

Information Notes Series 1:

Third Party Credit Rating for Credit Rating Bodies

Note 1.1 Setting up your third party credit rating process

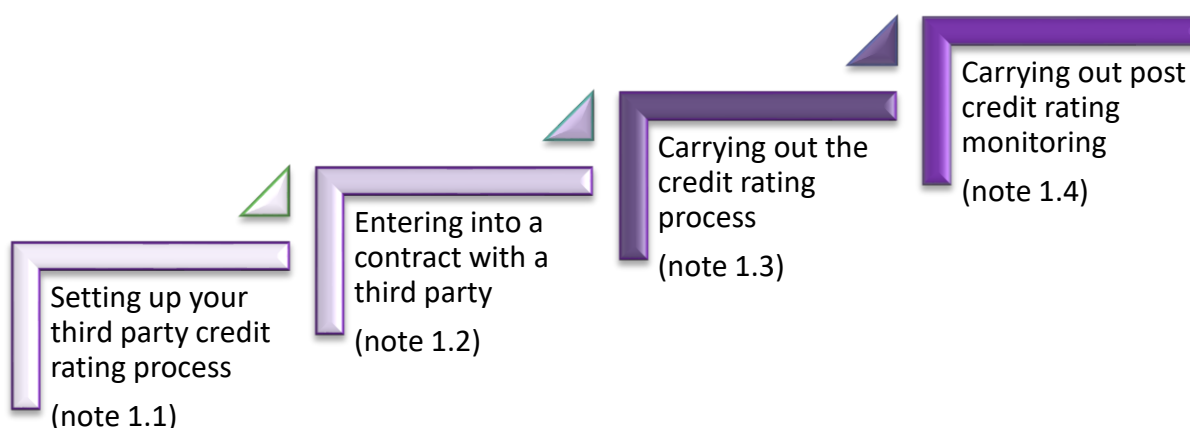
Information Note 1.1

Third Party Credit Rating for CRBs

Setting up your third party credit rating process

This information note supplements the principles and guidance within the SCQF Handbook. Other useful documents include the Ceasing Credit Rating Flowcharts and for SCQFP Approved CRBs – the SCQF Quality Assurance Model (QAM) all of which are available from www.scqf.org.uk (see links below).

This note is the first in a series about Third Party Credit Rating for CRBs. There are four notes in total as indicated below.



Credit Rating will be defined as third party where:

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

Setting up your third party credit rating process

You will typically have carried out credit rating of your own internal programmes before embarking on credit rating for third parties and will have a well-established system in place for this. However, you will still need to review your processes to make sure that they are fit for purpose for working with a third-party organisation as this can create different challenges.

If you are a college or university and you haven't carried out any credit rating internally you will need to set up your credit rating system. If this is the case, we strongly advise you to contact the SCQF Partnership to seek training, help and support in setting up your systems. SCQFP Approved CRBs need to seek specific authority to carry out third party credit rating and cannot offer this service without applying and going through the necessary approval process.

If you are an SCQFP Approved CRB and have not yet sought approval to carry out third party credit rating then you must do so before embarking on any such arrangement. Contact the SCQF Partnership to start this process and refer to the SCQF Quality Assurance Model (QAM) for more details of the approval process.

Here are some things to consider when reviewing your existing internal credit rating systems (these points might also be useful if you are setting up systems without having credit rated internally): *(please note this is not an exhaustive list)*

- What information will you ask third parties to provide about their organisation and their programme(s) (*Note: there is a suggested minimum list in the SCQF Handbook*):
 - Is your internal submission document appropriate for those outside your organisation? Consider the terminology and the specific documents it might ask for.
 - Is there information you will need to request in addition to what you ask internal teams to submit?
 - Will you ask the third party to suggest a level and credit points in their submission? (This is sometimes a useful starting point for your credit rating team).
- You will know your own quality assurance processes so you might not ask internal teams to outline this in their submissions. However, you are unlikely to know that of a third party, so:
 - Will you need to add in a process for reviewing this into your system?
 - Does your existing submission document ask for evidence of this?
 - How will your credit rating panels (raters/vetters) review this information?
 - What aspects of quality assurance will you require the third party to have in place?

