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NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the 27th December, 2013

No. 8/6/2013-Inv.—In pursuance of the decision of the Cabinet Committee on Skill Development in its meeting held on 19th December, 2013, the National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) is hereby notified as per the following details:

1. DEFINITIONS APPLICABLE TO NSQF

- i. **“Competence”** means the proven ability to use acquired knowledge, skills and personal and social abilities, in discharge of responsibility roles. It is the ability to do a job well.
- ii. **“Credit”** is recognition that a learner has successfully completed a prior course of learning, corresponding to a qualification at a given level.
- iii. **“Knowledge”** means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. Knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.
- iv. **“Learner”** refers to an individual undergoing skill development training, whether in a formal or informal setting.
- v. **“Learning Outcomes”** represent what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, and which would be expressed in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.;
- vi. **“National Skills Qualifications Committee”** or **“NSQC”** refers to the Committee set up in accordance para 14. (i).
- vii. **“Qualification”** means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.

- viii. **“Recognition of Prior Learning”** or **“RPL”** is the process of recognising previous learning, often experiential, towards gaining a qualification
- ix. **“Sector”** means a grouping of professional activities on the basis of their main economic function, product, service or technology
- x. **“Skills”** means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. Skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments);
- xi. **“Trainer”** means someone who trains, instructs, teaches or otherwise enables the learner(s) to acquire the appropriate knowledge and skills.
- xii. **“Training Provider”**, **“Institute”** and **“Institution”** refer to any organisation providing knowledge and skills to learners.

2. WHAT IS THE NATIONAL SKILLS QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK?

- i. The National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) organizes qualifications according to a series of levels of knowledge, skills and aptitude. These levels are defined in terms of learning outcomes which the learner must possess regardless of whether they were acquired through formal, non-formal or informal learning. In that sense, the NSQF is a quality assurance framework. It is, therefore, a nationally integrated education and competency based skill framework that will provide for multiple pathways, horizontal as well as vertical, both within vocational education and vocational training and among vocational education, vocational training, general education and technical education, thus linking one level of learning to another higher level. This will enable a person to acquire desired competency levels, transit to the job market and, at an opportune time, return for acquiring additional skills to further upgrade their competencies.
- ii. The key elements of the NSQF provide:
 - a. national principles for recognising skill proficiency and competencies at different levels leading to international equivalency
 - b. multiple entry and exit between vocational education, skill training, general education, technical education and job markets
 - c. progression pathways defined within skill qualification framework
 - d. opportunities to promote lifelong learning and skill development
 - e. partnership with industry/employers
 - f. a transparent, accountable and credible mechanism for skill development across various sectors
 - g. increased potential for recognition of prior learning
- iii. The qualification framework is beneficial to schools, vocational education and training providers, higher education institutes, accrediting authorities as well as industry and its

representative bodies, unions, professional associations and licensing authorities. The biggest beneficiaries of such a framework are the learners who can judge the relative value of a qualification at a particular level on the framework and make informed decisions about their career progression paths.

3. INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE WITH QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORKS

i. A paradigm shift from education based on inputs towards education based on learning outcomes is taking place. Outcomes-based learning is a widely used term. The shift to learning outcomes is important for a number of reasons:

- a. It shifts focus from providers to users of education and training.
- b. By explaining what a learner is expected to know, understand or be able to do at the end of a learning process, individuals are better able to see what is offered in a particular course and how this links with other courses and programs.
- c. It increases transparency and strengthens accountability of qualifications – for the benefit of individual learners and employers.

The vast majority of the world's industrialized and transition countries are reforming their qualifications, while at the same time developing frameworks to relate these qualifications to each other and to generally reflect new demands in society and the labour market. The development of these systems is often linked to changes in higher education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and lifelong learning.

ii. Many countries worldwide are in the process of introducing qualification frameworks. Though the theoretical principles of all frameworks remain largely similar, the objectives of launching the frameworks vary. Whether the emphasis is on increasing the relevance and flexibility of education and training programs, easing recognition of prior learning, enhancing lifelong learning, improving the transparency of qualification systems, creating possibilities for credit accumulation and transfer, or developing quality assurance systems, Governments are increasingly turning to qualifications frameworks as a policy tool for reform. In some cases national developments are propelled by the emergence of regional frameworks (such as the European Qualification Framework). In many cases the implementation of qualification frameworks has been widely supported by international organizations and is often linked to aid money and even loans. There is increasing activity from international agencies in the area of qualifications frameworks: the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the International Labour Office (ILO), the World Bank (WB) and the European Union (EU) have current qualification framework projects.

