total number of SCQF credit points awarded on completion;</li> <li>• the SCQF level of the qualification/learning programme achieved;</li> <li>• the SCQF logo;</li> <li>• the name of the CRB.</li> </ul>
11	Credit Rating Bodies are responsible for uploading the details of all credit rated qualifications/learning programmes to the SCQF database.

#### Additional Principles when working with a Third Party submission

SCQF principles	Details
12	Credit Rating Bodies 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	Credit Rating Bodies must establish rigorous and appropriate systems for credit rating Third Party submissions.
14	Credit Rating Bodies 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 Credit Rating Body must ensure that the Third Party provides details of auditing/quality assurance of their systems including appropriate externality.
16	Credit Rating Bodies must ensure that the Third Party organisation submits regular (e.g. annual) reports of progress in the delivery of any credit rated 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	Credit Rating Bodies must agree an appropriate review date for the credit rated qualification(s)/learning programme(s) with the Third Party organisation.
18	Credit Rating Bodies are responsible for uploading the details of all Third Party qualifications/learning programmes which they have credit rated to the SCQF Database.
19	Credit Rating Bodies are responsible for issuing the SCQF logo to the Third

Party organisation and ensuring that they are aware of the requirements for certification as outlined in Principle 10.

#### Principles relating to Credit Transfer and the Recognition of Prior Learning

SCQF principles	Details
20	The design and development of qualifications and learning programmes for the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework should facilitate and promote credit recognition for prior informal and non-formal learning and credit transfer.
21	Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is given for learning, not for 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 of 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 and enhancement mechanisms of the organisation.

## Annex 4. Indicative Evidence for the criteria for becoming a Credit Rating Body

### 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:**

- 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 evidence confirming that its diversity and equality strategy meets the requirements of current legislation.
- 1.7 Provide an effective staff development policy and be able to demonstrate this policy in action.

Examples of Evidence:

- Strategic plans; formal constitutions; business plans; audited accounts;
- Organisational chart showing the key functions carried out by the organisation;
- Documentation showing the organisation's history; information about partners and stakeholders in Scotland.
- Customer service statement setting out standards of service users can expect, performance measures against which provision will be judged, focusing particularly on manageability, responsiveness and value for money.
- Details of partner education and training providers.
- Testimonies from these partners as well as others such as employers and stakeholders in Scotland.
- Documentation showing how the organisation has implemented its diversity and equality strategy and ensures course accessibility in terms of content and delivery.
- Documentation showing: the staff development policy and IIP registration.



## **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 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; and
- 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 system by carrying out internal reviews on all aspects of the quality assurance system and 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 and actions taken as a result of these external reviews.

Examples of Evidence:

- Procedures and policies for the quality assurance of programme design, approval, validation, accreditation, assessment or other related activities;
- roles and responsibilities of staff and/or committees involved in managing and operating both the quality assurance system and the individual processes within it;
- evidence of system review and action taken as a result;
- evidence of benchmarking activities and consideration of issues arising from these;
- evidence of process reviews and actions taken as a result.
- Internal review reports; details of actions taken on the findings of these reports; details of action taken in relation to any quality assurance activity.
- External review reports from quality assurance bodies such as QAA, SQA, HMIe; external review reports of other external quality assurance schemes; details of actions taken on the findings of these reports

### **Criterion 3: Capacity and Commitment**

**The organisation has the capacity and commitment to operate as an SCQF 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 under 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, Section 1 – SCQF Credit Rating Guidelines.

3.2 Define the scope of credit rating authority being applied for in terms of levels, sectors 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.

Examples of Evidence:

- Proposed credit rating procedure along with commentary showing how the procedure meets the criteria, links to other quality assurance processes operated by the organisation and complies with the requirements of the SCQF Handbook Business plan on proposed credit rating activity.

Covering the following areas:

- Aims and objectives;
- The qualifications, occupational sectors and levels of expertise in which it proposes to credit rate;
- Organisational chart illustrating the key functions of staff and level of expertise in occupational sectors relating to design, delivery and assessment of qualifications;
- Examples of record keeping;
- Communication strategy for the credit rating process; and identification of key dates to evaluate and review the effectiveness of the business plan.
- Internal review procedure and explanation of how this links to other quality assurance processes operated by the organisation.
- Arrangements for identifying and actioning any corrective and preventative measures arising out of internal review.

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.

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; and
- 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 SCQF Partnership.

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.

Examples of Evidence:

- Organisational chart illustrating the key functions of staff and level of expertise in occupational sectors relating to design, delivery and assessment of qualifications.
- Details of staff experience in credit rating activity undertaken in another capacity – eg submitting programmes for credit rating by a third party
- Arrangement for implementing the credit rating procedure. Explanation of how this procedure links to other quality assurance processes operated by the organisation.
- Arrangements for confirming the effectiveness of induction and training for individuals in the credit rating process.
- Examples of the organisation's certificates demonstrating how SCQF level and credit and logo will be shown on certificates.
- Examples of record keeping.
- Documentation showing how the organisation will inform its stakeholders about the SCQF
- Documentation showing how the organisation will update the SCQF database.
- Description of the way in which the organisation will use the SCQF logo.
- Arrangements for the provision of an annual self-assessment report.
- Description of how this process links to other quality assurance processes operated by the organisation.
- For individuals undertaking the credit rating process, examples of the organisation's training programme for credit rating; training needs analysis; continuous professional development and/or personal development programme; and induction training.

#### **Criterion 4: Providing a Credit Rating Service for Third Parties**

The organisation has the capacity and commitment to operate as an SCQF 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.

Types of evidence:

- Business plan on proposed third party credit rating activity covering: aims and objectives; the qualifications, occupational sectors, and levels of expertise it proposes to credit rate; organisational chart illustrating the key functions of staff and level of expertise in occupational sectors relating to design, delivery and assessment of qualifications; examples of record keeping; marketing strategy for the credit rating process; and identification of target dates to evaluate and review effectiveness of the business plan.

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.

Types of evidence:

- Reports from the body's annual monitoring of its own credit rating process; details of the experience of existing staff in credit rating own programmes; organisational chart illustrating key functions of the credit rating service; details of how individuals with the required level of expertise in occupational sectors relating to design, delivery and assessment of qualifications will be accessed and deployed; arrangements for implementing the credit rating procedures; explanation of how this procedure links to other quality assurance processes operated by the organisation.

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 Guidelines for third party credit rating are complied with fully.

Types of evidence:

- Proposed procedure for third party credit rating along with commentary showing how the procedure: meets the criteria; builds on the body's existing credit rating experience; links to other quality assurance processes operated by the organisation; and complies with the requirements of the SCQF Handbook.
- This includes the proposed procedures for: the decision making function in relation to third party credit rating, the administration of the credit rating service and the support function; ensuring that the submitting body's assessments are subject to external review and monitoring; the submitting body to report to the Credit Rating Body.
- The proposed guidance for submitting bodies on certificates and the way in which these should show SCQF level and credit and logo; examples of record keeping.
- Documentation showing how the organisation will inform its learners and other stakeholders about the SCQF, arrangements for the provision of an annual self-assessment report; description of how this process links to other quality assurance processes operated by the organisation.

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.

Types of evidence:

- Documentation showing internal review procedures and an explanation of how this links to the existing quality assurance processes operated by the organisation. Arrangements for identifying and actioning any corrective and preventative measures arising out of internal reviews.

4.5 Document a procedure for making an annual self-assessment of its third party credit rating activity.

Types of evidence:

- Proposed procedure and documentation of the annual self-assessment of 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.

