



Guidelines for Recognition & Regulation of Assessment Agencies 2020



National Council for Vocational Education and Training
(Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship)
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प्रस्तावना

एक मजबूत आधुनिक कल्याणकारी राज्य सक्षम और प्रबुद्ध युवाओं के प्रयासों से बनता है, जो राष्ट्र के समकालीन इतिहास को लिखेंगे। भारत के माननीय प्रधानमंत्री का दृढ़ विश्वास है कि हम कौशल विकास को जितना महत्व देंगे, हमारे युवा उतने ही अधिक सक्षम होंगे। कौशल आत्मनिर्भरता का उपकरण है, जो न केवल व्यक्ति को रोजगारपरक बनाता है, बल्कि व्यक्ति को स्व-रोजगार के लिए भी तैयार करता है।

कौशलीकरण संस्थानों में निरंतर सुधार के साथ नए प्रतिमान की शुरुआत प्रणाली में गुणवत्ता को संचालित करने की क्षमता रखती है। भारत सरकार ने कौशल संस्थानों के सुदृढीकरण के लिए कई प्रमुख उपाय किए हैं। एक व्यापक विनियामक की स्थापना इस पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र में धीरे-धीरे सुधार लाएगा। राष्ट्रीय व्यावसायिक शिक्षा और प्रशिक्षण परिषद (एनसीवीईटी) जैसी एक नई संस्था अधिक सुव्यवस्थित, विशिष्ट, मापनीय और अनुकूल विनियमन स्थापित करेगी।

कौशल विकास प्रशिक्षण का प्रभाव मजबूत आकलन और परिणामों के पश्चात प्रमाणन द्वारा स्थापित किया जाता है। इसलिए आकलन एक कुशल उम्मीदवार की क्षमता और सीखने के स्तर की जांच करने के लिए उचित, विश्वसनीय और पर्याप्त प्रक्रिया की प्रमुख कुंजी है।

एनसीवीईटी ने कौशलीकरण पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र में आकलन कार्य के विनियमन के लिए दिशा-निर्देश तथा एक परिचालन नियमावली तैयार किया है। इससे आकलन संस्थाओं के कार्यों में विश्वसनीयता, दक्षता और प्रभावकारिता आएगी, जिससे गुणवत्ता में सुधार होगा और लगने वाले कुल समय में कमी आएगी।

मैं चाहता हूँ कि इन परिवर्तनीय दिशा-निर्देशों को पूरे देश में तेजी से कार्यान्वित किया जाए तथा निकट भविष्य में दक्षता और प्रभावशीलता के रूप में प्रणालियों में परिकल्पित सकारात्मक परिणाम प्राप्त हो। मैं एमएसडीई के सचिव और एनसीवीईटी के अध्यक्ष, श्री प्रवीण कुमार को उनके सक्षम नेतृत्व के लिए तथा एनसीवीईटी की कार्यकारी सदस्य, सुश्री विनीता अग्रवाल एवं उनकी टीम को इन दिशानिर्देशों को तैयार करने में किए गए उनके अथक प्रयासों के लिए बधाई देता हूँ।

(डॉ० महेन्द्र नाथ पाण्डेय)
कौशल विकास और उद्यमशीलता मंत्री,
भारत सरकार



PREFACE



A key dimension in the continuous improvement of skilling ecosystem in our country is consistent and quality assured assessments. In the skilling life cycle of a trainee the assessment process establishes validity and objectivity for the measurement of performance in the particular skillset. The heterogeneous and fragmented system of institutions in skilling will hugely benefit from the genesis of the progressive regulator i.e. the NCVET and its forward looking regulation.

These set of Guidelines lay down standards for the recognition of Assessment Agencies and provide a monitoring and evaluation framework for their regulation. As an overarching regulator the vision of these guidelines is to create a pool of best in class Assessment Agencies for assessment delivery through standardized norms, continuous quality governance and incentivizing better performing agencies. This will enable these organisations to find the right fit into the system while inducing the principles of validity, fairness, reliability and flexibility. As the ecosystem evolves, NCVET would strive to move towards greater use of technology for conducting assessments to strengthen efficiency in the ecosystem.

These Guidelines have been a result of a long and rigorous exercise undertaken by the NCVET team. Stakeholder consultations, expert reviews and feedback along with focussed literature review have shaped the contours of these documents. The parameters which shall apply in establishing the optimal performance were carefully calibrated so as to be comprehensive and yet not excessive.

I would like to extend my best wishes for the smooth implementation of these Guidelines.