4. BACKGROUND OF DEVELOPMENT OF QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK IN INDIA

i. Through the National Policy on Skill Development, 2009, India recognized the need for the development of a national qualification framework that would transcend both general education and vocational education and training. The Policy envisioned that the framework will stimulate and support reforms in skills development and facilitate establishment of nationally standardized and acceptable, and internationally comparable qualifications. In the absence of an organization at the Central level to develop such a framework, individual Ministries started working on development of the framework, which were to subsequently be subsumed in the National framework, when available. The Ministry of Labour and

Employment developed the National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF) and the Ministry of Human Resource Development developed the National Vocational Educational Qualification Framework (NVEQF). The Ministry of Human Resource Development also launched a pilot of the NVEQF in Haryana at the secondary school level.

ii. Realizing the need to have a unified framework, an Inter-Ministerial Committee was formed by the Cabinet Secretariat to use the work already done by the two Ministries as the foundation of the National Skills Qualification Framework. With the formation of the National Skill Development Agency, the mandate to anchor and operationalize the NSQF to ensure that quality and standards meet sector specific requirements was transferred to the Agency.

5. NEED FOR QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK IN INDIA

i. In India, general education and vocational education & training have been operating as separate verticals, with very little interaction between the two. This has led to hesitation amongst the youth in opting for vocational education and training as it is presumed that this avenue would preclude the concerned individual from being able to acquire higher degrees and qualifications. In order to facilitate mobility from vocational to general education, and vice-versa, a qualification framework for India, i.e. the National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) will help make qualifications more understandable and transparent.

ii. The need for the NSQF arises due to the following additional reasons:

- a. Till now the focus of education and training has been almost entirely on inputs. The NSQF is based on an **outcomes-based approach**, and each level in the NSQF is defined and described in terms of competency levels that would need to be achieved. Job roles corresponding to each of these competency levels would be ascertained with the involvement of industry, through the respective Sector Skill Councils (SSCs).
- b. Pathways of learning and progression, especially on the vocational education and training front, are generally unclear or absent. There is no clear provision for vertical or horizontal mobility. The NSQF will **make the progression pathways transparent** so that institutes, students and employers are clear as to what they can or cannot do after pursuing a particular course and address the issues of inequity and disparity in qualifications
- c. There is lack of uniformity in the outcomes associated with different qualifications across institutions, each with its own duration, curriculum, entry requirements as well as title. This often leads to problems in **establishing equivalence of certificates/diplomas/degrees** in different parts of the country, which in turn impacts the employability and mobility of students
- d. The negative perception associated with vocational education and training can be significantly removed by the **development of quality qualifications that also permit acquisition of higher qualifications**, including degrees and doctorates
- e. There exist a large section of people who have acquired skills in the informal sector but who do not have the necessary formal certifications to attest to their skills. As a competency-based and outcomes based qualification framework, NSQF will facilitate

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) that is largely lacking in the present education and training scenario

- f. Majority of Indian qualifications are not recognized internationally and vice-versa. This creates a problem for the students and workers as their international mobility is adversely affected and they often have to undergo a course again to get a qualification that is recognized in the host country. The NSQF will also help **alignment of Indian qualifications to international qualifications in accordance with relevant bilateral and multilateral agreements**. Many countries are already in the process of aligning their qualifications to international qualifications through qualification frameworks
- g. The **credit accumulation and transfer system** that will be integrated in the NSQF will allow people to move between education, vocational training and work at different stages in their lives according to their needs and convenience. It will be possible for a student to leave education domain, get some practical experience in industry and return to studies to gain qualifications to progress higher in his chosen career

6. OBJECTIVES OF NSQF

- i. The objectives of the NSQF are to provide a framework that:
 - a. Accommodates the diversity of the Indian education and training systems
 - b. Allows the development of a set of qualifications for each level, based on outcomes which are accepted across the nation
 - c. Provides structure for development and maintenance of progression pathways which provide access to qualifications and assist people to move easily and readily between different education and training sectors and between those sectors and the labour market
 - d. Gives individuals an option to progress through education and training and gain recognition for their prior learning and experiences
 - e. Underpins national regulatory and quality assurance arrangements for education and training
 - f. Supports and enhances the national and international mobility of persons with NSQF-compliant qualifications through increased recognition of the value and comparability of Indian qualifications
- ii. **The NSQF is a quality assurance framework** — it facilitates the awarding of credit and supports credit transfer and progression routes within the Indian education and training system. It seeks to help everyone involved in education and training to make comparisons between qualifications offered in the country, and to understand how these relate to each other.