Types of evidence:

- For individuals undertaking credit rating processes for third party provision, examples of the organisations: training programme for credit rating; continuous professional development and/or personal development programme; and induction training.

## Annex 5. SCQFP Approved Credit Rating Body

### Annual Monitoring Review: Self-Assessment Form and Guidance notes

#### Annual Monitoring Self-Assessment Form Guidance Notes

***PLEASE READ THESE NOTES BEFORE COMPLETING THE ANNUAL MONITORING FORM***

#### Introduction

This self-assessment form requires to be completed as part of the Annual Monitoring Review process for SCQF Partnership approved Credit Rating Bodies (CRBs). The annual monitoring review process involves completion of this form and (where applicable) an annual monitoring visit to the CRB.

All information provided for the annual monitoring review will be treated in the strictest confidence.

The Form comprises of 7 sections relating to:

1. General information about the CRB
2. Criterion 1 – A Body of Good Standing
3. Criterion 2 – Robust Quality Assurance System
4. Criterion 3 – Capacity and Commitment
5. Criterion 4 – Providing a Credit Rating Service for Third Parties
6. Additional information required from collaborative partnerships
7. Checklist

All CRBs must complete information for Sections 1 – 4. You only need to complete Sections 5 and/or 6 if those sections are relevant to your organisation.

#### Evidence to be submitted

In addition to completing the form you are asked to supply, as a minimum, the evidence listed below:

- The most recent set of audited annual accounts for the CRB;
- An anonymised copy of a learner's certificate issued in the previous 12 months (and transcript where applicable);
- An up-to-date copy of all SCQF credit rating processes and procedures as operated by the CRB over the last 12 months;
- A copy of the report(s) from (a) the most recent internal review of the general quality assurance system and (b) the most recent internal review of the CRB's credit rating system currently in operation including third party credit rating if applicable;
- A copy of the report from the most recent external review of the CRB's credit rating processes and system
- A copy of the report from the most recent external review of the CRB (i.e. other than by the SCQF Partnership);

- A complete listing of the CRB's current SCQF credit rated provision carried out under their authority as a SCQFP Approved CRB;
- Details of the number of certificates including which have been issued over the last 12 months to candidates for each credit rated programme
- Examples of marketing material promoting the CRB's SCQF credit rated provision and SCQF generally;
- For CRBs carrying out third party credit rating the following should be provided for activity within the last 12 months:
  - A list of all programmes and third party organisations
  - An example of any guidance material sent to third parties through the credit rating process
  - An example of a letter confirming credit rating decisions to a third party
  - A sample of the ongoing annual monitoring of third parties
  - A copy of the internal review of the third party credit rating process (this may be included in the overall internal review of credit rating processes)
- For collaborative partnerships, minutes of any meetings between the partners reviewing the partnership and/or the credit rating activities;
- For collaborative partnerships, a copy of any new or amended contract between the partners.

In addition you should also supply any other documentation that you consider relevant for providing evidence that your CRB is continuing to meet the criteria for being an SCQF approved CRB. This may be documents relating to:

- the credit rating process;
- the organisational structure and constitution;
- quality assurance systems – particularly where these illustrate changes that have taken place over the last 12 months;
- staff training
- information about future credit rating activities and plans

You should indicate clearly the pieces of evidence you are submitting to support your statements within each of the responses to the questions in the sections of the self-assessment form.

Where the evidence is part of a larger document, you should consider carefully whether the review team needs the whole document and if the whole document is not deemed necessary include either an extract or clearly highlight the relevant section(s).

All pieces of evidence should be given a reference number either on the document or in the title of the electronic file and this number should be used in the evidence listing in Section G of the self-assessment form.

### **Completing the self-assessment form**

The self-assessment form should be used to provide evidence that your CRB continues to meet the criteria for being a Credit Rating Body for the SCQF. It should provide the SCQF Partnership with up-to-date information about your SCQF credit rating activities over the last 12 months and your plans for the future. It is therefore very important that you refer to the

Quality Criteria documented within the **SCQF Quality Assurance Model** to ensure you are providing the relevant evidence and information.

You should take care to document any changes that may have been made to your systems and processes highlighting any areas where these have been the result of internal and external reviews.

As well as the Quality Criteria you should also bear in mind the risk factors as outlined in the Quality Assurance Model which are that the CRB:

- Continues to be secure, stable and viable
- Has robust processes
- Is subject to review by an external quality assurance body
- Employs staff experienced in SCQF credit rating
- Provides training and CPD in credit rating
- Has a good credit rating track record within SCQF
- Takes action in response to reports and reviews – both internal and external
- Has changed the volume of its credit rating activity – up or down
- Has changed the scope of its SCQF credit rating – wider or narrower
- Has had changes in personnel with responsibility for SCQF credit rating
- Has had no activity since the last self-assessment report
- Has taken action on complaints made to the SCQF Credit Rating Body and/or the SCQF Partnership

These will be considered within the body of the final report by the annual monitoring team.

You should also ensure that you take into consideration the 25 principles as outlined within the SCQF Handbook which all CRBs must adhere to when formulating your responses.

### **Returning the self-assessment form**

Please return your completed self-assessment form, along with the evidence requested, by the deadline agreed to [reviews@scqf.org.uk](mailto:reviews@scqf.org.uk).

Where possible the form and the evidence should be sent in electronic format. Where this is not possible, hard copy will be accepted however the CRB should provide 3 sets of the form and all evidence.

If you have any questions about completing this self-assessment form, providing relevant information or about the annual monitoring process itself, please contact the SCQFP Office on Tel: 0141 225 2924 or at the email address above).

### **What happens next?**

As part of the annual monitoring review process you will have been advised whether or not your CRB will undergo a visit in the current year. Please note that for the first 3 years after approval a visit is mandatory. Following a successful Periodic (4-yearly) Review it is at the discretion of the SCQF Partnership Board whether or not a visit will take place.



*Where a visit is required:*

- I. On return of the completed report, officers of the SCQF Partnership will review the evidence provided against the criteria for being an SCQF approved CRB. They will draw up a further set of questions / topics to be discussed at the visit which are designed to clarify any points in the self-assessment report. The CRB will be given advance notice of the questions / topics. In addition, the information provided will be cross checked with the SCQFP database.

The visit will be arranged for a mutually suitable date and the team will consist of two members of the SCQFP Executive Team. The visit should normally last no more than one day.

After the visit, a report is compiled by the SCQFP Officers and shared with the CRB for checking on factual accuracy before being submitted to the SCQF Quality Committee. The Committee will then make a decision relating to the ongoing status of the CRB. On receipt of the report, the CRB will be expected to respond to any conditions and recommendations in the form of an action plan.

*Where a visit is not required:*

- II. The information and evidence in the self-assessment form will be reviewed by officers of the SCQF Partnership against the criteria for being an SCQF approved CRB to ensure that the CRB continues to meet the requirements for credit rating for the SCQF. Additional evidence may be requested if required and the Executive Team may contact the CRB on points of clarification.

A report, compiled by the SCQFP Officers, will be shared with the CRB for comments on factual accuracy before being submitted to the SCQF Quality Committee. The Committee will then make a decision relating to the ongoing status of the CRB. On receipt of the report, the CRB will be expected to respond to any conditions and recommendations in the form of an action plan.

### **What happens if the CRB fails to meet all criteria?**

It is possible that issues will sometimes arise from the information provided to the SCQF Partnership. These will be noted in the report that goes to Quality Committee. Quality Committee members will make any conditions and recommendations and may advise the Board on these issues and any actions that have been taken as a result. The Committee may also seek advice from the SCQF Board on any matters which may arise.

