

CREDIT RATING POLICY

1. Purpose

This policy sets out Newbattle Abbey College's approach to credit rating learning programmes, operating within the College's broader Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER) framework and in line with the requirements and guidance of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), including the SCQF Handbook.

The policy ensures that:

- SCQF level and credit points are allocated consistently, transparently and robustly
- Credit rating decisions are made through clear governance and quality assurance arrangements
- The integrity of the SCQF is protected across both College-devised and third-party provision.

Newbattle Abbey College recognises its responsibilities as an SCQF Credit Rating Body (CRB) and is committed to maintaining the quality and credibility of the Framework.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all credit rating activity undertaken by Newbattle Abbey College, including:

- Internally developed programmes owned and delivered by the College
- Third-party programmes submitted by external organisations for credit rating by the College.

2.2 The policy applies to:

- the allocation of SCQF level and SCQF credit points
- associated governance, quality assurance and externality arrangements
- annual monitoring and programme review of credit-rated provision
- maintenance of accurate records on the SCQF database.

2.3 This policy does not apply to programmes that are already credit rated by another recognised Credit Rating Body.

3. Definitions

Credit rating

The process by which a learning programme is allocated an SCQF level and a number of SCQF credit points.

Programme

A programme of learning refers to a defined body of learning, which may be delivered as a single, stand-alone programme or as a structured collection of learning, designed to achieve stated learning outcomes.

Credit-rated programme

A programme of learning that:

- is expressed in learning outcomes
- is formally assessed
- has quality assurance arrangements in place
- has a minimum of 10 notional learning hours (equivalent to 1 SCQF credit point).

Third-party credit rating

Credit rating of a programme owned by another organisation, where Newbattle Abbey College does not have unilateral authority to amend learning outcomes, assessment or delivery arrangements.

4. Principles of Credit Rating

4.1 Newbattle Abbey College will apply the principles of the SCQF when credit rating programmes, including:

- allocation of credit points based on notional learning hours
- allocation of level based on the SCQF Level Descriptors
- clear distinction between **level** (complexity of learning) and **credit** (volume of learning).

4.2 Credit rating decisions will be:

- evidence-based
- consistent
- transparent
- subject to quality assurance and appropriate externality.

4.3 The College will only credit rate provision where:

- there is a clear educational or community need
- no suitable nationally validated alternative is available, or
- third-party credit rating is justified and supported by appropriate due diligence.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Proposer

The Proposer is responsible for:

- completing the required credit rating documentation in full, using the approved templates;
- ensuring that submissions explicitly address the SCQF credit rating criteria: learning outcomes, assessment, quality assurance, and notional learning hours;
- providing accurate and complete information to support scrutiny at each stage of the credit rating process;

- attending the Credit Rating Panel to present the proposed programme and respond to questions, where required.

The Proposer does not participate in final credit rating decisions.

5.2 Curriculum Manager

The Curriculum Manager is responsible for:

- contributing academic, assessment and quality assurance expertise to the credit rating process;
- supporting the implementation of any conditions arising from credit rating decisions.

5.3 Depute Principal

The Depute Principal is responsible for:

- overseeing the operation of the College's credit rating process;
- acting as Chair of the Credit Rating Panel, except where the Depute Principal is the Proposer;
- determining, at Stage 1, whether a submission should progress to further scrutiny or cease;
- ensuring appropriate external quality assurance scrutiny is commissioned where required;
- maintaining the suite of credit rating templates and guidance documents, ensuring they remain aligned with Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) requirements and governance expectations.

5.4 Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- chairing the Credit Rating Panel where the Depute Principal is the Proposer;
- providing senior oversight to ensure the integrity and independence of credit rating decisions.

5.5 Senior Administrator

The Senior Administrator is responsible for:

- minuting ratified credit rating decisions at Senior Management Team meetings;
- uploading approved credit-rated programmes to the SCQF Partnership register;
- maintaining the schedule for review of credit-rated programmes;
- ensuring that all documentation and records relating to credit rating activity are retained in accordance with the College's Records Retention Policy.

6. Credit Rating Process

6.1 Overview of the Credit Rating Process

Credit rating at Newbattle Abbey College is supported by a suite of templates and guidance documents which form part of the College's credit rating framework. These are maintained by the Depute Principal to ensure continued alignment with Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) requirements, including systematic consideration of the four SCQF credit rating criteria: **learning outcomes, assessment, quality assurance, and notional learning hours.**

The College operates a **two-stage credit rating process**, followed by formal ratification. Supporting templates cover all stages of the process.