7. HOW IT WORKS?

i. The National Skill Qualification Framework is composed of **ten levels**, each representing a different level of complexity, knowledge and autonomy required to demonstrate the competence commensurate for that level. Level one of the framework represents the lowest complexity while level ten represents the highest complexity. The levels are defined by criteria expressed as learning outcomes. Volume of learning denoting *notional* time taken to acquire qualification may also be indicated for some levels and some sectors, **but it is important to note that the NSQF Levels are not related directly to years of study**. They are defined by the extent of demands made of the learner in broad categories of competence, i.e. professional knowledge, professional skill, core skill and responsibility. Over a lifetime of learning, individuals will move to higher from lower levels or across levels of qualifications as they take on new learning and acquire new skills.

ii. Each NSQF level is defined by a set of descriptors expressed as learning outcomes. The level descriptors are designed to **allow broad comparisons** to be made between outcomes of learning. **However, it is not the case that every qualification will or should have all of the characteristics set out in the level descriptors**. Each qualification at an NSQF level may be further defined with reference to curriculum, notional contact hours, subjects, duration of studies, workload, trainer quality and type of training institution, to indicate what is expected of the learner in terms of ability to do or apply at the end of the learning process. The positioning of two or more qualifications at the same level only indicates that they are broadly comparable in terms of the general level of outcome. It does not indicate that they necessarily have the same purpose or content.

iii. Some **other issues associated with** the NSQF are given below:

- a. **National Occupational Standards (NOS):** NOS define the measurable performance outcomes required from an individual engaged in a particular task. They list down what an individual performing that task should know and also do. These standards can form the benchmarks for various education and training programs and recruitment range of HRM practices. Just as each job role may require the performance of a number of tasks, the combination of all the NOSs corresponding to these tasks would form the Qualification Pack (QP) for that job role. The NOSs and QP for each job role corresponding to each level of the NSQF are being formulated by the concerned Sector Skill Councils (SSCs). In the event of there being no SSC for a given sector, or inability on the part of the SSC to produce the NOSs/QPs in a timely manner, this responsibility may be assigned by the National Skills Qualifications Committee (NSQC) to a relevant regulatory body or other entity having experience and knowledge of the sector.
- b. **Curriculum Packages:** The competency based curriculum packages would consist of syllabus, student manual, trainers guide, training manual, trainer qualifications, assessment and testing guidelines and multimedia packages and e-material. These will be developed for each NSQF level, and where relevant, for specific Qualification Packs (QPs) identified by the SSCs. This may be done by such agencies as the Ministries/ Departments, Sector Skills Councils and Regulatory Bodies may designate, or any other body, in accordance with the NSQF. NSQF curricula should be modular, allowing for skill accumulation and facilitating exit and entry. Curricula

design will also be aligned to a credit framework that reflects credits earned and competencies acquired. Training of trainers would also be aligned to the NSQF.

- c. **Industry Engagement:** Since the NSQF is based on an outcomes-based approach, participation of the industry and employers is a critical prerequisite for the success of NSQF. Vocational education, vocational training general education and skill development courses will be designed, developed, delivered, and learners assessed and certified in accordance with the NSQF in consultation with SSCs, industry and employers. In addition to this the industry may also provide support in terms of providing training institutions.
- d. **Horizontal and vertical mobility:** For horizontal and vertical mobility to take place, the following are essential:
- Each level is linked to the ones above and below it by a series of steps. If these steps in any industry sector or academic domain are missing, the NSQF would help identify and map these missing gaps.
 - These gaps would have to be filled, and the key administrative ministry, regulatory bodies already operating in that sector, the SSCs and other stakeholders being part of the NSQC, would need to be consulted in the process
 - The degree of lateral mobility that is considered desirable would have to be identified by the NSQC, and the same would have to be facilitated through on-going credit accumulation and transfer.

