



Guidance for Completion of Form AC2 Qualification Accreditation

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The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow, G2 8DQ

Lowden, 24 Wester Shawfair, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

<https://accreditation.sqa.org.uk>

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Introduction

This guidance will assist approved awarding bodies in the completion of *Form AC2 Qualification Accreditation*.

Note: If you are not an SQA Accreditation approved awarding body, then please refer to the ['Becoming an awarding body' web page](#).

For ease of use, one electronic form (Form AC2) has been created. This form covers all types of accreditation submissions as follows:

- ◆ Accreditation
- ◆ Reaccreditation
- ◆ Amendment
- ◆ Extension
- ◆ Withdrawal
- ◆ Workplace Core Skills

The Form AC2 also covers Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) credit rating approval/amendment.

The Form AC2 is split into a cover paper for SQA Accreditation use only and the following tabs for you to use:

Tabs to be completed by awarding bodies	Tab submission type
Tab 1: Submission Information	To be completed for all submissions.
Tab 2: Qualification Grid	To be completed for accreditation, reaccreditation and qualification structure amendment submissions.
Tab 3: Accred Reaccred	To be completed for accreditation and reaccreditation submissions along with Tabs 1 and 2.
Tab 4: Amend Extend	To be completed for amendment and/or extension submissions along with Tab 1 and 2 (for qualification structure amendments only).
Tab 5: SCQF Credit Rating	To be completed for SCQF credit rating approval or amendment.
Tab 6: Withdrawal	To be completed for withdrawal submissions along with Tab 1.
Tab 7: Workplace Core Skills	To be completed for all Workplace Core Skills submissions along with Tab 1.

The process of accreditation is covered in the flowchart (Appendix 1). The process of accreditation is underpinned by SQA Accreditation's *Regulatory Principles* and *Regulatory Principles Directives*. These can be obtained through our website (see Appendix 2: Links).

Points to note in relation to format of form used

The form is in Microsoft Excel Worksheet format.

Excel has a limited cell height of 409.50 points, some sections have an additional answer box which states '<Please use this box if you require further space>'. This box should be used when you can no longer enter text into the first box. In exceptional circumstances, additional rows can be added if your text is greater than both of these boxes.

Please note, you may have to expand the row height in order to view full content.

Tab 2: Qualification Grid — you can add or remove rows where necessary for the qualification structure. If the submission request is for more than one qualification, this grid can be replicated and titled 2a, 2b, 2c etc.

Press the 'Enter' button on the keyboard to go to the next question. In order to return a new line within a cell, select 'Alt' and 'Enter' at the same time.

Submitting the AC2 Form

Multiple qualifications may be submitted on the same form provided they are the same type of submission (for example, all accreditation) and cover the same subject area/sector.

The form and supporting documentation (this can include banked documents, see section 3.9) will be scrutinised by the assigned Accreditation Manager (AM). The AM will liaise with you on points of clarification prior to them completing the 'SQA Accreditation use only' cover paper and presenting the submission to Accreditation Co-ordination Group (ACG) for accreditation/approval. However, **only** the Form AC2 will be presented to ACG so please ensure that all relevant sections are fully completed.

For further support and guidance please contact your Accreditation Manager or SQA Accreditation. Please note that your completed Form AC2 should be submitted via the accreditation mailbox: accredquals@sqa.org.uk.

Tab 1: Submission Information

Tab 1 should be completed for all submission types.

1.1 Contact Details

This section captures the details of the awarding body and those of the person representing the awarding body — who we will contact if we have any questions relating to the submission.

1.2 Qualification Information

Developed By

Please provide the name of the organisation that developed the qualification. This will be the name of the Standard Setting Organisation (SSO), in the case of Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs). It may also be an awarding body, consortium of awarding bodies or regulatory body in the case of other qualifications. If you are unsure, then please seek advice from the Accreditation Manager.

Qualification Title(s)

Please insert the full title(s) of the qualification(s) as it/they will **appear on the learner's certificate**.

Where qualification structures have been prior approved by ACG, please ensure that the titles match the approved version.

Please refer to *Regulatory Principle Directive 4: Titling Conventions for the SCQF Credit Rating of Qualifications* (see Appendix 2: Links) for guidance on titling conventions.