In all cases, the CRB will be supported by the SCQF Partnership to address the issues. However, in the event that an issue is deemed particularly serious, the SCQF Partnership reserves the right to instruct the CRB to suspend its credit rating activities for the SCQF on a temporary basis.

Where the issue(s) are not resolved satisfactorily the SCQF Partnership reserves the right to ultimately withdraw the right to credit right completely. This option will only be adopted in exceptional circumstances and the approved CRB will be supported in every way before such an option is taken.



# Annual Monitoring Self-Assessment Form

Please read the Annual Monitoring Self-Assessment Form Guidance Notes before completing this form. You should complete the form as fully as possible taking care to indicate the evidence to support your statements in each of the responses.

## Section A – Credit Rating Body Details

### A1 Name of Credit Rating Body

--

### A2 Key contact details for the self-assessment form (if different from the current SCQF Key Contact)

--

### A3 Please detail the process that has been followed to produce this self-assessment and in particular which key senior personnel and key committees have been involved or consulted

--

### A4 Date of Submission:

--

**Section B – Criterion 1 – a body of good standing**

**B1 Please detail any changes to the constitution, structure and governance of the CRB in the last 12 months. Please detail any impact these changes have had on the credit rating processes within the CRB.**

**B2 Please detail any changes to the staff development policy of the CRB or any other changes to training and development processes in the last 12 months**

**B3 Please detail any changes that have been made to the CRB's diversity and equality policy (or equivalent policies) in the last 12 months**

**B4 Please detail any new partnerships with education and training providers in the last 12 months in terms of delivering quality assured learning in Scotland or for the Scottish market**

**B5 Please give details of the CRB's current strategy and/or business plan in relation to the delivery of learning in Scotland or for the Scottish market.**

**Section B cont'd**

**B6 Please add any supporting statements you would like to make that you consider are relevant to this section**

--

**Section C – Criterion 2 – Robust Quality Assurance System**

**C1 Please detail any changes to the CRB's quality assurance policy and procedures in the last 12 months. Please also detail what prompted these changes and what impact (if any) these changes have had or are expected to have.**

--

**C2 Please detail any changes to the management of the systems of quality assurance in the last 12 months (eg changes to job roles, responsibilities, personnel etc)**

--

**C3 Please detail any changes that have been made to the processes of programme design, approval, validation, accreditation, assessment or other related activities in the last 12 months**

--

**Section C cont'd**

**C4 Please detail the key findings and actions arising from the latest internal review of the CRB's quality assurance arrangements.**

*You should also indicate here who carried out this review, what the scope of the review was and when it was carried out*

**C5 Please detail the key findings and actions taken as a result of the most recent external review of the CRB's quality assurance systems and processes**

*You should also indicate here who carried out this external review, what the scope of the review was and when the review was carried out*

*(Please note that this does not include any review activity by the SCQFP)*

**C6 Please indicate the date and scope of the next external review to take place and who will be carrying this out**

*(Please note this does not include any review activity by the SCQFP).*

**C7 Please add any supporting statements you would like to make that you consider are relevant to this section**

**Section D – Criterion 3 – capacity and commitment**

**D1 Please detail any changes to the credit rating processes and procedures used by the CRB in the last 12 months.**

*You should indicate why these changes were made and what impact they have had or are expected to have*

**D2 Please give details of any difficulties or issues you have encountered in the last 12 months in relation to the operating of your credit rating processes. Please indicate how these were resolved.**

**D3 Please detail what programmes you plan to credit rate onto the SCQF over the next 12 months**

**D4 Please detail the CRB's strategy for ensuring that the correct staff receive the most appropriate training on SCQF and SCQF credit rating.**

**Section D cont'd**

**D5 If the CRB uses its own SCQF training materials any changes made to the content of that training since the previous SCQFP monitoring review should be detailed here**

*Revised training materials should be also included in the evidence submitted*

**Please detail how, as a CRB, you promote the use of the SCQF to your staff and to your learners.**

**Please detail how you promote the SCQF levels and credits allocated to programmes through your credit rating processes to staff within your organisation and to delivery centres (if appropriate)**

**Please detail the process you undertake to internally review your credit rating system and the decisions that you have taken as a CRB**

**Please add any supporting statements you would like to make that you consider are relevant to this section**

**Section E – Criterion 4 – Third Party Credit Rating Only**

**Please detail any changes you have made to your credit rating systems and procedures which particularly impact on your work with third party organisations.**

**Please give details of your current strategy or business plan in relation to your credit rating work with third party organisations.**

*You should include here any specific plans you may have for the promotion of this service, any organisations you plan to work with over the next 12 months or any plans you have to expand or contract your third party credit rating*

**Do you give staff involved in third party credit rating any additional training to that detailed in Section D? If yes, please give brief details here**

**Please indicate if there have been any issues encountered within your credit rating activities with third party organisations**

*In particular, please include here details of any appeals or complaints and any issues of a quality assurance nature*

**Please outline how as a CRB you communicate to third party organisations their responsibilities once they have a programme credit rated**



**Section E cont'd**

**Give a brief outline of the outcomes of your annual monitoring reviews of third party organisations, any issues which have arisen and how these have been dealt with**

**Please add any supporting statements you would like to make that you consider are relevant to this section**

**Section F – Collaborative Partnerships Only**

**Please detail any changes to the collaborative partnership arrangements that have not already been communicated to the SCQFP**

*You should include here any changes to roles, responsibilities and procedures relating to that contractual arrangement*

**What is the current strategy for the future of the collaborative partnership**

**Please detail if there have been any issues relating to your collaborative partnership and how these have been resolved**

**Section F cont'd**

**Please briefly summarise if there have been any issues regarding your credit rating activities which have impacted on your collaborative partnership**

**Please add any supporting statements you would like to make that you consider are relevant to this section**

**Section G – Evidence List**

Please use this section to indicate all documents accompanying this self-assessment as evidence.

*You should give each document a number and clearly indicate this on the document or within the title of the file.*

*You should then complete the table below using this number placing a X in the relevant section box. If you have cited the document as evidence in more than one section then you should put a cross in all of those relevant.*

Document Number	Page 1 list	Section A	Section B	Section C	Section D	Section E	Section F

**Annex 6. Example of Certificate issued by an SCQF Approved CRB  
for non-formal learning**



*This is to certify that*

*Name*

---

*of*

**SCOTTISH FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

*Completed*

**FIRE SAFETY OFFICERS COURSE**

**WEEKS 3 - 8**

and has been awarded XX credit points

at SCQF Level X

Credit rated by the Scottish Police College - Tulliallan

Date



## Annex 7. Example of the credit rating process by an SCQF Partnership Approved Credit Rating Body

### “XXXXXX” Application for Credit Rating Service

#### 1 Introduction

The following describes the credit rating process undertaken within XXXXXX in the credit rating of programmes of learning. It also details the requirements of the Credit Rating Team (CRT) and the Decision Making Group (DMG).

This process is detailed in the accompanying flow chart which gives step-by-step guidance on what happens when, by whom and what documentation is to be used for that part of the process.

**Note:** For the purposes of this document the term “Submitting Body” will refer to either a department within the organisation or any other internal or external organisation submitting a programme for credit rating.

#### 2 Development of programmes

Once a training need has been identified and approval for delivery has been gained through the appropriate governance structure, the relevant submitting body will liaise with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) to ensure Quality Assurance processes are being adhered to.

#### 3 Submitting Body

The submitting body will make initial contact with the Training Quality Assurance Co-ordinator (TQAC) within the QAU. All programme design will follow the guidance and principles laid down in the National Framework for Quality Assurance in Training and Education, available on the organisations intranet.