Accordingly, the NSQF would require such regulatory institutions (e.g. UGC, AICTE, NCVT, Technical and School Boards etc.) to define each of their entry and exit parameters in terms of competencies ascribable to that level of the NSQF so that vertical progression in vocational education would be strengthened. If necessary, reservations for individuals progressing through these channels can be considered and provided for. For instance, the system would permit vocational pass outs of Class X – XII, ITIs and polytechnics to gain entry into higher education programs in vocational/technical/general education courses including degree level courses such as the Bachelor of Vocational Studies (B.Voc.), notified by the University Grants Commission. Taking into account the competencies acquired and the credits accumulated, it would also be possible to change courses, if desired. Further, persons with skills shall have the option to move between vocational education, vocational training, general and higher education or vice versa at various stages, using pathways provided by the school boards, universities and colleges. If there are “competency gaps” identified in a candidate, a “bridge course” based on modular curricula to acquire those competencies may be imparted by the receiving Institution.

- e. **International comparability:** The NSQF will provide a means of articulation and alignment of the Indian Skill Qualification levels with those of other countries and regions. This will help in the mobility of Indian NSQF-aligned Qualification holders to work in and/or relocate to other parts of the world. The NSQF will also be the

means of interface with the various geographical regional frameworks that are developing across the world.

8. LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

i. Each level of the NSQF is associated with a set of descriptors made up of five outcome statements, 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.

ii. Each level of the NSQF is described by a statement of learning outcomes in five domains, known as level descriptors. These five domains are:

- a. Process
- b. professional knowledge,
- c. professional skill,
- d. core skill and
- e. Responsibility.

Each of these is briefly described below:

a. Process

Process is a general summary of the other four domains corresponding to the level.

b. Professional knowledge

Professional knowledge is what a learner should know and understand with reference to the subject. It is described in terms of depth, breadth, kinds of knowledge and complexity, as follows:

- Depth of knowledge can be general or specialized
- Breadth of knowledge can range from a single topic to multi-disciplinary area of knowledge
- Kinds of knowledge range from concrete to abstract, from segmented to cumulative
- Complexity of knowledge refers to the combination of kinds, depth and breadth of knowledge

c. Professional skill

Professional skills are what a learner should be able to do. These are described in terms of the kinds and complexity of skills and include:

- Cognitive and creative skills involving the use of intuitive, logical and critical thinking
- Communication skills involving written, oral, literacy and numeracy skills
- Interpersonal skills and generic

skills d. Core skill

Core skills refer to basic skills involving dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments used for performing the job, including IT skills needed for that level.

e. Responsibility

Responsibility aspect determines the following:

- Nature of working relationships
- Level of responsibility for self and others
- Managing change
- Accountability for actions

iii. The descriptors give broad, general, but meaningful, indicators of the learning outcomes at each level. The descriptors can be used in a number of ways:

- a. To allocate levels to learning programs and qualifications
- b. In validation and moderation of various qualifications and programs
- c. As a basis for communication with learners and other users of qualifications
- d. As a guide for mapping progression routes within and across the education and training sectors
- e. By program designers when making entry requirements and recommendations for programs

iv. The NSQF level descriptors are given below:

LEVEL	Process required	Professional knowledge	Professional skill	Core skill	Responsibility
Level 1	prepares person to/carry out process that are repetitive on regular basis require no previous practice	familiar with common trade terminology, instructional words meaning and understanding	routine and repetitive, takes safety and security measures.	Reading and writing, addition subtraction personal financing, familiarity with social and religious diversity, hygiene and environment	No responsibility always works under continuous instruction and close supervision
Level 2	prepares person to/carry out process that are repetitive on regular basis with little application of understanding, more of practice	Material tools and application in a limited context, understands context of work and quality	limited service skill used in limited context, select and apply tools, assist in professional	receive and transmit written and oral messages, arithmetic personal financing understanding of social political	No responsibility works under instruction and close supervision