- What will be your quality assurance processes for monitoring the third party programmes you have credit rated?
 - Many CRBs have their review process tied up with existing internal quality assurance arrangements. Will these be appropriate for third parties or do you need to have a separate process for third parties? Will you carry out some sort of monitoring visit/event with third parties? Will you require them to submit a report/self- assessment?
 - Are there aspects of the quality assurance processes that you, as a CRB, will retain responsibility for?
 - You should consider what will happen if the third party does not adhere to the quality assurance requirements, or work within the SCQF principles, including the guidelines for the use of the SCQF logo and brand, and build this into your processes. (SCQFP has a set of flowcharts which will help in designing this process).
- What happens at the end of the credit rating period?
 - When will you ask third parties to re-seek credit rating? It is good practice to start this process before the credit rating period runs out.
 - What will your policy be on cohorts of learners starting the programme near to the end date? (see below)
 - If a third party does not want to continue with the credit rating of its programme(s) or, as a CRB, you do not wish to renew the credit rating, do you have procedures in place to deal with this? (SCQFP has a set of flowcharts that will help you with this process)
- What types of programmes are you willing to credit rate and at what levels?
 - You will wish to consider if you will be willing to credit rate certain types of programmes or delivery models, such as programmes delivered overseas or in another language other than English, programmes delivered online, or programmes in a subject area where you will need to 'buy in' subject expertise. Are you willing to provide this service to an organisation based outside of the UK? These scenarios may need additional quality assurance and monitoring arrangements.
 - You may wish to have a different offer of services for organisations based outside of the UK in terms of the requirements and arrangements around quality assurance and how much of this you are happy for the third party to carry out itself, or which processes you may wish to provide
 - You should also consider the levels you will be willing to credit rate to ensure that you have sufficient and appropriate expertise available.

- What guidance and paperwork will you give out to third parties?
 - What training might you give to third parties to ensure they understand the SCQF and credit rating (SCQFP offers a workshop for third parties called 'Would You Credit It?' (normally free of charge to UK organisations).
 - Consider the use of templates to make sure that you receive sufficient information. A list of evidence to be submitted will also be helpful. It will be important to ensure that the template also asks for any previous history of having programmes on the SCQF or working with other CRBs.
 - What information will you give to the third party relating to its responsibility to deliver, assess and quality assure the programme as detailed in the submission and in line with the level and credit indicated in the credit rating decision. How will you ensure that the third party knows that it has to inform you of any changes to the programme and its delivery, assessment and quality assurance arrangements?
 - Does your credit rating process have a mechanism for communicating timelines and outcomes to submitting bodies (internal or third party) as well as a process for appeal Will you need to develop this specifically for third parties?
 - What guidelines will you give to the third party on how to use the SCQF credit rating information and logo on its website and within its marketing materials? Please remember that it is the CRB's responsibility to ensure that the third party is aware of the responsibilities in terms of using the SCQF logo and references to levels and credit points correctly. A number of documents are available from the SCQF website on brand Guidelines, naming guidelines and more.

Useful links	
SCQF Quality Assurance Model	QAM-full-updated-June-2025.pdf
SCQF Handbook	handbook.pdf
SCQF Level Descriptors	SCQF Level Descriptors - Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SCQF Credit Points Explained	credit-point-explained-march-2017-web.pdf
Naming Qualifications and Programmes for the SCQF	naming-qualifications-guide-a4-final-web-may-2023.pdf
Credit Rating Criteria Explained	criteria-explained-final-web-oct-2017.pdf
SCQFP workshops	SCQF Partnership workshops
SCQFP Brand Guidelines	scqf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/SCQF-Brand-Guidelines-2024-FINAL.pdf