During this process initial guidance, consultancy and support are offered by the TQAC. After the initial guidance, consultancy and support, a member of the QAU will be allocated to the programme for the duration of the consultancy period ensuring that a comprehensive programme design specification document is produced. This document forms the basis for any credit rating activities that may follow and covers areas such as;

- background and rationale for the programme,
- entry criteria, course aim and outcomes,
- structure and timings,
- learning, teaching and assessment methodologies,
- student support and resources,
- quality assurance processes and procedures.

All programme design specification documents follow the same standardised format to allow for consistency and familiarity for programme designers.

After the consultancy period and once the design specification and any accompanying training materials have been quality checked, approved and signed off by the Quality Assurance representative, the programme may then be submitted for credit rating to the Quality Assurance Manager (QAM).

The submitting body is required to submit the following;

- form CR 1 (internal application for credit rating)
- programme design specification document
- a component grid with a breakdown of notional learning hours
- all training materials including any manuals and training aids.

Programme designers are required to make themselves available to answer any questions/queries posed by the credit rating team, at the credit rating event.

A documentation pack will be made available during the initial consultancy meeting.

#### **4 Credit Rating Team – CRT**

The programme is then allocated to a credit rating team with a team leader appointed by either the QAM or the TQAC. The team will be made up of suitably trained staff that have undergone the initial credit rating workshop training and have observed a live CRT, in at least 2 credit rating events using the QA credit rating forms, and having been mentored by an experienced credit rater. The credit rating team will be made up of at least three staff. It would be preferable that at least one member of the credit rating team will have proven occupational expertise within the area. If this is not the case the course designer must be available to liaise with the team throughout the credit rating event.

All documentation, including the initial programme design specification checklist will be provided to the team at least two weeks prior to the event, in order that any questions can be highlighted to the CRT team leader. Prior to the event the CRT team leader and the TQAC will meet to discuss any questions arising from the team.

Pen pictures are held for all credit raters detailing their areas of expertise, their current roles and their training experience.

##### **Form CR 2**

Form CR 2 is used to obtain supplementary information, where required, by the CRT team leader.

##### **Form CR 2A**

Where necessary the CR 2A form can be used to obtain further information from the submitting body.

### **Form CR 3**

The CRT are asked to look individually at each learning outcome and then to come together to agree a moderated decision on the level of each outcome.

Once this process has been completed, and agreed, the CRT forward their decision to the Decision Making Group (DMG) using form CR 3. This includes the rationale and justification for their decisions along with a component grid breakdown of learning hours.

### **5 Decision Making Group - DMG**

The role of the Decision Making Group is to ratify the decision of the CRT. The DMG are not required to carry out a further rating of the programme but will look at the decisions and justifications of the CRT and allocate the appropriate decision for a rating and level for the programmes. There are 3 possible outcomes from the DMG:

- A.** Approved (without condition)
- B.** Approved with conditions/recommendations
- C.** Not Approved.

### **Form CR 4**

Both the CRT and submitting body are informed of the decision of the DMG using the form CR 4. This will include rationale of the DMG for the decisions made.

### **Remedial work**

If the programme requires any remedial work to be carried out, (from decisions B or C above) whether recommendations or conditions, the TQAC will liaise with the submitting body to arrange a suitable time to review the credit rating decision.

Once this work has been completed the submitting body will either provide evidence that the conditions/recommendations have been actioned (decision B) or will re-submit the programme to the TQAC for the process to be completed (decision C)

### **6 Formal Notification - (CR 5)**

On completion of the above, the submitting body is then informed officially of the SCQF Level and credit points allocated to the programme and informed that any certificates issued should contain these details. Further to this the certificate will be approved to use joint badging of XXXXXX College and SCQF and any agreed Third Party logos, where appropriate.

Details of the decision will then be presented to TQRC for consideration and discussion. The particulars of all credit rated programmes are held on a central database at the College and uploaded onto the SCQF database.

## **7 Appeals**

Submitting bodies have the right to appeal the decision of the credit rating process and request clarification as to the outcome. This initial contact should be on an informal basis and be directed to the TQAC to seek guidance and clarification as to the outcome. If this does not satisfy the submitting body a formal appeal is to be sent to the QAM within 7 days of the receipt of the formal notification and must detail the nature of the appeal and the area of clarification. The DMG will be reconvened to review the appeal and a final decision made. This decision will be notified to the submitting body within 14 days of the receipt of the formal appeal.

## **8 Associated Forms**

### **XXXXXX College Credit Rating Service Associated Forms**

- CR 1      Credit Rating Submission Document
- CR 2      Initial Request for information
- CR 2A    Additional request for information
- CR 4      Credit Rating Decision
- CR 5      Letter of Notification
- CR 6      Annual Report

**Form CR 1 Training**

**Credit Rating Submission Document**

<b>Section 1 – Programme Summary Information</b>	
<b>1.1 Programme Details:</b> Insert programme title here.	
<b>Submitting Body:</b>	
<b>Point of Contact -</b> <b>Nominated divisional rep.</b>	
<b>Aim of the programme:</b> <i>The specific aims of the programme should be entered here.</i>	
<b>Programme rationale:</b> <i>Please specify the overall rationale for the programme and its background.</i>	
<b>Programme details:</b> <i>Give a brief description of the planned delivery of the programme.</i>	
<b>Suggested SCQF Level &amp; Rating</b>	
<b>Signature of Submitting Body lead staff</b>	
<b>Date submitted for CR</b>	
<b>Date submitted to DMG</b>	



## 1.2 Planned volume of students / frequency of programme

*Please provide details of the proposed number of learners per year and how often programme will be delivered.*

## 1.3 Entry requirements: *(prior knowledge, experience or qualifications)*

*Enter minimum entry standards for the programme i.e. Completed pre-reads, courses attended or levels of experience.*

## 1.4 Learning Outcomes:

*There should be a clear set of **higher** level outcomes detailed here for the programme.*

## 1.5 Method of Assessment:

*Give a brief insight into the assessment instruments to be used in this programme.*

## Section 2 – Specific programme information

Please refer to the submission guidance document when completing this section

**2.1 Please answer the following questions by double clicking and placing a check mark in the appropriate box.**      **Yes**      **No**

- |  |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Does the learning programme have clearly identified learning outcomes?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If yes, are the outcomes formally assessed?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is the learning programme externally quality assured?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does the learning programme have a notional credit rating of more than one credit (i.e. 10 notional learning hours)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

IF YOU HAVE ANSWERED **NO** TO ANY OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT THE TQAC FOR FURTHER ADVICE

**2.2 Please indicate how the quality assurance of the learning programme is resourced.**

<b>2.3 Has this learning programme been delivered to learners?</b> <i>(If yes, please provide details)</i>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>2.4 Has this learning programme been recognised by an Awarding Body or professional body?</b> <i>(If yes, please refer to the Guide for submitting programmes and provide details)</i>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Section 3 – SCQF Component Grid**

**3.1 Notional Learning Hours Breakdown**

<b>Component breakdown (if relevant)</b> (e.g. topics/sections from the component)	<b>Formal input</b> (e.g. contact time with tutor, acquisition of knowledge/ understanding) <b>(hrs)</b>	<b>Additional Activities</b> (e.g. developing practice, reflection, research/study time) <b>(hrs)</b>	<b>Assessment</b> (e.g. planning, completion of assessment tasks) <b>(hrs)</b>	<b>Total time</b>
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
<b>Total hours</b>				
			<b>Credit value (hrs/10)</b>	

**Notes on Approach**

*In this section you should give details of how the breakdown of the above activities was arrived at and how they enhance/support the learning activities.*

