EDUCATE — ENABLE — EMPOWER

CREDIT AND LENDING

LEVEL 8

Professional Diploma in

SME Credit

2026-2027

iob

A recognised college of UCD

Who we are

IOB

IOB is a professional community of over 31,100 members who work in banking and the international financial services sector. Professional development of our members through education is at the heart of what we do. IOB provides university level programmes to enable our members achieve and sustain their professional qualifications and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) - essential in meeting customer and regulatory expectations.

Excellence in education – a recognised college of UCD

As a recognised college of University College Dublin (UCD) and the standout financial services educator, we offer qualifications of the highest standard. We currently have more than 40 programmes ranging from Professional Certificates (level 7) on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) to Masters Degrees (level 9). We design our programmes to be practical and relevant, and grounded in academic rigour.



Welcome

I am delighted to introduce you to the Professional Diploma in SME Credit programme.

The SME sector is a crucial part of the fabric of the Irish economy accounting for circa 70% of all private sector employment. To support the growing SME sector, and working with the banks, IOB has developed the Professional Diploma in SME Credit programme. It is a specialist programme accredited by University College Dublin (UCD) that provides participants with essential credit risk assessment knowledge to support them in making well informed and prudent decisions in response to SME applications for trading companies, property lending and agricultural lending.

A unique learning feature of the programme is that it allows for the recognition of participants prior experiential learning (RPEL) that meets the standards set by UCD. Therefore, participants who have completed relevant internal training and can provide evidence of other experiential learning may be eligible for exemptions from specific modules of the programme. Additionally, a participant may avail of an exemption if they already hold a relevant recognised professional qualification through the recognition of prior certificated learning (RPCL).

This brochure comprehensively describes the programme. The programme is delivered via blended learning with online webinars supplemented by up to two online one-day practical workshops for each module. The online content provides you with a suite of integrated interactive learning supports which enables you to progress through the programme at a pace that suits you.

I believe that the Professional Diploma in SME Credit Programme is highly relevant to the current economic environment and is a very important building block in developing the specialist knowledge and lending skills of bankers and other professional advisors who work with SMEs.

I wish you every success in your studies.



Ken O'Sullivan
Deputy Chief Executive
IOB

Pathway to Professional Banker designation for Professional Diploma in SME Credit holders

THIS PROGRAMME IS ON THE PATHWAY TO PROFESSIONAL BANKER DESIGNATION

Professional Banker Designation

Professional Banker

Once you have three years' relevant work experience you may apply to become a **Professional Banker**

3 Modules

Principles and Practice of Credit Risk Management **&** Principles and Practice of Banking **&** Customer Experience Management in Financial Services **=** Professional Diploma in Financial Services*

Specialist Programmes

For candidates who hold 30 ECTS Credits at level 7

- Professional Certificate in Customer Experience Management in Financial Services
- Professional Diploma in Digital Financial Services Management and Fintech
- Professional Certificate in Personal Debt Management and Personal Insolvency
- **Professional Diploma in SME Credit**
- Professional Diploma in Corporate Banking Credit
- Professional Certificate in Conduct Risk, Culture and Operational Risk Management
- Professional Diploma in Banking Risk Management Practices
- Professional Diploma in Sustainable Finance for Compliance Professionals

* *The Principles and Practices of Credit Risk Management module is common to the Professional Diploma in SME Credit and the Professional Diploma in Financial Services. Students completing the Professional Diploma in SME Credit can apply for exemption from this module if they enrol at a later date on the Professional Diploma in Financial Services meaning they will only have two modules (Principles and Practice of Banking and Customer Experience Management in Financial Services) to complete in order to be awarded the Professional Diploma in Financial Services.*

What does the programme cover?

The programme has been designed to enable you to:

- Assess the credit worthiness of SME borrowers (trading business, agri enterprise and commercial property transactions)
- Understand the main features and characteristics of SMEs in Ireland
- Describe the key funding sources available to SMEs
- Evaluate the commercial viability and sustainability of the SME business plans and management's ability to deliver the plan
- Understand the capital, funding and liquidity costs for the bank in relation to lending
- Structure a lending proposal in a manner which meets the needs of the SME borrower and complies with credit policies
- Understand the different types of credit monitoring controls
- Identify the early signs of credit deterioration, evaluate their potential impact and consider courses of action
- Understand the principles in relation to impairment provisioning
- Explain the data requirements, the importance of data accuracy and record keeping in supporting credit portfolio management, credit models and grading
- Effectively manage the client-bank relationship through the life of the credit facility to support the customer and protect the bank.

University award

Those who successfully complete this programme will be awarded the Professional Diploma in SME Credit by UCD.

This is a level 8 qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications and carries 30 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits.

The modules on this programme will give participants credits towards the Professional Diploma in Financial Services, leading to the Professional Banker designation. For more information on this designation please visit iob.ie/programme/prof-diploma-financial-services

Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)

The structure of the programme allows for accreditation of RPL. Therefore, those participants who have completed relevant internal training, and can provide evidence for other experiential learning, may be eligible for admission to and/or exemption from specific units of the programme. However, where participants have gaps between their demonstrated prior experiential learning and the module outcomes, they may be required to complete some units to bridge these gaps.