Where the submission is for an existing qualification, please enter the group award code(s). This part should remain blank if the accreditation submission is for a new qualification.

1.3 Accreditation Submission Type

Select the box and a drop-down menu will appear for you to choose the appropriate submission type.

Depending on the submission type selected from the drop-down menu an instruction will appear in the box 'Next Stage' and will indicate the next tab to be completed.

These are:

- ◆ Accreditation (go to Tab 3)
- ◆ Reaccreditation (go to Tab 3)
- ◆ Amendment (go to Tab 4)
- ◆ Amendment and Extension (go to Tab 4)
- ◆ Extension (go to Tab 4)
- ◆ Withdrawal (go to Tab 6)
- ◆ Workplace Core Skills units (go to Tab 7)

1.4 SCQF Credit Rating

The box has a drop-down menu. Choose 'Yes' if you are submitting for approval of an SCQF rating or seeking an amendment to an SCQF credit rating. If you select 'Yes', you should then complete Tab 5: SCQF Credit Rating.

1.5 Partnerships

If the qualification is being awarded in partnership with another organisation, then details of the partnership organisation should be provided in this section.

A 'partnership' is where two or more organisations work together to fulfil SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements. In doing so, those bodies involved in the partnership carry out awarding body functions and must have significant, clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

If there is an agreement document between the partners, please check the box. If this submission involves a new partnership arrangement or an amendment (for example an amendment to responsibilities) to an existing partnership, please provide a copy of the agreement.

Please note that all submission types should be accompanied with a letter of support from the awarding partner organisation.

Awarding Body Comments

Please use the text box to include any additional information relevant to the partnership.

Tab 2: Qualification Structure and SCQF Credit Rating

Tab 2 has not been protected so that awarding body representatives can add/remove rows where necessary for the qualification structure. An individual Tab 2 must be replicated for each individual qualification. These tabs should be named Tab 2a, Tab 2b etc.

Tab 2 should be completed for the following types of submission:

- ◆ Accreditation
- ◆ Reaccreditation
- ◆ Amendment (where the qualification structure has changed)

Note: Tab 2 is not required for withdrawals, extensions or any Workplace Core Skills submissions.

Please ensure that:

- ◆ you use the correct title of the qualification as used on Tab 1
- ◆ the qualification and unit titles match the approved version (if appropriate)
- ◆ you include information on the structure of the qualification (for example how many units and combination of units are required to achieve the qualification)
- ◆ the SCQF level and credit is included
- ◆ the credit rating body's name is entered (this will usually be SQA Accreditation)

Additional Structure Information — This box can be used to provide additional explanatory information regarding the structure. This may, for example, be related to a particularly complex structure or endorsements.

Additional SCQF Credit Rating Information — This box can be used to provide additional explanatory information regarding the SCQF credit rating. This could include the rationale for the allocation of overall SCQF level, for example based on the mandatory units or a more detailed explanation where this is not obvious.

Assessment Strategy Information — Please indicate the document title and ACG approval date if approved.

Core Skills Signposting Information — Please indicate the document title and ACG approval date if approved. This is only applicable for SVQs.

Tab 3: Qualification Accreditation/Reaccreditation

This section should be completed in reference to Regulatory Principles 10 to 13.

3.1 Qualification Summary

Summary of the Qualification — Please give a brief overview of the qualification you are submitting. For example, this could be a competence-based qualification (SVQ), or an exam-based qualification supported by a syllabus. You should also establish the purpose and outcome for the qualification(s).

Are you intending to offer this qualification internationally? — Select the appropriate response from the drop-down menu.

Is this qualification based on SQA Accreditation approved qualification products?

Qualification products may include a qualification structure, unit specifications, SCQF credit rating, assessment strategy and core skills signposting.

— Select the appropriate response from the drop-down menu. You will be directed to complete either Section A) or Section B).

A) Qualifications based on SQA Accreditation approved qualification products

NOS Approved — If submitting an SVQ then select 'Yes'. If submitting other qualifications, select 'No'.

Units Approved — Select the appropriate response from the drop-down menu.

Date Structure Approved — Enter date.

Date Assessment Strategy Approved — Enter date.