			works with no variables differentiate s good and bad quality	and religious diversity, hygiene and environment	
Level 3	person may carry put a job which may require limited range of activities routine and predictable	Basic facts, process and principle applied in trade of employment	recall and demonstrate practical skill, routine and repetitive in narrow range of application	Communication written and oral, with minimum required clarity, skill of basic arithmetic and algebraic principles, personal banking, basic understanding of social and natural environment	Under close supervision Some Responsibility for own work within defined limit.
Level 4	work in familiar, predictable, routine, situation of clear choice	factual knowledge of field of knowledge or study	recall and demonstrate practical skill, routine and repetitive in narrow range of application, using appropriate rule and tool, using quality concepts	language to communicate written or oral, with required clarity, skill to basic arithmetic and algebraic principles, basic understanding of social political and natural environment	Responsibility for own work and learning
Level 5	job that requires well developed skill, with clear choice of procedures in familiar context	knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study.	a range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools,	Desired mathematical skill, understanding of social, political and some skill of collecting and organising information, communication.	Responsibility for own work and learning and some responsibility for other's works and learning

			materials and information		
Level 6	demands wide range of specialised technical skill, clarity of knowledge and practice in broad range of activity involving standard non standard practices	factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	a range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	Reasonably good in mathematical calculation, understanding of social, political and, reasonably good in data collecting organising information, and logical communication	Responsibility for own work and learning and full responsibility for other's works and learning
Level 7.	requires a wide ranging specialised theoretical and practical skill, involving variable routine and non-routine context.	wide ranging ,factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	wide range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	good logical and mathematical skill understanding of social political and natural environment good in collecting and organising information, communication and presentation skill	full responsibility for output of group and development
Level 8	Comprehensive, cognitive, theoretical knowledge and practical skills to develop creative solutions, to abstract problem. Undertakes self study, demonstrates intellectual independence, analytical rigour and good communication.			Exercise management and supervision in the context of work/study having unpredictable changes, responsible for development of self and others.	
Level 9.	Advanced Knowledge and skill Critical understanding of the subject, demonstrating mastery and innovation, completion of substantial research and dissertation.			Responsible for decision making in complex technical activities, involving unpredictable study/work situations.	
Level 10.	Highly specialised knowledge and problem solving skill to provide original contribution to knowledge through research and scholarship.			Responsible for strategic decisions in unpredictable complex situations of work/study.	

9. CREDITS

i. “**Credit**” is recognition that a learner has successfully completed a prior course of learning, corresponding to a qualification at a given level. For each such prior qualification, the student would have put in a volume of institutional or workplace learning, and the more complex a qualification, the greater the volume of learning that would have gone into it. The credit points give learners, employers and institutions a means of describing and comparing the learning outcomes achieved. Based on this, the additional learning outcomes to acquire a qualification at a higher NSQF level can be determined. Credits quantify learning outcomes that are subject to valid, reliable methods of assessment. The number of credits may be worked out on the basis of the number of notional learning hours that an ‘average’ learner at a specified NSQF level might expect to take to achieve the learning outcomes, including the assessment. **However, this is merely a guide and no credits are added or taken away if more or less time is taken to achieve the outcomes.** No credits are ‘earned’ by a learner if the learning outcomes are not achieved or, in the case of RPL, demonstrated.

ii. Credits can be used to assist learners to transfer between programs. This can happen only when awarding bodies determine how much credit can be transferred into which of their programs. This decision will depend upon the nature/content of the learning for which the credit has been given and the requirements of the program into which transfer is being sought. This will also facilitate multiple entry and exit pathways at each level (or within a level) with the bundle of credits earned clearly certified by assessment and certification bodies which have been authorized to do so.

iii. Wherever notional learning time is used, it should include all learning activities required for the achievement of the learning outcomes for a particular level, including, for example:

- a. Formal learning, including classes, training sessions, coaching, seminars and tutorials
- b. Practice and learning on the job - gaining, applying and refining skills in the workplace
- c. Involvement in informal learning, example: community-based workshops, youth groups, playgroups
- d. Doing practical work in laboratories or other locations
- e. Expected private study, revision and remedial work
- f. Work-based activities which lead to assessment
- g. Undertaking all forms of assessment

Notional learning time may also be linked to the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO 08), which includes reference to a nominal duration of learning and workplace training for each occupation.

iv. The need to undertake any or all of these will be considered when credit is being allocated to a qualification or learning program. The mix of learning activities will vary from program to program — in school, the learning might be mostly class-based; in higher education much of the learning time could be spent outside of formal lectures etc. In other situations, much of the learning will be work-based. In determining the notional learning time

involved in achieving outcomes of learning (for eg. in a module/unit, program, or any piece of assessed learning), no rigid allocation of time is implied in this system, particularly as flexible and distance learning develops.

