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Government of India
Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
(National Council for Vocational Education and Training)

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Subject: Inviting Public Comments on revised draft "Guidelines for Recognition and Regulation of Assessment Agencies" - reg.

1. NCVET by the virtue of functions and powers entrusted by gazette notification No. SD-17/113/2017-E&PW dated 05th December, 2018 under chapter II, para 16 (b) by which the Council shall recognize, monitor, discipline and derecognize Assessment Agencies; and (1) by which the council shall frame guidelines for the conditions of recognition and functioning of Assessment Agencies, including their roles and responsibilities with respect to training bodies, consumer of such services and assessment agencies and consequences for violations of such conditions.

2. In pursuance of its mandate, NCVET formulated the 'Guidelines for Recognition and Regulation of Assessment Agencies' (mentioned as AA Guidelines hereafter) and Operational Manual which were ratified and launched by Hon'ble Minister, MSDE on 27th October 2020.

3. The skilling ecosystem in the country is highly dynamic owing to the technological advancements and positive disruptions brought out as a result of major policy initiatives such as launch of National Education Policy (NEP) in 2020, National Credit Framework (NcrF) and revised National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) in 2023. In line with the implementation of such major policy changes in the Vocational Education, Training and Skilling (VETS) ecosystem and the feedback received from various stakeholders during consultative meetings, a need was felt to comprehensively revise the AA Guidelines 2020 with an overarching objective of ensuring high-quality assessments for the credibility and effectiveness of vocational education and training programs.

4. The revised comprehensive "Guidelines for Recognition and Regulation of AAs" shall act as a reference point that draws up the contours of the norms of recognition and also delineates the detailed implementation process, monitoring mechanism and the repository of documentary evidence that would be required for initial recognition and continued affiliation of the assessment agencies. The Guidelines set the overarching governance and effective working principles in line with globally recognized accreditation standards of quality assurance which will ensure the identification and sustenance of the best-in-class AAs in the NCVET ecosystem.

5. Accordingly, comments/ inputs/ suggestions are invited on the draft guidelines at comments.aaguidelines@gmail.com by 23/05/2024.

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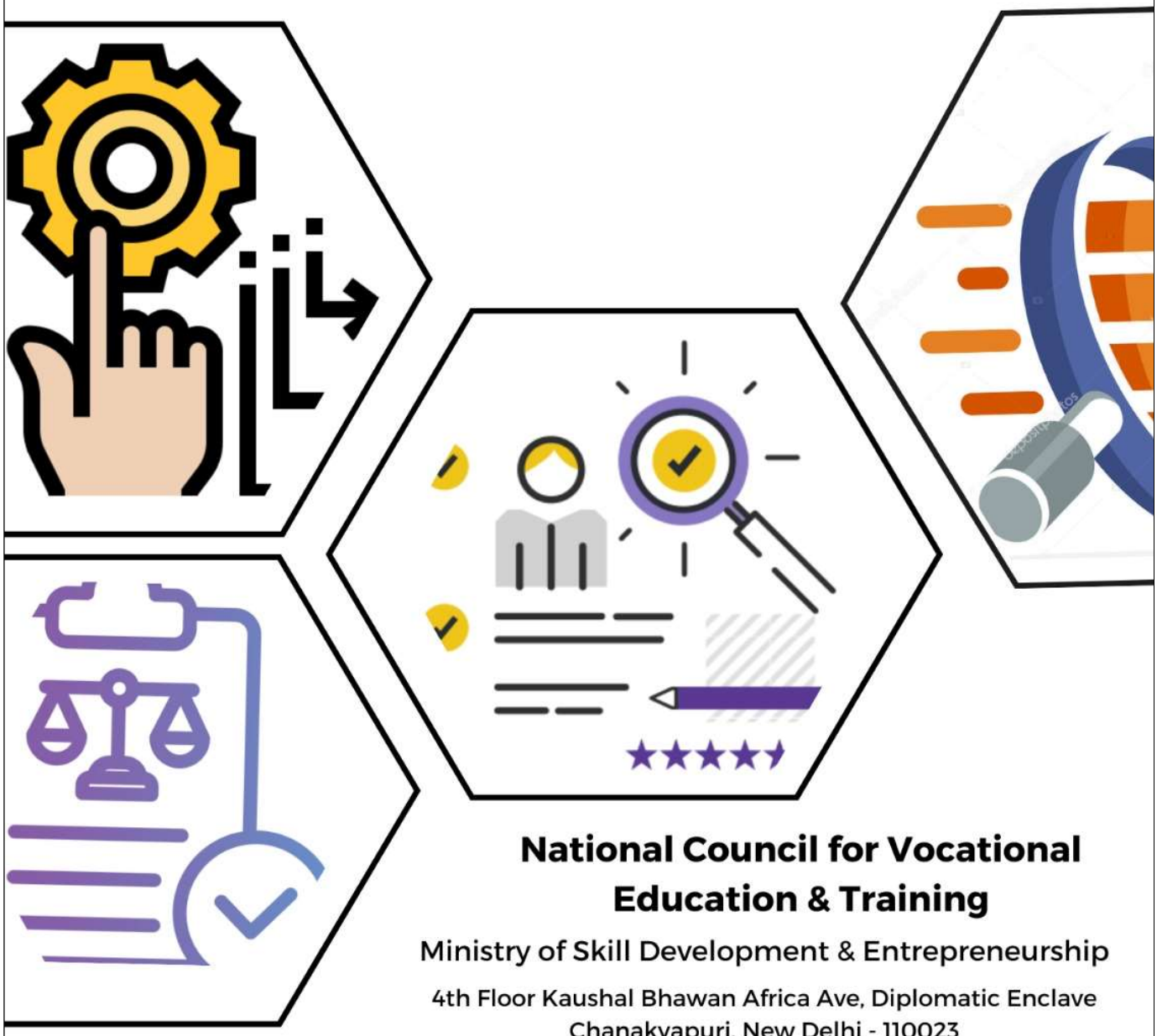
Director, NCVET

सत्यमेव जयते
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT
& ENTREPRENEURSHIP

REVISED COMPREHENSIVE GUIDELINES FOR RECOGNITION AND REGULATION OF ASSESSMENT AGENCIES 2024



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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. Overview of the Education and Skilling Ecosystem

Vocational Education, Training, & Skilling (VETS) are essential components of global efforts to address skills gaps, promote economic growth, foster innovation, support social inclusion and are key to preparing a future-ready workforce, promoting sustainable development in the global context. By investing in VETS programs, countries can build a global skilled workforce capable of meeting the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century economy.

The integration of skilling into education and vocational training is even more essential for India to harness its demographic dividend, drive faster and more inclusive economic growth to be a developed nation by 2047, reduce poverty, and meet the challenges of the future job market by creating an industry-ready workforce. Investing in high-quality Vocational Education, Training and Skilling programs is an investment in a more skilled, prosperous, and equitable future for all. Improving the quality and standards of vocational education, training, and Skilling (VETS) requires a comprehensive approach involving various stakeholders, policies, and strategies.

The skill development efforts in the country aims at increasing the productivity and employability of the workforce by synergizing efforts of various sectors of economy and business and by reforming the present system with enhanced capability to adapt to the changing technologies and labor market demands. The skill ecosystem in India has witnessed some great disruptive reforms and policy interventions which are reinvigorating and re-energizing the country's workforce today preparing the youth for not only for national and global job opportunities but also the self-employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. The skilling landscape in India, however, faces several challenges that hinder its effectiveness and impact. Some of the major challenges include:

1. **Quality of Training:** One of the primary challenges is the variable quality of skill training programs. Many training institutes lack adequate infrastructure, qualified instructors, and up-to-date curriculum, leading to subpar training outcomes. The paucity of trainers and the inability to attract practitioners from the industry as faculty adds to this issue.
2. **Quality Assurance Mechanisms:** Quality assurance is one of the major challenges in area of VETS. To implement robust quality assurance mechanisms and to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of VETS programs, minimum quality standards for training program & assessment need to be defined.
3. **Industry Alignment:** There is often a mismatch between the skills acquired through training programs and the requirements of the job market in the industry. This leads to a gap between the skills of the workforce and the demands of employers. Additionally, with technology changing the industry requirements at a very fast pace, it is important to keep pace with that in skilling.
4. **Public perception:** Public perception views skilling as the last option meant for those who have not been able to progress/ opt out of the formal academic system. This is also because of the limited mobility between skill and higher education

programs and vocational education. Additionally, skilling needs to be made aspirational.

5. **Scale and Reach:** Despite efforts to scale up-skilling initiatives, reaching a large proportion of the population, especially in rural areas, remains a challenge. Limited access to training facilities, lack of technological support & awareness, and logistical hurdles impede the expansion of skilling programs.
6. **Employability:** While skilling programs aim to enhance employability, many graduates of these programs struggle to find suitable employment. Factors such as inadequate soft skills, limited job opportunities, and stigma associated with certain vocational occupations contribute to this challenge.
7. **Credible Assessment:** Credible assessment particularly practical assessment, plays a crucial role in vocational education, training, and skilling (VETS). Multiplicity in assessments and certification systems & processes also leads to inconsistent outcomes and causes a lack of confidence among the employers.
8. **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):** There is a need to better recognize and validate skills acquired through informal learning or work experience. The lack of a robust system for recognizing prior learning limits opportunities for individuals to receive formal certification for their skills.
9. **Inclusive and Accessible Training and Removing Gender Disparities:** Ensure that VET programs are accessible to individuals from diverse backgrounds, including women, minorities, persons with disabilities, and marginalized communities. Address barriers to access such as geographic location, financial constraints, and cultural biases. Women are often underrepresented in skilling programs, primarily due to socio-cultural barriers, lack of access to education and training facilities, and limited job opportunities in certain sectors.
10. **Technology Integration:** While technology has the potential to revolutionize skilling by enabling online learning, remote training, and skill assessment, its effective integration into skilling programs remains a challenge, especially in areas with limited digital infrastructure and connectivity.
11. **Funding and Sustainability:** Many skilling initiatives rely heavily on government funding, which may not always be sufficient or sustainable in the long term. Ensuring adequate funding and exploring innovative financing mechanisms are essential for the sustainability of skilling programs.
12. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** There is a need for robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness and impact of skilling programs accurately. Without reliable data on outcomes and performance, it becomes challenging to identify areas for improvement and allocate resources effectively.
13. **The other Miscellaneous challenges:** Mismatch between demand and supply at the sectoral and spatial levels; Very low coverage of apprenticeship and internship programs; Inadequate impetus to innovation-driven entrepreneurship; inadequate focus on future & cross-sectoral skills.
14. **Lifelong Learning and Continuing Education:** Promoting a culture of lifelong learning and continuing education among VETS graduates and professionals. Offer opportunities for upskilling, reskilling, and career advancement through short-term courses, certification programs, and professional development workshops.

Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach involving collaboration between the Government, industry, educational institutions, Professional bodies and civil society organizations. By addressing issues related to quality, industry alignment, accessibility, and inclusivity, India can strengthen its skilling landscape and better prepare its workforce for the demands of the future economy.

The Assessment plays a crucial role in vocational education, training, and skilling.

The practical assessments are essential in vocational education, training, and skilling as they provide a holistic approach to learning that emphasizes the development of job-specific skills, employability skills, and real-world competencies. By incorporating practical assessments into vocational programs, educators can better prepare learners for success in their chosen careers. Therefore, a credible assessment mechanism encompasses the following:

1. **Enhances Learning Process:** Assessment, particularly formative assessment, supports learning processes and improves outcomes for Vocational Education, Training & Skilling (VETS) learners. It focuses on the learner's capacity to apply knowledge and skills, not just their theoretical knowledge.
2. **Aligns with Learning Outcomes:** Formative and summative assessments may be more effectively aligned so that they are part of a coherent and transparent framework. This alignment ensures that the focus of assessment is on the learner's ability to apply knowledge and skills.
3. **Ensures Job-Readiness:** Practical assessment is a cornerstone of vocational education, aimed at measuring a learner's ability to apply skills and knowledge in a real or simulated work environment. This ensures that graduates are not just "book smart" but are also competent and job-ready.
4. **Meets Industry Standards:** Practical assessments provide concrete evidence of a learner's ability to meet industry standards and perform effectively in a real or simulated work environment.
5. **Develops Technical Skills:** Vocational training focuses on developing technical skills for a specific job or trade. It offers practical knowledge in contrast to theoretical knowledge offered by the conventional formal education system.
6. **Provides Hands-On Instruction:** Vocational training provides the much-needed hands-on instruction in a specific trade.

In summary, the assessments including practical assessments in vocational education, training, and skilling VETS are essential for ensuring that learners acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to be successful in their chosen fields. They help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, making learners job-ready and competent.

India caters to a diverse skilling ecosystem which is supported by key stakeholders, and organizations. Prior to the regulation of Assessment Agencies (AAs) by NCVET, multiple assessment agencies existed in the assessment ecosystem in India with varied implementation norms. Further, in some cases, Awarding Bodies (ABs) have also taken

up the dual role of performing assessments. Due to this, parallel close-knit assessment systems were created across awarding bodies and assessment agencies with limited standardization in operations, leading to quality issues and potential conflict of interest.

To address the above-mentioned challenges in the ecosystem, an urgent need was felt to recalibrate the assessment strategy by integrating the processes, outcomes and technology to reach a grand unified vision. Therefore, a need for a vibrant policy framework was envisaged that encourages improvements and key transformations in the skilling network.

These Revised Comprehensive Guidelines for Recognition and Regulation of AAs shall act as a reference point that draws up the contours of the norms of recognition and also delineates the detailed implementation process, monitoring mechanism and the repository of documentary evidence that would be required for initial recognition and continued affiliation of the assessment agencies.

These Revised Guidelines set the overarching governance and effective working principles in line with globally recognized accreditation standards of quality assurance which will ensure the identification and sustenance of the best-in-class AAs in the NCVET ecosystem. This dynamic and outcome-focused document will lead to positive reforms in both short-term and long-term skilling endeavors and will strengthen the regulation of bodies that certify skilled candidates across sectors. Additionally, technology-based processes for accreditation will further stream-line these processes.

1.2. Overview: NCVET as a National Regulator for Vocational Education, Training and Skilling

The National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) was notified by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) on 5th December 2018 to integrate the fragmented regulatory systems in India and infuse quality assurance across the entire skilling/ vocational training value chain, leading to strengthened outcomes. The NCVET will act as an overarching skills regulator which will regulate the functioning of entities engaged in vocational education and training, both long and short-term and establish minimum standards for the functioning of such entities. The major functions of NCVET include:

a) Recognition and regulation of Awarding Bodies (ABs), Assessment Agencies (AAs) and Skill related Information Providers
b) Approval of qualifications as per the NSQF (National Skills Qualification Framework)
c) Monitoring and supervision of recognized entities
d) Grievance Redressal.

The Awarding Bodies (ABs), Assessment Agencies (AAs) and Training Providers are three key players in the skilling ecosystem of India. The Awarding Body creates qualifications and related learning material and awards certification to learners in the approved qualifications. The Assessment Agency ensures the conduct of quality assured standardized assessment to formally evaluate the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills

and/or competencies) of an individual, records results, and develops assessment strategy and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)/ checklists for content development (including question bank), assessment and delivery processes, performance reporting and analytics, roles and responsibilities of the assessors, proctors and SME, etc. NCVET grants recognition to AAs and strives to address the issues related to quality in outcomes while putting forth standardization across assessments in the skill training value chain. For the regulation of AAs, this comprehensive document namely – 'Revised Guidelines for AAs' has been developed by integrating the erstwhile 'Guidelines for Recognition and Regulation of Assessment Agencies' and the 'Operational Manual'. The revised Guidelines draw up the contours of the norms of recognition and also delineates the detailed implementation process, monitoring mechanism and the repository of documentary evidence which would be required for initial recognition and continued affiliation of the assessment agencies. This document elucidates the guidelines for recognition and regulation of assessment agencies.

1.3. Vision and Objectives of AA Guidelines

1.3.1. Vision

The Guidelines for Recognition and Regulation of Assessment Agencies are envisioned to serve as the cornerstone for fostering a robust and equitable educational and skilling ecosystem. This vision is rooted in the belief that rigorous and fair assessments are fundamental to the integrity of educational and skilling mechanisms, workforce development, and the overall societal trust in qualifications and competencies. The Guidelines aim to create a standardized framework that ensures the highest quality in assessment practices, promote transparency, and safeguard the interests of learners, assessment agencies and employers alike.

1.3.2. Objectives

NCVET mandates a dynamic and robust mechanism to ensure standards of quality and reliability are maintained amongst all the AAs. The mechanism ensures the standardization of processes in the skill ecosystem. During the tenure of a recognized body both periodic & yearly evaluation of performance shall be undertaken based on clearly defined parameters and evidence. NCVET monitoring mechanism ensures an outcome-based system which will help AAs to identify the risks and mitigate the same through corrective actions. The Assessment Agency Guideline lays down the documentary evidence required and the processes for recognition and continuing operational efficiency for applicant organizations. The objective of the guideline is as follows:

a) Standardization of processes adopted by Assessment Agencies
b) Quality assurance measures in planning & development of assessments
c) Quality improvement mechanism in the operational conduct of Assessment Agencies
d) NCVET procedures, templates, and parameters for monitoring
e) Alignment of Assessment with requirements as in National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF)

f) Enable Accumulation & Transfer of credit-based assessment as detailed in the National Credit Framework (NCrF) to the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC).

1.4. Scope of AA Guidelines

a) In order to regulate the functioning of entities engaged in Vocational Education, Training & Skilling (VETS) and to establish minimum standards for their functioning the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) notification no. SD-17/113/2017-E&PW dated 05.12.2018, states - "The National Council for Vocational Education and Training shall be entrusted with the development, qualitative improvement and regulation of vocational education and training, for granting recognition to and monitoring the functioning of awarding bodies, assessment agencies, skill information providers, and training bodies, and to perform other incidental functions as specified in the Resolution."
b) NCVET will regulate the vocational education & training eco-system as well as its functioning and will ensure maximum quality in outcome and standardization of processes. Assessment of a learner is essential in ensuring the quality of the training and establishing the learning outcome. To enhance the overall quality of assessment & to address the current challenges in assessment and strengthen the assessment process, NCVET lays down revised Guidelines for Recognition and Regulation Assessment Agencies.
c) In order to implement any government-funded training and any other fee-based training program where in training is conducted on NSQF-aligned and approved Qualifications, it shall be mandatory for assessments to be conducted through assessment agencies recognized by the NCVET to get credits for that qualification.
d) In fulfilling the above functions, the Guidelines for Recognition & Regulation of Assessment Agency outlines the affiliation, operations & monitoring mechanism and the repository of documentary evidence which would be required for initial recognition and continued affiliation of the assessment agencies.
e) The Guidelines for Recognition and Regulation of Assessment Agencies shall also be applicable to the Awarding Body (Dual) for assessment-related functions.

1.5. Definitions

a) **Awarding Body (AB)** refers to an entity that awards or proposes to award certification to trainees for an NSQF-aligned and approved qualification either developed or adopted by it as per policy on adoption of Qualifications by ensuring quality training and reliable assessments.
b) **Assessment Agency (AA)** refers to an agency that tests or conducts examinations to assess whether a learner has met the requirements necessary to be competent and qualified with respect to a skill or qualification.
c) **Assessment Agency (AA) Guidelines** are the Guidelines for Recognition & Regulation of Assessment Agencies 2020 released by NCVET and as updated from time to time for recognition and regulation of the AAs recognized by NCVET.
d) **Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs):** An Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) makes systems or components that are used in another company's end-product.
e) **Multinational Company (MNC):** Multinational Corporations or Multinational Companies are enterprises that operate in one or more countries other than their

native country. MNCs are globally reputed successful firms that have grown over many years into large corporations that are international in their vision, strategies, and operations including development, manufacturing, deployment, hiring, and marketing, etc.

f) **Leading Indian Enterprises:** There are classifications of the leading Indian Enterprises of national importance based on their size, turnover, employment potential, export potential, operations, strategic importance, manufacturing, contract manufacturers (CMs), aftermarkets, operating in services and education, etc. Many of these leading Indian Enterprises are reputed MNCs as well.

g) **Council** means the National Council for Vocational Education and Training notified on December 5, 2018, vide notification number SD-17/113/2017-E&PW of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India.

h) **National Skills Qualification Committee (NSQC)** is the Committee formed under NCVET (also notified under the NSQF gazette notification No. 8/6/2013-Invt dated 27th December 2013) which approves qualifications for NSQF alignment and other qualification approval parameters laid down by the NCVET.

i) **National Qualification Register (NQR)** is the online repository of the NCVET-approved qualifications, anchored, and housed under NCVET.

j) **National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF)** is a competency-based skill framework which organizes qualifications according to a series of levels of knowledge, skills, and aptitude notified by NCVET as updated from time to time. The NSQF is anchored at NCVET. NCVET has prescribed norms, procedures, and templates for NSQF alignment of qualifications which shall be followed by all the NCVET recognized Awarding Bodies and Assessment Agencies for performing their functions. https://ncvet.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/NSQF-Order-updated-.pdf

k) **Recognition** of an entity as an AA by NCVET means that the entity has been authorized to assess trainees after completion of the trainees' training under an NSQC-aligned and approved qualification.

l) **Training Bodies** are the entities which are affiliated by recognized Awarding Body in consonance with the NCVET guidelines and agreement signed with AB concerned and will function under its supervision.

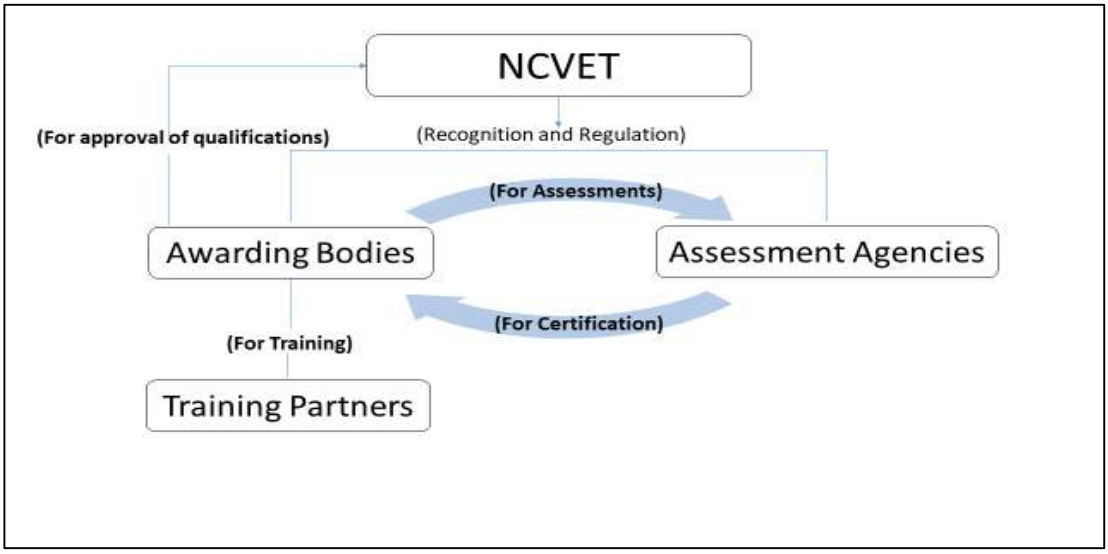
m) **Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)** is a National repository to digitally store the academic and other credits earned from recognized institutions/bodies so that credits could be redeemed, and the relevant award of certificate, diploma or degree granted taking into account the credits/credit points earned at various NCrF levels.

1.6. Interlinkages among Assessment Agencies, Awarding Bodies, Training Centres and Regulating Body

India's diverse skilling ecosystem caters to multiple levels of skilling in different sectors which involves a rigorous interplay between different stakeholders. The key players in the skilling ecosystem in India are the Awarding Bodies, Assessment Agencies and Training Providers. An NCVET-recognized Awarding Body is entitled to award an NCVET certificate to trainees/ learners after successful completion of training and assessment of NSQF-aligned and approved qualifications which are either developed or adopted by the Awarding Body. An NCVET recognized Assessment Agency is authorized to assess trainees after completion of the trainees' training under an NSQC aligned and approved qualification. The recognized Assessment Agency is eligible to carry out assessments for NSQF aligned and approved qualifications in the sector allocated to the AA for which

adequate capacity (Question Banks, Assessors, SMEs, Industry connects etc.) has been demonstrated by the AA and such qualifications are being run under any schemes/ programmes funded by the Government of India as well as any fee-based programmes. NCVET as an overarching regulator undertakes centralized recognition of AAs and ABs and strives to address the issues related to quality in outcomes while putting forth standardization across assessments and certification in the skill training value chain. NCVET also regulates the functioning of Awarding Bodies engaged in vocational education and Training, both long & short-term, by establishing minimum standards for their functioning.

The flow chart given below summarizes the **interlinkages between NCVET, ABs, AAs and Training Partners.**



The main functions of Awarding Bodies include the following:

1. Award certification to learners in approved qualifications.
2. Conduct skill gap analysis to bridge the gaps between industrial requirements and training conducted.
3. Creation of qualifications and related learning material.
4. Development of affiliation/ accreditation norms for training partners and affiliating/ accrediting training partners.
5. On-boarding assessment agencies to ensure fair and reliable assessments through pre-defined norms and processes.
6. Monitor the functioning of training partners and assessment agencies.
7. Develop norms for Training of Trainers and Assessors.

The main functions of Assessment Agencies include the following:

1. Conduct quality assured standardized assessment and record results.
2. Develop Assessment Strategy and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)/ checklists for content development (including question bank), assessment and delivery processes with AB, performance reporting and analytics, roles and responsibilities of the assessors, proctors and SME, etc.

3. Ensure availability of accessible standardized assessment tools across different languages and learner groups
4. Ensure availability of core assessment staff (full time/ part time) at all times across states and sectors of operation, who are qualified and competent to deliver the tasks assigned to them.
5. Allocate certified Proctors/Assessor for the assessment batch.
6. Undertake performance rating of assessors and proctors.
7. Cooperate with the Council in any inspection or audit of its activities.

1.7. Alignment of AA Guidelines with the NEP 2020, NCrF and NSQF

1.7.1. National Education Policy 2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India introduces several key points related to assessment across various levels of general and vocational education. Here are some of the main aspects related to assessment as outlined in the NEP 2020:

a) Holistic Progress Tracking: The NEP emphasizes on a shift from rote memorization to a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of subjects. NEP recommends that the Assessment strategies should focus on evaluating a student's overall progress, including cognitive, social, and emotional development.
b) Formative Assessment: The NEP promotes the use of formative assessment as a continuous and regular evaluation tool. Formative assessments are meant to provide timely feedback to both students and teachers, allowing for adjustments in teaching and learning strategies.
c) Competency-Based Learning: The policy also emphasizes on the adoption of a competency-based framework, where assessments focus on determining the attainment of specific skills and knowledge rather than on memorization. Assessments are designed to evaluate a student's ability to apply knowledge in real-world scenarios.
d) Multidisciplinary Assessment: The NEP encourages a multidisciplinary approach to education. Assessments are designed to reflect a student's understanding of subjects across different domains, fostering a more well-rounded education.
e) Integration of Technology in Assessment: The policy advocates the use of technology in assessment processes. This includes the use of AI and other technologies to conduct adaptive testing, providing personalized assessments suited to individual learning levels.
f) Teacher Training for Assessment: There is a focus on training teachers to design and implement effective assessment methods. Professional development programs for teachers are aimed at enhancing their understanding of varied assessment strategies.

The policy outlines assessment reforms in higher education, including the use of semester-based credit systems and the introduction of a holistic multidisciplinary education approach. Multiple entry and exit points in both school and higher education

are proposed, allowing students to accumulate credits over time. These points reflect the NEP 2020's vision for a more flexible, competency-based, and continuous learning & assessment system aimed at promoting holistic development and reducing the stress associated with high-stakes examinations.

1.7.2. NCrF, NSQF and the Revised Level Descriptors

NCrF is a comprehensive credit framework encompassing elementary, school, higher, and vocational education & training, integrating creditisation of learning on three axis i.e. academics, vocational skills and experiential learning, including relevant experience and professional levels acquired. The National Credit Framework (NCrF) is an inclusive single meta framework to seamlessly integrate the credits earned through school education, higher education, vocational & skill education and learning during work. For creditization and integration of all learnings, the National Credit Framework (NCrF) shall encompass the qualification frameworks for higher education, vocational & skill education and school education, namely the National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF), National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) and National Curriculum Framework (NCF) respectively. While catering to multi-disciplinarily and holistic education across sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities and sports, NCrF enables Multiple entry - Multiple exit (ME-ME) pathways in general & vocational education; ensuring flexibility for students to choose their learning trajectories based on their career choices, including option for mid-way course correction or modification, as per their talents and interests.

a) With a view to establish equivalence between general and vocational education, it is important that each program within general education and vocational education, training & skilling has a measurable criterion including the outcomes and competencies backed by a robust assessment mechanism. The National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) is an outcome and competency-based framework which organizes qualifications according to a series of levels of knowledge, skills, aptitude, and responsibility defined in terms of learning outcomes that the learner must acquire through formal, non-formal or informal learning which may comprise of academics, vocational education, training & skilling and experiential learning including relevant experience and proficiency/ professional levels acquired, subject to assessment. Thus, the NSQF is a skills quality assurance framework.
b) NSQF is a national competency-based skill framework that provides for multiple pathways, horizontal as well as vertical to facilitate mobility both within vocational education and training/ skilling and between vocational education and training/ skilling and general education thus linking one level of learning to another higher level. The National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) is an outcome and competency-based framework which is composed of levels 1 (one) to eight (8), comprising of Level-1, Level-2, level-2.5, Level-3, Level-3.5, Level-4, Level4.5, Level-5.0, Level-5.5, Level-6.0, Level-6.5, Level-7.0, and Level-8.
c) Each level represents a different level of skill, complexity, knowledge, responsibility and autonomy required to demonstrate the competence commensurate with that level. Level one of the framework represents the lowest complexity while the highest level i.e. level 8 represents the highest complexity.

d) Each NSQF level is defined and described by a set of level descriptors expressed in terms of learning outcomes in five domains, which describe in general terms, the minimum knowledge, skills, and attributes that a learner needs to acquire in order to be certified for that level. The five domains are:
   (i) professional theoretical knowledge,
   (ii) professional and technical skills/ expertise,
   (iii) aptitude, mind-set, soft skills, employment readiness & entrepreneurship skills,
   (iv) broad learning outcomes and
   (v) level of responsibility.

e) These levels are defined in terms of learning outcomes which are an explicit description of what a learner should know, understand and be able to do as a result of learning, regardless of whether these competencies were acquired through formal, experiential, non-formal or informal learning.

f) The credit framework allows for the identification of measurable outcomes through a well-defined assessment process to enable the equivalence of a vocational education and skilling program with general education programs with or without any additional academic learning. It facilitates interoperability, mobility and transfer of students between schools, boards, colleges and universities, empowering greater choice and means for students to pursue knowledge and skills of their interests, aptitude and circumstances.

g) To bring vocational education and skilling under the realm of formal education, it is imperative that every type of learning can be creditised subject to its assessment.

h) Based on the assessment conducted, NCrF enables creditisation of Experiential learning including relevant experience and professional levels acquired, depending on the weightage for relevant experience and proficiency levels achieved.

i) NCrF outlines the Assessment Bands that are the stages at which the student/ learner needs to be formally assessed for progression in academic/ vocational/ skilling streams. {e.g. 10th/ 12th board exams, Directorate General of Training (DGT) assessment and exams for Craftsmen Training Scheme (CTS), Undergraduate (UG)/ Postgraduate (PG) semester exams}. The conduct of assessment is mandatory for earning credits for all types of learning and progression to the next assessment band. The redemption of credits so earned depends on assessment bands, which implies that the overall credits earned will be accumulated within the existing assessment band and will allow a learner to establish eligibility for the next assessment band or earn a certificate, diploma or degree at the same NCrF level. A course/credit, once redeemed for a degree can be reused.

j) The NCrF is a competency framework that also enables gifted learners with exceptional learning abilities/ capabilities/ competencies to move up the education and skilling ladder without going through the prescribed established formal education/learning hours by assessing the learning outcomes for assignment of credits and the credit levels. In this regard, it is recommended that such specialized assessment methods have to be strict, objective, above board and adhere to high

standards so as to keep the credibility of the NCrF intact. The NCrF document can be accessed at https://www.ugc.gov.in/pdfnews/9028476_Report-of-National-Credit-Framework.pdf

1.7.3. Operationalization of NCrF

The National Credit Framework, duly approved by the government has been notified by UGC on 10th April 2023 (https://www.ugc.gov.in/Ncrf.aspx.). The NCrF has been adopted by NCVET on 12th May 2023. Subsequently, the Dept. of Higher Education vide its order dated 10th May 2023 constituted a High-level Committee (HLC) to oversee the operationalization and implementation of NCrF. The NCrF provides for creditization of all learning including academic, vocational skills & experiential learning, and assignment, accumulation, storage, transfer & redemption of credits, subject to assessment; removes distinction between subjects and establishes academic equivalence between vocational & general education while enabling mobility within & between them, and its operationalization through the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC).

1.7.4. Recognition to Prior Learning (RPL)

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, emphasizes on ensuring Lifelong learning for everyone. As per the NEP, 2020, “The opportunity to attain foundational literacy, obtain an education, and pursue a livelihood must be viewed as basic rights of every citizen. The Recognition of Prior Learning acts as a tool to recognize the competency, skills, professional level, foundational literacy and education of an individual which are mainly acquired through either non-formal, informal or tradition modes of learning.

This will enable individuals to exhibit their personal and professional capabilities in a more formal and effective way. Accordingly, guidelines on RPL has been formulated with the introduction of a reformed framework, the landscape of education and training will receive a fresh impetus, Recognizing all types of non-formal learning outcomes is a technique that honors and makes visible the whole range of competencies that people have acquired over the course of their life in diverse contexts and through various means. RPL serves as a motivator for the advancement of lifelong learning. The assessment process is the integral part of achieving RPL.

The link for the detailed guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is: https://ncvet.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Final-RPL-guidelines.pdf

1.8. Types of Qualifications and Associated Assessments

1.8.1. Qualifications

a) Qualification means learning with a defined formal outcome of assessment & validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards. This outcome is actualized in the form of a formal Certificate and also reflects as credits in ABC.
b) Once recognized, NCVET allocates sectors and territorial jurisdiction to the recognized Assessment Agencies. Accordingly, the Assessment Agencies may conduct assessments on the qualifications falling under the allocated sectors.

c) The NSQF aligned and approved qualification shall clearly define the assessment strategy, assessment criteria against NOSs and assessment tools & process that shall be utilized for the assessment of the learners on that qualification in a holistic manner.

1.8.2. NOS

a) National Occupational Standards (NOS) specify the learning & standard of performance an individual must achieve when carrying out a function in the workplace, together with the knowledge and understanding they need to have. Essentially NOSs of a qualification are evidence-based benchmarks of good practice that have been agreed to by a representative sample of employers and other key stakeholders. Each NOS defines one key function collating the related performance criteria in relation to the specific function in the job role concerned. Put together, these NOSs form a Qualification which is used to train learners for a particular job role.
b) Assessment of NOS is to be conducted through NCVET recognized Assessment Agency on-boarded by the Awarding Body implementing the NOS; and certification shall be carried out by such NCVET recognized Awarding Bodies.
c) For NOSs approved as Standalone learning units by NSQC: Individual certification of NOS shall be allowed.
d) For NOSs which are not approved as Standalone but are part of an already approved & aligned Qualification: Individual certification of NOS/(s) shall not be allowed except where it is adopted as per NCVET Adoption Guidelines specifically for standalone usage like upskilling, RPL.

1.8.3. Micro-Credentials

a) A micro-credential certifies the achievement of a coherent set of skills and knowledge; and is specified by a statement of purpose, learning outcomes, and strong evidence of need by industry, employers, Government, Professional bodies or the community. They are smaller than the qualifications & NOSs and focus on skill development opportunities in a focused area.
b) Micro-credentials may be a permutation of units (performance criteria centered around identified learning outcomes) that may be developed within a sector or across sectors in a multiple of 7.5 learning hours in a learning day, these can be a set of 04 such days (30 hours) or 02 such days i.e., 15 learning hours or 01 such day i.e., 7.5 hours with a FastTrack assessment that can be carried out using Online tools/modes. However, based on the requirements the number of hours may vary.
c) Since not too many hand-skills are covered as part of the training of micro-credentials, it is proposed to have an online assessment process, if possible, of the micro-credentials. The blended learning guidelines may be appropriately used for the assessment based on the subject/ topic. The micro-credentials may have built-in formative assessment, for a better understanding. For the smaller micro-credentials, it is not essential to have a summative assessment.

d) The Assessment process may follow the blended learning guidelines. The assessments may be of the duration as decided by the industry and shall be flexible. For self-paced Micro-Credentials, the On-Demand assessments can be used which may help in establishing the final learning outcomes (The option of taking the assessment in such cases shall be disabled for multiple attempts and be restricted to be unidirectional and time-based)
e) Micro, Nano credentials and NOSs may be stacked to make a qualification. The link for the detailed guidelines for the Development, Approval & Usage of National Occupational Standards (NOS) & Micro-Credentials (MC) is: Guidelines-for-Development-Approval-Usage-of-National-Occupational-Standards-NOS-Micro-Credentials-MC.pdf (ncvet.gov.in)

1.8.4. Nano Credentials-

a) A nano-credential is smaller than a micro-credential with the ability to 'stack' into micro-credentials, NOS or Qualification. A nano-credential should be of less than 7.5 hours and are more focused on particular skill sets.
b) These ultra-specialized credentials are designed to provide learners with precise skills or knowledge in a particular area and is mainly used for upskilling.
c) The Assessment process for nano-credentials may follow similar norms as proposed for micro-credentials. It is proposed to have an online assessment process & built-in formative assessment for nano-credentials. The NCVET blended learning guidelines may be appropriately used for the assessment based on the subject/ topic.

1.8.5. Flexible Memorandum of Understanding or Flexi-MoU Scheme:

a) The Flexi-MoU scheme allows industries to train candidates as per their skill set requirements and provides trainees with an industry environment aligned with the market demand and latest technology to undergo training. It is designed to cater to the needs of both industry as well as trainees.
b) The scheme offers flexibility to Industry, for their tailored & customized courses, having market-relevant content that meets the industry requirements. These courses developed by Industrial Training Partner (ITP) are intended to provide more weightage towards industrial training and are high employment potential.
c) Assessments under Flexi-MoU Scheme: While training is the sole responsibility of ITP, assessment is jointly done by ITP and DGT. Industry conducts practical and formative assessments, with ensured placement of at least 50% of the total successful trainees trained. Practical and formative assessment shall be conducted by ITP, and Computer Based theoretical exams shall be conducted by DGT.
d) The detailed DGT Guidelines for Flexi MoU Scheme may be accessed at https://dgt.gov.in/sites/default/files/Draft_Guidelines_for_Flexi_MoUFinalVersion.pdf

1.8.6. National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS)

a) In the Indian context, the Apprentices Act, 1961 and the Apprenticeship Rules, 1992 were enacted with the objective to meet the demand of skilled workforce, to promote the industrial economy, and to provide experiential learning opportunities to the youth.
b) The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) launched the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) on 19th August 2016 to provide financial incentives to the establishments engaging apprentices under the Apprentices Act, 1961.
c) National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme-2 (NAPS-2) launched in 25th October 2023, aims to promote apprenticeship training in the country, by providing partial stipend support to the apprentices engaged under the Apprentice Act, 1961, undertaking capacity building of the apprenticeship ecosystem, and providing advocacy assistance to the stakeholders.

1.8.7. Diploma

a) Diploma in Vocational Education & Training & Skilling would mean a NSQF aligned & approved qualification of a higher order in a specific field leading to a focused job or learning. Thus, the basic features of Diploma Qualification are as follows:
   i. It is a long-term qualification
   ii. It is of higher order learning i.e. higher than school education but not leading to a degree except under provisions of lateral entry into any degree program
   iii. It is generally a focused or specialized field of learning leading to a vocation/job role in the market.
b) The assessment process for Diploma/Diploma (Advanced) Qualifications shall be comprehensive and quality-assured. Only the top-performing AAs shall be eligible to conduct Diploma assessments based on their rating. Till such time that the ratings of AAs are published by NCVET, assessments shall be undertaken by the agencies notified by NCVET for this purpose. Additional measures shall be taken to infuse more norms & protocols with respect to the assessment of Diploma Qualifications. Such measures and the detailed assessment strategy are provided at Annexure 5 of the NCVET Guidelines for Diploma Qualifications in Vocational Education, Training & Skilling.
   https://ncvet.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/DiplomaGuidelines_20230515.pdf

1.8.8. Employability Skills

a) NCVET has been encouraging all Awarding bodies to make efforts to ensure that the job roles being submitted for NSQF alignment and approval are holistic in nature and should cater to the dynamic industry needs by imparting the trainees with adequate employability skills (ES).

1.9. Categories of Qualifications

1.9.1. Multi Skill Qualifications

a) Multi-skilling is a Combination of Independent Job roles which can be performed by an individual. Multi-skilling pertains to those Skill-sets/ Learning Outcomes (LOs) that an individual must possess to execute a comprehensive job role that requires independent knowledge and competencies panning out in multiple sectors or sub sectors within a sector.
b) Each job role in such combination pertains to a single qualification which may exist across different sectors or different sub sectors within a sector.

1.9.2. Cross-Sectoral Skill Qualifications

a) It comprises of one complete independent job role or qualification whose NOSs are spilling over two or more sectors/sub-sectors. Independently these NOSs may or may not be useable as a complete independent qualification/Job Role. Each job role is unique and required for a specialized field of Cross-Sectoral application. Therefore, the development of such qualification involves close collaboration of 2 or more sectors which will develop NOSs relating to their concerned sectors and integrate the same with an integrating NOS, as required to be developed together by both sectors.
b) The Assessment of such Cross-Sectoral job role would require that the assessment of each NOS be done by experts in the sector concerned. For easy implementation of the assessment process, they may choose an Assessment Agency which has the competency to assess NOSs of both sectors.
c) The assessments based on multi-skill qualifications require the assessor/s to assess on all the components/NOSs of the qualification and the interlinkages between them. Unlike a single qualification where the assessor needs training (ToA) to execute assessments in one sector and its pedagogy, the approach in Multi-Skilling & Cross-Sectoral skilling would differ. The following processes may be adopted:
    i. Assessment Agencies capable of assessing multiple skill and sectors may be utilized for these assessments.
    ii. A Coordinating Assessment Agency may be made responsible for the multiple parts of the qualification (multiple sectors), and this single coordinating assessment agency provides for multiple assessors (may be sourced from different Assessment Agencies) to cater to the various parts of the qualifications.
    iii. Assessor is trained (ToA) in multiple sectors/sub-sectors so as to successfully conduct assessments. Single assessor assesses through neutral assessing ways (reduced biases) technology in assessment, MCQ type question banks, etc.
    iv. The “Lead Awarding Body (AB)” will be responsible for managing the overall assessment process. On-site, practical assessments will be conducted by the Assessment Agency having knowledge of both areas.

v. The “Supporting AB” will develop multiple choice-based question banks with model answers which will be used by the “Lead AB” to conduct online/automated assessment for the curriculum related to the “Supporting AB”.

vi. The Assessment Agency will host the question bank prepared by both the “Lead Awarding Body” & “Supporting AB” on an independent platform. Whereas the “Lead AB” is the awarding agency that has submitted the qualification taking the “lead” to develop the qualification and taken responsibility for maintaining and majority of the curriculum content and the “Supporting AB” is the other AB that contributes to the development of the multi-skill/cross-sectoral qualification being developed by the “Lead AB”.

1.9.3. Traditional/ Heritage Qualifications

a) For the training/ Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in fading/ dying skill qualifications/ skills and qualifications that are at the verge of extinction/rare traditional/ heritage skills, the instructors who have been duly awarded or recognized by Central/ State government(s) for that special skill(s) can be entrusted with the dual responsibility of training and assessments, in view of the exceptional/ rare skill levels involved.

1.9.4. Future Skills Qualifications

a) Future skills refer to the set of competencies, abilities, and knowledge that are predicted to be in high demand in the future job market. These skills are expected to help individuals adapt to the rapidly evolving technological, economic, and social landscape of the future. The concept of future skills recognizes that the workforce is undergoing a fundamental shift, driven by advances in technology, globalization, and changing workplace dynamics. Jobs that were once considered stable and secure may no longer exist, and new jobs are emerging that require a different set of skills and competencies.

b) The assessment of future and emerging skills involves anticipating the evolving demands of the job market, technological advancements, and societal changes.

c) The NSQF aligned and approved qualification on future skill shall clearly define the assessment strategy, assessment criteria against NOSs, assessment tools that shall be utilized for the assessment of the learners on that qualification in a holistic manner.

d) For the Niche future skills assessed, some of the eligibility criteria may be different than the other Assessment agencies.

1.9.5. MNC/ OEM based skill Qualifications

a) The participation of MNCs in Vocational Education, Training & Skilling (VETS) ecosystem is an imperative as it is the final consumer of the goods/ services developed in the form of skilled manpower. The MNCs are often at the forefront of technological advancements an industry requires and uses.

b) By aligning their qualifications with the NSQF, they contribute to making the qualifications more relevant and up-to-date with the changing needs of the industry. Refer "**Guidelines for Qualifications of Multinational Companies – Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM)/ Original Design Manufacturer (ODM)/ Value Added Reseller (VAR)/ Other industry bodies**" for further information.

c) The assessment agency assessing these skills has to ensure that the students are able to get benefit of getting credits of these NSQF-aligned qualifications by posting the obtained credits in ABC.
The link of the MNC guidelines is:
https://ncvet.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Guidelines-for-Creditisation-of-Skilling-and-Training-Courses-and-Qualifications-of-MNCs-and-Leading-Indian-Enterprises.pdf

1.9.6. Work Integrated Skill Qualifications

a) A Work Integrated Skill Qualification (WISQ) typically refers to a credential or certification that combines both theoretical knowledge and practical skills relevant to a specific industry or profession. WISQ programs emphasize hands-on experience and application of knowledge in real-world work settings.

b) These qualifications are designed to bridge the gap between education and employment by providing learners with opportunities to develop practical skills and gain industry experience while pursuing their studies. WISQ programs often involve partnerships between educational institutions and employers, allowing learners to participate in internships, apprenticeships, or co-op placements as part of their curriculum.

c) These qualifications are particularly valuable in industries where practical experience and competency are highly valued, such as healthcare, engineering, information technology, and skilled trades.

d) Overall, WISQ programs offer a practical and experiential approach to education, preparing students for the demands of the workforce and increasing their employability upon completion of their studies.

1.9.7. Specific and customized qualifications catering to various schemes and PwDs

a) NCVET receives specific and customized qualifications catering to various government run schemes such as PMKVY, DDU-GKY, PM Vishwakarma Scheme etc. and for PwDs for which the qualifications are created as per the needs and requirements of the Scheme and its associated beneficiaries based on the disabilities. The detailed assessment procedures to be adhered to in such cases will be clearly outlined in the NSQF aligned and approved qualifications.

1.10. Main Features of AA Guidelines

a) Eligibility Criteria: Section 2 of the Guidelines defines the minimum eligibility criteria for agencies that seek to undertake assessment and be recognized as AAs by NCVET. This section lays down the basic minimal requirements for entities who

seek NCVET recognition as an assessment agency including their legal status, prior experience, financial status, sectoral credibility, and infrastructure.

b) Process: Section 3 of the Guidelines delineates the application process for the entity seeking NCVET recognition as an Assessment Agency. This section defines the complete process along with the submission of fees, tenure of validity, application flowcharts with timelines, and special provisions applicable to certain Assessment Agencies.
c) Roles, Responsibilities, and Functions of Assessment Agencies: Section 4 of the Guidelines defines the major roles and responsibilities of a recognized Assessment Agency, operationalization of AA Guidelines, allocation of sectors and geographies and other such parameters.
d) Monitoring and Evaluation: Section 5 of the Guidelines defines the monitoring and evaluation criteria for the recognized AAs including continuation criteria, mechanism, types, frequency, risk assessment framework, risk ratings, corrective actions.

2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR THE RECOGNITION OF ASSESSMENT AGENCIES (AAs)

2.1. Definition of Recognition:

Recognition of an entity as an Assessment Agency (AA) by NCVET means that the entity has been authorized to assess trainees after completion of the trainees' training/learning under an NSQC aligned and approved qualification.

2.2. Scope of Recognition:

2.2.1. Geographical:

Geographical recognition entails the approval of NCVET to conduct assessments in different Indian States and Union Territories for a specified tenure. NCVET will give geographical recognition to AAs state-wise. Assessment Agencies may seek recognition in one state or multiple states based on the conditions specified in the Eligibility Criteria.

2.2.2. Sectoral:

The sector can be defined as a group of professional activities which are categorized based on the main economic function performed by different individuals. A sector shares the same or related economic activities, products, services or technology. There are 60 such sectors clearly defined adopted in the skilling ecosystem. The Indicative list of sectors is attached as in Annexure I.

The recognition holds validity with respect to sector/s for which approval of NCVET has been obtained. Assessment Agencies (AAs) will be recognized by NCVET for offering the services of assessment in **one sector or multiple sectors** based on their competency and experience, as outlined in the Eligibility Criteria. This information will be in the public domain to ensure that it is available to all the stakeholders.

Note: Once recognized, an AA may apply for recognition in additional sectors or geographies as per the criteria laid out in section 3.10 of Assessment Agency Guidelines.

2.3. Eligibility Criteria for Recognition:

2.3.1. Legal Status of Assessment Agency:

a) The entity should be legally recognized to operate within the jurisdiction of India and the State/UT (as the case may be). The entity must be registered/ affiliated with the appropriate authority in India as a Company/ Society/ Charitable Trust.
b) It is to be noted that the entities registered as Partnership firms and/or Hindu Undivided Family Business are not allowed to apply for NCVET recognition as an Assessment Agency. For the purpose of these Guidelines, a Partnership firm refers to a business in which two or more individuals, called partners, come

together to operate a business for profit. Hindu Undivided Family business is formed by members of a joint family, comprising a common ancestor and their lineal descendants or members of the same family.

c) If any foreign entity intends to associate with NCVET, they may apply in the following ways, adhering to FCRA guidelines and norms:
   i. Application must be made by a subsidiary registered in India or
   ii. They may get into a consortium with an Indian subsidiary. In the case of consortium, there should be clearly identified lead partner.
d) Entity should not have been blacklisted by any government agency/ public sector undertaking/ autonomous bodies or any other regulatory body.
e) Entity should have a valid PAN, GST and any other statutory requirement under the Government of India or any state government.

2.3.1.1. Assessment Agency (AA) to be registered under the Companies Act

The Companies Act 2013 is an Act of the Parliament of India on Indian company law which regulates incorporation of a company, responsibilities of a company, directors, dissolution of a company. Any entity applying to NCVET for seeking recognition as an Assessment Agency should be registered under the Companies Act.

The types of Companies eligible to apply as an Assessment Agency are given as follows:

a) Public Limited Companies or Limited Companies: A public limited company is a company that has limited liability and offers its shares to the general public for subscription and trading on stock exchanges. A public limited company is required to have a minimum paid-up capital of 5 lakh rupees or higher in addition to the other conditions as specified in the Companies Act 2013.
b) Private Limited Companies: A Private Limited Company is a separate entity that is held privately and provides limited liability. A private limited company is required to have a paid-up capital of 1 lakh rupees or higher in addition to the other conditions as specified in the Companies Act 2013.
c) One Person Company: One Person Company (OPC) is a type of company that can be formed with just one person as its member and shareholder. Although there is no specific requirement for minimum paid-up capital, the OPC must maintain a minimum authorized capital of 1 Lakh rupees or higher as prescribed by the Companies Act 2013.
d) Non-Profit or Section 8 Companies: A non-profit company is a company incorporated with the primary objective of promoting commerce, art, science, sports, education, research, social welfare, religion, charity, protection of the environment, or any other similar objective, provided that its profits, if any, are utilized solely for promoting its objectives and not distributed among its members as dividends.

2.3.1.2. Requisite number of Members on the Board and their minimum experience

a) The company registered under the Companies Act 2013 should have atleast 7 members on the Board.

b) For the Public Limited, Private Limited and Non-Profit companies, it is mandatory for two members to have atleast 10-15 years of experience in skilling, vocational education, training and assessments. The members may be sector/domain experts in a particular field.
c) In addition to 2.3.1.2 b., it is mandatory for the other two members to have 10-15 years of industry experience in any relevant field.
d) Out of these at least two should be independent Directors.

2.3.1.3. Private LLPs/ Private Partnership Entity are not eligible

a) The entities which are registered as Private LLPs or Private Partnership Entities with the following conditions are not eligible to apply as an Assessment Agency:
   i. The partnership in which the liability of the partners is limited to their agreed contribution in the LLP.
   ii. Mutual rights and duties of the partners are governed by an agreement between the partners or between the partners and the LLP as the case may be.

2.3.1.4. Mergers and Acquisitions

a) For the purpose of these Guidelines, a “merger” is defined as the combination of two or more companies into one entity, wherein all assets, liabilities, and shareholders' interests of the merging companies are transferred to the newly formed or existing company. Both the companies will cease to exist in a merger as they operate as another new company. "Acquisition" is defined as the process through which one company acquires control over another company, either by purchasing a significant number of shares or by taking over its assets and liabilities. It involves the transfer of ownership and control of the acquired company to the acquiring company.
b) For the entities applying for NCVET recognition as an AA and have been constituted as a result of Merger and/or acquisition must comply with the following conditions:
   i. A merger and/ or acquisition between two companies shall only be considered by NCVET if both the companies directly/ indirectly deal with the assessment, skill-development, consultancy services related to skill development, education services and other related functions. However, in case any entity is dealing with training-related activities on NSQF-aligned qualifications, it shall account for conflict of interest and the application shall not be considered for NCVET recognition.
   ii. The requisite documents related to the Merger and Acquisition of entities such as MoU between both the companies, Sale-Purchase Agreement, Due Diligence Reports and Regulatory filings must be submitted to NCVET at the time of application.

2.3.1.5. Any other type of Applicant AA

1) **Startups**: As per the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DPIIT), a startup can be defined as a “business entity that has been established within the last 10 years and has a turnover of less than Rs. 100 crore in any financial year since its inception”.

Further, the startup should have the potential to generate employment and contribute in economic wealth. Also, startups should be working towards improving existing products, services, or processes. The new ideas and innovations in the skilling ecosystem brought by startups are encouraged for the benefit of all the stakeholders. Startups shall fulfill the eligibility criteria mentioned in these guidelines and shall also comply by the following points:

a) The entity should be a DPIIT (Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade) recognized Startup.
b) The entity must possess DPIIT Certificate of Recognition for Startups not obtained before 5 years from the date of application.
c) The entity should be working towards innovation/ improvement of existing products, services and processes in the vocational education/ skilling domain and should have the potential to generate employment/ create wealth. The entity should have a scalable business model with demonstrated excellence in the area of conducting assessments for vocational education and skilling.
d) An entity formed by splitting up or reconstruction of an existing business shall not be considered a "Startup."

Note: After undertaking detailed scrutiny and evaluation of the application submitted by the startup entity as per the norms and procedures prescribed under these Guidelines, the final review shall be undertaken by the Standard Committee constituted by NCVET, empowered by the Council to consider the grant of AA recognition. The Standard Committee shall comprise of members from the concerned government bodies, industry and domain experts, academicians etc.

2) **Subsidiary company:** An entity (or applicant), operating under a parent company, seeking NCVET recognition as an assessment agency shall provide the details of the parent company along with the detailed documents of subsidiary company. The experience of parent organization may be considered in the application of subsidiaries, details are in point 2.3.2.1.

2.3.2. Prior Experience in Vocational Education, Training and Skilling

For seeking NCVET recognition as an AA, the prior experience shall only be considered if the entity directly/ indirectly deals with assessment, and consultancy services related to VET, skill development, education services and other related functions.

2.3.2.1. Criteria - Sectoral/ Domain and Geography

The entity must be able to demonstrate prior experience in the space of VETs assessments. The same would be judged based on the following:

a) The entity must be in the business of assessment of skilling for a continuous period of at least 3 financial years, inclusive of the year of application.
b) The entity should have conducted skilling assessments of the following number of candidates in the jurisdiction for which it is seeking the Assessment Agency recognition in any 2 of the last 3 financial years.

Recognition Sought For	Assessments conducted in Skilling Domain
Category 'I' States/UTs*	7,500
Category 'II' States/UTs*	15,000
Pan India	75,000

The classification of states into Category 'I' and 'II' is based on youth population (age group 15-29) as per the census 2011. List of States/UTs is placed at Annexure II.

c) An entity applying for recognition in a single State/ UT must showcase its experience in the same State/ UT.
d) For an entity applying for more than one State, the number of assessments conducted in the respective state would be added up for considering the prior experience.
e) If the entity is applying for PAN India recognition, then the entity should have conducted minimum number of assessments in any of the following:
    i. For atleast 10 states/ UTs of category I states/ UTs.
    ii. For atleast 5 states/ UTs of category II states/ UTs.
    iii. In case the entity has conducted assessments in both category I and category II states/UTs, then the total conducted aggregate assessments should be minimum 75,000 in the skilling domain. (For eg., if the entity fulfils the individual states criteria for 4 category-I states/ UTs and 3 category-II states/ UTs, then the entity is eligible for PAN India recognition).
f) The recognition shall be subject to fulfillment of sector and geographical credibility listed in the guidelines.
g) For subsidiaries, the prior experience and finances of parent organization may be considered for NCVET recognition as an AA, if the subsidiary has been specifically formed by the parent body for the purpose of being an Assessment Agency, and the management control of the subsidiary remains with the parent body.

2.3.2.2. The Areas considered for Prior experience are as follows:

a) Skilling in School Education and Higher Education

The NEP 2020 recognizes the importance of integrating skill development into school and higher education to ensure that graduates are not only academically proficient but also equipped with practical skills essential for the workforce. The number of assessments conducted for school education and higher education in the skilling domain shall be considered in the prior experience.

b) Vocational Education, Training and Skilling (VETS)

Vocational Education and Training and Skilling (VETS) is a form of education that focuses on providing practical skills and knowledge required for specific occupations or trades. It is designed to prepare individuals for employment in a particular industry or sector. VET and skilling play crucial roles in preparing individuals for the workforce and aims to provide

a foundational set of skills that can be applied across various fields. Assessments conducted in such fields shall be considered in their prior experience.

c) Heritage and Traditional Skills

'Heritage skills' shall include, but shall not be limited to, those skills, aptitudes, and competences necessary for the completion of a specific work in the sphere of cultural heritage. These skills include the application of a heritage trade or craft, knowledge, custom, art, technique and skill as have been developed and safeguarded, whether through tradition or instruction, and having a conservation context.

Traditional skills that are still practiced today have passed through generations, like intricate embroidery and weaving, wood carving, pottery, and stone carving. These skills not only provide a source of livelihood for many people but also help preserve India's rich cultural heritage. Despite the challenges and the use of modern technology; India's craft sector is one of the largest employment sectors, after agriculture, and it employs a large number of people, including artisans, weavers, potters, stone carvers, and other skilled workers who create handmade products.

Assessments conducted in the Heritage and Traditional skills shall be considered in the prior experience.

d) Indian Knowledge System (IKS)

IKS is a collective range of Indian Knowledge that has exhibited in systematized ways of knowing. Starting from the oldest compositions of knowledge i.e. the Vedic literature to the country's native and tribal folklore, the Indian Knowledge is spread as a spectrum. Indian Knowledge encompasses the Foundational knowledge, Science, Engineering & Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences through a structured classification. IKS (Indian Knowledge System) has evolved over millenniums. It has a wide range of several beaches such as Astronomy, Ayurveda & Yoga (Health and Well-being) Mathematics and Computing, Languages and Linguistics, Metallurgy, Rasa-Shastra, Public Administration, War Technology. Management Science and many more. Assessments conducted in the Indian Knowledge System domain shall be considered in the prior experience.

e) Future and Emerging skills/ Technology areas

Future and emerging skills and technologies refer to the capabilities and advancements that are expected to play a significant role in the evolving landscape of various industries and societies. These skills and technologies are often at the forefront of innovation and have the potential to shape the future in terms of economic, social, and technological progress. As industries evolve and societies progress, the demand for individuals with expertise in these future skills and technologies is likely to increase. Staying updated on these developments and acquiring relevant skills will be crucial for individuals and organizations to thrive in the rapidly changing landscape.

f) Future of Work areas

The "future of work" refers to the evolving and anticipated changes in the nature of work and employment as influenced by technological advancements, societal shifts, and economic developments. This concept encompasses various aspects, including the transformation of job roles, work environments, organizational structures, and the skills required for success in the workforce.

g) International/ Globally Required Skills

International/ Global assessments provide a comprehensive understanding of a situation, issue, or phenomenon by considering a wide range of perspectives, contexts, and variables. This holistic approach helps in capturing the complexity of global challenges. By examining data and trends across different regions, countries, or cultures, global assessments can help identify common patterns, trends, and correlations.

Conducting assessments on a global scale facilitates benchmarking and comparison between different regions or countries. This can be useful for evaluating the effectiveness of policies, programs, or interventions and learning from successful practices in other parts of the world. Global assessments provide a common ground for collaboration among countries, organizations, and stakeholders. Assessments conducted globally shall be considered in their prior experience.

h) Niche areas/ Strategic Technology areas

Niche areas typically refer to specific, specialized, or narrowly defined segments within a broader field, market, or ecosystem. These areas are characterized by a distinct set of characteristics, requirements, or interests that differentiate them from the larger, more general context. Identifying and understanding niche areas can be strategic for businesses, professionals, and content creators, as it allows them to carve out a unique space, cater to specific needs, and build expertise in a focused domain. This also includes strategic technology areas for overall national interest.

2.3.3. Financial Status of Applicant

2.3.3.1. Criteria

The entity applying to become a prospective Assessment Agency must ensure the following to prove its financial viability:

a) Minimum turnover of Rs. 3 crores (cumulative) in the last 3 financial years for the entities applying for PAN India.
b) Minimum turnover of Rs. 30 lakhs (cumulative) in the last 3 financial years for the entities applying for 1 state of category 1 and the amount will multiply for every state added of category 1.
c) Minimum turnover of Rs. 70 lakhs (cumulative) in the last 3 financial years for the entities applying for 1 state of category 2 and the amount will multiply for every state added of category 2.
d) Entity should have positive profit before tax.
e) Availability of funds to generate enough income to meet operational payments and debt commitments for at least 1year.
f) Entity should have a positive net worth.
g) NCVET may decide specific requirements in case of Assessment in Niche areas or areas of National Strategic importance.

2.3.3.2. Eligible Sources of Finances

The revenue generated by the activities conducted in the Vocational Education, Training and Skilling domain would only be considered under financial viability.

2.3.3.3. Timeline for Considering the previous prior experience

The Assessment Agency shall opt to submit the requisite data related to prior experience and financials of the last 3 financial years as per any of the following two options:

a) The data from the last three completed financial years will be submitted from the date of application submission.
b) Alternatively, for the running financial year the agency can submit data from one month before the application submission date. In this scenario, the ongoing financial year will be regarded as one complete financial year, regardless of the number of months elapsed.

2.3.4. Sector Credibility (Including Industry Linkages)

2.3.4.1. Number of Sector-Wise Assessments Conducted

To establish sectoral credibility, the entity should have evidence of having conducted assessments in a sector for which recognition is sought. The number of sector-wise assessment conducted includes NSQF aligned & approved and non-NSQF aligned qualifications.

2.3.4.2. Availability of Assessors, Master Assessors and Proctors

The organization should ensure it has access to Assessors, Master Assessors, Masters of Trade, Proctors, and supporting team members who are proficient in the relevant sector or domain. Sufficient assessors, examiners, and proctors should be on hand to conduct assessments for the sector and its related qualifications. Additionally, there should be documented evidence of the availability of assessors, examiners, and proctors who are fluent in the local language of the region to facilitate assessment delivery.

2.3.4.3. Availability of SMEs

The entity should have the availability of subject matter experts (SME) and supporting team members competent in the sector/ domain. The entity shall recruit at least 1 SME for each sector for which recognition is sought.

2.3.4.4. Availability of Question Banks

The organization should possess question banks tailored to the sectors seeking recognition. When developing these question banks, the organization should consider that each qualification typically consists of approximately 4-5 National Occupational Standards (NOSs), with each NOS containing 10-15 Performance Criteria (PCs). Thus, for each PC, five questions should be developed, resulting in an estimated total of minimum 350-400 questions per qualification. These Questions in the Question Bank(s)

shall be prepared in consultation with the concerned AB for ensuring that these are assessing the intended outcomes. The question bank should encompass a balanced mix of difficulty levels, including low, medium, and high covering different types of questions following the BLOOM Taxonomy. The AA shall be responsible for a process for periodic review of question banks must be defined by the AA and every cycle of review should be done in consultation with the concerned AB. The questions should be changed/ upgraded periodically (say after every 2-3 cycles). Additionally, the organization should provide assessment tools and question banks in local languages relevant to the region seeking recognition. The assessment agency catering to assessment for People with physical disabilities may also plan to use different tools/media to enable assessments.

2.3.4.5. Availability of Industry Connects through MoUs/ Agreements

NCVET will actively encourage the effective participation of industry in the assessment process as well as in setting up assessment centers.

All recognized AAs will be encouraged to strive towards excellence, strengthen effective participation of industry and promote the use of technology in the assessment process. The entity shall ensure the availability of industry connects through the agreement signed between them or through MoU.

The Integration with industry can be in the following ways:

a) Hiring of industry practitioners, as SMEs or associating with industry for the development and updating of Question Banks
b) Involving the industry in designing assessment tools
c) Participation of experienced individuals from the relevant industry as experts and assessors.
d) Involving the industry as an observer during the assessment process particularly for practical. This may strengthen the faith of the industry in the assessment process and help in the recruitment of candidates for jobs.
e) NCVET will encourage key industries/industry associations to set up independent assessment centers.

2.3.5. Infrastructure

The entities seeking recognition should have good infrastructure in terms of physical and digital infrastructure to support quality assessments.

2.3.5.1. Physical and Digital Infrastructure

Physical Infrastructure:

Presence of a registered office in India, the premises of which must necessarily be separate/ independent from the office of the promoting organization (if any).

Presence of a fully functional website with the following critical information:

a) Details of the operational teams with the organogram.
b) Assessor and proctor details with educational qualification, and relevant experience

c) Sample assessment papers for various qualifications w.r.t. the domain and sector for which recognition is sought.
d) Information on industry linkages to strengthen assessment delivery.
e) Information on grievance redressal and POSH mechanisms.
f) Availability of supporting documents of registered office, such as ownership document or lease agreement.
g) Proof of premises being used for commercial purposes, such as telephone bill, internet bill, electricity bill, etc.

Digital Infrastructure

a) Availability of adequate assessment tools and aids to support the delivery of assessment pertaining to the qualification (offline, blended, online, proctored)
b) Availability of the state-of-the-art technology, AI enabled test engine to deliver and monitor online and blended assessment lifecycles respectively, with the capability of delivering a variety of questions in a randomized fashion, offer assessment lifecycle dashboards and performance analytics to all stakeholders, along with the requisite systems to refresh the assessment content periodically.
c) The presence of audio and video systems for online proctoring or auto proctoring to record the ongoing assessment at the assessment centers.
d) Availability of geo-tagging facilities for assessors and proctors to verify their presence in the training/ assessment centers.
e) Performance reporting and analytics.
f) Availability of online verification and authenticity of candidates undergoing assessments with special reference to auto online proctoring together with geo-tagging.
g) The following tools would be essential markers for the assessment delivery to learners with disability:
    i. Availability of special instructors/ content developers for creating specific disability-based assessment content.
    ii. Availability of trained proctors and assessors to understand and align with the PwD learners.
    iii. Availability of ICT tools for delivering assessments and monitoring.
    iv. Availability of published results in line with the needs of person with Disabilities.

2.3.5.2. Governance and Human Resources Management

Governance

The entity applying for recognition as an Assessment Agency should be able to showcase the following as part of governance structure.

a) Transparency in the ownership and management structure with suitable controls and clearly identifiable lines of authority.
b) The head of the entity/ CEO shall be engaged on a full-time basis.

c) The head of the entity/ CEO shall not promote/ run parallel business which may lead to a conflict of interest with assessment operation of the entity.
d) The head of the entity/CEO would be considered unsuitable for that role by virtue of the presence of demonstrable evidence of any of the following:
    i. Any reported criminal convictions against him/her
    ii. Any findings such as order/s by a court or any professional, regulatory, or government body that he/ she has breached a provision of any legislation or any regulatory obligation to which he / she is subject to
    iii. Any proceedings related to bankruptcy
    iv. Any disqualification from holding the directorship of a company or from public office
    v. Any finding of malpractice or maladministration
e) Documented standard operating procedures highlighting recruitment, training, deployment and performance evaluation mechanisms for assessment staff.

Human Resources

The entity shall have the following:

a) Adequate number of key assessment staff like certified assessors and proctors, (employed and/or contracted) across states and sectors as per the requirement of qualifications/ sectors for which recognition is sought.
b) Availability of other staff including SME for development of assessments tools, instructional designs for assessment, question bank development, performance reporting and analytics.
c) Presence of critical functional teams including but not limited to MIS, IT, content development etc.
d) For Entities with Dual Recognition: In addition to the above, entities with Dual Recognition shall ensure separation of personnel, systems, and managerial control of the awarding and assessment functions. Such separation should be done in such a way that both awarding and assessment arms function as separate business units or as independent departments with necessary resources at disposal. Entities recognized as Dual Agency shall formulate a policy on conflict of interest.

2.3.5.3. Information Technology: Assessment Engine, Portals, DMS and SDMS

Assessment Engine and Portals used for assessment process must have the following features.

a) Automated Creation of Test from the question bank - NOS and PC's wise: The tests created for every Qualification Pack should follows a strict pattern for every single question that goes according to the National Operating Standards (NOS) and further to the PC's.
b) Anti-cheat detection by Live Proctoring: The online assessment platform should incorporate real time proctoring that can be easily monitored throughout the assessment process right from the start till the end.

c) Real time photo capturing of candidates: As soon as the assessment begins the smart AI enabled platform should ensure live video feeds and random photo capturing at regular intervals that assist in detecting any suspicious behavior of the candidate.
d) Graphical view for performance analysis: Generate performance analysis with a graphical view on the basis of 5 parameters mainly - Assessor, Training Partner, Job Role, State and Date (From - To).
e) Assessment tracking through Geo Location, Date & Time stamping: As soon as the Assessor Logs in or Logs out of the Assessor App, the Geo location with date & time stamping should be recorded even in an offline mode and the same should be tracked for the Students as well. Also, all the details are sent via an email to the Awarding Bodies at the time of Assessor Login.
f) Reminder mail: A reminder mail is sent to NCVET, AB, Assessor and SSC, 24 hours prior to the commencement of the assessment.
g) The portal should be capable of giving performance reports and analytics.
h) In case of any malpractice from a learner, the portal should be able to record and flag that activity.
i) Phasing out of most easy and most tough question: The platform should automatically classify the questions as easy, medium or tough questions based on the difficulty levels. A ready reference report of the usage of the questions should also be available to see the usage of each question. For the questions not answered correctly by most students, feedback may be given to the AB and the training partner.
j) Works in Online/ Offline Mode
k) 100% Security of Data: This Skill Assessment Platform should ensure zero possibility of content theft and performs the suggested security as per guidelines of GOI on regular intervals.
l) Privacy of data of students should be maintained as per the guidelines of Govt of India
m) User-friendly Interface: Portal should have user-friendly interface should be easy to access, operate and should not require any prior expertise. Features should be specifically designed to render ease and accuracy to the user.
n) Integration to ABC/other systems: Enable AB to transfer the learner's data, together with the credits/grades attained post the assessment to Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) of the student.

Database Management System DMS and SDMS

Database Management System DMS and SDMS of the assessment process must have:

a) Systems to record, validate and report all relevant assessment details.
b) Clearly documented procedures for the security of information pertaining to learners' details including results.
c) Availability of tools and relevant software for data collection.
d) Management and learning support staff with necessary skills to analyze the collated assessment data and give feedback for improving operations.

The entity must also adhere to data maintenance and protection as per Government laws/ norms of Data Scrutiny and Data Privacy.

2.3.6. Comprehensive Future Plans

As a measure for ensuring comprehensive planning, the entity, must have a sound business plan highlighting demonstrable evidence in the following:

a) Presence of budget projections, along with basis of underlying projections (revenue, planned assessments etc.) for the upcoming fiscal year.
b) Details of the implementation plan for the assessment proposed in different sectors, qualifications, NOSs, micro-credentials and geographies including the engagement of assessors, proctors and SMEs as required.
c) Details of assessments done on NSQF and non-NSQF aligned qualifications and fees-based assessments.
d) Presence of a comprehensive risk plan and mitigation strategies.
e) Future plan for industry linkages
f) Plan, if any for global assessment
g) The presence of ongoing research and innovation to ensure that the entity is following the best practices of its business line w.r.t. process and product/s& tools.

2.4. Eligibility Criteria (Matrix)

Jurisdiction		Assessments Conducted (Any 2 years in last 3 years)	Financial Turnover (last 3 financial years)
PAN India		75,000	03 Crores
States	**Category I***	7,500	30 Lakhs
	Category II*	15,000	70 Lakhs

*The classification of states into Category 'I' and 'II' is based on youth population (age group 15-29) as per the census 2011. List is attached in **Annexure II**

2.5. Conflict of Interest

An entity applying for Assessment Agency recognition may account for conflict of interest if it is involved in training-related activities along with the assessment functions. Separating training and assessment functions helps maintain objectivity and impartiality in the evaluation process. Having separate agencies ensures a system of checks and balances, with one agency focused on delivering high-quality training programs and another agency responsible for rigorously evaluating the competency and skills of individuals through standardized assessments. This helps ensure that assessment standards remain consistent and are not compromised by the interests of training providers. Therefore, the legal entity seeking NCVET recognition as assessment agency should not be in the business of training and certification of NSQF-aligned qualifications to avoid the conflict of interest in operations.

3. RECOGNITION OF ASSESSMENT AGENCIES – PROCESS

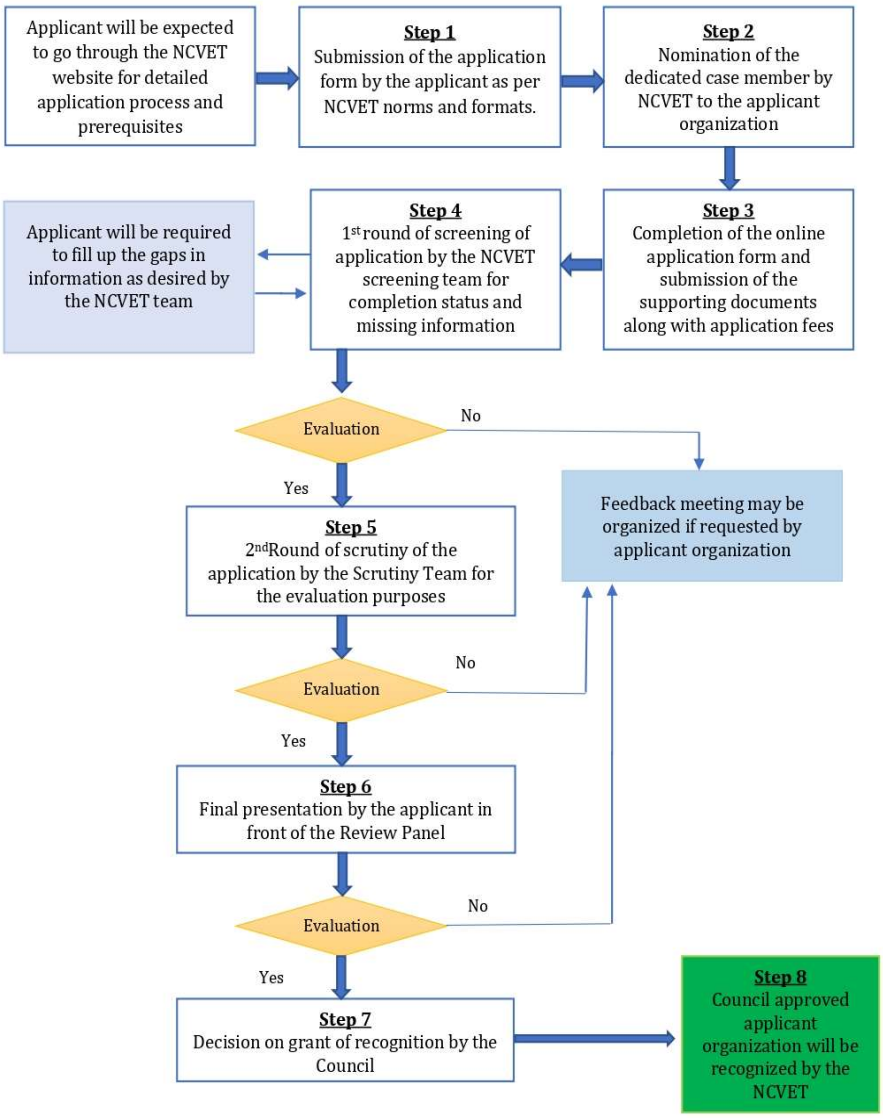
3.1. Process of Recognition:

Assessment Agencies will be recognized by NCVET for delivering NSQF-aligned assessments in various sectors, NOSs, Micro-Credentials, Nano credentials and Qualifications based on their competencies and expertise. The recognition process also clearly specifies the geographical areas where recognized AAs would be authorized to deliver assessments. This information is made available in the public domain to ensure its availability to all stakeholders.

Recognized AAs will be mandated to abide by various guidelines released by the NCVET from time to time. This will be mandated and applicable from the date of the signing of the "agreement" between the respective AA and NCVET. In case any AA has any objection to any new rules created as part of the guidelines, they can give the notice period as per the legal agreement.

3.2. Application Process:

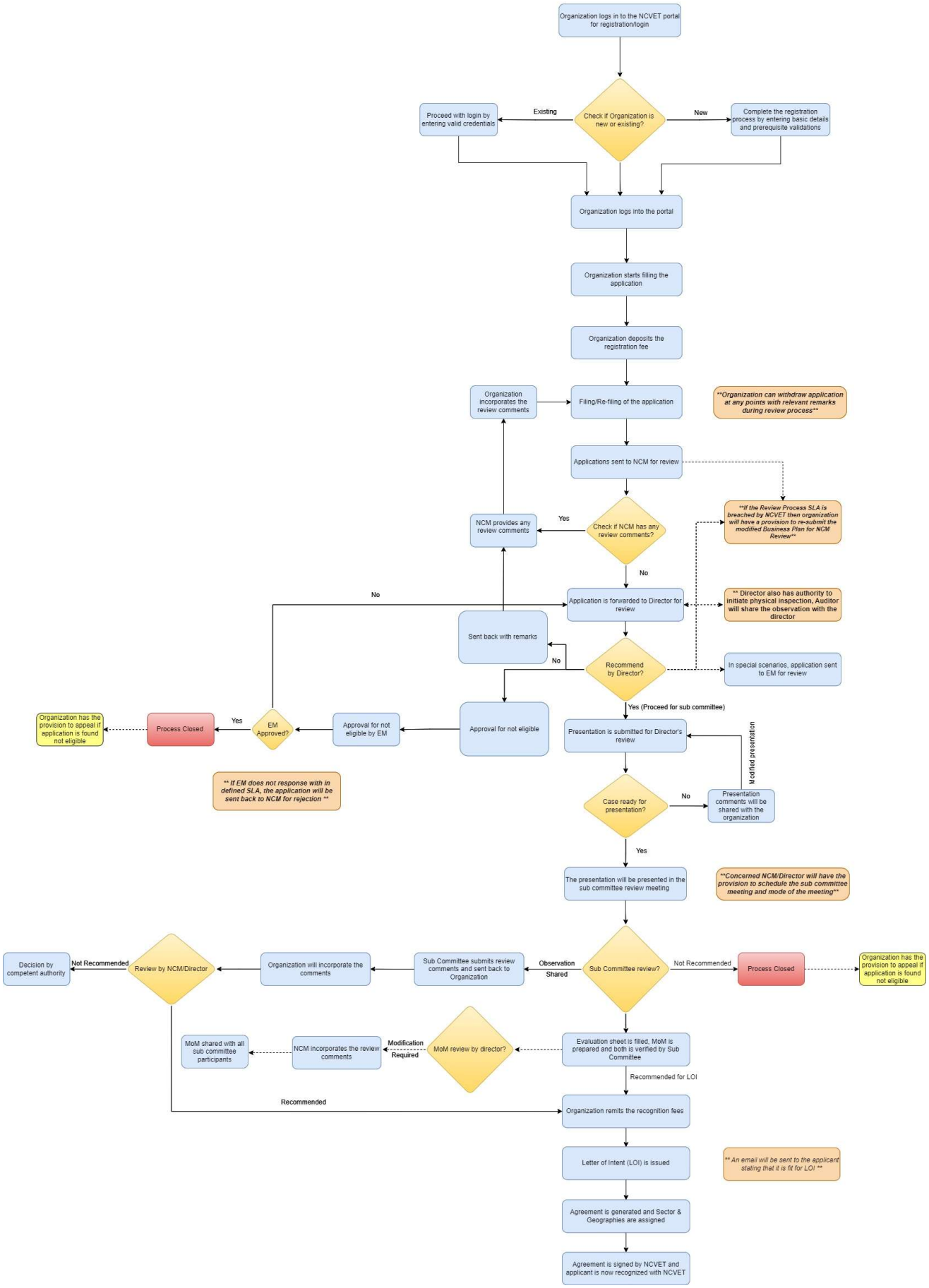
The application process for the recognition of AAs will be open throughout the year. The eligible AAs may apply through NCVET website. The detailed process and instructions for submission are outlined herein. The comprehensive flowchart of the process of application and its evaluation is given in the figure below:



Note: Till such time that NCVET rolls out an online system, the application process will be executed in the offline mode. The application process will begin from Step 3 and organizations will be required to fill an application in a format prescribed by NCVET and submit the same through email and hard copies. All the acknowledgments, necessary communication and information gathering will be facilitated through a contact email, details of which will be provided in the application form which will be made available on the NCVET website.

NOTE: Once the online application system through the Digital Enterprise Portal (DEP) is active, the entities can directly apply through the portal and the applicable flowchart, as in Annexure III. This flowchart ensures that the applicant meets the basic criteria (as per company act, financial, prior experience, etc.) before proceeding with the screening of the application, which helps in further processing of application.

Recognition: Process Flow AA



3.3. Application Processing and Recognition Fees

An entity applying for recognition as an Assessment Agency shall submit a non-refundable processing fee of Rs. 25,000/- at the time of submitting the application. This fee is payable at step 1 of the recognition process along with the completed application form and supporting documents.

If the applicant is recommended by the Sub-committee for the issue of Letter of Intent (LoI), then the applicant body shall be required to submit the recognition fees of Rs. 1,00,000/- before the issue of LoI.

NOTE:

i. No additional fee for affiliation/ accreditation would be charged from AAs by the ABs.
ii. No onboarding fees will be charged by ABs to onboard AA for their qualification.

3.4. Submission Process

The applicant would be required to submit the hard copy of the proposal in terms of the guidelines and requirements of NCVET as amended from time to time. The Hard copy of the Proposal from the applicant body needs to be submitted at the NCVET office and soft copy shall be sent at proposal-ncvet@gov.in.

NOTE: After the Digital Enterprise Portal (DEP) becomes functional, applications will be received through the portal.

3.5. Tenure of Validity of AA

The recognition of an AA and the mandate of the AA guidelines for them will come into effect from the date of signing of the agreement between NCVET and the recognized Assessment Agency.

The tenure of recognition will be as follows:

a) Initially, an AA will be recognized by NCVET for a period of 3 years.
b) Post the completion of the said duration, AA will submit an application for renewal, which if approved would extend the recognition for an additional 3 years, from the original date of approval. This renewal will be based on the performance of an AA as per the risk rating framework and adherence to the continuation criteria as elaborated in the AA Guidelines. The monitoring and evaluation of AA will result in their performance report.
c) AA must apply 6 months prior to completion of recognition period. Upon such re-application by recognized AAs, the recognized body shall continue to have privileges of recognition till a decision on extension or discontinuation is made by NCVET, only if the application is made 6 months prior to completion of the recognition period. AA should ensure that any training batch does not spill over to the post recognition period.

NCVET will reserve the right to withdraw the recognition based on periodic review and audit/ reports of substantiated irregularity from the stakeholders.

3.6. Processes/ Steps for Recognition – Flowchart with Timelines

As per the existing process, the step-wise flowchart of the recognition process is as follows:

Step 1: Expression of Interest by the Applicant Organization

This step marks the beginning of the recognition process through an expression of interest (EOI) by the applicant organization and approval of this request for processing by NCVET.

Process Name: Expression of interest by the applicant organization	
Eligibility Criteria	
An organization which fulfils the eligibility criteria as indicated in the AA Guidelines, based on self-review, can express interest to NCVET for recognition as an AA.	
Input	**Output**
▪ Credentials of the applicant organization such as organizational contact details, website and contact information of the head of the organization etc. ▪ Template for the initial registration (Annexure-I)	▪ Login id and password for the applicant organization
List of steps/ tasks to be performed	
Owner	**Tasks**
Applicant Organization	1. Applicant must register on NCVET website and provide relevant details, for the purpose of creation of a registration account. 2. Applicant must provide the contact details of the SPOC (Single Point of Contact) for all communications with NCVET.
NCVET Team	3. NCVET system will create login id and password for the applicant organization and share it with them through an email/ automated mailer.
Exit Criteria	
This process ends with creation of login id and password for the applicant organization and communicating these details to the applicant through an email/ automated mailer by NCVET.	
Timeline of Completion	
The login id and password will be provided to the applicant by NCVET within **2 working days** of successful submission of the initial registration details. Note: After DEP becomes functional, this process will be done immediately.	
Verification and Validation	
NCVET shall ensure: ▪ Availability of the resources to review the initial registration request of the applicant organization. **Applicant Organization shall ensure:** ▪ Nomination of SPOC for all matters relating to NCVET recognition. ▪ Furnishing of authentic information to NCVET for the initial registration.	

Step 2: Nomination of a Dedicated Case Member

This step aims at supporting the applicant organization to enhance their understanding about the application process and requirement of the various documents/ evidence during the entire application process.

Process Name: Nomination of the dedicated case member to the applicant organization	
Eligibility Criteria	
A dedicated case member will be nominated by NCVET to the applicant organization for further processing of the application.	
Input	**Output**
▪ Initial application/ registration details	▪ Nomination of the dedicated case member
List of steps/ Task to be performed	
Owner	**Tasks**
NCVET	**1.** Post review of the initial organizational details submitted by the prospective Assessment Agency, NCVET nominates a dedicated case member, **within 5 working days**.
Exit Criteria	
This process ends with the nomination of a dedicated case member for the applicant organization.	
Timeline of Completion	
The dedicated case member to be nominated **within 5 working days** of successful submission of the initial registration request.	
Verification and Validation	
NCVET shall ensure: ▪ Nomination of dedicated case member to every application.	

Step 3: Filling of the Online Application

At this step, the applicant organization fills in the online application form and submits the documentary evidence to demonstrate compliance to the eligibility criteria.

Process Name: Filling of the online application by applicant organization	
Eligibility Criteria	
Only the applicant organizations having the login id and password provided by NCVET will be able to access their online account to fill the application form.	
Input	**Output**
▪ Details of the applicant organization in line with the requirements of eligibility criteria indicated in the AA Guidelines. ▪ Template of the application form (Annexure II)	▪ Acknowledgement from NCVET on successful submission of the application form in the form of email/ automated mailer.
List of steps/ Tasks to be performed	
Owner	**Tasks**

Applicant Organization	1. Logging in the NCVET portal with the login credentials, the applicant organization would fill in the detailed application form with the necessary documentary evidence along with application fee. 2. During the application process, the organization can raise queries to NCVET. 3. Dedicated case member on behalf of NCVET would resolve the queries. 4. When the application is completed, applicant organization shall submit the application together with the relevant evidences. 5. The organization should ensure that its legal head signs off the application and evidence.
Exit Criteria	
This process ends with a receipt of an automated acknowledgment email by the applicant organization from the NCVET.	
Timeline of Completion	
The window to complete the application form will be open for **15 days** from the date of receipt of the login details of the portal from NCVET.	
Verification and Validation	
NCVET shall ensure: ▪ All queries of the applicant organization regarding the application process are addressed. **Applicant Organization shall ensure:** ▪ Completion of application and submission of required documentary evidence with the application.	

Step 4: First Round of Screening of Application

First round of screening will happen at the time of filling the form and is led by the dedicated case member. The system will not allow the form to be completed unless the applicant meets the criteria given for application. This screening step majorly focuses on satisfactory completion of the application form and availability of all the necessary evidence to support the application.

Process Name: First round of screening of the application of applicant organization	
Eligibility Criteria	
This step will begin after the acknowledgement is generated by the system after successful submission of the application form by the applicant organization.	
Input	**Output**
▪ Details provided by the applicant organizationduring the application process	▪ Acknowledgment from NCVET regardingcompletion of first round of screening ▪ Decision of approval or rejection of theapplication

List of Steps/Tasks to be performed	
Owner	**Tasks**
NCVET Dedicated Case Member	**1.** The case member will carry out an initial check of the application. If he/ she identifies any areas of omission or insufficient clarity, then he/ she will reach out to applicant organization for additional information or justification. **2.** The applicant organization may be asked to furnish further information as deemed fit by NCVET. **3.** If the case member is not satisfied with the application, the same may be rejected. If the dedicated case member is satisfied with the application, then it may be scheduled for second round of screening after the approval of the Director/ appropriate authority in NCVET.
Appropriate authority/ Director, NCVET	**4.** Reviews the decision of the dedicated case member and approves/ disapproves it with or without comments. In case of rejection approval of the Executive Member, NCVET would be taken.
NCVET Dedicated Case Member	**5.** An acknowledgment is generated communicating the decision to the applicant organization. The case member must clearly document the reasons for rejection or acceptance.
Exit Criteria	
The process ends with clear communication of acceptance or rejection of the application of the organization. In case of acceptance, the next steps of scrutiny shall be clearly delineated in the acknowledgement email received by the applicant organization.	
Timeline of Completion	
▪ The first round of scrutiny will be completed **within 10 working days** from the date of submission of the application by the organization and communicate to the applicant organization regarding missing documents, if any, within this period. ▪ Applicant will have to submit the missing documents/ portfolio of evidence within additional **5 working days** from the date of communication from NCVET.	
Verification and Validation	
NCVET shall ensure: ▪ Review of the application and the attached evidence are complete. **Applicant Organization shall ensure:** ▪ The application is complete in all respects and the required documentary evidence provided with the application are correct. ▪ Queries raised by the dedicated case member are addressed.	

Step 5: Scrutiny of the Application

This round of screening is a critical step where a designated Scrutiny Team reviews the application on grounds of its compliance to the eligibility criteria and decides to either approve or reject the application. Also if the applicant fails to reply the queries after two chances given to him, the application may be rejected.

Process Name: Scrutiny of the application by Screening Team
Eligibility Criteria

This step will begin only after the applicant organization clears the first round of screening done by the dedicated case member and is approved by the Director/ appropriate authority at NCVET.

Input	Output
▪ Details provided by the applicant organization during the application process	▪ Acknowledgment from NCVET on completion of second round of screening ▪ Decision of approval or rejection after the second round of screening

List of steps/Task performed to be performed

Owner	Tasks
NCVET	**1.** NCVET will nominate a Scrutiny Team to evaluate the case. The Team can have 2 to 3 members including the dedicated case member. The composition and terms of reference of this team is mentioned in Annexure III.
NCVET Scrutiny Team	**2.** The team will evaluate whether the applicant meets the eligibility criteria. **3.** The team may seek input from experts and clarification from the applicant organization. **4.** The team can also physically inspect the premises of the applicant organization at this stage, if required. **5.** The team then arrives at a decision to either approve or reject the application.
Member,NCVET	**6.** The Scrutiny Team takes the decision in consultation with the Executive Member, NCVET.
NCVET Screening Team	**7.** The Scrutiny Team prepares an acknowledgment for the applicant organization on the decision of approval or rejection of the application. **8.** On approval of the application, the acknowledgment will communicate the decision of the approval and date for the Review Panel meeting. **9.** On rejection of the application the acknowledgment will communicate the decision of rejection along with reasons and any specific feedback for improvement. **10.** The Team prepares minutes of meeting (MoM) of the review process clearly mentioning the reasons for acceptance or rejection of the application process and feedback (if any).
Applicant Organization	**11.** The applicant organization can request NCVET for a Feedback Meeting at this stage.

Exit Criteria

After the queries raised by the NCVET team are answered, the process ends with the following

- Vetting of the Scrutiny Team's decision by Executive Member, NCVET.
- Sharing the acknowledgement with applicant of the completion of the second round of screening and with the decision of rejection or approval of the application for processing the application to the next step.
- In case of acceptance, communication of the date and time of the Review Panel meeting to the organization.
- Preparation of the MoM of the review made by the Scrutiny team along with details of the reasonsof acceptance or rejection.

Timeline of Completion

▪ The second round of screening should be completed within **15 working days** from the date of acknowledgement generation of the first round of screening. Any clarification to be sought and resolved within this timeline.
Verification and Validation
NCVET shall ensure: ▪ Evaluation of application in line with the recommendations of the eligibility criteria indicated in the AA guidelines.

Step 6: Review Panel Meeting

In this step, Review Panel members would screen the application submitted by the applicant organization and assess the capacity of the prospective Assessment Agency to operate as per the continuation criteria specified in the AA Guidelines.

Process Name: Third round of screening by Review Panel	
Eligibility Criteria	
This step will begin after the acknowledgement of approval on the second round of screening is shared with the applicant organization.	
Input	**Output**
▪ Briefing on application by the ScreeningTeam ▪ Details provided by the applicant organization during the Review Panel meeting	▪ Decision on approval or rejection of the application after the Review Panel meeting ▪ If approved, the application is forwarded for the Council meeting
List of steps/Tasks to be performed	
Owner	**Tasks**
NCVET	1. NCVET will nominate the Review Panel which will be headed by Chairperson, NCVET with Executive Members. 2. The terms of reference and composition of the Review Panel is given in Annexure III.
NCVET Screening Team	3. The Screening team will furnish a brief of the case and the MoM of their meeting to the Review Panel.
Applicant Organization	4. The organization will make a presentation in front of the Review Panel highlighting their suitability as a recognized AA. The presentation will be delivered by the Head of the applicant organization/ Business Head.
Review Panel	5. The Review Panel will assess the suitability of the applicant organization w.r.t compliance to the eligibility criteria and capacity to fulfill continuationcriteria laid down in the AA guidelines. 6. In addition, the Review Panel will assess the capacity of the applicant organization to deliver quality outcomes in line with their proposed business plan submitted with the application form. 7. The Review Panel then will decide on the approval or rejection of the application and if approved, forward the application to the Council. 8. The decision and the basis for the same shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting (MoM).
Exit Criteria	

This process ends with the approval of MOM of the Review Panel meeting by **the Executive Member, NCVET.**
Timeline of Completion
The Review Panel meeting will be organized within **15 working days** of completion of the Screening team meeting, extendable by the discretion of the Executive Member.
Verification and Validation
NCVET shall ensure: ▪ Evaluation of application is in line with the eligibility criteria and ability to fulfil the continuation criteria. **Applicant Organization shall ensure:** ▪ Authenticity of information provided to the Review Panel. ▪ Business head/ CEO delivers the presentation in front of the Review Panel.

Step 7: Decision on the Application by the Council

NCVET is headed by a chairperson appointed by the Central Government. The final decision on the approval/ rejection of the application for recognition of AA would rest with the Council. The composition of the Council is mentioned in the gazette notification (No. SD-17/113/2017-E&PW— dated 5 December 2018).

Process Name: Council Meeting	
Eligibility Criteria	
This step will begin after the approved minutes of Review Panel meeting and application of the organization has been placed before the Council.	
Input	**Output**
▪ Briefing and minutes of meeting of the Review Paneland Scrutiny Team ▪ Details provided by the applicant organization duringthe Council meeting	▪ Decision on grant of recognition or rejection of the applicationof the organization after the Council meeting
List of steps/Tasks to be performed	
Owner	**Tasks**
NCVET Team	**1.** The NCVET team will place a brief of the case before the Council along with recommendations of the earlier screenings done at NCVET.
Council, NCVET	**2.** Council will assess the suitability of the applicant organization on its compliance to the eligibility criteria and capacity to fulfill the continuation criteria and any other parameter as they deem fit. **3.** In addition, the Council will assess the capacity of the applicant organization to deliver quality outcomes in line with the larger industry and employment climate in the country. **4.** Thereafter, the Council may decide on the grant of the recognition or rejection of the application. The decision and the basis for the same are recorded in the minutes of the meeting (MoM)

Exit Criteria
This process ends with approval of minutes of the Council meeting by the Chairperson, NCVET
Timeline of Completion
The Council meeting shall be organized every quarter or as per the directives of the Chairperson, NCVET.
Verification and Validation
NCVET shall ensure: ▪ Evaluation of application in line with the recommendations of the eligibility criteria and any other criteria as the Chairperson, NCVET deems fit

Step 8: Communication of the Recognition Decision to the Applicant

This is the final stage of the application process where decision on recognition as AA or rejection of the application is communicated to the applicant organization. This step also clarifies the follow up actions under both the scenarios.

Process Name: Communication of the recognition decision to the applicant organization	
Eligibility Criteria	
This step begins after the Chairperson, NCVET has approved the minutes of the Council meeting and final decision on the application of the organization has been taken.	
Input	**Output**
▪ Decision of the Council meeting	▪ Communication of the decision of approval orrejection of the application to the applicant organization
List of steps/Tasks to be performed	
Owner	**Tasks**
NCVET Dedicated case member	1. An email with decision of approval/ rejection of the application by NCVET will be forwarded to the applicant organization. 2. NCVET may impose any additional requirement or special conditions of recognition as it deems fit. 3. NCVET may invite recognized AA for an induction meeting. Such meetings will be organized from time to time for newly recognized AAs to familiarize themselves with the next steps as a regulated AA. 4. Post approval as a recognized AA, an agreement would be signed between NCVET and recognized Assessment Agency detailing the terms of association and thereby, beginning of the AA's tenure as a recognized entity.
Exit Criteria	
This process ends with sharing of the written communication on decision of recognition, the date of the induction meeting (if approved) and the signing of the agreement between NCVET and recognized AA.	
Timeline of Completion	
▪ The decision on final approval or rejection of the application is to be communicated to the applicant organization in writing **within 7 working days** of Council meeting. ▪ The agreement would be drawn up and signed **within 90 working days** of the receipt of approval by the recognized AA.	
Verification and Validation	

NCVET shall ensure:

- Adequate resources are available for necessary support to the recognized AAs.

3.7. Grant of Provisional Recognition through the Issuance of LoI

Based on the information submitted by the applicant body, the detailed scrutiny and evaluation of the application and the final review undertaken by the Sub Committee of NCVET, the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) by virtue of its functions and powers as notified by gazette notification No. SD-17/113/2017-E&PW dated 05th December, 2018 under Section 16(1) (b) 'recognize, monitor, discipline and de-recognize assessment agency', may issues Letter of Intent (LoI) for the grant of provisional recognition as an Assessment Agency to the applicant body.

As per the office order no. 38004/01/2021/NCVET, dated 01st August 2022, amendment was made in the Guidelines for Recognition & Regulation of Awarding Bodies and Assessment Agencies with respect to the Recognition fees. The total application fees is divided into two categories: Processing Fees and Recognition Fees. Processing fees is required to be submitted at the time of application, whereas the applicant is required to submit the recognition fees of Rs. 1,00,000/- if the case is recommended by the Sub-committee for the issuance of the Letter of Intent (LoI). The LoI may be issued to the applicant body after receiving the payment details and getting it checked with the Finance department of NCVET.

This LoI will grant them provisional recognition as an AA till the agreement is signed and the AA gets the regular recognition of NCVET. The entity will be able to conduct assessments as an NCVET-recognized Assessment Agency. However, the validity of the Letter of Intent LoI will only last for ninety days, starting on the date it was issued. The entity will be required to submit sectoral data in the prescribed format within a 90-day period, as mentioned in the letter of intent.

NOTE: Once the online application through DEP is active the sector allocation data will be asked at the time of application only. Based on the initial sectoral data, the sectors will be allocated to the applicant and accordingly, the Letter of Intent (LoI) will be issued.

3.8. Allocation of Sectors and Territorial Jurisdiction

As mentioned in the letter of intent, the applicant is required to submit the latest sectoral and geographical details of assessments undertaken till two months prior from the date of issuance of the LoI. The nominated case member will review and validate the data, and accordingly, the sectors will be allocated to the assessment agency by the approval of competent authorities.

NOTE: With the DEP, the data for sector allocation will be asked at the time of application only. Based on the initial data, sectors and territorial jurisdiction will be allocated to the applicant and accordingly, a Letter of Intent (LoI) will be issued.

3.9. Grant of Regular Recognition through Signing of the Agreement with the Applicant Body:

After undertaking detailed scrutiny and evaluation of the application submitted by the applicant bodies as per the norms and procedures prescribed under the AA Guidelines, the final review is undertaken by the Sub Committee of NCVET, empowered by the Council to consider the grant of AA recognition and accordingly the LoI is being issued.

It shall be obligatory on the part of the applicant body to submit the required information and documents mentioned in the LoI and to enter into an Agreement with NCVET as required under Section 25 (4) of the NCVET gazette notification. The agreement shall be signed by the authorised signatory of the applicant body. The draft of the Agreement to be signed for the award of regular recognition shall be shared by the applicant body. This shall be an instrument of legally binding arrangement between the NCVET and the AA concerned by which the AA would agree to comply with the provisions contained therein, and in the Guidelines for 'Recognition and Regulation of Assessment Agency' published by the NCVET as amended from time to time under Section 16(1)(i) of the NCVET gazette notification, with respect to itself, its affiliated associates and any other recognised body of NCVET with whom the AA is working.

3.10. Extending the Scope and Jurisdiction of the Recognized Assessment Agency (AA):

If the recognized AA wishes to extend assessment services for new Sectors and additional Territorial Jurisdictions which are not within the current scope of recognition, they will need to submit evidence, as prescribed in this document, pertaining to the eligibility criteria laid down in the guidelines. This process can be carried out after six months of signing the agreement i.e. the grant of recognition by NCVET. In such cases, NCVET may ask recognized AA to complete a statement of assurance/ compliance for some or all the criteria as part of the application process for consideration of NCVET.

The following conditions need to be fulfilled for adding new sectors/geographies for AA

a) In case of expansion into new geographies the applicant needs to fulfill the minimum of 50% assessments of the state category in one year for grant of additional geography in which the applicant is seeking recognition.
b) In the case of expansion into new sector, the entity shall need to fulfill min. of 5000 skilling assessment in the sector in which the applicant is seeking recognition post signing of agreement. Assessments conducted shall be considered once the applicant is able to ensure evidence and submit the same to NCVET.
c) Performance of AA, measured through NCVET's monitoring and evaluation mechanism shall also be considered while allocation of the sectors and territorial jurisdiction.
d) In case of expansion in Niche areas/ Future of work areas, NCVET can relax this, which may be ratified in NCVET council.

3.11. Reducing the Scope and Jurisdiction of the Recognized Assessment Agency (AA):

If the recognized AA is not able to perform satisfactory in the allocated sectors and territorial Jurisdiction, then the underperforming sections or jurisdiction will be revoked which will affect the overall rating of the Assessment Agency.

3.12. Provision of Fast-Track approval for certain emergent/special categories

There is a special provision of the fast-track approval to certain proposals which are subject to priority. This may include proposals with National interest, National emergency, special category proposals such as proposals with all digital evidence and any other category. For the entity, submitting the required documents as digital evidence, NCVET will be able to directly get that data from Digi locker and this will simplify the document verification process by saving time and efforts.

In another case, a proposal may be of some national interest and national emergency. That proposal may be given priority and the timelines may be reduced to the best suited level.

It is important to note that the applicant is required to go through the entire recognition process including each and every stage mentioned in the guidelines, only the timeline will be reduced to prioritize the fast-track proposals.

Further, the fast-track approval of proposals requires the approval of at least 2 executive members out of 3 nominated members.

3.13. Ineligibility & Withdrawal of Application

3.13.1. Applicant found ineligible after the Director Review

Director will evaluate whether the applicant meets the eligibility criteria and may seek clarification from the applicant organization. The team can also physically inspect the premises of the applicant organization at this stage, if required, post which the director will arrives at a decision to either approve or reject the application. These rejections however will be put up for EMs' approval for ratification.

3.13.2. Applicant found ineligible after the Final Review of Sub-committee

The Review Panel will assess the suitability of the applicant organization w.r.t compliance to the eligibility criteria and capacity to fulfill continuation criteria laid down in the AA guidelines. In addition, the Review Panel will assess the capacity of the applicant organization to deliver quality outcomes in line with their proposed business plan submitted with the application form. The Review Panel then will decide on the approval or rejection of the application.

3.13.3. Applicant found Ineligible due to the Non-Compliances at any stage

The applicant organization is supposed to submit the asked additional information, missing documents and necessary clarifications with NCVET via. email and hard copy within 15 days. If the observations are not closed in the defined time frame of 15 days, then the dedicated case member needs to send a reminder email asking for the response on the observations made. After sending the reminder mail, If the applicant does not close all the observations in the next 7 days, then the application is treated as ineligible and the online account created for such applicants will be deactivated by NCVET and the application will be subject to rejection.

3.13.4. Withdrawal of Application by the Applicant at different stages

The applicant organization who withdraws their application at any point of time during the complete process of the recognition because of what so ever reason, can re-apply for the NCVET recognition anytime at the later stage after withdrawal of the initial application. In such cases, the online account created for such applicants will be deactivated by NCVET. During re-application, the applicant organization will go through the entire application process from the beginning, including the payment of the said application fee.

3.13.5. Suspension/Blacklisting of the applicant by NCVET

At any stage of scrutiny process of application, the council has the rights to blacklist an applicant if the applicant found to be fraud and involved in illegal activities that may be a threat to the society. The suspended or blacklisted applicant will not be able to apply again for NCVET recognition as an Assessment Agency.

The recognition of the Assessment Agency may be suspended by the NCVET under the following scenarios:

a) Any document, information, data or statement submitted by the Assessment Agency in its proposal for recognition, based on which the Assessment Agency was considered eligible for grant of recognition, is found to be false, incorrect or misleading by NCVET at any stage. To democratize the process of AA recognition, the automated process implementation to Digital Enterprise Portal is in progress. AAs are expected to submit supportive documents at various stages. However, any wrong data submitted by AA will disqualify his application.
b) Indulgence by the AA in any corrupt practices, malpractices and/ or fraudulent means in the function of the AA which is found to be true after due inquiry by NCVET.
c) Assessment Agency falls in the high-risk or medium risk category as per the Risk Assessment Framework detailed out in the Guidelines for Recognition & Regulation of Assessment Agencies 2020 and Operational Manual for Recognition & Regulation of Assessment Agencies 2020 released by NCVET.
d) Assessment Agency fails to furnish the relevant information as prescribed in Self-Evaluation Form prescribed under Annexure V of the Operational Manual for

Recognition & Regulation of Assessment Agencies 2020 within one month of the completion of one year of recognition period.

3.13.6. Provision of Review and Appeal

The applicant organization may make an appeal to NCVET for review of the application. The decision to re-examine the application would be based on the discretion of NCVET. A re- examination, however, is not an opportunity for an applicant to submit further evidence which the applicant did not send as part of the original application. An appeal can be made if an applicant organization is rejected at the following stages only:

- Step 4: Screening by dedicated case member
- Step 5: Scrutiny by the Scrutiny Team
- Step 6: Screening by the Review Panel

The decision on the appeal will be taken by the Executive Member. The appeal would have to be made within one month of receipt of the decision of rejection by the applicant organization.

3.13.7. Number of times an Applicant may apply Post Rejection/Withdrawal

Any legal entity applying to NCVET for recognition as AA cannot apply more than three times (If rejected or/and has withdrawn their application) till the next 5 years form the date of first application.

If the applicant is found ineligible at any stage of their scrutiny, then the case will be closed with an intimation to the applicant. In this case, the applicant cannot re-apply for the next 6 months from the date of rejection.

In case of withdrawal of the application, the applicant cannot re-apply for the next 3 months from the date of withdrawal.

3.14. Resubmission of Application by the Applicant

Withdrawal Case:

The applicant organization who withdraws their application at any point of time during the complete process of the recognition because of what so ever the reason, can re-apply for the NCVET recognition anytime at the later stage after withdrawal of the initial application. In such cases, the online account created for such applicants will be deactivated by NCVET. During re-application, the applicant organization will go through the entire application process from the beginning, including the payment of the said application fee.

Closed Application on Account of non-submission of Information:

The applicant organization is supposed to submit the asked additional information, missing documents and necessary clarifications with NCVET via. email and hard copy within 15

days. If the observations are not closed in the defined time frame of 15 days, then the dedicated case member needs to send a reminder email asking for the response on the observations made. After sending the reminder mail, If the applicant does not close all the observations in the next 7 days, then the application is treated as ineligible and the online account created for such applicants will be deactivated by NCVET. During re-application, the applicant organization will go through the entire application process from the beginning, including the payment of the said application fee.

Ineligible/ Rejected Cases:

The applicant organizations which are rejected after the decision of the Review Panel or Council will not be allowed to re-apply for the NCVET recognition for at least six months from the date of the rejection of the said application. For the applicant organizations whose applications are rejected at the earlier stages of screening/ scrutiny will not be allowed to re-apply for NCVET recognition for at least three months from the date of the rejection of the said application. In such cases, the online account created for such applicants will be deactivated by NCVET. During re-application, the applicant organization will go through the entire application process from the beginning, including the payment of the said application fee.

3.15. Penalties in case of Non-Adherence

In case of non-adherence to NCVET policies and guidelines, as well as involvement in non-ethical and fraudulent activities by a recognized Assessment Agency (AA), penalties may be charged.

The penalties are categorized into two types:

a) Financial and

b) Other penalties

3.15.1. Financial Penalties

Financial penalties refer to the imposition of monetary fines on the recognized Assessment Agency. The severity of the penalty is likely to be determined by the seriousness of the non-adherence or fraudulent activities. The purpose of financial penalties is to deter entities from violating NCVET policies and guidelines and to ensure compliance. Instances in which entities are levied a financial penalty are as follows:

a) falling into the medium risk rating for three consecutive years after recognition may lead to public warning and NCVET may levy financial penalty.
b) falling into the high-risk risk rating during two consecutive years after recognition may lead to public warning and NCVET may levy financial penalty.

However, the specific financial penalties if any to be levied will be conveyed by NCVET from time to time as part of updates on AA guidelines.

3.15.2. Other Penalties

Other penalties may include a range of non-monetary actions taken against the recognized Assessment Agency. These actions are likely to be diverse and can vary based on the nature and gravity of the non-compliance. Some of other penalties may include:

Revocation of Recognition -

If the recognized Assessment Agency consistently fails to adhere to NCVET policies or performs inadequately in recognized sectors, qualifications, National Occupational Standards (NOSs), micro-credentials, or specific geographical areas, the NCVET has the authority to revoke the recognition of underperforming sections.

Impact on Overall Rating -

The revocation of underperforming sections can have a cascading effect on the overall rating of the Assessment Agency. This implies that the agency's rating may be downgraded due to its failure to meet the required standards and expectations set by NCVET.

3.16. Renewal of Application as an AA

3.16.1. Submission of Application for Renewal

An Assessment Agency applying for renewal of recognition after initial recognition of 3 years needs to submit the details of the work done in the recognition period of 3 years and establish their credibility to continue to the work in VET and Skilling ecosystem.

3.16.2. Recognition Fees

An Assessment Agency applying for renewal of recognition after initial recognition of 3 years needs to submit the details of the work done in the recognition period of 3 years and establish their credibility to continue to the work in VET and Skilling ecosystem. Applicant shall submit a non-refundable processing fee of Rs. 25,000 at the time of submitting the application along with completed application form and supporting documents.

If the Assessment Agency is recommended by the Sub-committee for re-recognition, then the applicant body shall be required to submit the recognition fees of Rs. 1,00,000 before the renewal of the recognition.

No additional fee for affiliation/ accreditation would be charged from an AA by the AB.

3.16.3. Scrutiny of the Application by the nominated case member

As per section 3.6

3.16.4. Director Review

As per section 3.6

3.16.5. Subcommittee Review

As per section 3.6

3.16.6. Decision by the Subcommittee

As per section 3.6

3.16.7. Revised Allocation of Sectors and Territorial Jurisdiction

After the expiry of the initial recognition tenure of 3 years, the AA can apply for renewable which is subject to the monitoring and evaluation conducted by NCVET. Based on the performance of AA, measured through NCVET's monitoring and evaluation mechanism, the revised sectors and territorial jurisdiction will be allocated to the AA.

3.17. Special Provisions for Recognition

3.17.1. International Assessments and Assessment Agency:

An international/ global assessment agency refers to an agency that operates in one or more countries other than their native country and is responsible for conducting assessments, evaluations, or examinations to assess whether a learner has met the requirements necessary to be competent and qualified with respect to a skill or qualification.

The primary focus of an international/ global assessment agency is to assess the knowledge, skills, competencies, or qualifications of individuals or entities on a global level and such agencies operate across different regions, countries, or jurisdictions.

In order to seek NCVET recognition as an Assessment Agency, the applicant body of international repute must comply with the following additional conditions:

a) NCVET may modify the criteria, in the public interest, for companies working in niche areas, emerging/ futuristic technology areas, new age/ future skills areas or strategic areas, on a case-to-case basis. The courses/ qualifications offered should be relevant to their own products, services or technologies in high demand.
b) The entity must be registered in India
c) The entity must demonstrate a proven track record of successfully conducting assessments, especially on an international scale.
d) The entity must demonstrate the existing collaborations/ MoUs with international organizations, educational institutions, and other stakeholders in the vocational education and training domain by submitting requisite evidences in the form of validations.

3.17.2. Assessments for OEMs/ Industry Based programs

The "Guidelines for Qualifications of Multinational Companies – Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM)/ Original Design Manufacturer (ODM)/ Value Added Reseller (VAR)/ Other industry bodies" encourages the participation of the MNCs in various ways to align

their qualifications with the NSQF. This will contribute to making OEM qualifications more relevant and up-to-date with the changing needs of the industry. The assessment platform of the AA should be able to handle all types of multiple-choice and short answers questions. The detailed set of desirable features of Assessment Engine are given in Annexure B of Blended Learning Guidelines notified by NCVET. The engine should also be able to ensure identity check of learner and have built-in features to avoid frauds. The link for Guidelines for Blended learning for Vocational Education, Training and Skilling is

https://ncvet.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Guidelines-for-Blended-Learning-for-Vocational-Education-Training-Skilling.pdf

3.17.3. Detailed RPL by Master Craftsmen

The Master Trainers/ Master Assessors who are well known Master Craftsmen/ Artisans in the selected field of traditional art/ craft shall be engaged for the assessment of traditional skills. The National/ State Awardee Master Craftsmen/ Artisans, and National Merit Certificate Holders are to be given preference as assessors.

3.17.4. RPL / Assessment on Demand: On-demand through Aggregators (online/ offline)

This delivery channel provides opportunities to all those skill seekers who wish to take an online/ offline exam and be certified. This may also be offered as a fee-based program if the learners wish to be assessed and certified. This ideally should be offered from accredited/designated centres as per the NCVET guidelines.

3.17.5. Assessments for PWDs

NCVET is committed to formulate and implement policies that are inclusive and provide equal opportunities for Persons with Disabilities in the field of vocational education and skill development. To strengthen its commitment for the empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, NCVET encourages entities dedicatedly involved in the conduct of assessments catering to PwD sector.

In order to seek NCVET recognition as an Assessment Agency, the applicant body working for PwD sector must comply with the following additional conditions:

a) The entity must demonstrate expertise in the field of conducting assessments for special needs education/ skilling and understanding of the unique requirements of persons with disabilities in vocational education, training, and skilling.
b) Availability of qualified assessors, proctors, and subject matter experts with experience in assessing individuals with diverse disabilities. Assessors should be trained in using appropriate accommodations and assistive technologies.

c) The entity must adhere to the accessibility standards to ensure that assessment venues, materials, and processes are accessible to individuals with various types of disabilities.
d) Collaboration with disability organizations and experts to stay informed about best practices and evolving standards in the field of disability assessment.
e) A commitment to maintaining a sensitive and ethical approach when working with persons with disabilities, respecting their dignity and ensuring their rights are upheld.
f) List of infrastructure/tools that needs to be present at the assessment centres to ensure trainees with Disabilities have no accessibility issues.
g) The entity must ensure appropriate strategy for assessing candidates of a particular disability. Like Change print (e.g., font size, colour) of a written test or allow use of a reader in case of Visual impairment depending on the level of impairment. This may include allowing PwDs to choose between different assessment methodologies according to their disability. Similarly, it may convert questions to audio and accept answers using audio or braille keyboards in some cases.

The applicant bodies applying as a special category in PwD sector must adhere to the NCVET Guidelines for Providing Comprehensive Accessibility Standards for training of Persons with Disabilities accessible at https://ncvet.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Final-Draft-Accessibility-Guidelines-for-PwD-Public-Consultation9.1.2024.pdf.

3.17.6. Criteria of AAs working in Niche Areas/ Technologies

Niche areas typically refer to specific, specialized, or narrowly defined segments within a broader field, market, or ecosystem. These areas are characterized by a distinct set of characteristics, requirements, or interests that differentiate them from the larger, more general context. Identifying and understanding niche areas can be strategic for businesses, professionals, and content creators, as it allows them to carve out a unique space, cater to specific needs, and build expertise in a focused domain.

3.18. On boarding of Assessment Agencies by Awarding Bodies

a) All Assessment Agencies shall be recognized by NCVET based on the criteria mentioned in section 2. The list of AAs recognized by NCVET shall be put on NCVET website. Awarding Bodies shall onboard the NCVET recognized Assessment Agency based on the sector and geography for which the AA is recognized. However, awarding bodies must ensure a transparent onboarding mechanism of Assessment Agencies. All Awarding Bodies shall adopt a common standard in the form of Request of Proposal for onboarding of Assessment agencies to ensure transparency in the ecosystem. NCVET reserves the right to make any changes in the onboarding process of Assessment Agencies from time to time. The mechanism for allocation of target to Assessment Agency by Awarding Body should be such that each

recognized AA to get a minimum of 8% assessments and max up to 25% in the specific sector.

b) AAs not having PAN INDIA recognition may be on-boarded by ABs over and above the defined maximum number of 12 for assessment in that specific geography and sector for which they have been approved.

c) In addition, if the number of assessments to be done by any AB exceeds or is likely to exceed 2,00,000 (Two Lakhs) in a financial year than for every 20,000 assessments beyond 2 lakhs, AB may on-board 01 additional approved AA. This will be applicable only for the period for which such demand has arisen. In this case, the concerned ABs will be required to take prior approval of NCVET by submitting detailed justification along with evidence of need.

3.19. On boarding of AA/ TPs/ TCs on Skill India Digital Hub(SIDH) by AB

It is a primary responsibility of Assessment Agency to register themselves on Skill India Digital Hub; however, Awarding Body must ensure that recognized Assessment Agency is on-boarded on SIDH. Awarding Body shall ensure that it is registered on Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH). The certification based on skilling and training course/ qualification shall be creditised as per the provisions of National Credit Framework (NCrF). Therefore, the verifiable student/ learner/ workman's data shall be shared, with the consent of the students/ learners/ workforce personnel concerned. Such data shall be shared with the NCVET or with any agency authorised by it. However, such data sharing shall be subject to the provisions of the "The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023".

4. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND FUNCTIONS OF ASSESSMENT AGENCIES

4.1. Roles and Responsibilities of a Recognized Assessment Agency

4.1.1. Development of Question Banks

a) The entity should have availability of questions bank for the sectors seeking recognition.
b) The entity shall be responsible for preparing multiple questions on each PC in such a manner that the minimum average number of questions per Performance Criteria (PC)/ group of PCs of every NOS within a qualification works out to be 5 to 6.
c) These Questions in the Question Bank(s) shall be prepared in consultation with the concerned AB for ensuring that these are assessing the intended outcomes. A process for periodic review of question banks must be defined by the AA and every cycle of review should be done in consultation with the concerned AB.
d) Question banks should be available in Modern Indian Languages also, as per requirement.
e) Sample questions should be readily available on the website of concerned AB and the AA.
f) The question banks should have a proportional mix of easy, medium and hard questions as guided by the AB and should be changed/ upgraded periodically (say after every 2-3 cycles).
g) The assessment engine of the AA should be able to handle all types of multiple-choice and short answers questions. The detailed set of desirable features of Assessment Engine are given in Annexure B of Blended Learning Guidelines notified by NCVET.

4.1.2. Assessment (Assessment Calendar, Assessment Tools Availability, ToA etc):

a) The entity should have Assessment Calendar for each month which shall be available on its website and Skill India Digital Portal.
b) The entity should ensure availability of assessment tools and question banks in vernacular languages for the region in which recognition is sought and for different learner groups like PwD.
c) The entity shall ensure that they have a ready repository of the tools and aids which are aligned to the needs of the qualifications. The tools developed for assessing the qualifications should be able to map the skills, knowledge and competencies of the learners, and should be accessible and commensurate to the learner's needs. Entity shall also ensure that the tools of assessment adequately support the delivery of assessments for learners with disability.
d) The entity shall ensure that assessment tools to be used for the assessment delivery for various qualifications are approved by the concerned AB before the assessment delivery.

e) The entity shall ensure that all assessors and proctors are trained to use the assessment tools and assessment guides appropriately.
f) Ensure gender parity and affirmative action for marginalized sections as for as its staff including assessors and proctors.
g) Maintain the repository of learners' assessment data either through its own in-house team or through an agency mandated by NCVET; Repository of the assessors with their qualification and number of years of work experience

Training of Assessors (ToA)

To emphasize upon the importance of standardization in the conduct of assessment and to create a robust and scalable model of assessments by ensuring that each assessor is certified on National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) aligned Qualifications/ National Occupational Standards prior to assessing batches across skilling verticals, ToA guidelines has been developed. This standardization is essential for creating a level playing field for assessors across the skilling ecosystem and instilling confidence in employers about the competency of the skill certified workforce. In line with the global best practices, the Guidelines advocate for a shift towards learning outcomes and competency-based assessments by focusing on the need to impart both domain and platform skills to the Assessors. This will further enhance the assessor's ability to evaluate the learners' ability to perform tasks effectively in real-world scenarios.

It shall be the responsibility of the AB concerned to develop a NSQF aligned Qualification on TOA within 6 months of recognition and get it approved by the National Council for Vocational Education and Training as per the ToA Guidelines of NCVET. It is mandatory for the assessors to undergo training of such qualifications.

The Training of Assessors (ToA) process involves developing NSQF-aligned qualifications and providing mandatory training for assessors. This comprehensive program would include both theoretical and practical training covering topics such as assessment methodology, standardization, quality assurance, and employability skills.

Additionally, awareness about the ToA program is generated in order to mobilize the candidates who undergo screening processes. The program is conducted, focusing on domain and platform skill assessments. Successful candidates become certified assessors, while those needing improvement undergo skill gap training for further assessment. Collaboration with industry partners is essential to ensure the program's relevance and alignment with industry standards. ToA Certificates issued are valid for three years, and detailed guidelines for the ToA process can be obtained from NCVET.

The link for the detailed guidelines for the Training of Assessors is: https://ncvet.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/ToA-Guidelines_final.pdf

4.1.3. Availability of Assessment Staff

The assessors will be onboarded by the Assessment Agencies. Their experience should be in line with the requirements for the sector, which they would be assessing. They should also meet the basic assessor guidelines as laid down by NCVET from time to time. Only certified assessors will be able to conduct assessments.

The entity shall have the following:

a) Adequate number of key assessment staff like certified assessors and proctors, (employed and/or contracted) across states and sectors as per requirement of qualification/ sector for which recognition is sought. In addition to it, the availability of assessor/ examiners and proctors well-versed in the local language of the region, to facilitate the delivery of assessment needs to be ensured. The expected training requirements of the assessment staff and their preferential experience in the sector has been detailed in the ToA guidelines.
b) Availability of other staff including SME for development of assessments tools, instructional designs for assessment, question bank development, performance reporting and analytics.
c) Presence of critical functional teams including but not limited to MIS, IT, content development etc.
d) Entities with Dual Recognition
    i. In addition to the above, entities with Dual Recognition shall ensure separation of personnel, systems, and managerial control of the awarding and assessment functions. Such separation should be done in such a way that both awarding and assessment arms function as separate business units or as independent departments with necessary resources at disposal.
    ii. Entities recognized as Dual Agency shall formulate a policy on conflict of interest.

4.1.4. Availability of sufficient number of Subject Matter Experts (SME) and Proctors

a) The entity should have the availability of subject matter experts (SME) and supporting team members competent in the domain/sector. The entity shall recruit at least 1 SME for each sector for which recognition is sought.
b) The AA must ensure that they hire sufficient number of proctors, wherever necessary in line with the requirement of the qualification to be specified by the AB concerned. The proctors engaged by the AA shall fulfil the conditions laid down in the AA and ToA Guidelines as amended from time to time.
c) The AA shall align proctors for online and blended assessments that are conducted:
    i. Face-to-face at a physical assessment center
    ii. Online proctored for a virtual assessment at the candidate's own place
    iii. Remote auto proctored at the candidate's own place/ station
d) The AA shall ensure that assessors and proctors are trained and certified and are provided any need-based bridge training for new qualifications. The AA shall provide

data relating to number of assessors and proctors trained by them to NCVET. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses must be undertaken for all other staff for enhancing their functional performance including the assessors and proctors.

e) The entity should have evidence of availability of assessor/ examiners and proctors well-versed in the local language of the region to facilitate the delivery of assessment
f) Availability of special instructors/ content developers for creating specific disability-based assessment content.

4.1.5. Role of AA in pre-assessment

a) Identification and selection of TOA certified assessors for proper planning coordination of assessment.
b) Assessors/Proctors' Verification before conducting assessment at the training centre in order to prevent any malpractices.
c) Coordination with Assessor for travel, logistics and boarding for the assessment.
d) The AAs shall confirm the availability and deputing of the qualified assessors to ABs.
e) AAs shall ensure that the deputed assessors are able to reach the place of assessment within 24 hours (travel time).
f) The assessor shall verify the availability of assessment tools and equipment in the training centre, conduct assessment in the scheduled language, wherever required etc. The same will be a part of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) to be signed between the ABs and AAs which must be adhere to.
g) The AA shall ensure that an assessor is not affiliated/ working with more than four AAs simultaneously. AA shall take an undertaking from the assessor that the assessor is not working with more than four AAs simultaneously. For any niche area, based on AB/AA's request, this condition may be relaxed.

4.1.6. Role of AA during assessment

a) Candidate verification and evidence collection ensuring genuine candidates appearing for assessment.
b) Candidate Orientation about the assessment process.
c) Execution of the Assessment Process including invigilation (Real Time Audit) and resolution of various technical issues.
d) Ensuring smooth conduct of examination. Record the results of the assessment accurately, and communicate it to recognized bodies in the manner stated in the agreement granting recognition;
e) Record the results of the assessment accurately, and communicate it to recognized bodies in the manner stated in the agreement granting recognition.
f) The assessor - learner ratio, wherever applicable, shall be as defined by ABs. However, it should not be more than 1:20 in case of manufacturing sector, 1:30 in case of service sector and 1:50 in case of school education.

4.1.7. Role of AA in post-assessment

a) Collection of post assessment documents, such as answer sheets.
b) Resolution of conflict wrt results raised by the trainee.
c) Result uploading and Approval.
d) Conducting re-evaluation/re-assessment, on demand assessment
e) Re-uploading of results in case there is a mismatch in the result shared and the one uploaded on SIDH or any other authorized system.
f) Coordination with the SIDH team & ABs for the resolution of the SIP-related activities.
g) AA plays a major role in result uploading, documentation and Compliance of entire assessment process.

Following are the timelines to be followed by the Assessment agency and Assessor in accordance to the various functions conducted by them.

Activity	Timeline	Responsibility
Batch acceptance / Rejection by Assessment agency	Within **2 days** of batch receipt from Awarding body	Assessment Agency
Assignment of batch to Assessor	**Short term training** – Within 7 **days** of receipt of batch from Awarding body **For Long term training** – assessor to be assigned **before 30 days** of scheduled assessment / examination date	Assessment Agency
Batch acceptance / rejection by assessor	Within **3 days** of batch receipt from Assessment Agency	Assessor
Submission of results by Assessment Agency	**Short term training** – Within **3 days** from conduct of assessment **For Long term training** – within 5 **days** of examinations schedule	Assessment Agency

4.1.8. Adherence to NCVET Guidelines

NCVET may call for any information related to assessors, proctors, and SMEs associated with the AA like their qualifications, work experience etc. and the AA shall provide such information to NCVET. NCVET will, however, ensure the confidentiality of such information as per the data privacy & other concerned laws.

a) The recognized AA must adhere to the Guidelines/SoP prepared by the NCVET to ensure smooth functioning of assessment.
b) The entity must also adhere to data maintenance and protection as per Government laws/ norms.
c) Adherence to Assessment Guide developed by AB for each qualification
d) Assessments data to be stored and prevented in adherence with the law of the state/nation.

e) Assessment Agency must ensure adherence to timelines laid down by NCVET from time to time.

Promotion of Technology

a) The AA shall ensure proper use of appropriate technology viz, Artificial Intelligence (AI)/ Machine Learning based test engine, computers, tablets, mobile applications, video communication tools, etc. to deliver domain specific assessments. ICT tools and processes to be used by the AA for the assessment delivery shall be approved by the concerned AB and /or NCVET. ICT/ technology tools to be used for assessment delivery should be aligned to the competencies as defined by the AB in its qualification. ICT/ technology tools shall be used for the assessor verification (during the time of assessment), conducting the assessment in online mode and recording of results. There should also be technology tools available for disabled-friendly assessments.
b) Any AA which is using online mode for assessment must also provide a link for real time monitoring of the assessment process to NCVET. Others using offline or blended mode of assessment must also provide video clips & pictures of the batch being assessed.
c) In case of completely online assessment process, in line with the blended learning guidelines of NCVET, technology platform should be capable enough to detect & avoid any kind of frauds.

4.1.9. Research & Development

Assessment Agency must carry out research and conduct Skill Gap Analysis to understand the need of assessment. All Assessment Agencies shall work in collaboration with Industry partners to understand the new age and future emerging skills and prepare themselves in accordance with the need.

4.2. Relationship of Assessment Agency with various Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Terms of relationship with AA
NCVET	NCVET will recognize and regulate AA as per guidelines framed by it
AWARDING BODY AB	Select AAs on the basis of sectors and geography and onboard them for the assessment of their training batches. AB is responsible for day-to-day monitoring of AA and also conducting Training of Assessors ToA. AB sets the broad guidelines of how to record and store the assessments material post assessment.
SKILL INDIA DIGITAL HUB SIDH	SIDH will solicit, collect and publish information related to Training Partners and trainees trained.

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plays a pivotal role in ensuring the efficacy and quality of Assessment Agencies (AAs) operating within the vocational education and training sector. Effective M&E of AAs not only upholds the integrity of the certification process but also guarantees that the skill sets assessed are relevant, reliable, and reflective of industry requirements. This, in turn, ensures that learners are equipped with the competencies necessary to thrive in a dynamic and competitive job market. With this background, NCVET mandates the implementation of a comprehensive and systematic monitoring system to enforce adherence to quality and reliability benchmarks across all AAs.

5.1. Objectives of Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation of AAs shall be guided by the following objectives:

a) **Verification of Compliance**: To thoroughly review and verify that AAs are continuously meeting the criterion for recognition as per NCVET standards and maintaining the same without deviation.
b) **Quality Assurance**: To systematically evaluate and confirm that AAs are conducting assessments in strict alignment with the established quality and compliance benchmarks put forth by NCVET.
c) **Ethical Operations**: To monitor that AAs and their affiliates conduct their operations with high ethical standards, keeping in mind the welfare and rights of learners as well as interests of other stakeholders.
d) **Performance and Outcome Enhancement**: To oversee and encourage AAs to adopt fair and transparent procedures that are conducive to the attainment of improved outcomes for learners.
e) **Grievance Resolution**: To set up a mechanism to resolve grievance and complaints lodged against recognized AAs or individual assessors/proctors, upholding the sanctity and fairness of the assessment process.
f) **Integrity Verification**: To enforce and monitor high levels of integrity and transparency among AAs, creating an environment of trust and reliability within the skilling ecosystem.
g) **Innovation and Adaptation**: To promote and stimulate the use of advanced ICT tools and innovative practices among AAs for the enhancement of the assessment process, ensuring scalability and adaptability to future trends.
h) **Recognition and Incentivization**: To implement a merit-based incentive system that recognizes and rewards AAs for exceptional performance and adherence to NCVET directives, fostering a culture of excellence and continuous evolution.

5.2. Monitoring and Evaluation via Excellence-Risk Framework

With the above objectives in mind, monitoring and evaluation of AAs shall be conducted through **Excellence-Risk Framework** which is a structured approach of management of risks arising out of the key functions of AAs and simultaneously rewarding their attainment of excellence on the same functions. It encompasses a systematic process of identifying, monitoring, and assessing risks while concurrently striving for excellence in conducting quality assured standardized assessments.

This framework emphasizes proactive identification of potential risks related to various aspects of assessment strategy and delivery, governance and manpower, business

planning, financials and grievance and POSH. The purpose is to integrate risk management seamlessly into the NCVET's strategy and operations, fostering a proactive approach to risk identification along with defining excellence.

5.2.1. Purpose of Excellence-Risk Framework

Key purposes of Excellence-Risk Framework to be followed by AAs are:

a) **Focus on Excellence:** The framework shall emphasize on achieving excellence in key functions while managing risks effectively.
b) **Comprehensive Risk Assessment:** The framework shall enable a thorough evaluation of potential risks across various macro-parameters.
c) **Regulatory Compliance:** The framework shall ensure adherence to NCVET standards and regulations while managing risks and compliance requirements.
d) **Continuous Improvement:** The framework shall facilitate continuous improvement through ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and refinement of risks.
e) **Stakeholder Engagement:** The framework shall encourage active engagement with AAs to ensure alignment of risk management efforts.
f) **Transparency and Accountability:** The framework shall promote transparency and accountability in risk management processes to build trust and credibility.

5.2.2. Parameters of Excellence-Risk Framework

The framework incorporated six macro-parameters that collectively contribute to its robust and effective operation. The parameters are as follows:

1. **Governance and Manpower**: This parameter refers to the specific criteria measuring aspects such as decision-making structures, policies, and procedures, number of employees, training and development needs that guide the overall functioning of AA. It is composed of 6 sub-parameters as in section 5.3.2 (A).
2. **Business Planning and Research:** This parameter tries to verify whether recognised AAs have prepared business planning including their specific goals, strategies and actions and are involved in market research. It is fragmented into 3 sub-parameters as in section 5.3.2 (B).
3. **Financials:** This parameter explores the aspects of financial viability of AAs by considering indicators such as annual turnover, net worth, profitability. It is further segregated into 5 sub-parameters as in section 5.3.2 (C).
4. **Assessment Strategy:** This parameter examines plan or approach designed by AAs to evaluate the learning progress, skills, and knowledge of candidates. It is composed of 11 sub-parameters as in section 5.3.2 (D).
5. **Assessment Delivery:** This parameter studies the process of administering and conducting assessments by AAs by selecting appropriate assessment methods. It is fragmented into 14 sub-parameters as in section 5.3.2 (E).
6. **Grievance Redressal and POSH:** This parameter examines the timeline within which AAs can resolve grievances along with disposal of POSH related cases. The aim is to find out effectiveness of their grievance redressal system. It is divided into 4 sub-parameters as in section 5.3.2 (F).

By looking into the excellence and risk aspects on the same parameter, this framework brings forth a comprehensive approach to monitoring and evaluation, thereby adherence strictly to regulatory mandates set by NCVET. Additionally, it facilitates towards a structured process for continuous improvement of AAs.

5.2.3. Structure of the Excellence-Risk Framework

The Excellence-Risk Framework consists of macro-parameters, each encompassing specific risk categories, compliance benchmarks, and excellence markers. The framework clearly visualizes how the AAs has fared in various categories of risk viz. low, medium, and high risk along with compliance and excellence in a single sub-parameter defined under a macro-parameter. The arrow moving towards left identify the three categories of risks, explain the sub-parameters which fall under a particular category of risks while the arrow moving towards right shows compliance first and then excellence. This framework, therefore, suggests a sequence interlinking the risks and excellence in the monitoring and evaluation process. An illustrative structure of the framework is given below:

Macro-Parameter	**Assessment Delivery**				
Sub-Parameter	**High Risk**	**Medium Risk**	**Low Risk**	**Compliance**	**Excellence**
Batch Acceptance	AA accepts less than 70% batches assigned by Awarding Bodies	AA accepts 70-90% batches assigned by Awarding Bodies	AA accepts 90% and above batches assigned by Awarding Bodies	AA accepts 100% batches assigned by Awarding Bodies	Consistency in compliance standard for continued 12 months in an year

5.3. Excellence and Risks Framework

5.3.1. Definition

This section puts forth the definitions of various categories of risks, compliance, and excellence.

Categories of Risk	Definitions
Low Risk	Parameters under low-risk categories shall be defined **as events with some concerns** which the existing controls and procedures shall be able to cope up with.
Medium Risk	Parameters under medium-risks categories shall be defined **as significant event or circumstances** that requires NCVET management effort to minimize the impact.
High Risk	Parameters under high-risk categories shall be defined **as events or circumstances with potentially**

	disastrous impact on learners or employers, thus impacting the credibility of the skill ecosystem and NCVET's regulatory role.
Compliance	Compliance parameters involves adhering to **criteria and benchmarks** as mentioned in these guidelines.
Excellence	Excellence parameters are criteria which shall be used to evaluate AA's performance in **exceeding minimal compliance requirements** and achieving superior outcomes.

5.3.2. Framework

Details of each parameter, categories along with frequency are provided below:

	Sub Parameter	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk	Compliance	Excellence
A	**Governance and Manpower (Yearly)**					
1.	Stable Organizational structure		Change in leadership and intimation given to NCVET thereafter	Planned change in leadership and advance intimation given to NCVET	No change in the leadership of the Organizational structure	
2.	Adequate Manpower	Key positions as per organization organogram are not filled for more than 60 days (such as CXOs, functional heads including Operation, IT, HR, Finance)	Operational staff as per organization organogram not filled for more than 60 days (such as Managers, Executives etc.)	Operational staff as per organization organogram not filled for more than 30 days (such as Managers, Executives etc.)	All positions are filled as per organization organogram submitted	Organization structure and responsibilities updated to reflect change in scale of business during the year
3.	Continues Professional Development (CPD)		CPDs not conducted during the year for any staff	For 50% and above staff engaged for more than 6 months have attended continuous professional development programs (CPDs)	All staff engaged for more than 6 months have attended continuous professional development programs (CPDs)	CPDs resulted in increase in the effectiveness/efficiency of the ecosystem
4.	Feedback and Continuous Improvement	Feedback from candidates being collected, and corrective actions	Feedback from candidates being collected, and corrective actions taken	Feedback from candidates being collected, and corrective actions taken (more than 70% of	Feedback from candidates being collected from more than 70% of assessed	Feedback from multiple stakeholders collected and corrective actions being taken: a) Assessors b) SMEs c) Proctors

	Sub Parameter	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk	Compliance	Excellence
		taken (below 50% of assessed candidates)	(between 50% - 70% of assessed candidates)	assessed candidates)	candidates and Feedback taken from Industry/ Employers taken at least once in past 12 months and evidence of corrective action	d) Employers/ Industry e)Any other employees
5.	Regular audits of operations (non-financial)	No internal/ external audit done in past 12 months	Only internal audit of operations done in past 12 months		Report of External audit done at least once in past 12 months, available and submitted to NCVET	Regular audits (internal and external), audit reports available, evidence of corrective action taken on basis of audits available
6.	Awards, recognition, accreditation etc	-	-	-		Awards and recognition from other entities like ABs, Employers, Industry Overseas accreditation by a reputed agency
B	**Business Planning and Research (Yearly)**					
7.	Underachievement v/s Plan	Deviation of more than 50% from the annual plan	Deviation greater than 25% and upto 50% from the annual plan	Deviation greater than 10% and upto 25% from the annual plan	Deviation upto 10% from the annual plan	(a) Next year plan is available (b) New BP plans include additional NSQF levels/ geographies/ sectors/ segments/heritage (any one or more) where applicable
8.	Overachievement v/s Plan	Deviation of more than 50% from the annual plan	Deviation greater than 25% and upto 50% from the annual plan	Deviation greater than 10% and upto 25% from the annual plan	Deviation upto 10% from the annual plan	
9.	Research/ Mapping of current trends globally in assessments					AA is able to present evidence of process/ technology improvements undertaken based on Research/ Mapping of current trends globally in assessments
C	**Financials (Yearly)**					
10.	Turnover less than planned		Deviation greater than 25% and upto 50% from the annual plan	Deviation greater than 10% and upto 25% from the annual plan	Deviation upto 10% from the annual plan	
11.	Turnover more than planned		Deviation greater than 25% and upto 50% from the annual plan	Deviation greater than 10% and upto 25% from the annual plan	Deviation upto 10% from the annual plan	

	Sub Parameter	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk	Compliance	Excellence
12.	Continued positive net worth	Net worth is negative			Net worth is positive	
13.	Availability of sufficient cash flows	Operating cashflow ratio is below 0.5	Operating cashflow ratio is 0.5 and above but below 1		Operating cashflow ratio (cash flow from operating activities (CFO) / average current liabilities) is 1 and above	
14.	Profitability	AA is a loss making entity in two consecutive years	AA is a loss making entity		AA remains in profit	
D	**Assessment Strategy (Yearly)**					
15.	Continued adherence to parameters of assessment guide and assessment strategy		Non adherence to SOPs for QB development, Content Development, Assessment processes, Performance reporting and analytics, selection mechanism, eligibility criteria and training and certification of proctors and assessors		Continued adherence to SOPs for QB development, Content Development, Assessment processes, Performance reporting and analytics, selection mechanism, eligibility criteria and training and certification of proctors and assessors	-
16.	Functional Assessment Engine / portals	Assessment Engine / portal has below 70% requirements functional as laid down in NCVET guidelines, Operational manual etc. (AA recognition, blended learning etc.) List of features:	Assessment Engine / portal has 70% above requirements functional as laid down in NCVET guidelines, Operational manual etc. (AA recognition, blended learning etc.) List of features		Assessment Engine / portal has all requirements functional as laid down in NCVET guidelines, operational manual (AA recognition, blended learning etc.) • Automated Creation of Test • Anti-cheat detection by Live Proctoring • Real time photo capturing of candidates • Assessment tracking	Additional advance features incorporated in the test engines / portal

	Sub Parameter	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk	Compliance	Excellence
					through Geo Location, Date & Time stamping • Reminder mail • Performance reports and analytics • Bucketing of most easy and most tough question • Works in Online/ Offline Mode • 100% Security of Data Up-loadable file examinations Mock test sessions	
17.	Assessment Readiness for development of Question banks for incremental qualifications added/proposed to be added (in next 3 months) as per Business requirements (planned/ unplanned)		Either one or more of the following not available: SME, QB and trained assessors		SME, QB and certified assessors proficient in Indian languages available for all incremental active qualifications QB approved and loaded onto testing engine	-
18.	Availability of QB with required number of questions developed in consultations with SME/ Industry/ AB	Less than 50% of active qualification has desired question bank as per the given standard	Greater than 50% and upto 60% of active qualification has desired question bank as per the given standard	Greater than 60% and upto 80% of active qualification has desired question bank as per the given standard	AAs should have the QB with desired number calculated as No. of NOS X No. Of PCsX5 questions (5 NOS X 20 PCs each NOS X 5=500 questions) more than 80% above active qualification has desired question bank as per the above standard	All active qualifications either meet the laid down standards for Question bank or exceed the criteria
19.	Question bank availability in India language (no of	Question bank available for	Question bank available for	Question bank available for more than 50%	All Question bank available in all	-

	Sub Parameter	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk	Compliance	Excellence
	active qualifications x no languages as per area of operation)	less than 25% of languages of operation	25% - 50% of languages of operation	languages of operation	languages of geographical operation	
20.	Sample questions available on website	Sample questions not available on website for less than 50% qualifications assessed by the AA	Sample questions not available on website for 50% or more qualifications assessed by the AA		Sample questions available on website for all qualifications assessed by the AA	Mock test facility available for trainees to undertake practice tests
21.	Availability of Certified assessors		Adequate number of assessors not available for one or more states.		Adequate number of assessors not available for one or more states	
22.	Transparent & Secure Data storage mechanism		Non-availability of transparent and secured date storage mechanism and retrieval of assessment records at trainee level and batch level, including video recordings		Availability of transparent and secured date storage mechanism and retrieval of assessment records at trainee level and batch level, including video recordings	
23.	Assessment capability width and depth		Limited range of NSQF levels. (Not done NSQF level 6 and above)		Ability to conduct assessment across NSQF levels	
24.	Reliability analysis for QB			Non validation for reliability	SME/Industry validation for reliability	
25.	Question paper security mechanism			Non declaration of zero breach	Question bank is on secure link. Self declaration of zero breach	
E	**Assessment Delivery (Monthly)**					
26.	Batch Acceptance Rate	AA accepts less than 70% of batches allocated for assessment by Awarding Body	AA accepts between 70% -90% of batches allocated for assessment by Awarding Body	AA accepts 90% and above batches allocated for assessment by Awarding Body	AA accepts 100% batches allocated for assessment by Awarding Body	Consistency in compliance standard for continued 12 months in an year
27.	Deviation between scheduled assessment date and	50% or below batches are	More than 50% and upto 75%	More than 75% batches are assessed on	100% batches are assessed	Consistency in compliance for continued 12 months

	Sub Parameter	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk	Compliance	Excellence
	actual assessment date	assessed on scheduled date.	batches are assessed on scheduled date.	scheduled date.	on scheduled date.	in an year (rolling period), deviation between scheduled and actual date of assessment is less than < 5 working days, for atleast 70% of batches assessed
28.	Offline Assessment conducted by certified Assessor	For less than 70% of batches assessment conducted by a certified assessor	For 70%-80% batches assessment conducted by a certified assessor	For 80% above batches assessment conducted by a certified assessor	For all batches assessment conducted by a certified assessor	-
29.	Assessment in local language	For less than 70% of batches assessment by assessor well versed in local language	For 70%-80% batches assessment by assessor well versed in local language	For 80% above batches assessment by assessor well versed in local language	For all batches assessor well versed with local language	-
30.	Result submission within Turn around Time	Delays of more than 7 days for more than 10% of batches	Delays of more than 3 days for more than 10% of batches	Delays of upto 3 days for upto 10% of batches	The result submission is within specified Turn around Time for all batches assessed in the month	-
31.	Video evidence of assessment	video is captured for less than 90% batches,		video is captured For 90% or more batches,	Video evidence of all batches is captured	-
32.	Monitoring of video evidence	For less than 85% of batches, video evidence is reviewed and monitored	For 85%-90% batches, video evidence is reviewed and monitored	For 80% above batches, video evidence is reviewed and monitored	Video evidence of all assessment batches is reviewed and monitored	AI enabled tools are used in monitoring and assessment of learning outcomes
33.	Assessor reaches on time and leaves after completion of the complete assessment		Punctuality is maintained by assessors for below 75% batches	Punctuality is maintained by assessors for 75% and above batches	Punctuality is maintained by assessors for all 100% batches	
34.	Question paper being used is in Official Indian Language		Question papers being used are in Official Indian Language for below 75% batches	Question papers being used are in Official Indian Language for75% and above batches	Question papers being used are in Official Indian Language for all 100% batches	
35.	Number of practical assessments done per assessor per day of assessment		No. of candidates assessed does not exceed the limits set in	No. of candidates assessed does not exceed the limits set in the guidelines for	No. of candidates assessed does not exceed the limits set in	

	Sub Parameter	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk	Compliance	Excellence
			the guidelines for below 75% batches	75% and above batches	the guidelines for 100% batches	
36.	Result submission with accuracy		Result submission is done with accuracy for below 75% batches	Result submission is done with accuracy for 75% and above batches	Result submission is done with accuracy for 100% batches	
37.	Storage of Assessment records		Storage of assessment records are in non-compliant with defined guidelines		Storage of assessment records are in compliant with defined guidelines	
38.	Analysis of assessment data		Analysis of assessment data is done for 75% and above batches	Analysis of assessment data is done for 75% and above batches	Analysis of assessment data is done for 100% batches	
39.	Process in place for scheduling of assessment and allocation of assessors	Scheduling of assessor to more than 1 batch, in different locations on the same day multiple times	Scheduling of assessor to more than 1 batch, in different locations on the same day		Process established for allocation of assessor. Evidence of adherence. Zero instance of duplicate scheduling in past month	Availability of online management system for scheduling of assessment and allocation of assessor which can be easily integrated with available portals. Zero instance of duplicate scheduling in past 12 months
F	**Grievance and POSH (Monthly)**					
40.	Grievance redressal rate		Less than 70% grievances are redressed	70% or above grievance are redressed	Redressed 100% grievance received	
41.	TAT for grievance redressal		Less than 80% of grievances redressed within TAT	80% or above grievances are redressed within TAT	100% Grievances are redressed within TAT	
42.	POSH cases redressal rate	Any complaint escalated from internal committee to legal case		80% or above complaints are redressed within TAT	Redressed 100% complaints received	
43.	TAT for POSH cases redressal		Less than 80% of POSH related complaints redressed within TAT	80% or above POSH related complaints redressed within TAT	100% POSH related complaints are redressed within TAT	

5.4. Mechanism for Implementation of Excellence-Risk Framework

To operationalize the Excellence-Risk Framework, detailed mechanism has been framed that translates the conceptual aspects of the framework into actionable steps. This mechanism is designed to embed the core parameters of excellence and risk management into the regular tasks and strategic decisions of AAs.

The following elements outline the mechanism for implementation of the framework:

5.4.1. Performance Monitoring

The framework shall establish clear performance indicators aligned with the parameters of both excellence and risk. To ensure adherence to the framework, regular self-evaluation, and self-regulation by AAs against these indicators shall be promoted by NCVET As mentioned in the framework, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) shall be used to measure success and make this data available for regular review.

5.4.2. Scoring Matrix

The Excellence-Risk Framework is designed to evaluate and monitor the performance of AAs in relation to six macro-parameters that signify risk and excellence within their operations. A scoring matrix is an essential component of this framework as it translates qualitative considerations into quantitative scores that can be analyzed and compared over time. The scoring matrix detailed herein provides a structured approach for assigning numerical values to the parameters that determine the risk level and excellence of AAs.

A. Purpose of the Scoring Matrix

The scoring matrix intends to:

- Quantify the risk and excellence parameters identified in the Excellence-Risk Framework.
- Provide a standardized method for evaluating the performance of AAs.
- Facilitate decision-making for interventions, recognitions, and improvements.
- Encourage continuous improvement by identifying areas for development.
- Ensure transparency and objectivity in the monitoring and evaluation process.

B. Structure of the Matrix

The scoring matrix is constructed by assigning point values to each category of risks, compliance, and excellence while weightages are assigned to macro-parameters and corresponding sub-parameters. This shall help to accurately reflect the emphasis on distinct operational areas. However, be informed that the figures mentioned below are indicative and any change done would be notified accordingly.

Macro parameter wise Excellence-Risk Framework (ERF) Scores

Sl.	Macro Parameter	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk	Compliance
A.	Governance & Manpower	2	3	2	4

Sl.	Macro Parameter	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk	Compliance
B.	Business Planning and Research	6	5	4	2
C.	Financials	2	2	1	2
D.	Assessment Strategy	1	2	1	2
E.	Assessment Delivery	55	69	59	71
F.	Grievance & POSH	34	19	33	19
	Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

C. Weightages

Macro-parameters represent the primary areas of AA operations and responsibilities. Each macro-parameter and corresponding sub-parameter have been assigned a weightage that signifies its relative importance in the overall functioning of an AA. The weightage of each macro-parameter is a percentage of the total score and is determined by its impact on the quality, viability, and risk profile of an AA.

D. Scoring Process

An integral aspect of the scoring matrix is the differentiation between the levels of risk (viz. low, medium, and high), compliance, and excellence. Each macro and sub-parameters are evaluated across these dimensions:

1. **Risk Categories**: Each level of risk, low, medium, and high has been scored based on the likelihood and potential impact of adverse events within the scope of the macro-parameter.
2. **Compliance**: This dimension addresses whether the AA adheres to established regulatory and procedural standards, with scores reflecting how well these standards are met.
3. **Excellence**: This dimension evaluates the extent to which the AA not only meets compliance standards but also exhibits superior performance and demonstrates industry-leading practices. It is worthy to mention here, that scores for excellence can be obtained only after submission of relevant proofs in the form of official documents, letters, reports etc. Once, the submitted proofs are reviewed by NCVET senior management, then only excellence scores shall be designated to an AA for that achievement over and above compliance.

As mentioned earlier, each macro-parameter has several sub-parameters and every sub-parameter has been scored separately for risks (all three categories), compliance, and excellence. The summation of these scores, weighted according to the macro-parameter's designated importance, yields the final assessment score for the AA.

Example of a Scoring Matrix Structure

Governance & Manpower

- **Weightage:** 7%
- **Sub-parameters:** Change in leadership, adequate manpower, continuous professional development, etc.
- **Risk:** Scores from 0 to (-100) for each category of risk level.

- **Compliance:** Scores from 0 to 100 based on adherence to guidelines.
- **Excellence:** Scores from 0 to 100 for exceeding standards and best practices.

Assessment Delivery

- **Weightage:** 55%
- **Sub-parameters:** Batch Acceptance, result submission TAT, analysis of assessment data etc.
- Identical scoring approach as above, with **higher weightage** due to operational criticality.

Continuing the above example of Batch acceptance as a sub – parameter under Assessment delivery. The indicative impact of lower batch acceptance rates by the AA on their scores for this sub parameter is given below:

Macro-Parameter	Assessment Delivery				
Sub-Parameter	**High Risk**	**Medium Risk**	**Low Risk**	**Compliance**	**Excellence**
Batch Acceptance	AA accepts less than 70% batches assigned by Awarding Bodies	AA accepts 70 - 90% batches assigned by Awarding Bodies	AA accepts 90% and above batches assigned by Awarding Bodies	AA accepts 100% batches assigned by Awarding Bodies	Consistency in compliance standard for continued 12 months in an year
Score	-5	-3.6	-3	+3	On Claim – depending on scores assigned by the NCVET team

Thus, if AA accepts 100% of the batches assigned to it by all its awarding bodies in the defined timeline, then +3 shall be added to its score. If the AA does this for a continued 12 months in a year, then the AA shall be eligible to claim excellence under this category. As mentioned earlier, excellence scores are subject to review by NCVET senior management and shall be added only after a decision is taken by the appropriate authority.

However, for the three categories of risks, if AA accepts 90% and above batches then -3 shall be deducted from the overall score and for that sub-parameter, the AA shall be in the low-risk category. The same logic applies for other risk categories.

Cumulative-Scores Calculation

The Cumulative-Scores of an AA could be depicted using the below formula:

Final Score of an AA =

$$\sum_{n=1}^{43} (\mathrm{RS}n * \mathrm{SPW}\ n) + (\mathrm{CS}\ n * \mathrm{SPW}\ n) + (\mathrm{ES}\ n * \mathrm{SPW}\ n)$$

Where

RS = Risk Score

SPW = Parameter Weightage

CS = Compliance Score

ES = Excellence Score

The methodology of score calculation can be understood with the help of an example given below:

Illustrated is a sample AA scoring grid for a set of 5 sub-parameters. The weightage of Excellence, Compliance and Risk categories for each sub-parameter is given against the parameter, and the AA performance score against that parameter is also specified, where 1 indicates the reported/ calculated status of the AA.

Macro-Parameter					
Sub-Parameter	**High Risk**	**Medium Risk**	**Low Risk**	**Compliance**	**Excellence**
Sub Parameter 1 (SP1) Weightage	-5	-3.6	-3	+3	
AA Performance score	0	1	0	0	
Sub Parameter 2 (SP2) Weightage	0	-10	-7	+12	
AA Performance score	0	0	0	1	
Sub Parameter 3 (SP3) Weightage	0	-3	0	+3	
AA Performance score	0	0	0	1	
Sub Parameter 4 Weightage (SP4)	-30	0	0	+5	
AA Performance score	1	0	0	0	
Sub Parameter 5 Weightage (SP5)	-3.0	-0.5	0	+1	
AA Performance score	0	0	0	1	

Based on the data submitted by the AA, AB and taken from SIDH where applicable, this AA is categorized under Medium Risk on SP1, Compliance on SP 2, SP3 and SP5 , high risk on SP4, indicated by a score of 1 corresponding to these.

Thus, the score of the AA in the above example would be

Score = -3.6 (SP 1) + 12 (SP 2) +3 (SP 3) – 30 (SP4) +1 (SP5) = - 10.4

Here SP4 is an example of a parameter where being non compliant with guidelines puts the AA under high risk category directly since its implication could potentially jeopardize the AA operations or even have wider implications for the eco system.

For each sub-parameter, the scores from the risks are multiplied by the weightage of the respective macro-parameter. Similar methodology adopted for finding out compliance, and excellence score that is multiplying each of them with the weightage of the macro-parameter. All the dimensions are then added to give a total sub-parameter score. Below formula depicts the weighted score of a sub-parameter:

Weighted Score for a sub-parameter = (Risk Score* parameter Weightage) + (Compliance Score* parameter Weightage) + (Excellence Score* parameter Weightage)

$$\sum_{n=1}^{43} (\mathrm{RSn} * \mathrm{SPW\ n}) + (\mathrm{CS\ n} * \mathrm{SPW\ n}) + (\mathrm{ES\ n} * \mathrm{SPW\ n})$$

5.4.3. Rating Bands

The final score for the AA is the sum of the weighted scores of all macro-parameters. The score will ultimately place the AA within a performance tier such as **Exceptional, Good, Needs Improvement** and **Unsatisfactory** which determines the nature and frequency of oversight or incentives that might be applied.

5.5. Outcome of the scoring

5.5.1. Physical Inspection

Physical inspections of assessment agencies shall be done based on scores obtained through the Excellence Risk Framework. The inspection shall focus on validating the integrity and effectiveness of their operations and services. Agencies with high excellence ratings might be inspected less invasively, acknowledging their proven track record of managing risks and maintaining standards, whereas those with lower ratings may undergo more rigorous evaluations to ensure that any identified risks are being appropriately addressed and that the agency is moving towards excellence.

5.5.2. Renewal of Recognition

The framework shall guide the renewal of the recognition status of AAs once their tenure is over after the stipulated 3 years, with a focus on performance according to the framework's metrics.

5.6. Review and Reporting

NCVET shall conduct regular reviews to assess the effectiveness of the framework. Reports shall be generated at regular interval that capture both quantitative scores from the matrix and qualitative insights from the implementation.

Stakeholder Engagement: A system of integration of feedback from relevant stakeholders shall be in place wherein they can report concerns, suggest improvements, and provide

input on how the framework operates day-to-day. The feedback shall be incorporated continuously to improve processes that refine the framework and its implementation on an ongoing basis.

5.7. Frequency of Monitoring

To ensure the fair and reliable process of assessments NCVET shall monitor recognized AAs both annually and monthly on the parameters mentioned in section 5.2.2. As mentioned in the framework, parameters such as Governance, Business Planning, Financial Viability and Assessment Strategy shall be monitored annually while Assessment Delivery and Grievance and POSH parameters shall be monitored monthly.

5.8. Risk Mitigation

Risk mitigation measures shall ensure that for any assessment agency whose macro-parameters fall under low, medium, and high-risk categories should take appropriate measures to come out of the risks and move towards compliance first and subsequently towards excellence. As the regulatory authority responsible for upholding the standards of vocational education and training, NCVET is committed to implementing robust risk mitigation and corrective action strategies. It shall be noted that, since business planning and research does not have any risk category, hence the same has not been considered here. It shall be kept in mind that mitigation measures listed down here are only suggestive in nature to facilitate AAs for preparation of their mitigation plan. All AAs falling under risk categories need to submit mandatorily their risk mitigation plan to NCVET.

AAs falling in the **Unsatisfactory/ Needs improvement category** would be required to develop a comprehensive Risk Mitigation Plan in consultation with the Awarding Bodies they are affiliated with, if needed. The leadership team of the AA would be required to present the same to NCVET within a month of the release of ratings and rankings, on a suitable date. NCVET might seek clarifications on the plan, if required.

For AA in both the above categories, NCVET will continue to monitor performance and, in line with its mandate to strengthen the skilling ecosystem, guide and support the AA in taking corrective actions towards risk mitigation.

Going forward, the monitoring of AA shall be made available on the digital platform that is expected to integrate data with other relevant portals. It will help AAs to avoid repeated reporting of data required for monitoring. This self-monitoring mechanism shall prevent AAs from falling into the Risk zone. AAs are encouraged not to consider gradual improvement of the status in the sequence of High risk to Excellence. AAs shall take all necessary action to remain in Compliance, while also striving for Excellence in all applicable parameters immediately upon detection of any type of risk.

Annexure I

S. No.	Sector
1	Aerospace and Aviation
2	Automotive
3	Agriculture
4	Apparel
5	Beauty & Wellness
6	BFSI
7	Capital goods
8	Chemicals and Petrochemicals
9	Construction
11	Domestic Worker
12	Education, Training & Research
13	Electronics
14	Env. Sc.
15	Food
16	Gems/Jewel
17	Glass & Ceramics
18	Handicrafts
19	Healthcare
20	Hydrocarbon
21	Infrastructure
22	Iron & Steel
23	IT-ITeS
24	Judiciary
25	Leather
26	Legal Services
27	Legislators
28	Life Sciences
29	Media & Entertainment
30	Mining
31	Musical Inst.
32	Office Admin
33	Optical Products
34	Org. Retail
35	Paints & Coatings
36	Paper & paper products
37	Plumbing
38	Postal
39	Power
40	Printing
41	Public Admin
42	Pvt. Security

43	PwD
44	Railways
45	Real Estate
46	Religious Prof.
47	Rubber
48	Shipping
49	Sports
50	Telecom
51	Textile
52	Tobacco
53	Tourism & Hospitality
54	Transportation, Logistics and Warehousing
55	Unorg. Sector
56	Water Supply
57	Wood & Carp.
58	Instrumentation
59	Green Jobs
60	Management

Annexure II

Classification of the States and UTs in Category I & II for AB Guidelines		
S.No.		State /UT
1	Category -I	Andaman and Nicobar Islands
2		Lakshadweep
3		Dadra and Nagar Haveli
4		Daman and Diu
5		Ladakh
6		Chandigarh
7		Puducherry
8		Sikkim
9		Mizoram
10		Goa
11		Arunachal Pradesh
12		Nagaland
13		Manipur
14		Meghalaya
15		Tripura
16		Himachal
17		Uttarakhand
18		J and K
19		NCT of Delhi
20		Chattisgarh
21		Telangana
22		Haryana
23		Kerala
24		Punjab

25	Category - II	Jharkhand
26		Assam
27		Orissa
28		Gujarat
29		Karnataka
30		Rajasthan
31		Tamil Nadu
32		Madhya Pradesh
33		Andhra Pradesh
34		Bihar
35		West Bengal
36		Maharashtra
37		Uttar Pradesh