**Form SPC CR 2**

**Initial Request for Information**

**This form should be completed by the Credit Rating Team Leader (CRTL). If no comment is made against a section, please indicate this.**

**Please complete in black ink or typescript.**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Name of Credit Rating Team Leader:**

**Contact Details of CRTL:**

**Submitting Body:**

**Title of learning programme submitted:**

**Submitting Body Nominated Representative:**

**Contact Details of Submitting Body Nominated Representative:**

<b>CR 2 (Learning Programme Information) Comments/Queries</b>	
<b>Section</b>	1: General Information 1.1: Programme Details
<b>CRTL Comments</b>	
<b>Submitting Body Comments</b>	
<b>Section</b>	1: General Information 1.2: Volume of Students
<b>CRTL Comments</b>	
<b>Submitting Body Comments</b>	
<b>Section</b>	1: General Information 1.3: Entry Requirements
<b>CRTL Comments</b>	
<b>Submitting Body Comments</b>	
<b>Section</b>	1: General Information 1.4: Learning Outcomes
<b>CRTL Comments</b>	
<b>Submitting Body Comments</b>	
<b>Section</b>	1: General Information 1.5: Method of Assessment
<b>CRTL Comments</b>	
<b>Submitting Body Comments</b>	
<b>Section</b>	2: Specific Programme Information 2.1 SCQF Criteria
<b>CRTL Comments</b>	

<b>Submitting Body Comments</b>	
<b>Section</b>	2: Specific Programme Information 2.2 How is the Quality Assurance of the programme resourced?
<b>CRTL Comments</b>	
<b>Submitting Body Comments</b>	
<b>Section</b>	2: Specific Programme Information 2.3 Has this learning programme been delivered to learners?
<b>CRTL Comments</b>	
<b>Submitting Body Comments</b>	
<b>Section</b>	2: Specific Programme Information 2.4 Has this learning programme been recognised by an Awarding Body or professional body?
<b>CRTL Comments</b>	
<b>Submitting Body Comments</b>	
<b>Section</b>	3. SCQF Component Grid 3.1: Notional Learning Hours breakdown
<b>CRTL Comments</b>	
<b>Submitting Body Comments</b>	
<b>Section</b>	Design Specification 4.1: Programme Structure and Timings
<b>CRTL Comments</b>	
<b>Submitting Body Comments</b>	
<b>Section</b>	Design Specification 5.1: Achievement of Aims
<b>CRTL Comments</b>	

<b>Submitting Body Comments</b>	
<b>Section</b>	Design Specification 6.1: Learning, Teaching and Assessment methods
<b>CRTL Comments</b>	
<b>Submitting Body Comments</b>	
<b>Section</b>	Design Specification 7.1: Student Support
<b>CRTL Comments</b>	
<b>Submitting Body Comments</b>	
<b>Section</b>	Design Specification 8.1: Resources
<b>CRTL Comments</b>	
<b>Submitting Body Comments</b>	
<b>Section</b>	Design Specification 9.1: Regulations
<b>CRTL Comments</b>	
<b>Submitting Body Comments</b>	
<b>Section</b>	Any other questions
<b>CRTL Comments</b>	
<b>Submitting Body Comments</b>	

**Form CR 2A**

**Additional Request for Information**

**This form should be completed by the Credit Rating Team Leader (CRTL).  
Please complete in black ink or typescript.**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Name of Credit Rating Team Leader:**

**Submitting Body Nominated Representative:**

**Title of learning programme submitted:**

**Date of submission by CRTL:**

**Date received from Submitting Body Nominated Representative:**

**Additional Documents supplied:**

**CR 2A (Learning Programme Information) Additional Comments/Questions**

**CRTL Comments/Questions**

**Submitting Body  
Comments/Answers**

**CRTL Comments/Questions**

**Submitting Body  
Comments/Answers**

**CRTL Comments/Questions**

**Submitting Body  
Comments/Answers**



<b>CR 2A (Learning Programme Information) Additional Comments/Questions</b>	
<b>CRTL Comments/Questions</b>	
<b>Submitting Body Comments/Answers</b>	
<b>CRTL Comments/Questions</b>	
<b>Submitting Body Comments/Answers</b>	
<b>CRTL Comments/Questions</b>	
<b>Submitting Body Comments/Answers</b>	

**XXXXXX College**  
**Credit Rating Decision Making**  
**Credit Rating Reference:**

<b>Programme Title:</b>	
<b>Submitting Body:</b>	
<b>Decision Summary:</b>	
<b>SCQF Level:</b>	Core Outcomes:      Level
	Electives:              Level
	<b>Overall Level:        Level</b>
<b>SCQF Credit Points:</b>	Core Outcomes:
	Electives:
	<b>Total Credit Points:</b>

**XXXXXX College**

Decision Making Group – Recommendations

<b>Programme Details:</b>			
<b>Submitting Body</b>			
		<b>Comment on Justification &amp; Rationale</b>	
<b>Outcome 1 :</b>			
<b>Outcome 2 :</b>			
<b>Outcome 3 :</b>			
<b>Outcome 4 :</b>			
<b>DMG Membership</b>			
<b>Decision:</b>		1. Approved without conditions	2. Approved with conditions
		3. Not Approved	
<b>Confirmation of Rating &amp; Level</b>		<b>Level:</b>	<b>Points:</b>
<b>Conditions &amp; Recommendations</b>			
<b>Signed by Chair of DMG</b>		<b>Date:</b>	

**Form CR 5 Letter of Notification**

**Insert Name**

**Address of Submitting Body**

Reference:

Date:

Dear

**Course and Course Number**

Name of Submitting Body recently submitted the above course for formal credit rating. The recommendations from the Credit Rating Team have been closely considered by the nominated Decision Making Group (DMG) who can now confirm the following:

**SCQF Level Allocated: Level      SCQF Points Allocated:**

**Period of Credit Rating: X years – from – to with a suggested re-validation / review period starting in.**

A full outline of decisions with recommendations can be seen within the CR4 document and will be communicated to the ----- Unit for their perusal.

Details of this credit rating can now be confirmed to each student successfully completing the course **and** all associated assessments, and can now be included on formal course certificates for courses starting from this date on.

May I take this opportunity to remind you that credit rating of training courses remains subject to appropriate internal and external quality assurance measures being adhered to, and the completion and submission of an annual report submitted to QA Training and Educational Standards.

Training and Educational Standards will provide the necessary assistance and guidance in regard to any Quality Assurance and Design Specification requirements and review.

It is also essential that details of any future changes in course content or structure are submitted to Training and Educational Standards at the earliest opportunity to allow for assessment on any impact this may have on the credit rating status of this programme.

Yours Sincerely

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX (as Chair of Decision Making Group)

Quality Assurance Manager

**Form CR 6 Annual Report**

<b>QUALITY ASSURANCE</b>		
<b>ANNUAL REPORT</b>		
This form should be completed by submitting bodies on an annual basis who have had qualification(s) /learning programmes accredited		
<b>SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION</b>		
<b>Name of submitting body</b>		
<b>Name of main contact</b>		
<b>Telephone number</b>		
<b>Email address</b>		
<b>Qualification(s)/Learning Programme(s) previously SCQF Credit Rated by CRB</b>		
<b>SECTION 2: QUALIFICATION(S)/LEARNING PROGRAMME(S)</b>		
<b>Have there been any amendments or changes to the outcomes within your qualification/learning programme?</b> <i>If yes, please provide comment and supporting evidence of these changes.</i>	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Please provide copies of all Quality Control reports produced in the last 12 months including Internal Audit and External Verification reports which are relevant to the qualification/learning programme listed above. Please highlight any key issues identified in these reports and any action taken to address these.</b>	<b>Enclosed</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>SECTION 3: CANDIDATES AND CERTIFICATION</b>		

<b>Have candidate numbers exceeded expectations?</b> Please provide details	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Has gaining SCQF credit rating impacted on the number of candidates undertaking the qualification/learning programme?</b> Please provide details	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>How many candidates have been certificated in the last 12 months?</b>		
<b>How many candidates have been withdrawn from the qualification/learning programme in the last 12 months?</b>		
<b>Please provide a blank copy of the candidate certificate</b>	<b>Enclosed</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>SECTION 4: SCQF CREDIT RATING</b>		
<b>What added value has the SCQF credit rating of this qualification/learning programme brought to your Organisation /Department?</b>		
<b>How have you publicised the SCQF credit rating of your qualification/learning programme in the last 12 months?</b>		
<b>Do you have any other qualifications/learning programmes which you are considering for credit rating?</b> <b>If yes please give details below including any timelines for submission?</b>	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

**SECTION 5: ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION**

Do you have any other comments you wish to make in support of this annual report or the SPC Credit Rating Service?