6.2 Stage 1: Proposal and Initial Scrutiny

A single **Proposer** is responsible for completing the required credit rating documentation. This will include:

- programme aims and learning outcomes
- assessment strategy
- quality assurance arrangements
- calculation of notional learning hours
- proposed SCQF level and credit points
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The completed documentation is submitted to the **Chair of the Credit Rating Panel.**

The Chair will review the submission and determine whether it should:

- progress to the next stage of the credit rating process, or
- cease at this stage, with feedback provided to the Proposer.
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Where the proposal is approved to progress, it will be referred to an **external quality assurance professional** (for example, an external examiner or equivalent) for independent scrutiny. The external reviewer will consider the submission and may confirm or challenge the proposed SCQF level and credit points in relation to the learning outcomes.

Any challenge or commentary provided by the external reviewer will be formally recorded, alongside recommendations for consideration by the Credit Rating Panel.

6.3 Stage 2: Credit Rating Panel Consideration

Stage 2 consideration is undertaken by the **Credit Rating Panel**, chaired by the Depute Principal and comprising:

- Depute Principal (Chair)
- Curriculum Manager
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The Proposer will attend the Panel to present the proposed programme and to respond to questions, but will not take part in the final decision-making.

The Credit Rating Panel will consider whether:

- learning outcomes align with the proposed SCQF level descriptors
- assessment is appropriate to the level claimed
- credit points accurately reflect notional learning hours
- quality assurance arrangements are sufficient

The Panel may decide that the programme is:

- **Approved**
- **Approved with conditions**
- **Deferred for resubmission**

The decision and its rationale will be formally recorded using the approved template documentation.

Where the Depute Principal is the Proposer, the Panel will be chaired by the **Principal**.

6.4 Stage 3: Ratification

All credit rating decisions are subject to formal **ratification by the Senior Management Team (SMT)**.

Ratification will take place at a scheduled SMT meeting, with the final decision formally minuted by the **Senior Administrator**.

Following ratification:

- the Senior Administrator is responsible for uploading approved programmes to the **SCQF Partnership register**; and
- all documentation and decisions will be retained in accordance with the College's **Records Retention Policy**.

7. Third-Party Credit Rating (Additional Requirements)

7.1 Prior to credit rating third-party provision, the College will undertake appropriate due diligence, including consideration of:

- programme ownership and governance
- assessment and quality assurance arrangements
- capacity to maintain standards over time
- delivery model, including multi-site delivery where applicable

7.2 A formal contract will be put in place with the third-party organisation, setting out:

- roles and responsibilities
- monitoring and review arrangements
- duration of the credit rating
- arrangements for amendment, suspension or withdrawal

- requirements to comply with SCQF branding and data requirements

8. Quality Assurance, Monitoring and Review

8.1 All credit-rated programmes will be subject to annual monitoring, proportionate to risk and scale, to confirm:

- continued alignment with the approved SCQF level and credit points
- effectiveness of assessment and quality assurance
- any material changes that may affect the credit rating decision

8.2 Programme review will take place prior to the end of the credit rating period, or earlier where significant changes are proposed.

8.3 A review will be triggered where:

- learning outcomes change
- assessment strategy changes significantly
- delivery context changes in a way that may affect level or credit

9. Records and SCQF Database

9.1 Accurate records of all credit rating activity will be maintained, including:

- submissions
- panel papers
- minutes and decisions
- conditions and responses
- monitoring and review outcomes

9.2 Records will be retained in line with the College's Records Retention Policy.

10. Related policies

10.1 This Policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant College policies, procedures, and guidance documents, whether specifically listed below or subsequently published or amended.

- Assessment and Verification Policy
- Malpractice Policy
- Retention and Disposal Schedule
- SCQF Handbook
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10.2 The College reserves the right to update, introduce, or revise policies from time to time.

10.3 All staff are expected to ensure their compliance with the most current versions of applicable policies.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant College policies, procedures and guidance documents, whether specifically listed above or subsequently published or amended.

The College reserves the right to update, introduce, or revise policies and procedures from time to time.

Compliance with the most current versions of applicable policies and procedures, as published, is expected.

Title:	Credit Rating Policy
Lead Officer:	Curriculum Manager
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Approved By:	BOD
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