Praveen Kumar

Chairman, National Council for Vocational Education and Training &
Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
Government of India



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

NCVET has a key objective of improving the assessment delivery and inducing standards in this function, thereby ensuring that the assessments are fair, reliable, valid and comprehensive. The 'Guidelines on Recognition and Regulation of Assessment Agencies' and the 'Operational Manual' developed by NCVET, seek to realise this objective. These Guidelines lay down standards and minimum requirements for initial recognition of Assessment Agencies and elaborate the monitoring framework for their continued association.

These Guidelines have been developed after rounds of engagement with national and international experts and stakeholder consultations with existing Assessment Agencies, State Skill Departments and Skill Development Missions, Central Ministries/ Departments, Industry etc. The guidelines were further kept for public scrutiny and comments received have been examined and incorporated accordingly.

I thank Mr. Praveen Kumar, Chairman, NCVET & Secretary, MSDE, for his vision and constant guidance in the formulation of these Guidelines. Development of these Guidelines was possible due to the support of DFID, UK and the diligent efforts of the NCVET team comprising of Ms. Tanavi Singh, Ms. Shubhi Mathur, Mr. Shuvadeep Ray and Mr. Anupam Maity, Consultants at NCVET. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of Ms. Sandhya Chintala of IT/ITES SSC, the DGT team, the representatives of Assessment Agencies (Co Cubes and Navriti) and Automotive SSC in this endeavour. I am also grateful to the constructive comments and feedback of all stakeholders which helped in firming up these Guidelines.

I am sure that these Guidelines would help in addressing the issues related to quality in outcomes while bringing about standardisation across assessments in the skill training value chain.

Vinita Aggarwal
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Senior Economic Advisor,
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Glossary

AA	Assessment Agency
AB	Awarding Body
AI	Artificial Intelligence
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DGT	Directorate General of Training
DSDC	District Skill Development Committees
FCRA	Foreign Contribution Regulation Act
GoI	Government of India
GST	Goods and Services Tax
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
ITI	Industrial Training Institutes
LLP	Limited Liability Partnership
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
ML	Machine Learning
MoM	Minutes of Meeting
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSDE	Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
NCVET	National Council for Vocational Education & Training
NCVT	National Council of Vocational Training
NQR	National Qualifications Register
NSDA	National Skill Development Agency
NSQF	National Skills Qualification Framework
OM	Operational Manual
PAN	Permanent Account Number
POSH	Policy for Prevention of Sexual Harassment
PWD	Persons with Disability
QA	Quality Assurance
QF	Qualification File
QP	Qualification Pack
R&D	Research and Development
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SME	Subject Matter Expert
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SPOC	Single Point of Contact
SSDM	State Skill Development Missions
TAT	Turn Around Time
TC	Training Centre
ToA	Training of Assessors
ToT	Training of Trainers
TP	Training Partner
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Table of Content

Section 1: Introduction	3
1.1 NCVET- An Overview	3
1.2 Definition of Assessment Agency	4
1.3 Functions	4
Section 2: Assessment Agency Guidelines	5
2.1 Vision	5
2.2 Objectives	6
2.3 Scope	6
2.4 Structure.....	7
2.5 Key Features.....	7
Section 3: Recognition of Assessment Agencies	9
3.1 Defining Recognition	9
3.2 Scope of Recognition.....	9
3.3 Categories of Recognition	9
3.4 Recognition Process	10
3.5 Recognition Fee	12
3.6 Tenure of Recognition.....	12
3.7 Action for Breach of Agreement Granting Recognition.....	13
Section 4: Operational Models	15
4.1 Operating Process.....	15
4.2 Industry Participation in Assessment.....	16
4.3 Promotion of Technology	17
Section 5: Eligibility Criteria for the Recognition of Assessment Agencies	18
Section 6: Applicability of Guidelines to different AAs.....	25
Section 7: Monitoring and Evaluation	26
7.1 Objectives	26
7.2 Mechanism	26
7.3 Continuation Criteria: Parameters for Monitoring	27
7.4 Risk Assessment Framework	36

7.5 Risk Mitigation	36
7.6 Reporting	36
Section 8: Defining the Relationship Between Awarding Bodies and Assessment Agencies	37

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 NCVET- An Overview

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
- c. Monitoring and supervision of recognized entities
- d. Grievance Redressal

The key players in the skilling ecosystem in India are the Awarding Bodies, Assessment Agencies and Training Providers; wherein the Awarding Body articulates job standards and certifies competencies and Assessment Agency follows an assessment and validation procedure that formally evaluates the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competencies) of an individual.