**SECTION 6: ENCLOSURE CHECKLIST**

DOCUMENTS:	Yes	No
External Quality Assurance Report	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sample Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other relevant documentation – please list below	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SECTION 7: DECLARATION**

I declare all information in this form to be accurate

Signature:	Date:
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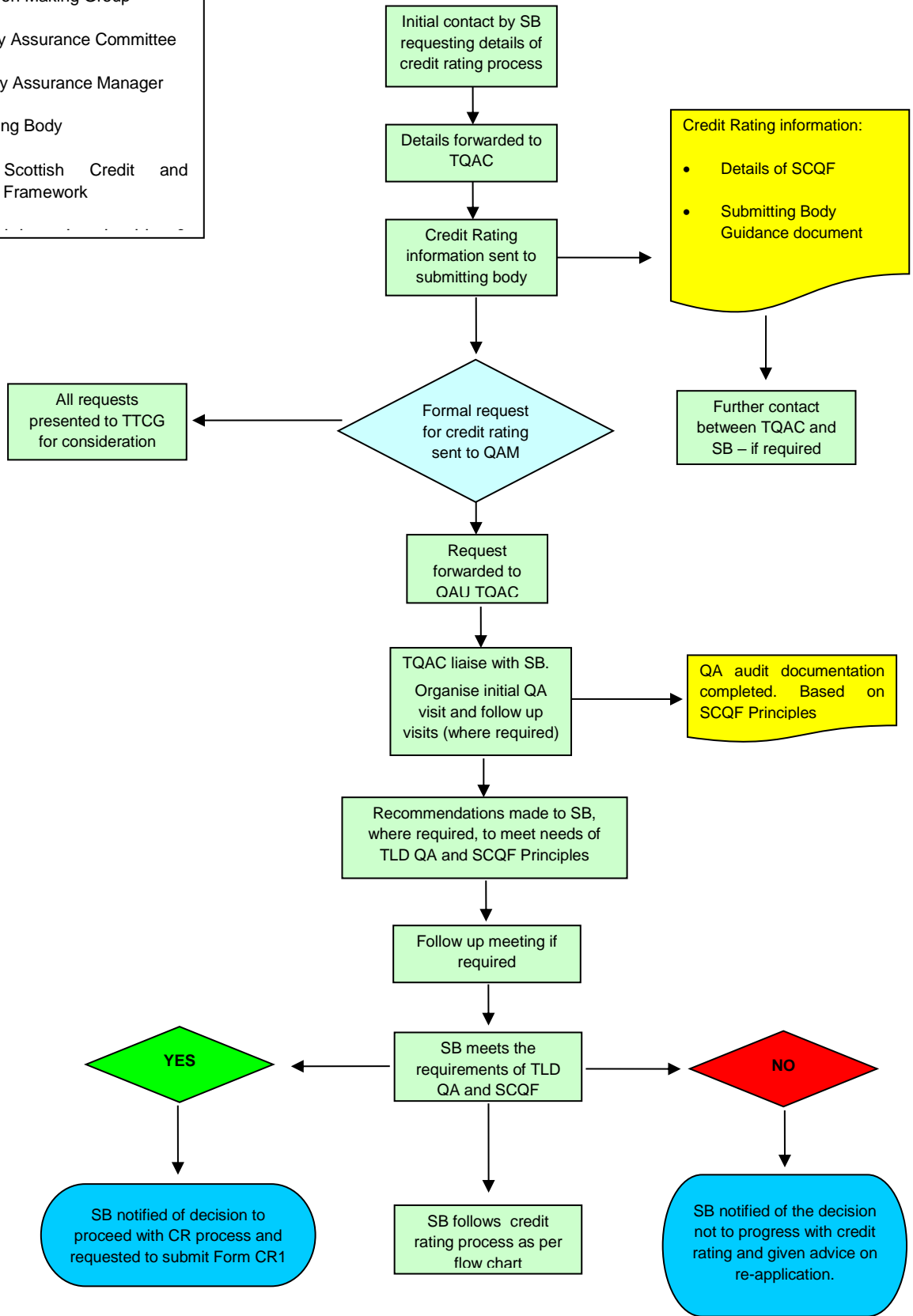
Name (please print):

Position (please print):

Please provide copies of all Quality Control reports produced in the last 12 months including Internal Audit and External Verification reports which are relevant to the qualification/learning programme listed above. Please highlight any key issues identified in these reports and any action taken to address these.	Enclosed <input type="checkbox"/>
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**XXXXXX College - Application/Request for Credit Rating**

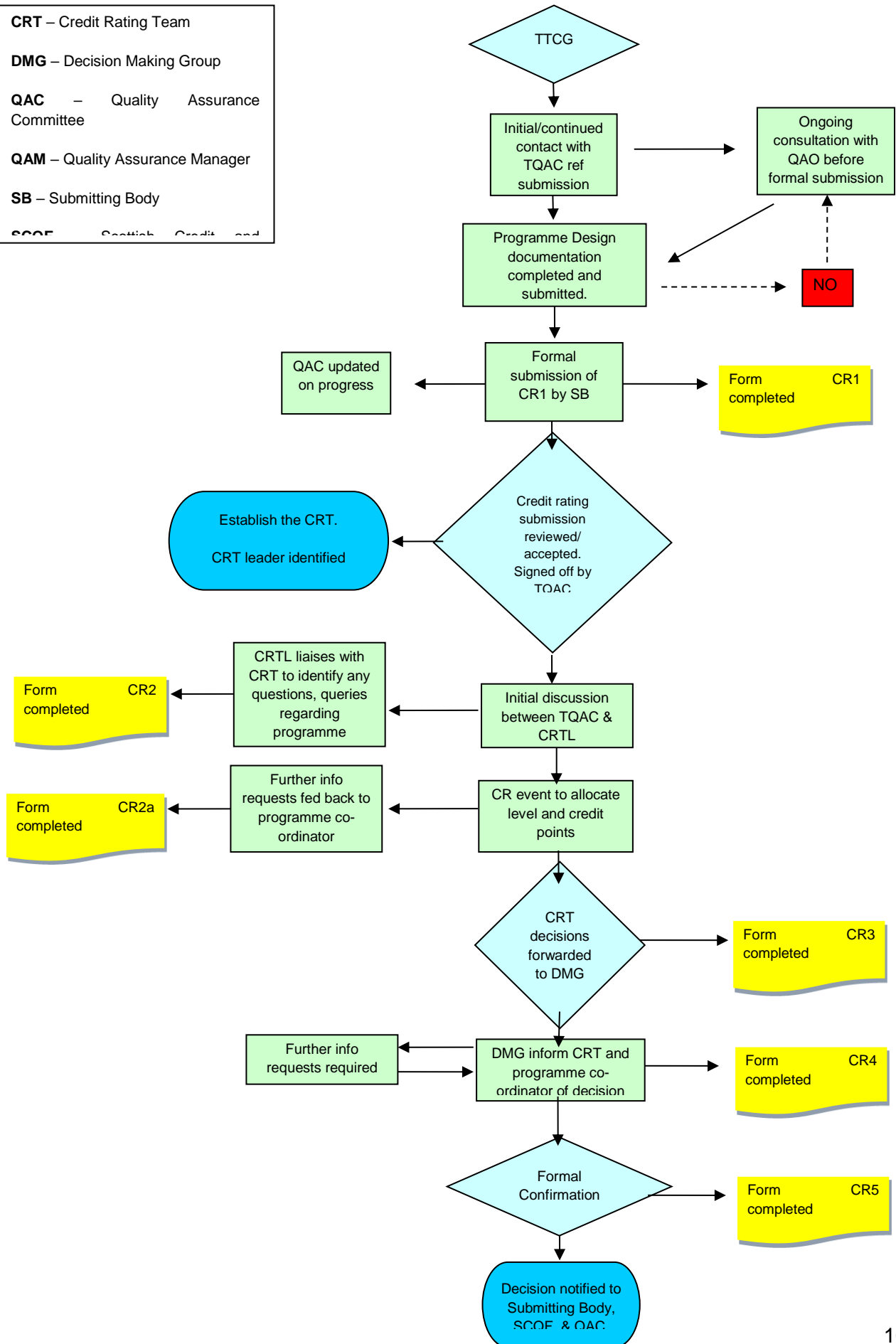
**CRT** – Credit Rating Team  
**DMG** – Decision Making Group  
**QAC** – Quality Assurance Committee  
**QAM** – Quality Assurance Manager  
**SB** – Submitting Body  
**SCQF** – Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework





## XXXXXX College- Credit Rating Process

**CRT** – Credit Rating Team  
**DMG** – Decision Making Group  
**QAC** – Quality Assurance Committee  
**QAM** – Quality Assurance Manager  
**SB** – Submitting Body  
**SCOF** – Scottish Credit Framework



## Annex 8. Case Study examples of non formal and informal learning programmes and qualifications on the SCQF

### Case Study 4: Microsoft

**Background** Microsoft is known across the globe as a household name in IT and nearly all of us will have had some experience of their products or services, even if we are not aware of it. It is a technology leader that creates innovative software to help individuals and organisations realise their full potential. The company has spent many years in Scotland working closely with the education sector to make Microsoft certification and training affordable and adaptable to delivery within standard qualifications such as degrees and Higher Nationals.

#### Rationale

Microsoft has had a long term interest in how it could best help Scotland's economy and the skills of its people. It was among the first companies to become interested in the SCQF to further the skills work it has been doing in Scotland during the last ten years. A recent survey amongst colleges highlighted the need to move forward and to obtain credit rating so that Microsoft certifications could be used as credit towards SQA qualifications and other purposes.

#### The Process

The SCQF Partnership advised Microsoft as to where the Framework could be most effective to their business and the routes to having their programmes recognised on the SCQF. The programmes which have been credit rated to date cover a range of skills – providing for the needs of those who look after desktops in a variety of sizes of organisations and the backroom technicians who look after the server.

#### Benefits

The SCQF was developed to help both employers and employees understand and compare the range of qualifications available in Scotland. Mainstream qualifications, such as those offered in schools, are included in the Framework and Microsoft is one of the private sector companies that has stepped up to the mark to place its industry-standard certifications on the SCQF.

Specialists recognise the value of the Microsoft programmes. Having them on the SCQF means they can be used within college programmes ensuring that graduates can develop the latest skills and gain credit for what they achieve. The collaborative work between the public and the private sectors enables young people to have the right skills at the right time while driving Scotland's economy forward. The credit rated programmes range from SCQF Level 7 to SCQF Level 9 with a value of 9 to 40 SCQF Credit Points. They were credit rated by the University of the West of Scotland.

The Director of Microsoft Scotland, commented, *“Working with the SCQF has enabled Microsoft to bring a formal recognition of its own certification system in terms of credit and level. This is valuable in that it brings together qualifications from the worlds of industry and academia, thus establishing a mutual parity to support the Scottish Government's skills strategy. In practical terms, those responsible for hiring IT professionals for industry vacancies now have, for the first time, a method of comparing different qualifications on applicants' CVs. This will bring benefit to Microsoft, its tens of thousands of solution partners and hundreds of thousands of customers.”*

### Background

The vision of CHILDREN 1<sup>st</sup> is for a happy, healthy, safe and secure childhood for every child and young person in Scotland. For over 125 years, CHILDREN 1<sup>st</sup> has been working to build a brighter future for Scotland's vulnerable children and families. We work to safeguard children and young people, to support them within their families and to help them recover from abuse, neglect and violence. We speak out for children's rights and campaign to change attitudes.

CHILDREN 1<sup>st</sup> has a long tradition of involving volunteers and highly value the unique contribution that volunteers make to the charity. The energy, enthusiasm, skills and experience which volunteers bring, enrich the work of paid staff and help them to provide high quality services for vulnerable children, young people and their families. The organisation has around 270 staff and 900 volunteers in 27 locations across Scotland.

### Rationale

With funding available by the Scottish Government, the SCQF Partnership established a project to support learning programmes using a community learning and development approach, by having them credit rated on to the SCQF. 2012-13 was the first of a three-year project aimed at supporting the credit rating of up to 30 programmes.

### Challenge

Volunteers come to CHILDREN 1<sup>st</sup> with a wide range of skills, abilities and motivations. Some of their motivations are simply to "help a child", while others are looking to develop skills for personal development or professional reasons. CHILDREN 1<sup>st</sup> believed that SCQF credit rating would be attractive to volunteers who have few or no qualifications in this field and that they could be used for progression in their personal or professional life.

### The Process

CHILDREN 1<sup>st</sup> originally got involved in the credit rating process through its involvement in the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Council for Scotland's CLD approval process. The CLD approval panel recommended that CHILDREN 1<sup>st</sup> would apply for the Scottish Government and SCQF project in order to have the programme credit rated. Following an initial information workshop, the first step was to complete a work plan of tasks. CHILDREN 1<sup>st</sup> had an existing volunteer training programme which was amended and adapted to the needs of the credit rating process. Many of the learning outcomes were amended through the process. A consultant who was working with SCQF supported the organisation. The consultant liaised with CHILDREN 1<sup>st</sup> and the credit rating body – Edinburgh's Napier University. CHILDREN 1<sup>st</sup> was successful in the credit rating process and now has an SCQF 5 credit rated programme for our volunteers titled, "Supporting Children Young People and Families: Volunteer Training and Assessment Programme".

### Benefits

Having its programmes credit rated and assigned a level is extremely important for the organisation as it provides the opportunity for its volunteers to get recognition for their learning in the workplace. It also helps their understanding of courses and programmes that lead to qualifications.

## Case Study 6: **The National Navigation Award Scheme (NNAS)**

**Background** The National Navigation Award Scheme (NNAS) was launched at the Royal Institute of Navigation in 1994. The Scheme is a personal performance, non-competitive, incentive scheme for all ages to learn navigation skills and gain confidence to get out and enjoy the countryside. The NNAS is recognised by many outdoor and outdoor training related organisations as a sound and encouraging training system to learn the skills of land based navigation and gain confidence in planning your own outdoor journeys.