Core Skills Signposting Approved — Please enter date (if applicable)

SCQF Credit Rating Approved — Please enter the date when SCQF credit rating was approved.

B) Other Qualifications

Qualification Products — Please outline the products which your qualification is based on and include these in your supporting documents, for example unit specifications or a syllabus, assessment strategy or assessment methodology/guidance. Units being submitted for accreditation should be listed on Tab 2: Qualification Grid.

Additional Requirements — This may include any additional requirements which have been defined for the qualification — for example an assessment strategy which you may have developed to support the delivery, assessment or quality assurance of this qualification. Please provide information and copies of any supporting documentation.

If also submitting for approval/amendment of SCQF credit rating, please remember to complete Tab 5: SCQF Credit Rating.

3.2 Accreditation Period Requested for Qualification(s)

Implementation Date — Please note that the accreditation start date will be the date of the ACG meeting when the submission is approved. This information will be provided by SQA Accreditation. If you have a planned implementation date this can be included, for information, in this section.

Accreditation End Date — You should select an accreditation end date (month end). An accreditation period of up to five years may be granted.

Certification End Date — You should select a certification end date. This date must take into account how long it will take an average learner to complete the qualification and be certificated (the date from the accreditation end date to the certification end date is also known as the lapsing period).

Please also note that these dates may be changed by ACG, for example where the same qualification is offered by a number of awarding bodies.

ACG will confirm and formally communicate the accreditation dates of the qualification.

3.3 Details of Existing Qualification(s) for Reaccreditation

A reaccreditation submission will be required where an awarding body wishes to submit a proposal for a qualification which will directly replace an existing qualification(s) which is currently accredited.

Please list the qualification titles, qualification codes and the accreditation period of the qualifications being replaced. **Note:** No withdrawal paperwork will be required for the qualification being replaced.

Dual Running Term (if required) — You may wish to request a period of dual running of both the old and the new qualification (this will normally be up to 6 months). This will allow you sufficient time for qualification codes to be allocated, documentation to be finalised, providers notified, and the qualification prepared for implementation so preventing a gap in provision.

Dual Running Rationale — Please provide the rationale for the dual running and the requested time period.

3.4 Identifying the Demand/Need for a Qualification

Please provide details of your process for identifying the demand/need for the qualification(s). If this process has already been documented and a copy banked with us, please make reference to the documents. If a new or revised process has been followed, please provide us with details and ensure documents are replaced in SharePoint.

Please provide details and clear evidence of the demand for each proposed qualification within this submission.

This may be evidenced by providing:

- ◆ a copy of your business case
- ◆ a summary of your labour market intelligence (LMI) or your market research and how you have established a market for the qualification — this may include potential uptake for the qualification
- ◆ support for the qualification which could include industry/employer/provider support

Some of the evidence may have been generated by the SSO/developer which you may have used to inform your decision to seek accreditation.

For reaccreditation submission, please also provide a rationale for the reaccreditation and evidence of existing and continuing demand and uptake.

3.5 Designing and Developing the Qualification

Please provide details of your design and development process followed for the qualification(s). If this process has already been documented and a copy banked with us, please make reference to the documents. If a new or revised process has been followed, please provide us with details and ensure documents are replaced in SharePoint.

The qualification could derive from qualification products developed by SSOs/Developers or have been developed by yourself or other awarding bodies.

You must detail and evidence how this qualification has been developed against your banked qualification development process. This may be further supported by:

- ◆ providing details of your internal qualification approval process
- ◆ detailing your involvement in SCQF credit rating the qualification against the SCQF
- ◆ designing an assessment strategy and/or methodology to support the qualification delivery and assessment
- ◆ producing assessment materials
- ◆ detailing your involvement in any third-party development processes (for example SSO/developer)
- ◆ demonstrating how you will meet any additional requirements set by a third-party (for example an assessment strategy developed by an SSO/developer)
- ◆ providing evidence of support from the organisation that developed the qualification

3.6 Maintaining and Reviewing the Qualification

Please provide details of your review process for the qualification(s). If this process has already been documented and a copy banked with us, please make reference to the documents. If a new or revised process has been followed, please provide us with details and ensure documents are replaced in SharePoint.