These guidelines focus on the regulation of AAs. Currently multiple assessment agencies exist in the assessment ecosystem in India with varied implementation norms. Further, in some cases, ABs have also taken up the dual role of performing assessments. Due to this, parallel close-knit assessment systems have been created across awarding bodies and assessment agencies with limited standardization in operations, leading to quality issues and potential conflict of interest. The NCVET will undertake centralized recognition of AAs and strive 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, two sets of documents have been developed- the '*Guidelines for Recognition and Regulation of Assessment Agencies*' and the '*Operational Manual*'. While the guidelines draw up the contours of the norms of recognition, the operational manual 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. The '*Guidelines*' and '*Operational Manual*' set the overarching governance and effective working principles in line with globally recognized and accredited standards of quality assurance which will ensure the identification and the sustenance of the best in class AAs

in the NCVET ecosystem. This document elucidates the guidelines for recognition and regulation of assessment agencies.

1.2 Definition of Assessment Agency

Assessment Agency is defined as an agency which 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.

1.3 Functions

- a.** Conduct quality assured standardized assessment and record results
- b.** Develop 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
- c.** Ensure availability of accessible standardized assessment tools across languages and learner groups
- d.** Ensure availability of certified Assessors/Examiners, Proctors and SME
- e.** Allocate certified Assessor to the assessment batch
- f.** Undertake performance rating of assessors and proctors
- g.** Set up systems for grievance redressal
- h.** Cooperate with the Council in any inspection or audit of its activities

Section 2: Assessment Agency Guidelines

2.1 Vision

Consistent and quality-assured assessment is essential for effective qualifications. It enables the qualifications to gain recognition, credibility and value in the VET, the formal education and the employer ecosystems, both national and international. It is also important that qualifications are trusted by learners and employers. Learners want the assurance that the assessment is fair, and that the process of calibration of their competence is the same as that for all other learners. Employers want to be sure that holders of qualifications have been assessed against all the outcomes described in the qualification.

As an overarching regulator, NCVET will strive to establish a credible and quality assured assessment ecosystem through standardized norms, continuous quality governance and incentivization of better performing agencies, assessors/proctors. The vision is to create a pool of best in class Assessment Agencies for assessment delivery. As the ecosystem evolves, NCVET would strive to move towards greater use of technology for conducting assessments to strengthen efficiency in the ecosystem.

The vision and philosophy of NCVET to regulate the assessment ecosystem in the country is majorly driven by the following pillars:

Strengthening Governance

NCVET strives to ensure effective role separation of the assessment and awarding functions in the skilling ecosystem.

Strengthening Quality

NCVET strives to strengthen the quality in assessment systems across short-term and long-term skill ecosystem and move towards greater use of technology for conducting assessments to strengthen efficiency

Strengthening Outcomes

NCVET aims to recognize best in class assessment agencies with established credibility across sectors and geographies both national and international.

Self-Regulation and Self-Monitoring

NCVET seeks to envision a self-regulated ecosystem where the assessment agencies administer stringent controls on their operations to act in accordance to the mandate set by NCVET.

2.2 Objectives

These ‘Guidelines for recognition and regulation of Assessment Agencies’, by NCVET, also referred to as AA guidelines, lay down standards for recognition of Assessment Agencies to carry out assessments, while also highlighting the monitoring and governance framework for their continued association. They aim to address the issues related to quality in outcomes through standardized national norms, continuous quality governance leading to identification and promotion of best in class Assessment Agencies.

The key objectives of the AAs guidelines are to:

- a. Design standard norms for the recognition of AAs
- b. Design quality norms for assessment planning, delivery and monitoring of assessment and AAs.
- c. Define the turnaround time (TAT) for various assessment processes to ensure efficiency in the assessment systems (assessment scheduling, implementation - online and offline, result declaration & award of certification; data warehouse and data -mine and documentation)
- d. Introduce a system to evaluate the performance of the AAs and their assessors/examiners and proctors (Rating & Ranking norms)
- e. Define the lifecycle of the recognized AAs and dual agencies along with the responsibilities of associated stakeholders in the NCVET ecosystem.

2.3 Scope

Para 2 of the 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 this Resolution.”

Accordingly, it is desirable that all the Assessment Agencies get recognized as per the NCVET Guidelines for improved quality and acceptability. However, in order to implement any government funded training program, it shall be mandatory for assessments to be conducted through assessment agencies recognised by the NCVET.

2.4 Structure

The Guideline is bifurcated into following three major parts:

- a. Eligibility Criteria:** Defines the minimum entry criteria for agencies which seek to undertake assessment and be recognized as AAs. They are the basic minimal organizational requirements for entities who seek standard or dual recognition or recognition as an assessment centre.
- b. Continuation Criteria:** Defines the rules and procedures which the recognized AAs are required to adhere to continuously, throughout the tenure of their recognition. Compliance to continuation criteria is mandatory for the AAs, to ensure sustenance of the recognition given by NCVET.
- c. Relationship between key Stakeholders:** Defines the evolving role of ABs and AAs for key activities to be undertaken and the relationship between them.

