



# Queen Margaret University

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## CREDIT RATING OF EXTERNAL PROVISION

### 1 Definition

1.1 Credit rating is defined as the process whereby QMU judges an external programme against the SCQF to assess level and volume of credit. Credit rating is intended to facilitate entry to higher education and assist transfer between programmes, including programmes validated under credit accumulation systems which may not map directly onto SCQF. It does *not* lead to a named award of QMU.

### 2 Initial approach

2.1 It is expected the initial approach will be made by the external provider to the Partnership Development Team. The external provider might be an employer, another education provider or private institution. The initial approach may be made directly or through a member of academic staff employed by the University.

2.2 During initial discussions the Partnership Development Team will provide advice to the external provider on the following:

- Nature and purpose of credit rating
- The minimum and maximum amount of potential credit rating (normally between 5 and 80 credit points)
- Procedure, timescale and documentary requirements
- Cost

2.3 If the external provider decides to proceed with the application for credit rating, the Partnership Development Team will be responsible for all further arrangements as set out below (in conjunction with staff in the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement).

### 3 Approval process – preparatory stage

3.1 An Academic Facilitator will be identified who has some subject specific knowledge relevant to the programme. QMU will not credit rate provision which is unrelated to the University's areas of expertise. Note that the Partnership Development Team will provide advice regarding procedures, while the academic facilitator will provide advice about curriculum. Academic Facilitators will not normally provide more than the equivalent of one day's work unless costed otherwise.

3.2 The Partnership Development team will conduct basic checks in order to assess the suitability of the provider. The information required for this assessment will normally be acquired through conversation with the provider and will include information on the organisation's legal standing, educational experience and relevant subject expertise. A site visit is not normally necessary. The Partnership Development Team will present this information to the Dean of School and discuss whether to proceed with the credit rating event.

3.3 Normally, a standard fee will be charged. If there is any deviation from this fee (for instance because additional academic input is sought or the provider wishes to engage QMU to conduct verification of assessment), the fee must be agreed by the Dean of School.

3.4 The Academic Facilitator will then liaise with the provider to assist in the preparation of documents for submission to the School Academic Board.

#### **4 Approval process – School Academic Board**

4.1 The external provider is required to submit documentation to the School Academic Board for scrutiny. Documentation should be submitted in electronic format via the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement.

4.2 As a minimum, the documentation will include:

- Module descriptor(s)
- Name and status of external provider submitting application
- Contact details for link person at external provider
- Background information on external provider (context within which programme will operate)
- Rationale for seeking credit rating from QMU
- If there is more than one module, overall programme aims and objectives
- Structure (length of programme and order in which curriculum is delivered)
- Information about external reference points used to design the programme
- Mode and location of delivery
- Entry requirements to programme
- Usual or expected student numbers
- Target market
- Describe quality assurance arrangements, including mechanisms for programme management, proposed measures for the verification of marking, student feedback and input from employers or other external stakeholders.
- CVs of key teaching staff

Staff in the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement will provide details of any additional requirements.

4.3 Staff in the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement will forward papers to the Secretary of the School Academic Board at least one month before the relevant meeting.

4.4 The School Academic Board will normally appoint at least three members to scrutinise the documents in advance of its meeting and provide a report. The Board will normally make its decision through scrutiny of the documents. Occasionally, the Board may also invite representatives from the provider to attend, for example if there are outstanding questions that might be more easily addressed through a face to face discussion.

4.5 The School Academic Board may make one of the following three recommendations:

- To credit rate the programme at a particular level and volume of credit for a specified period of years (normally no more than five)
- To request further information from the external provider
- To reject the request for credit rating

4.6 If the Board decides to recommend that the programme is credit rated, this will be reported through the Board's minutes to Senate. Following approval by Senate the external provider will receive written confirmation of the credit rating.

- 4.7 If the School Academic Board decides to request further information, a date will be set by which time this is to be provided. Normally, information will be reviewed by correspondence.
- 4.8 All correspondence with the provider will be handled through staff in the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement.