Credit Transfer

i. Credit transfer is the process of recognizing prior learning that has been credit rated by the assessment and certification bodies authorized to do so. The transfer of credit points from one qualification or learning program into another helps to minimize duplication of learning. Learners may have already achieved NSQF credits for learning that they have previously undertaken and it may be possible for all or some of these credits to be transferred to another qualification or learning program. The key focus of credit transfer decisions should be on the benefit to the learner and on support for effective learning pathways. Transparency in decision-making for credit recognition and transfer is a critical factor in supporting and encouraging the on-going involvement of learners in education and training.

ii Credit transfer would facilitate access and promote new learning opportunities without compromising learning outcomes associated with a given NSQF level. Those responsible for designing qualifications and learning programs will be encouraged to identify opportunities for credit transfer wherever they exist.

iii. Credit transfer can be made in various ways such as allowing a learner to drop a subject already studied or take the next level course in that subject, direct admission to higher-level such as direct second-year admission, etc. This could also take the form of reservation of seats for students coming with prior learning background. The credit transfer system in each industry sector or academic domain needs to be detailed out by the NSQC, with the inputs from the respective institutions/universities/Ministries/regulators, etc. at the time of registration of qualification, so that students undertaking the qualification are clear about the possible credit transfer opportunities available to them. These could include issues such as

- a. Standardisation of course content, syllabus, notional learning time, credit values etc.
- b. Standardisation of credit values for prior/ informal learning.
- c. Stipulation of time limit and other conditions beyond which the credit will not survive – as students may forget training inputs unless these are put to use.
- d. Stipulation of related subjects for credit transfer. For example, credits in Chemistry would be relevant for polymer technology. Credits in turning / machining may be relevant for mould making, though both mould making and polymer science form part of the same 3 year Diploma currently in force.

10. QUALIFICATIONS REGISTER

i. To ensure that learners have access to all the qualifications registered and currently being provided by various training providers/institutions, a register of qualifications, that are approved and available, shall be maintained and regularly updated. The NSQF Register will be the official national public record of all qualifications aligned to NSQF levels, qualification pathways and accrediting authorities.

ii. The qualifications register will be made available on a web portal and regularly updated. Every institution offering an NSQF-aligned qualification will have to keep details of

its training programs updated on the portal.

11. SHARING OF RESOURCES

Sharing of Resources already created by different organizations would be encouraged for optimum utilization of the funds and expertise available. Industry and employers would be encouraged to partner with skill / vocational training providers/institutes so that the requirements and ethos of the work place are integral to skill training packages/programmes.

12. RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

i. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a very important associated function of the NSQF, especially in the Indian context where majority of the workforce has not received formal training. The NSQF will help individuals who have gained learning informally, such as through life, work and voluntary activities to have this learning recognized. This will include knowledge and skills gained:

- a. Outside of formal learning situations
- b. Through informal learning and training in the workplace, the community and/or the voluntary sector
- c. From continuing professional development activities
- d. From independent learning

ii. RPL will give an option for personal or career development or to gain credit towards other qualifications or learning programs to learners who have the skills but no certificate to prove it. It will help learners make clearer connections between the learning they have already achieved and future learning and/or career opportunities. Benchmarking an individual's learning against the NSQF Level Descriptors will help them to identify the appropriate level of options for progression. This will improve career progression and skill upgradation of learners as well as facilitate the engagement of the experienced practitioners as resource persons.

iii. At present, the Modular Employable Skills (MES) scheme under the Ministry of Labour and Employment has a component of RPL, wherein direct testing and assessment of skills may be done. Ministry of Tourism also runs the Skill Testing and Certification Programme, wherein candidates can get their skills assessed and get certificate for the same. However, efforts for recognition of prior skills are limited. By introducing RPL through the NSQF, such efforts will gain momentum and allow learners to benefit on a larger scale. The NSQF will develop process for Recognition of Prior Learning/traditional learning for any given job role against the relevant level descriptors and notify the same for Skill Training Providers/Vocational Training Providers/Certificate awarding bodies for use in assessment and certification.