The parameters enlisted as Eligibility Criteria and Continuation Criteria are mandatory in nature for all AAs including those seeking recognition from NCVET under Standard or Dual category or recognition as an independent Assessment Center. The NCVET recognized AAs will be mandated to abide by various guidelines released by the NCVET from time to time. However, there are certain variations in the applicability of eligibility for various categories of the AAs, which are indicated in Section 6 of the Guidelines.

The processes of application by an entity for recognition, evidences required for eligibility, scrutiny of such applications by NCVET, monitoring & evaluation along with timelines, instructions and relevant templates have been detailed out in the Operational Manual (OM).

2.5 Key Features

I. Centralized Recognition of Assessment Agencies

The guidelines will enable centralized recognition system of AAs on the basis of sector and geography.

II. Standardization of Assessment Processes and Delivery

The critical processes of assessment delivery will be standardized using best available practices. This would lead to a learner being assessed in a consistent way, ensuring uniformity of assessment and competency evaluation.

III. Separation of Assessment and Awarding Functions

Taking cognizance of the commonality of interests, NCVET seeks to separate the assessment and awarding function and keep them at arm's length to strengthen quality and accountability in their operations. Even for organisations and institutions which have dual recognition, the separation of the assessment and awarding functions in terms of personnel, administrative staff and resources have been embedded in the recognition modalities of NCVET.

IV. Self-Regulation

NCVET envisions a self-regulated ecosystem by inculcating a culture of self-monitoring and improvement. AAs are expected to administer controls on their operations and come up with continuous self-improvement and risk mitigation plans during their recognition period. NCVET will provide self-evaluation template for the AAs and dual agencies in the Operational Manual.

V. Delegated Regulation

NCVET will function as an overarching regulator, while the day to day operations and assessment delivery by AAs shall be monitored by the ABs as per the norms prescribed by NCVET. However, assessment outcomes and adherence to the NCVET prescribed quality norms by AAs, will be monitored by the NCVET.

VI. Performance Linked Categorization of AAs

NCVET as a regulator strives to establish an assessment ecosystem of credibility and quality through standardized norms leading to identification and promotion of best in class AAs. This will be promoted through risk rating of AAs which forms part of monitoring and evaluation of AA by NCVET. This rating is based on quantifiable outcome indicators which are based on performance of an AA. This would allow NCVET to recognize and incentivize best in class AAs while marking out those whose performance is below standards.

VII. Industry participation

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

VIII. Promotion of Technology

NCVET recognizes the fact that the use of technology in conducting assessments is a key area of good practice which helps in addressing many issues within the assessment process, including improving the accessibility of assessments for trainees in remote areas, and reducing costs for assessment agencies. Sectors where use of technology for assessments is limited, will be encouraged to adopt a blended model to conduct assessments. Thus, a range of assessment methods online, offline and blended with adequate reliance on technology and online methods appropriate to the qualifications, would be promoted by NCVET.

Section 3: Recognition of Assessment Agencies

3.1 Defining Recognition

Recognition of an entity as an Assessment Agency means that the entity has been authorized to conduct assessments for qualifications and perform other functions as outlined in Section 1.3.

3.2 Scope of Recognition

i. Sectoral

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 public domain to ensure that it is available with all the stakeholders.

Sector means a grouping of professional activities on the basis of their main economic function, product, service or technology. Enlisting of sectors shall be done by NCVET for all such purposes as defined in the guidelines.

ii. Geographical

Geographical recognition entails the approval of NCVET to conduct assessment 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. .

Note: Once recognized, an AA may apply for recognition in additional sectors and geographies by submitting evidence of its experience and competency as outlined in the Eligibility Criteria.

3.3 Categories of Recognition

i. Standard Recognition

An entity recognized for conducting assessment of learners shall acquire standard recognition. These recognized entities would be further onboarded by the AB for conducting assessments.

ii. Dual Recognition

An entity recognized for conducting assessment and certification shall acquire Dual Recognition.

Possible cases under Dual Recognition would be -

- a. A recognized Awarding Body is eligible to apply for recognition as an AA for trainings directly imparted in its campus, for its approved qualifications.
- b. Central Ministries/ State Departments/ Government institutions or bodies, are eligible to apply for Dual recognition

Following requirements shall be fulfilled by an entity applying under dual category recognition*:

- Separation of personnel, systems and managerial controls
- Separation of financial resources
- Established track record and market reputation

** AB should move towards setting up an Assessment Board. Till such time this is done, same person shall not be involved in both assessment and training functions.*