This may be evidenced by:

- ◆ providing timescales for the review of the qualification (this could include periodic review of take-up)
- ◆ detailing your process for collecting feedback on the qualification content and delivery and how you action any issues raised (this could include feedback to the developer)

3.7 Delivering and Assessing the Qualification

If the qualification is to be delivered and/or assessed remotely, you must ensure that all information provided in this section covers **all** forms of delivery and assessment (for further guidance refer to the document *Using Online and Remote Technology for Delivery, Assessment and Quality Assurance* — see Appendix 2: Links).

Please provide details of your processes that ensure the effective delivery and assessment for the qualification(s). If these processes have already been documented and a copy banked with us, please make reference to the documents. If a new or revised process has been followed, please provide us with details and ensure documents are replaced in SharePoint.

Please provide details of the assessment methods to be used and demonstrate how you ensure these assessment methods are fit for purpose for the qualification being assessed.

This may include:

- ◆ an overview of the personnel involved in the delivery and assessment of the qualification, eg. tutors, assessors, quality assurers, expert witnesses
- ◆ the assessment requirements which are specified by an SSO/developer or a regulatory body or developed by you to support the qualification (for example this may include how you will meet any requirements as detailed in the assessment strategy)
- ◆ an overview of your assessment methodology detailing your delivery and assessment requirements to be met by providers for the qualification(s) within the submission
- ◆ evidence requirements (this should include the type, amount and standard of evidence to be produced)
- ◆ identified simulation requirements
- ◆ the conditions of assessment (for example assessment under invigilated conditions)
- ◆ any other specific arrangements or requirements — this may include timescales for delivery, qualifications and experience of those delivering the qualifications or management of examinations, question banks and question papers

3.8 Quality Assuring the Qualification

Please provide details of your quality assurance process followed for the qualification(s). If this process has already been documented and a copy banked with us, please make reference to the documents. If a new or revised process has been followed, please provide us with details and ensure documents are replaced in SharePoint.

Please also explain how you will ensure the quality assurance system is fit for purpose for the qualification and allows for consistency of assessment across providers and over time.

Please detail how your quality assurance systems meets the assessment requirements of the qualification(s) (for example this may include how you will meet any requirements as detailed in the assessment strategy) and provide details on the following:

- ◆ the personnel involved in the quality assurance of the qualification and how you ensure that they are suitably qualified/experienced to undertake the function
- ◆ the frequency and type of the internal and external quality assurance activity
- ◆ the quality assurance of assessment conditions (for example, will remotely delivered qualifications be quality assured in a different way?)
- ◆ the monitoring and reviewing any conditions of assessment
- ◆ how you monitor and review the use of systems and platforms that support delivery, assessment and quality assurance, including online
- ◆ how you ensure that you meet the assessment requirements of the qualification(s)
- ◆ any additional/specific requirements or resources needed and how you will meet them (this may include management and quality assurance of examinations, question banks and question papers)
- ◆ the standardisation of the quality assurance activity

3.9 Document Checklist

Make sure you attach or reference all relevant items indicated in the document checklist. Any additional supporting evidence should be clearly listed under 'Other'.

Tab 4: Qualification Amendment/Extension

Note: If you are in any doubt as to whether to submit an amendment rather than a reaccreditation submission, please contact your Accreditation Manager to discuss. As a general rule any change to the mandatory section of the qualification is likely to result in a reaccreditation submission.

Submission Type

Please go back to Tab 1, Section 1.3 and select the submission type from the drop-down box if you have not already done so.

Note: It is possible to submit a joint request for both an amendment and extension. Please select the appropriate submission type from the drop-down menu on Tab 1.3 (Amendment and/or Extension).

Amendment

If there are minor changes to qualification structure, unit specifications, assessment criteria or assessment methods this may be an amendment. Please discuss with your Accreditation Manager. Major changes will result in a reaccreditation.