13. FUNCTIONS/RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAKEHOLDERS

The NSQF is the joint responsibility of many stakeholders and each has its own role to play in its development, implementation and maintenance. The roles/responsibilities of the main stakeholders are listed below:

a. National Skill Development Agency (NSDA)

The NSDA has been mandated to anchor and operationalize the NSQF to ensure that quality and standards meet sector specific requirements. The NSDA will also facilitate the setting up of professional certifying bodies in addition to the existing ones. In performing the above functions, the NSDA will be ensuring that the NSQF acts as a quality assurance framework and facilitates capacity building.

b. Sector Skills Councils (SSCs)

Sector Skill Councils are industry-led national partnership organizations that will bring together all the stakeholders from their respective sectors. Based on the needs of the industries in concerned sector, the SSCs are developing the NOSs and QPs for the various job roles in their sectors, and they will align the same to appropriate levels of the NSQF. They will work to supplement the existing vocational training and education system for the Industry Sector in meeting the entire value chain's requirements of appropriately trained manpower in quantity and quality across all levels on a sustained and evolving basis

The SSCs shall also provide inputs to the Central and State level implementing agencies in developing the curriculum packages, capacity building of institutions and training providers, and assessment and certification of the skills imparted. The Sector Skill Councils shall be licensed and regulated by the National Skills Qualification Committee.

c. Central Ministries

The Central Ministries, being at the apex of the issues in their administrative control, will have to provide the leadership to ensure that all stakeholders align the programs being offered by institutions/bodies under their aegis to the NSQF in accordance with the Implementation Schedule in para 14.iv.

d. State Governments

The institutions/bodies under the control of the respective State Governments will be encouraged to align their learning programmes to the NSQF, as this would facilitate greater mobility for individuals holding such qualifications. The State Governments will also help determine the modalities for ensuring that while regional variations are provided for, the same do not undermine the quality assurance associated with the NSQF.

e. Regulatory Institutions.

All the existing regulatory institutions (e.g. UGC, AICTE, NCVT, Technical and School Boards etc.) would define their entry and exit competencies and qualifications in terms of NSQF levels so that provision of vertical progression in both general and vocational education would be strengthened and vocational pass outs are able to gain entry into the respective portals of higher education in the vocational/technical/ general education courses including degree level courses.

Thus, Regulatory/Awarding bodies while continuing to regulate their courses, programmes, affiliation, and accreditation system shall ensure their alignment and conformity with the NSQF.

f. Training Providers/Institutes/Institutions

All training providers would have to organise their courses/programmes to ensure alignment with NSQF levels in accordance with the implementation schedule in para 14.iv.

14. IMPLEMENTATION

The NSQF would be anchored in the National Skill Development Agency (NSDA), and will be implemented through the National Skills Qualification Committee (NSQC). A permanent secretariat for the NSQC would be set up under the NSDA for this purpose.

i. National Skills Qualification Committee

Composition: The NSQC shall have a composition as under:

- i. Chairman NSDA Chairman
- ii. Secretary, Dept of School Education & Literacy,
Ministry of HRD Member
- iii. Secretary, Dept of Higher Education,
Ministry of HRD Member
- iv. Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment Member
- v. Member Secretary, Planning Commission..... Member
- vi. Mission Directors, from three State Skill
Development Missions (in rotation) Members
- vii. Sectoral Representatives as below Members
- viii. Director General NSDA Member-Secretary

For each sector that is being discussed, the Sectoral Representatives would comprise:

- ix. Secretary, Administrative Ministry..... Member
- x. Chairman/CEO of the concerned Sector Skill Council(s)..... Member
- xi. Heads of all Regulatory Bodies, including where relevant, UGC,
AICTE, CBSE, NCVT, State Boards etc in the Sector Members
- xii. Heads of two training institutions (one Govt and one private)..... Members
- xiii. Any other person/agency relevant for the sector* Member

**Note: Where more than one Ministry / Department is related to a particular sector, a representative from each of these Ministries/Departments would be invited under this provision so that all concerned are represented. The representative could be a technical person from an expert agency or body under the Ministry dealing with the issue of training and skills in that particular sector. In sectors that focus on skilling for overseas job markets, representatives of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs would be included.*

The NSQC would be at liberty to set up specific sub-committees for addressing sectoral issues. However, all Members of the NSQC representing specific sectors, and listed under the group of “sectoral representatives” would necessarily have to be part of the sub-committee(s) on the sector”.