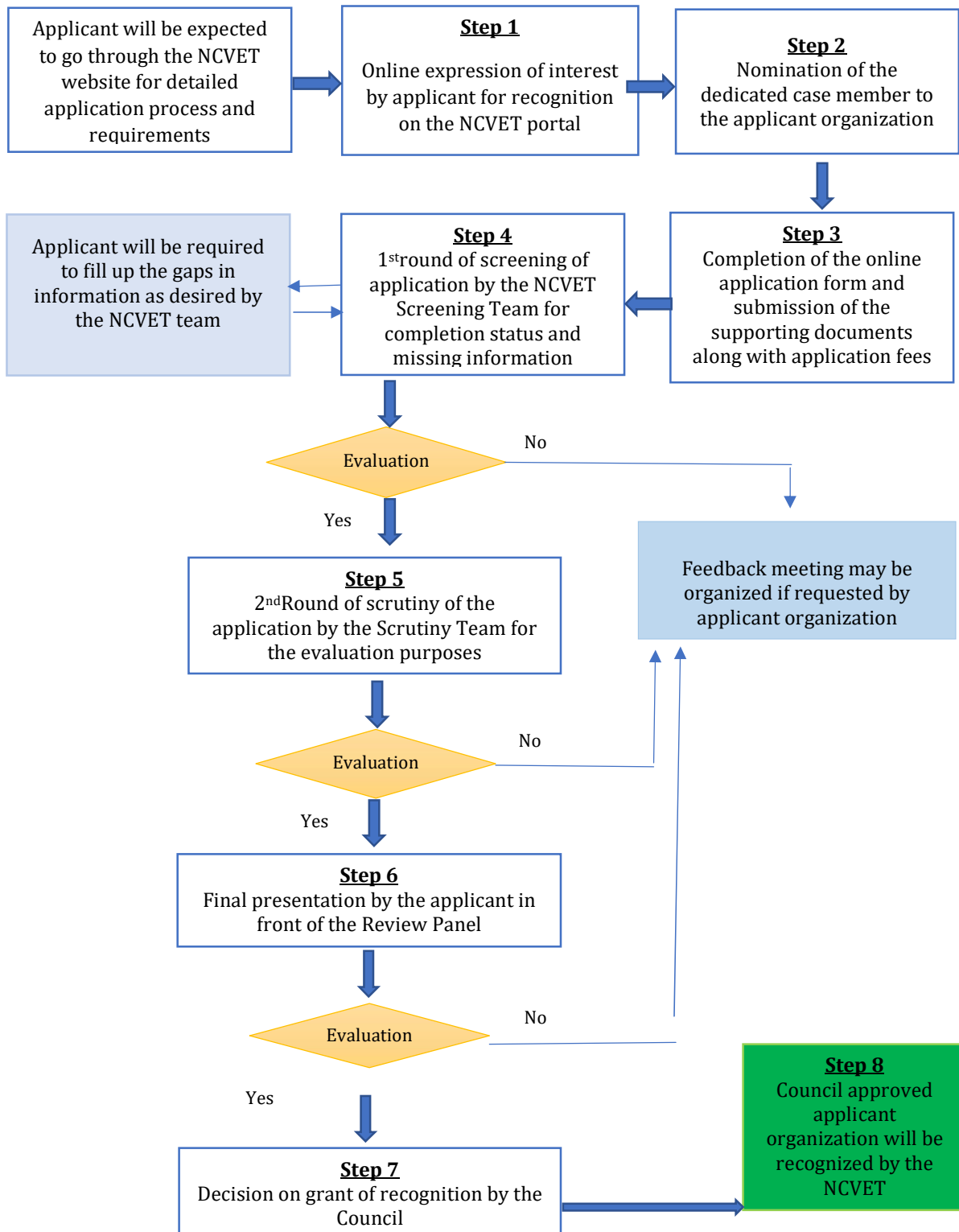
iii. Recognition for Imparting Vocational Education in Schools

The National Education Policy, 2020, lays emphasis on providing vocational exposure to children at early ages especially in middle and secondary school and integration of quality vocational education into higher education in order to ensure that every child learns at least one vocation and is exposed to several more. Where training in specific job oriented vocational qualification is either being imparted or proposed to be imparted, recognition of school boards for conducting assessments can be facilitated in the following two ways:

- a. Recognition of the School Board under dual category as AB and AA to enable the Boards to conduct the assessments for their own training/vocational courses
- b. Third-party assessment through NCVET recognized AAs for the training imparted.

3.4 Recognition Process

The application process for the recognition of AAs will be open throughout the year. The eligible AAs may apply through the NCVET website. The detailed process and instructions for submission are outlined in the Operation Manual. The snapshot of 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. 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 acknowledgements, necessary communication and information gathering will be facilitated through a contact email, details of **which** would be provided in the application form which would be made available on the NCVET website.*

3.5 Recognition Fee

An entity applying for recognition as an AA will be required to pay a recognition fee of Rs. 100000/- only (Rs. 50,000/- refundable in case of rejection). This fee is payable at step 3 of the recognition process along with completed application form and supporting documents.