An amendment submission is required in each of the following situations:

- ◆ where there has been a change to the assessment or assessment conditions (for example moving to online assessment)
- ◆ where there has been a change to a unit, a small number of units within the structure, or where some optional units are being added to an existing qualification (for example where the qualification or the mandatory section of the qualification, has not been updated in its entirety)
- ◆ where there has been a minor change to the assessment strategy or regulatory requirements
- ◆ where there has been a change to the awarding partnership or awarding arrangements
- ◆ where there has been a change to the SCQF credit rating (**Note:** please also complete Tab 5)

Extension

An extension submission is required in each of the following situations:

- ◆ where the revised/new qualification is not ready or has not yet been approved but where you want to prevent a gap in provision
- ◆ where the existing qualification is still fit for purpose, is coming to the accreditation end date and where no replacement/new qualification is being developed

4.1 Current Qualification Details

Please complete the qualification titles, qualification codes and accreditation period of the existing qualifications for which an amendment and/or extension is requested.

If accreditation dates are the same, those qualifications titles can be listed under Qualification Title(s) and Code(s). Additional rows can be added for multiple qualifications.

4.2 Details of Amendment and/or Extension

Please provide details and your rationale to support the amendment and/or extension of the qualifications.

Please note that qualifications which are awarded in partnership with another organisation must have the support of the partner organisation.

Amendment

You should consider the following:

- ◆ reasons for the amendment
- ◆ the impact the amendment may have on existing learners
- ◆ the impact the amendment may have on future demand
- ◆ the impact on delivery, assessment, and quality assurance
- ◆ the impact on maintaining and reviewing the qualification
- ◆ the impact the amendment may have on SCQF credit rating
- ◆ evidence in support of your amendment, this could be support from providers/SSO/developer/employers

If the amendment has been made by the SSO/developer then support should be sought from them and copies of any ACG approved qualification products should be provided.

Please clearly detail all amendments and attach any relevant revised documentation.

Qualification Structure

If there has been a change to the qualification structure or SCQF credit rating information, please complete Tab 2: Qualification Structure and SCQF Credit Rating.

Extension

You should consider the following:

- ◆ the current demand/take-up of the qualification
- ◆ the future demand for the qualification
- ◆ the length of extension, taking into consideration any planned or potential review cycles (for example qualification, NOS, legislation)
- ◆ if the qualification was originally developed by an SSO/developer then you should consult them to determine if a replacement qualification is being developed, the timescales for the review/development and also to seek support for the extension
- ◆ evidence in support of your extension, this could be support from providers/SSO/developer/employers

Where qualifications have zero or low uptake then please consider the following policy prior to submitting an extension request — *Accredited Qualifications Zero Uptake Policy* (see Appendix 2: Links).

Note: Tab 2: Qualification Structure and SCQF Credit Rating does not need to be completed for extension-only submissions or if the amendment does not impact the qualification(s) structure(s).

4.3 Proposed Accreditation Period

An accreditation period typically of up to five years may be granted. You should therefore specify an accreditation end date and a certification end date. The certification end date should be selected taking into account how long it will take an average learner to complete the qualification and be certificated (the date from the accreditation end date to the certification end date is also known as the lapsing period).

If the qualification was developed by an SSO/developer then they may be able to provide an indication of a possible accreditation period which aligns to their plans for qualification review.

Please note that the dates may be selected by ACG to align where the same qualification is already accredited. ACG will notify you of the accreditation period.

Amendment only submissions — the original accreditation dates and certification end date will be retained. However, please note that if the amendment requires us to allocate a new qualification code the accreditation start date will be the new date of ACG approval.

4.4 Communication of Changes to Providers and Stakeholders

Please indicate how you intend to communicate the proposed changes to your providers and any other relevant stakeholders.

This should include details of how you intend to inform all providers of the changes made. If any changes to assessment materials or other documentation are required, please detail how you intend to disseminate the information.

Tab 5: SCQF Credit Rating

This tab must only be completed when seeking approval for SCQF credit rating. SCQF credit rating must follow the SQA Accreditation's credit rating methodology (see Appendix 2: Links). Please ensure that you complete the Qualification Grid (Tab 2) with the SCQF level and credit of each unit and overall qualification level and credit.

You do not need to complete this tab if the SCQF credit rating has previously been approved as part of an approved qualification product.

5.1 SCQF Credit Rating Information

Once you have allocated levels and credit to the individual units you should consider the overall level and credit of the qualification and provide a rationale for your recommendations.

5.2 SCQF Credit Rating Checklist

Please ensure you have completed all items on the checklist.

An SCQF credit rating report must be submitted following the SCQF credit rating of a full qualification.