Functions: Functions of the NSQC would be as under:

- a. approve and notify the NOSs and the QPs prepared by the Sector Skills Councils, including job roles that exist across various sectors;
- b. approve the accreditation norms developed by the concerned Sector Skills Councils for training providers in the sector;
- c. develop/approve the accreditation norms for non-statutory certification agencies;
- d. based on the National Standards for Occupation/National Industrial Classification or any other nationally accepted classification system, to determine the definitions of

- sectors, and approve the creation of additional Sector Skills Councils including on the recommendation of the NSDC;
- e. prescribe guidelines for ensuring that implementing agencies, including training providers, address the special needs of disadvantaged sections of the population, including persons with disabilities, members of Scheduled Castes and Tribes, OBCs, minorities, women etc.;
 - f. review and resolve any issues/disputes among Ministries/ Departments/ Regulatory Bodies regarding alignment of courses to NSQF, credit transfer, etc.;
 - g. all matters requiring cross-sectoral approach, such as credit accumulation and transfer, recognition of non-formal learning, apprenticeship, online and distance learning, lateral mobility and bridge courses;
 - h. coordinate and align Indian qualifications to international qualifications frameworks to allow international mobility;
 - i. addressing all transition issues, including developing suitable mechanism for recognizing and aligning to the NSQF all qualifications pre-dating the implementation of the NSQF;
 - j. Any other activity as may be entrusted by the Government;
 - k. map all existing certificate, diploma, degree and other courses available in the sector, and identify gaps if any;
 - l. determine whether progression from one level to another should be allowed for a specific course/discipline (eg, should a progression link be established between a nursing qualification and a medical one?);
 - m. map all the progression pathways so determined and agreed, and decide how the progression will take place – how much credit would be allowed for movement from one level to the next, and how such progression can be facilitated;
 - n. determine progression links between courses and certifications that are granted by regulatory and/or professional bodies, and those that are currently unregulated;
 - o. identify and specify bridge courses and processes if any, that would be needed to permit progression from one level to another;
 - p. establishing and maintaining high standards for skill training in each sector.

Provided that functions (a) to (j) above would have to be discharged by the NSQC itself, and would not be delegated to any sub-committee.

At the State level the State Skill Development Mission shall perform the coordination function in the realm of skill development along with local SSCs/industry/ trade association and all other stakeholders for the implementation of NSQF.

ii. Accreditation

While national accreditation norms would be approved by the NSQC, actual accreditation of training providers will be done by relevant regulators. The identification, registration and accreditation of the institutes/training providers would be done through a mechanism determined by the concerned Ministries and regulators in consultation with SSCs/industry as the case may be.

iii. Assessment and Certification

Assessment and certification will be done by the respective agencies of the Government/private sector as is done now. However, assessment and certification norms developed by the concerned regulatory bodies, SSC/industry would be approved by the NSQC to ensure that outcomes conform to the appropriate NSQF level. Certificates issued

post assessment will mention that the level of the NSQF at which it lies.

iv. Implementation Schedule

In order to ensure a smooth transition, the implementation timetable for rolling out the NSQF would be as under:

- (i) Immediately upon the Notification of the NSQF,
 - a. All other frameworks, including the NVEQF (National Vocational Educational Qualification Framework) released by the Ministry of HRD, would cease to exist, and would be superceded by the NSQF.
 - b. NSQF compliant training/ educational programmes/courses would be entitled to receive government funding on a preferential basis.

- (ii) After the third anniversary date of the notification of the NSQF,
 - a. Government funding would not be available for any training/ educational programme/ course which is not NSQF-compliant.
 - b. All government-funded training and educational institutions shall define eligibility criteria for admission to various courses in terms of NSQF levels.
 - c. The recruitment rules of the Government of India and the public sector enterprises of the central government shall be amended to define eligibility criteria for all positions in terms of NSQF levels.
 - d. State Governments shall be encouraged to amend their recruitment rules as well as those of their public sector enterprises to define eligibility criteria for all positions in terms of NSQF levels.

- (iii) After the fifth anniversary date of the notification of the NSQF,
 - a. It shall be mandatory for all training/educational programmes/courses to be NSQF-compliant.
 - b. All training and educational institutions shall define eligibility criteria for admission to various courses in terms of NSQF levels.

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