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

Further, no separate charges shall be applicable while applying for fast track renewal for a period of 2 years after completion of 3 years of recognition.

3.6 Tenure of Recognition

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:

- i. Initially, an AA will be recognized by NCVET for a period of 3 years.
- ii. Post the completion of the said duration, AA will submit an application for fast track renewal, which if approved would extend the recognition for another 2 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 Operational Manual (OM).
- iii. Post completion of the total tenure of 5 years, an AA would be required to submit a fresh application for seeking recognition as an AA.

For both (ii) and (iii) an AA must apply 6 months prior to completion of recognition period. Upon such re-application/ request for fast track renewal 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 the recognition period.

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

3.7 Action for Breach of Agreement Granting Recognition

The Council may take one or more of the following actions against recognized bodies if they violate the terms of the agreement granting recognition, namely: —

- (i) private warning;
- (ii) public warning;
- (iii) directions to cease and desist certain activities;
- (iv) impose penalties;
- (v) suspension
- (vi) de-recognition of a recognized body, leading to termination of the agreement pursuant to which recognition was granted.

Suspension

A recognized AA may be **suspended** if it falls in the high-risk category as per the risk assessment framework detailed out in the operational manual released by NCVET, for two consecutive years.

Such an AA will be given six months' post suspension to ensure compliance with the guidelines and if found satisfactory their recognition can be restored at the discretion of the NCVET.

De-recognition

An AA may be **de-recognized** under the following scenarios:

- i. Any AA proven to be indulging in corrupt and/ or fraudulent malpractices.
- ii. Any AA failing to ensure compliance with the guidelines after 6 months of suspension.
- iii. Any AA found to be engaging in franchisees model or outsourcing assessment to other entities.
- iv. The members of the Governing Body of the AA have resigned and/or ceased to function, so as to bring down the strength to less than the minimum number of required members for the quorum.

Such an AA will be given a period of six months' post de-recognition to ensure completion of any pendency.

3.8 Surrender of Recognition

If an AA wants to surrender its recognition, it may do so via formal intimation to NCVET with reasons for surrender at least 90 days before the proposed date of surrender.

Section 4: Operational Models

Assessment Agencies will be recognized by NCVET based on the eligibility criteria mentioned in the guidelines. Given the dynamism associated with the changing needs and aspirations of the learners and industry, the operational model for the design, development and conduct of assessments would continue to innovate and dynamically lend itself to future requirements.

However, the essence of evolving the operational model will be to identify best in class AAs delivering quality assessment.

4.1 Operating Process

The following operational models will be adopted by the NCVET:

1. Recognition of AAs for Conducting Third Party Assessments

NCVET will create a pool of recognised AAs based on the eligibility criteria elaborated in Section 5 of the Guidelines. Thereafter there will be two phases in allocation of AAs to ABs:

Phase I: In Phase-1, Awarding Bodies will have the flexibility to select any Assessment Agency/ies from this pool of recognised AAs, based on their sectoral and geographical requirement, for carrying out assessments for their qualification.

Phase II: In Phase-II, once NCVET develops its capacity, randomized allocation of assessment agencies to ABs will be done via an AI enabled platform with ML (Machine Learning) capabilities to map requirements between ABs and AAs concerned. Such an AI driven platform shall have in-built algorithms for mapping ABs and AAs based on the conditions of language and geographical availability, job role, skill set needed, sectoral expertise to name a few. This online system would automatically allocate AAs to training batches when ABs raise a request for such assessments.

NCVET shall also put in place a system of rating of AAs and their assessors. The algorithm for allocation of AAs for assessments will also take into consideration AA, assessor and proctor ratings such that high performing AAs will get a preference in the allocation process.

***Note:** In both these phases there will be no further requirement of affiliation of AAs by ABs. AAs may enter into an Agreement with the AB concerned for conducting assessments as per the norms prescribed in the NCVET guidelines as well as for sharing of assessment fees. The assessment fees will be as per various scheme guidelines under which the training will be funded, of which minimum 60 % shall be given to the AA.*

2. Recognition as AA for Conducting Centralised Assessments

This will be applicable in the case of bodies with dual recognition where ABs have their own internal mechanisms for conducting assessments such as:

- i. Government Departments/ Govt institutions or bodies
- ii. Specialized training institutes of the Govt., Skill Universities, etc for trainings directly imparted by them, for their approved qualifications.

Such bodies/ ABs will be recognized as AA, by NCVET, based on the eligibility criteria elaborated in Section 5 of the Guidelines.

3. Independent Assessment Centers

In line with global best practices, NCVET would allow AAs and relevant entities such as PMKKs/ IISC/ industry skill centres of repute/ autonomous institutes established by the line ministries or any other agencies/organizations to set up independent sector wise physical assessment centres wherein learners with/without having undergone training can assess their skill sets for job competencies. This would not only increase the reach of quality assessment throughout the vast geography of the country, but also align with agile industry needs in the domestic ecosystem.