This should include a summary of:

- ◆ the SCQF credit rating process including peer review and standardisation
- ◆ the participants and their experience

For a new or amended SCQF credit rating, a form must be submitted for each individual unit.

Please ensure all SCQF credit rating information is completed in Tab 2: Qualification Grid.

Tab 6: Qualification Withdrawal

A withdrawal submission must be submitted where the qualification is coming to an end and is not being replaced by another qualification which is being submitted for reaccreditation (see Tab 3: Reaccreditation guidance).

A withdrawal may also be considered where there is zero uptake or where an awarding body makes a business decision that it no longer wishes to offer the qualification. Please note that a qualification can be withdrawn at any point during the accreditation period.

6.1 Qualification Details

Please list the qualification titles, qualification codes, accreditation start date, accreditation end date and certification end date of the qualifications for which a withdrawal is requested.

6.2 Rationale for Withdrawal

Please outline why you are requesting the qualification be withdrawn. For example, no market demand/zero uptake for the qualification. If the qualification was developed by an SSO/developer or if the qualification is awarded in partnership with another organisation then this section should also include support that you have sought from them for this decision.

6.3 Learners Currently Registered

Please select the box and a drop-down menu will appear for you to indicate if your qualification has had zero uptake. Please note, if this is a zero-uptake qualification the accreditation end date and certification end date will be altered to be the month end after the withdrawal request goes to ACG.

If you have learners registered, please indicate the number. Please indicate which month/year of the current accreditation period you would like accreditation to end. Please also indicate the month/year you would like the certification to end (taking into account the time required for registered learners to complete the qualification).

The accreditation and certification end dates will always be at the month end.

6.4 Communication of Withdrawal to Providers

Please indicate how you communicated the proposed withdrawal to providers and how you will inform them of the withdrawal. You should also include any providers approved to offer, even when they have no current registrations.

6.5 Awarding Body Portfolio Management

Please indicate if you have any remaining SQA Accreditation accredited qualifications.

Tab 7: Workplace Core Skills

This tab must be completed for any submission that relates to Workplace Core Skills units. You could be wanting to offer Workplace Core Skills for the first time (an accreditation), seeking to move over to a revised version (a reaccreditation) or making an amendment, extension or withdrawal of Workplace Core Skills.

Please select the required submission type from the checklist: Accreditation, Reaccreditation, Amendment, Extension, Withdrawal.

7.1 Qualification Summary

Please note that SQA Accreditation produces and publishes the unit specifications, assessment support packs and *Guide to Assessing Workplace Core Skills* (see Appendix 2: Links) and these are available on our website for all awarding bodies to use. When you seek to offer these, we need to confirm you are working to the current versions. The version numbers and publication dates can be found on the back pages of the Workplace Core Skills documents.

Unit Specifications — Please list the version numbers and publication dates for each Workplace Core Skills unit included in the submission.

Assessment Support Packs — Please list the version numbers and publication dates for each Workplace Core Skills unit included in the submission.

Guide to Assessing Workplace Core Skills — Please list the version number and publication date.

7.2 Current Qualification(s) Details

This section should only be completed if you offer Workplace Core Skills already. These fields should remain blank if you are seeking to offer Workplace Core Skills for the first time.

Please insert the full qualification title(s) and code(s) of the Workplace Core Skills. The titles shown on the form must match those shown on the published Workplace Core Skills unit specifications.

Please enter the current accreditation start, end and certification end dates.