Full details of the RPL process for this programme are available from the Programme Manager.

Who would benefit most from this programme?

The programme is designed to meet the needs of:

- SME relationship managers (trading, agri, property, portfolios) and their lending portfolio support staff
- Credit underwriters
- Loan administration and credit policy officers
- Accountants, Lawyers and other professionals who provide SME advisory services
- Credit review staff who are responsible for ensuring that lending and credit delivery standards are complied with
- Internal Audit staff who assess whether the credit management standards are fit for purpose and are being complied with
- Credit Portfolio Managers who are responsible for identifying and managing excessive credit concentrations in the loan book, forecasting loan losses and estimating provisions
- Marketing staff who design and promote credit products
- Financial Control staff with responsibility for budget setting, capital allocation, financial performance evaluation and financial/regulatory reporting.



"Completing the Professional Diploma in SME Credit, has provided me with a platform to pursue a career in corporate and business credit and a base to continue my education with IOB. Being a busy working mum studying with IOB has allowed me to maintain a good work life balance."

Heather McNally

Curriculum

NFQ: Level 8
Academic credits: 30 ECTS
Modules: 3
Awarding body: UCD

You study three modules as follows:

1. **Principles and Practices of Credit Risk Management**
2. **SME Credit Risk Assessment**
3. **SME Financing and Distressed Credit Analysis**

1. Principles and Practices of Credit Risk Management

(NFQ Level 8, 10 ECTS)

- What is credit risk?
- Why is credit risk so important?
- What are the other key categories of risks that banks are exposed to?
- Bank Risk Appetite Framework
- Basel Principles for the Management of Credit Risk
- Components of the Credit Risk Management Framework
- Credit portfolio management and credit concentration risk
- Credit culture
- Credit Risk Appetite Statement
- The end to end credit process
- Overview of the Canons of Lending
- Credit application process
- Bank capital
- Risk weighted assets
- Basel II & Basel III, Minimum Regulatory Requirements
- Introduction to Credit Models
- Impairment provisioning
- Stress testing
- Impairments and capital
- Pricing for Risk.

2. SME Credit Risk Assessment

(NFQ Level 8, 10 ECTS)

- Objectives and challenges of SME lending
- Characteristics of business entities
- The canons of lending
- Business strategy, Industry, Economic and Management team risk assessment
- Characteristics of the different SME sectors
- Primary Statements in financial reporting
- Analysing financial information - P&L, balance sheet and cash flows
- Calculating and analysing repayment capacity
- Preparation of cash flow statements
- Understanding working capital analysis
- Conducting a financial projections sensitivity analysis
- Different types of security and legal issues affecting security
- Explaining covenants and conditions precedent.

3. SME Financing and Distressed Credit Analysis

(NFQ Level 8, 10 ECTS)

- Traditional banking facilities for SME borrowers
- Alternative sources of finance for SMEs
- Start-up business lending
- Agricultural lending
- Property lending
- Conducting the borrower loan interview
- Writing the credit application
- Negotiating final terms and conditions
- Legal documentation and drawdown
- Procedures for deciding on impairment provisions
- Monitoring and control framework
- Identifying and reviewing a potentially distressed customer
- Negotiating with customers in difficulty
- Managing arrears and restructuring
- Cancelling facilities, collections and recoveries
- Loan restructuring options
- Importance of the facility letter in impairment cases
- Legal remedies for recovery.

Further Information

Award

When you successfully complete this programme, you will be awarded a Professional Diploma in SME Credit from UCD.

This is a level 8 qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Assessment structure

Combination of continuous assessment (multiple choice questions) and an end of trimester two hour written examination with essay style questions.

Entry requirements

The minimum entry requirements to the programme are:

- 3 years' experience (full-time) in a relevant banking role and have completed the Professional Diploma in Financial Advice or equivalent 30 ECTS level 7 programme

or

- An honours degree (min. H2.2, level 8 NFQ)

or

- Admission will also be considered from experienced professionals who do not meet the minimum admission requirements as set out above, who can demonstrate learning based on work and training experience e.g. individuals employed in a credit role with responsibility for credit decisions in financial services.

Professional body membership

You must be a current member of IOB, or become a member, to undertake this programme.

Delivery

The programme will be delivered via blended learning with online webinars supplemented by up to two online one day practical workshops for each module.

Programme duration

Participants will be permitted to register and complete all three modules within one trimester. However, we would recommend that participants study the programme over at least two trimesters.

As one of the primary learning outcomes of the programme requires participants to be skilled to assess and structure SME credit proposals, online case study workshops will be used to support the participants web-based learning of the relevant units.

How to apply

To apply online, visit
iob.ie/programme/sme-credit

Fees

Module	Fee
Principles and Practices of Credit Risk Management	€675
SME Credit Risk Assessment	€675
SME Financing and Distressed Credit Analysis	€675

Contact us

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