The Assessment Centres would need to ensure the availability of quality proctors, assessors, assessment tools in consideration of the requisite pedagogy.

These assessment centres will be encouraged to have tie ups with the respective ABs to facilitate assessment and certification services for learners, who wish to avail the services of such centres (walk-in services). Such a system could also be leveraged for taking into consideration assessments under “Recognition of Prior Learning” (RPL) scheme.

NCVET would encourage the ABs/ Training Providers to get assessments conducted in such centres, particularly where the training centres are in close proximity to these assessment centres.

Entities desirous of creating such assessment centres would be recognized by NCVET as per the eligibility criteria set out in Section 5 of the Guidelines and will have to abide by the Continuation Criteria for their continued association with NCVET.

4.2 Industry Participation in Assessment

All recognized AAs will be encouraged to strive towards excellence, strengthen effective participation of industry and promote use of technology in the assessment process. Integration with industry can take place through the following avenues:

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

4.3 Promotion of Technology

NCVET seeks to promote usage of technology in all sectors (including non-IT based). In order to ensure greater permeation of technology in assessment, entities seeking recognition (both standard and dual), must own AI enabled test engines and platforms for online, offline and blended assessment requirements. Such a platform must support assessments in different vernaculars on different kind of devices for providing enhanced flexibility in assessment delivery. It should also have technical capabilities to monitor the assessment through navigation control, geo-tagging and ability to flag in case of any malpractice, along with providing non-internet-based assessments in areas where connectivity poses a challenge. NCVET also encourages remote proctoring and shall incentivize entities having audio and video systems for online proctoring and or auto proctoring to record the ongoing assessment at the assessment centres.

Section 5: Eligibility Criteria for the Recognition of Assessment Agencies

The eligibility criteria for recognition of Assessment Agencies defines the suitability of entities/organizations to associate with NCVET in the capacity of an Assessment Agency (AA).

These eligibility conditions would be applicable to all agencies seeking recognition as Assessment Agencies in any category, i.e. **standard recognition, dual recognition or as independent Assessment Centres.**

Entities seeking recognition as dual agencies will be required to submit evidences for all conditions for assessment and awarding functions individually.

The evidences required to be submitted for the eligibility conditions have been detailed in the Operational Manual.

1. Legal Status

- a. The entity should be legally recognized to operate within the jurisdiction of India and the State/UT (as the case maybe). The entity must be registered/affiliated with the appropriate authority in India as a Company/Society/Charitable Trust /Limited Liability Partnership/Consortium.
- b. In case of a consortium, there should be a clearly identified lead partner who would be required to apply. If at point in time, the lead partner abdicates the consortium, the said entity would cease to be recognized.
- 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,
 - ii. They may get into a partnership/consortium with an Indian subsidiary. In 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 Government of India or any state government.
- f. To prevent conflict of interest, a training entity will not be eligible to apply for recognition as AA.

Entities with Dual Recognition

- a. In addition to the above, entities seeking Dual Recognition should be not-for-profit.
- b. Clause 1f is relaxed only when entities created by the Government of India or any State Government with such dual functionalities apply for recognition as AAs.

2. Financial Viability

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

- a. Minimum turnover of Rs. 3 crore (cumulative) in the last 3 financial years
- b. Entity should have positive profit before tax
- c. Availability of funds to generate enough income to meet operational payments and debt commitments for at least 1 year
- d. Entity should have a positive net worth

3. Prior Experience

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

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

Recognition Sought For	Assessments conducted
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 Annexed in Operational Manual.*

- c. For an entity applying for more than one State, the number of assessments conducted as prior experience would be the summation of the above numbers (as per the number of States applied for), unless the organization applies for pan India status, in which case the pan India eligibility criteria will apply.
- d. An entity applying for recognition in a single State / UT must showcase its experience in the same State/ UT.
- e. The recognition shall be subject to fulfillment of sector and geographical credibility listed in Section 5.5 of the guidelines.
- f. For subsidiaries, the experience of parent organization may be considered at the discretion

of NCVET, 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.

Relaxation

The above conditions may be relaxed based on the discretion of NCVET for

- (i) Government bodies
- (ii) Industry bodies
- (iii) Those operating in niche areas/emerging technologies/traditional and heritage skills,
- (iv) Those operating in difficult terrains like LWE areas, North-Eastern states, hilly areas, Jammu & Kashmir, etc.
- (v) Those working for specific sections of society with special needs by PwD, women, etc.
- (vi) Entities wishing to establish independent assessment centers.