## **5 Quality assurance**

- 5.1 The external provider is required to notify the University in writing in advance of the introduction of any changes to the credit-rated programme, particularly those that might affect the SCQF level or volume of credit. Additionally, the provider will submit a brief annual report to the School Academic Board. The Partnership Development Team will liaise with external providers regarding these reports. A summary report covering all credit rated provision will be presented annually to the relevant School Academic Board for consideration.
- 5.2 If the University considers the changes to be such that the SCQF level or volume of credit would be affected, this will require either a follow up meeting or approval by correspondence.
- 5.3 Credit rating will be time-limited. At the end of the period of approval, the provider may request re-approval. This request will be reviewed by the relevant School Academic Board who will normally appoint at least three members to scrutinise the documents in advance of its meeting and provide a report. the provider should submit the following documentation to support this request:
- Rationale for seeking re-approval from QMU
  - Evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme, supported by evidence as applicable (including student feedback) and identification of any suggested changes based on this evaluation
  - Module descriptor(s)
  - If there is more than one module, overall programme aims and objectives
  - Structure (length of programme and order in which curriculum is delivered)
  - Information about external reference points used to design the programme
  - Mode and location of delivery
  - Entry requirements to programme
  - Usual or expected student numbers
  - Target market
  - Describe quality assurance arrangements, including mechanisms for programme management, verification of marking, student feedback and input from employers or other external stakeholders.
  - CVs for key teaching staff
- 5.4 The School Academic Board may make one of the following three recommendations:
- To reapprove the credit rated programme at a particular level and volume of credit for a specified period of years (normally no more than five)
  - To request further information from the external provider
  - To reject the request for re-approval

## **6 Publicity**

- 6.1 The University will issue a standard certificate of credit rating which the provider should issue to students on completion of the provision. This certificate should include the SCQF logo and will fall in line with SCQF Principles 10 and 19.

- 6.2 All other promotional materials which incorporate reference to QMU must be formally approved by the Governance and Quality Enhancement and as appropriate.
- 6.3 The Partnership Development team will be responsible for keeping details of credit rated provision up to date on the SCQF database.

**APPENDIX 1**

**Third Party organisation logo**



**Third Party Name**

**Programme Name**

This document certifies that

**Student name**

successfully completed the above named programme and has achieved the award of

x credits at SCQF Level x

This programme is credit rated by Queen Margaret University

## APPENDIX 2



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## CREDIT RATING ANNUAL REPORT

<b>Name of Partner:</b>	
<b>Name of Programme:</b>	
<b>Academic Year:</b>	
<b>Form completed by:</b>	

Please provide a brief overview of the operation of the programme in the past year
Have there been any staff changes? If yes, please comment.
Have there been any changes to the structure or content of the programme?
Have there been any changes to the format of assessment? If yes, please provide details.
Have there been any changes to the management of assessment? If yes, please provide details.
Were there any recommendations or commendations provided by external verifier. If yes, please provide details and any response planned to accommodate these.
Were there any issues with student recruitment?
Were there any issues with student progress? <i>Comment on fails, deferrals and withdrawals</i>
Were there any operational issues that should be highlighted?
How have students been able to use the credit rating?
Are there any areas of particularly good practice that you would like to highlight?
Are there any other developments or issues which QMU should be aware of?

## APPENDIX 3



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### CREDIT RATING RISK ASSESSMENT

<b>Name of Partner:</b>	
<b>Name of Programme:</b>	
<b>Form completed by:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Notes and comments</b>
Fit with QMU mission	
Does QMU have academic expertise in this area?	
Are there any legal issues to consider? (eg visa issues)	
What is the academic track record of the partner?	
What staff are available to teach and assess the programme?	
How will quality and standards be maintained?	
Are there sufficient resources to support delivery?	
Who is the target market? Does the programme meet a need?	