7.3 Proposed Accreditation Period

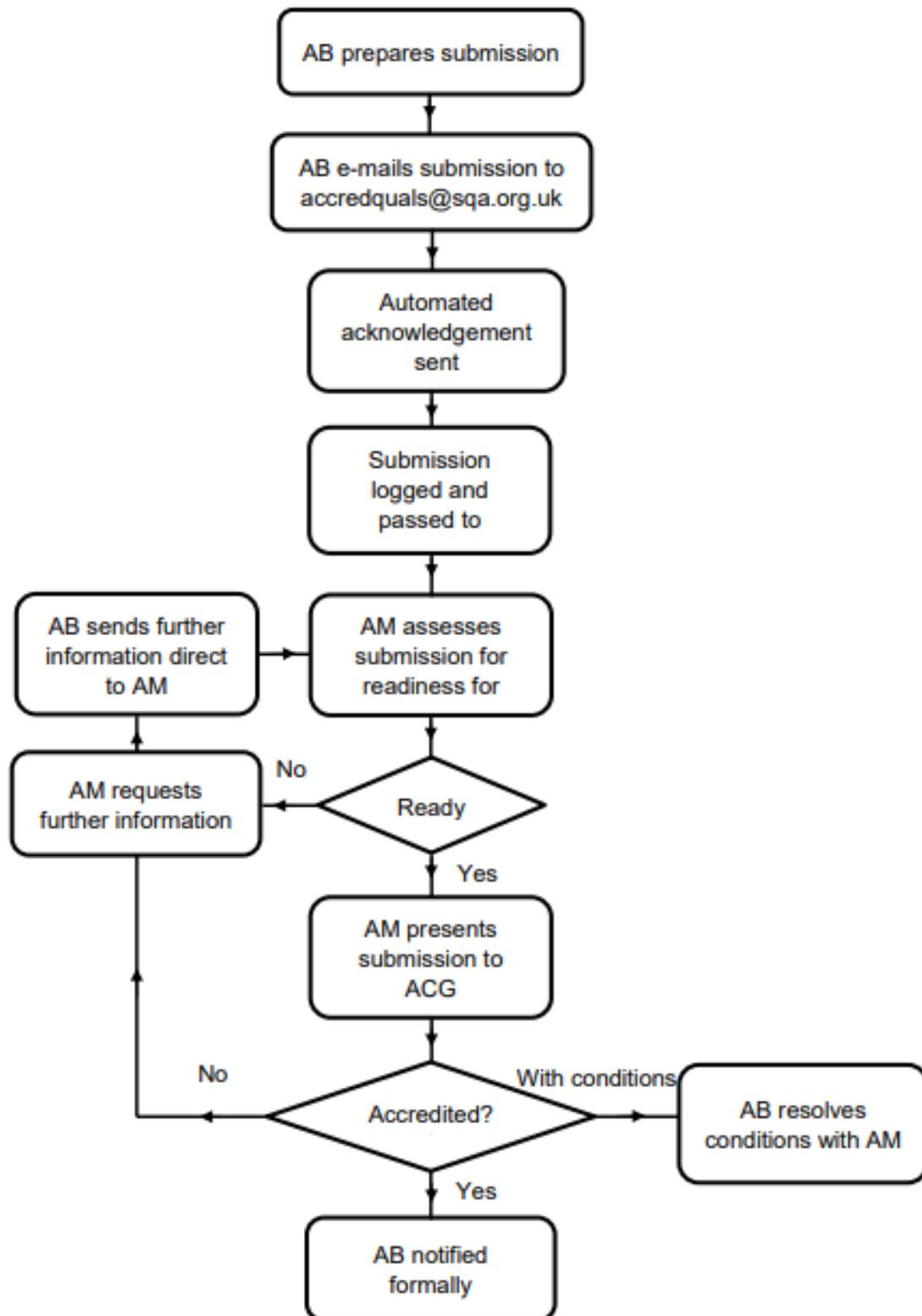
This section should be completed for accreditation, reaccreditations and extensions of Workplace Core Skills. It does not need to be completed for amendments or withdrawals.

Please enter the proposed accreditation start, end and certification end dates.

7.4 Rationale and Communication

Please provide a rationale for the accreditation/reaccreditation/amendment/extension/withdrawal of the Workplace Core Skills. Please describe how you will communicate with your providers about this.

Appendix 1: Accreditation Process



Appendix 2: Links

[Regulatory Principles and Regulatory Principles Directives](#)

[Regulatory Principle Directive RPDIR — 4, Titling conventions for SCQF credit rated qualifications](#)

[Using online and remote technology for delivery, assessment and quality assurance: Guidance to awarding bodies](#)

[Accredited Qualifications Zero Uptake Policy](#)

[SQA Accreditation's Credit Rating Methodology](#)

[Credit Rating of SQA Accredited Qualifications for the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Guidance for Sector Skills Councils, Standard Setting Organisations, Awarding Bodies and Participants \(April 2014\)](#)

[Guide to Assessing Workplace Core Skills](#)