**Rationale** West Highland College (UHI) were keen to credit rate some outdoor programmes and had a budget to make this happen. They approached the NNAS and the decision was taken by the Board to credit rate their Bronze Award. In many ways the decision was an easy one and came along at the right time for the Board.

**The Process** The focus of the Young Navigator Star Awards is to encourage exploration and journeying in local areas using simple maps such as street maps, pictorial park maps and orienteering maps. There is a gradual learning progression via One Star (bronze), Two Star (silver) and Three Star (gold) levels with certificates and badges available for achieving candidates. The Young Navigator Star courses are fantastic for youngsters to actively learn outside the classroom, and the Gold level is often used as a lead-in for the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award.

Given that the Bronze Award was the introductory programme and more people take part in this award – some 3,000 to 5,000 a year – this was considered the best choice for a first attempt at the credit rating process.

The Bronze NNAS Award involves navigation in the countryside using paths, tracks and other linear features, basic map interpretation and compass work. It was credit rated at SCQF Level 4 with 2 credit points. In the five months after a successful credit rating around 1500 people have participated and been certificated in the Bronze Award.

**Benefits** The credit rated programme and its success in a relatively short time has invigorated the Board and given it a huge impetus to move forward with a number of other necessary changes. The Board's new motivation has led to changes in their Quality systems and processes which are now more comparable to other similar organisations. They are about to launch a new digital online system which will impact on those who engage with the NNAS. In a business sense the new credit rated programme has made selling the Bronze Award much easier to Headteachers and parents. The Award is now seen as having added value with a new badge, new qualification and both recognition and improved credibility.

The experience of the last few months has had a very significant effect on the Board which clearly sees the benefits of credit rating and the SCQF. The credibility of the new Bronze Award has allowed penetration into Northern England with uptake based on the credit rated added value of the programme.

## Case Study 7: The Royal Yachting Association Scotland (RYA Scotland)

### Background

The Royal Yachting Association Scotland (RYA Scotland) has two distinct roles. Firstly, it is a membership organisation charged with looking after the interests of individuals, clubs, training centres and affiliates of the RYA in Scotland. Secondly it is a recognised governing body for sailing in all of its forms in Scotland. The first of these roles is directly supported by the membership of the RYA and the second is supported by Sport Scotland, the national agency for sport. RYA Scotland has five full-time employees, 5 part-time employees and it is also currently working with an Intern position. In addition it has ten people who deliver activity on a contractual basis.

### Rationale

With funding made available by the Scottish Funding Council, the SCQF Partnership established a programme of work to initiate and support a range of employer engagement projects. 2012-13 was the second of this three-year project aimed at raising levels of awareness of the SCQF and helping to bring together employers, colleges and universities to utilise the SCQF. This projects highlights how the SCQF can be used to develop progression routes, improve skills utilisation and recognise learner achievement through partnerships between employers, sectors and educational institutions.

### The Process

The Development Manager of RYA Scotland was approached by SkillsActive Scotland offering an opportunity to get some of the RYA awards credit rated on to the SCQF. It was a great opportunity to work with educational establishments with a view to improving the quality of training.

### Benefits

The Dinghy Instructor Award has been credit rated at SCQF level 8 with 7 credit points and the Powerboat Instructor Award at SCQF Level 8 with 5 credit points. These courses take place throughout Scotland and are available to those aged 16 and over. This process has introduced a number of new areas of working that requires RYA Scotland to deliver workforce training and development and fundamentally change the approach to delivering instructor training. This will improve the quality of the proficiency training delivered in Scotland. The process was comprehensive, useful and much easier than expected. RYA Scotland was provided with great support from the outset.

### Learning Programme

The Powerboat Instructor course takes 3 days. However, pre-course work is required and the candidates have to have achieved a high level of powerboating prior to signing up for the course. This is verified by a pre-entry assessment, alongside a check of First Aid certificates and personal membership of the RYA. The course itself examines the delivery of training in the handling of powerboats and associated activities. The course is moderated on the final day, by an external moderator who verifies the ability of the candidates, as well as the performance of the trainer leading the course. The programmes are moderated by an external moderator who informs RYA Scotland about the quality of the course and candidate performance. This helps to monitor the training programmes and the standards of delivery.

## Annex 9. Inventory of key questions for CRBs



The SCQF Partnership is participating in a project with a number of partners led by The Educational Research Institute (Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych – IBE) in Poland.

**The main goal of the NCF-IN project is to provide evidence based support to national governments, EU agencies and key stakeholders in developing policies on including non-formal VET qualifications into National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs). This will be done by:**

- providing systematised knowledge on the organisational and financial solutions applied in seven EU countries on including non-formal VET qualifications into their NQFs,
- developing organisational and financial models related to the inclusion of non-formal qualifications to NQFs.

The project partners believe that better evidence based support for decision makers and stakeholders will provide more impetus and greater efficiency in NCF implementation and its opening to the non-formal sector, resulting in better VET and LLL policies within EU countries and at the EU level.

### **Context and definitions**

The NCF-IN project defines non-formal sector qualifications as those qualifications which are awarded outside the formal school education system (general, VET, HE). This includes among others: private or market qualifications, qualifications from community/voluntary sectors and trade unions, regulated qualifications that are not awarded in the formal education system (e.g. SVQs), learning delivered in schools as part of Curriculum for Excellence but not necessarily on the SCQF and not regulated by SQA, and qualifications from regulated occupations and professions.

The project wishes to investigate the different types of non-formal sector qualifications that are included on the SCQF and the processes and procedures that are followed by the organisations carrying out these practises.

### **Next steps**

With this in mind we are developing a number of interview questions which we hope to be able to discuss with you to assist us in compiling a Country Report as one of the key deliverables of the NCF-IN project.

Some potential questions are listed below although not all of these will apply to your organisation or institution and I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to go over these questions and to investigate any emerging issues.

It is also necessary for us to obtain authorisation from you/your organisation to collect and process information and data that you provide. To this end we have created a Consent Form which we ask you to sign and authorise with an official organisation stamp following interview.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation.

### **Interview questions for NQF-IN project**

#### **Sample questions for CRBs:**

Have you placed non-formal sector qualifications on the SCQF? What are they?

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What are the critical factors for you when an application for credit rating is received?

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Please describe the procedures or process used and explain if this process differs from placing formal qualifications on the Framework

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How are the following elements considered in the process?

- The use of Learning Outcomes

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- Quality Assurance

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- The use of levels and credit

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What are the costs involved for all of the parties involved in the process?

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What do you see as the role of the SCQF Partnership in this process?

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How would you describe your organisations role in relation to placing non-formal sector qualifications on the SCQF?

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What has been the main driver/motivation for placing these qualifications on the SCQF?

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What are the benefits of including non-formal sector qualifications on a NQF?

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**Sample questions for key bodies:**

How would you describe your organisations role in relation to placing non-formal sector qualifications on the SCQF?

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Please describe the process/procedures in place for ensuring the quality of non-formal sector qualifications being place on NQFs

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**Sample questions relating to Third Party organisations:**

What are the main considerations when credit rating something on behalf of a Third Party?

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What has been the main driver/motivation for placing these qualifications on the SCQF?

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What do you see as the role of the SCQF Partnership in this process?

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What are the benefits of including non-formal sector qualifications on a NQF?

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Is cost a stumbling block? Are there other barriers?

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## Consent/Authorisation Form

On behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ I authorise SCQF Partnership to use the information and data I have supplied for reproduction in the Country Report for Scotland as one of the deliverables of the NQF-IN project: “Developing organisational and financial models for including non-formal sector qualifications in National Qualifications Frameworks”

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation/Company stamp: