

NATIONAL BOARD FOR TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Guidelines for the Implementation of:

# MANDATORY SKILLS QUALIFICATION (MSQ) IN POLYTECHNICS IN NIGERIA



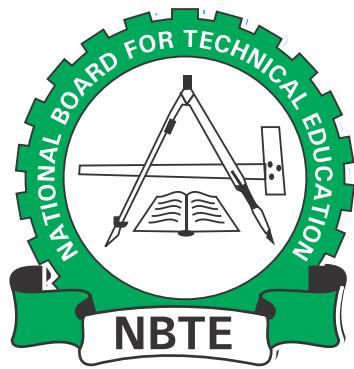
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JUNE 2024





## Guidelines for the Implementation of:

# MANDATORY SKILLS QUALIFICATION (MSQ) IN POLYTECHNICS IN NIGERIA



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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION:**

In line with the global trends, today skills are taking centre-stage in the training of young Nigerians in Polytechnics. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), in responding to this development, has decided to add a Mandatory Skills Qualification (MSQ) as a requirement for graduation for all newly reviewed National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) Curricula. This means Diploma holders will soon be graduating with a National Skills Qualification (NSQ) or its equivalent, as an additional certification. MSQ is a new requirement for all Diploma programs and is a new skill requirement to be attained before graduation.

This is an important requirement that will lead to what may be called dual certification of Diploma holders and is expected to greatly enhance employability. However, NBTE is aware of the limited skills training facilities in our Polytechnics and is therefore allowing a phased introduction. This Guideline was drawn to give Polytechnic administrators ways and means of implementing this new provision.

On the other hand, quality assurance plays a pivotal role in ensuring the effectiveness and relevance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs. Assessors serve as crucial agents in this process, responsible for evaluating the quality of education and training provided in various technical and vocational fields. Their role encompasses assessing standards, learning outcomes, and the overall performance of Skills Development Centres (SDCs) in Polytechnics and other TVET institutions. Quality Assurance Assessors are key in the delivery of skills training. Under the MSQ, provision is made for those at the HND level, who had acquired NSQ at ND to enroll for Quality Assurance Assessor (QAA) training as an alternative to another NSQ. QAA certificate will be handy even in the workplace since most industries do on-the-job training.

### **1.1 Assessing Current Situation Structure on Skills**

Nigeria's technical manpower situation is characterized by several challenges, including:

- 1.1.1 Skill Shortages: Many industries in Nigeria, including engineering, information technology, and manufacturing, face shortages of skilled technical personnel. This gap often resulted



- in companies struggling to find qualified workers to fill critical positions or import labour.
- 1.1.2 **Mismatch between Industry Needs and Training:** There is often a mismatch between the skills taught in TVET institutions and the requirements of industries. This gap lead to graduates being ill-prepared for the demands of the job market. Sometimes industries have to spend heavily in retraining the new employees who come in without relevant skills.
- 1.1.3 **Lack of Synergy between industry, government agencies and TVET Institutions.**

MSQ is designed to address these challenges enabling graduates to acquire at least one certified skill. The NSQ is awarded based on competencies acquired which are assessed on the job in the industry. Collaboration between the Polytechnic SDC and industry (formal or informal) is absolutely necessary.

### ***1.2 National Skills Qualification (NSQ):***

The NSQ is a certification system designed to assess and recognize the skills and competencies of individuals in various fields. It focuses on vocational skills and is typically obtained through vocational training programs, apprenticeships, and assessments conducted by approved skill assessment bodies. The NSQ aims to bridge the gap between formal education and industry needs by providing individuals with practical skills that are relevant to the job market. The competencies to be acquired are described in the National Occupational Standards.

- 1.2.1 **Purpose:** The NSQ system aims to recognize and certify individuals' skills and competencies acquired through formal and informal learning, work experience, or a combination of both.
- 1.2.2 **Structure:** The NSQ system consists of nine different levels, with each level representing a progression in skills and competencies. These levels may include basic, intermediate, and advanced qualifications, allowing individuals to advance their skills over time.
- 1.2.3 **Assessment:** Assessment for NSQ is typically competency-based, meaning individuals are evaluated on their ability to perform specific tasks and activities relevant to their chosen field using Quality



Assurance Managers (QAA, IQAM and EQAM). Assessments may include practical demonstrations, and workplace assessments conducted by accredited assessment bodies (Sector Skills Councils, Awarding Bodies, Training Providers and Regulatory Body)

**1.2.4 Relevance:** NSQ qualifications are designed to align with industry standards and requirements, ensuring that individuals possess the skills needed to meet the demands of the job market. This focus on practical skills helps bridge the gap between formal education and industry needs.

### **1.3 Benefits of Dual Certification**

The dual certification of obtaining both a National Skills Qualification (NSQ) and a National Diploma (ND) in Nigeria offers several benefits:

**1.3.1 Comprehensive Skill Set:** By pursuing both certifications, individuals can develop a well-rounded knowledge, skills and competences. Skill sets that combine theoretical knowledge with practical skills are achieved. This dual approach equips them with a deeper understanding of their chosen field and enhances their ability to perform effectively in various work environments.

**1.3.2 Increased Employability:** Holding both NSQ and ND certifications enhances individuals' employability by demonstrating their proficiency in both theoretical concepts and practical applications. Employers value candidates who possess a diverse skill sets and can contribute meaningfully to their organizations from day one after employment.

**1.3.3 Versatility:** Dual certification provides individuals with versatility in career options. They can choose to pursue employment opportunities that align with their NSQ qualifications, focusing on specific skills and competencies, or leverage their ND qualifications to pursue higher education or career advancement opportunities.

**1.3.4 Adaptability:** In today's rapidly evolving job market, adaptability is essential. Dual certification equips individuals with the adaptability to navigate changing industry demands and technological advancements. They can apply their broad skill sets to various roles and industries, making them valuable assets to employers.



**1.3.5 Professional Recognition:** Holding both NSQ and ND certifications demonstrates individuals' commitment to continuous learning and professional development. It signifies their dedication to mastering their craft and staying current with industry trends and best practices, earning them recognition and respect within their professional communities.

**1.3.6 Career Progression:** Dual certification opens doors to career advancement opportunities. Whether individuals choose to pursue further education, seek promotions within their current organization, or explore new career paths, having both NSQ and ND certifications provides a strong foundation for upward mobility and career growth.

Overall, the dual certification of obtaining both NSQ and ND/HND qualifications in Nigeria offers individuals a competitive edge in the job market, create self-employment, enhances their career prospects, and equips them with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in their chosen fields.

## **2.0 IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES**

Given the foregoing, the following recommendations are made on the MSQ implementation modalities:

- 2.1 The MSQ at ND level: the ND students will be allowed to choose a skill area of their interest but related to his/her field of study and be trained, assessed and certified on attaining competency within their NDII (Semesters I and II, 4 credits in total). The training should be carried out in a registered SDC leading to the award of NSQ of appropriate level (2 or 3) by an approved Awarding Body.
- 2.2 In a situation where the trade area chosen by the MSQ candidate is not available at the Polytechnic's SDC or Entrepreneurship Development Centre (EDC), the Polytechnic can provide the training while the candidate is assessed at a nearby workplace environment after establishing an MoU between the workplace and the Polytechnic.
- 2.3 The implementation of MSQ is to be done in phases, starting with Departments or Schools for whose facilities are available at the SDC



- or EDC for the training. Gradually Polytechnics are expected to build up facilities for as many trades as possible to accommodate the diversity of interest of the students.
- 2.4 At HND level, students who could not attain NSQ earlier at ND level, can be given the chance to do his/her MSQ as outlined above. However, those who already have acquired the NSQ at their ND have two options:
- 2.4.1 Either they take a higher level NSQ training (for example if the ND NSQ gave them Level 2, they can now enroll for Level 3 at HND), or
  - 2.4.2 Be allowed to undertake the QAA training as their HND MSQ. QAA training at HND level is only allowed for holders of NSQ. The QAA training is available as a 4 credit unit course in the final year of the HND and this covers the MSQ.
- 2.5 The HND student who is undertaking QAA training will require learners to complete his or her training. These shall be available in the Polytechnic's SDC or EDC (whichever is used) which is a work place environment for the ND MSQ students. This gives a perfect synergy between the MSQ at ND level and QAA training at HND level for those who seek to undertake it.
- 2.6 For ICT and Oil and Gas Skills, international certification, if chosen by students, is accepted as equivalent to NSQ. This is because skills in these two sectors have become internationalized. NBTE has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Huawei and CISCO who shall offer 70% discount on their skills qualifications to students of Nigerian Polytechnics.

For further details on the NSQF please consult the Operational Manual available at the NBTE website or your Institution's Skills Development Centre.

### **3.0 CONCLUSION:**

The establishment and enforcement of Mandatory Skill Qualification (MSQ) in Polytechnics in Nigeria is designed to uphold excellence, promote innovation, and facilitate the seamless integration of skilled individuals into the workforce, thereby fostering personal fulfillment and driving economic prosperity.

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