4. Governance and Manpower

a. Governance

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

- i. Transparency in the ownership and management structure with suitable controls and clearly identifiable lines of authority
- ii. The head of the entity/CEO shall be engaged on a full-time basis with no additional charges or part time assignments.
- iii. 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
- iv. 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:
 - Any reported criminal convictions against him/her
 - 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
 - Any proceedings related to bankruptcy
 - Any disqualification from holding the directorship of a company or from public office
 - Any finding of malpractice or mal-administration
- v. Documented standard operating procedures highlighting recruitment, training, deployment and performance evaluation mechanisms for assessment staff.

b. Manpower

The entity shall have the following:

- i. 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.
- ii. Availability of other staff including SME for development of assessments tools, instructional designs for assessment, question bank development, performance reporting and analytics.
- iii. Presence of critical functional teams including but not limited to MIS, IT, content development etc.

Entities with Dual Recognition

- a. 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.
- b. Entities recognized as Dual Agency shall formulate a policy on conflict of interest.

5. Sector and Geographical Credibility

a. Sectoral/ Domain Credibility

- i. To establish sectoral credibility, the entity should have evidence of having conducted assessments in a sector for which recognition is sought.
- ii. 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.
- iii. The entity should have adequate assessors/examiners and proctors available for delivery of assessments in the sector and related qualifications.

b. Geographical Presence

- i. 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
- ii. The entity should have assessment tools and question banks in vernacular languages for the region in which recognition is sought.

6. Infrastructure and Accessible Assessment Tools

The entity seeking recognition as an Assessment Agency must ensure the following in terms of infrastructure and assessment tools:

a. Infrastructure

- i. 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).
- ii. Presence of a fully functional website with the following critical information:
 - Details of the operational teams
 - Assessor and proctor details such as qualification, industrial and educational experience
 - Sample assessment papers for various qualifications w.r.t. the domain and sector for which recognition is sought
 - Information on industry linkages to strengthen assessment delivery
 - Information on grievance redressal mechanisms

b. Assessment Tools and Accessibility

- i. Availability of adequate assessment tools and aids to support the delivery of assessment pertaining to the qualification [offline, blended, online, proctored)
- ii. Availability of an AI enabled test engine with the capability of delivering a variety of questions in a randomized fashion, offer assessment lifecycle dashboards and performance analytics to all stakeholders
- iii. The following tools would be essential markers for the assessment delivery to learners with disability:
 - Availability of special instructors/ content developers for creating specific disability-based assessment content.
 - Availability of trained proctors and assessors to understand and align with the PwD learners.
 - Availability of ICT tools for delivering assessments and monitoring.
 - Availability of published results in line with the needs of person with Disabilities.

7. Comprehensive Business Plan

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 and geographies including the engagement of assessors, proctors and SMEs as required.

- c. Presence of a comprehensive risk plan and mitigation strategies.
- d. Presence of ongoing research and innovation to ensure that the entity is at the top of its business line w.r.t. process and product/s.

8. Assessment Strategy and Delivery

- a. The entity must have documented Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for:
 - Development of Assessment Strategy
 - Content Development (including Question Bank)
 - Assessment and Delivery processes
 - Performance reporting and analytics
 - Selection mechanism, eligibility criteria and training and certification of proctors and assessors
 - Roles and responsibilities of the assessors, proctors and SME
- b. Presence of a system to ensure that the orientation, training, and calibration for proctors and assessors takes place for relevant qualifications for which assessments are to be carried out
- c. Guided processes to be followed by all staff engaged in any assessment activity
- d. Presence of internal audits ensuring quality assurance of all stages of the assessment lifecycle
- e. Along with the procedural compliance documentation, the entity must also ensure and demonstrate the availability and utilization of the following:
 - State-of-the-art technology to deliver and monitor online and blended assessment lifecycles respectively, along with the requisite systems to refresh the assessment content periodically.
 - Presence of audio and video systems for online proctoring and or auto proctoring to record the ongoing assessment at the assessment centres
 - Availability of geo-tagging facilities for assessors and proctors to verify their presence in the training/ assessment centres
 - Availability of online verification and authenticity of candidates undergoing assessments with special reference to auto online proctoring

9. Data Management Systems

For effective data management, the entity must showcase the following:

- 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 and data.

- d.** Management and learning support staff with necessary skills to analyze the collated assessment data and give feedback for improving operations.
- e.** The entity must also adhere to data maintenance and protection as per Government laws/norms.

10. Grievance Redressal

For safeguarding the quality and effective management of grievances in the VET ecosystem, the entity must ensure that a responsive grievance redressal mechanism is in place with clear cut 'Turn Around Time' (TAT) for complaints and escalation metrics. The following shall be demonstrated by the entity:

- a.** Establishment of a grievance redressal committee by the entity
- b.** Appointment of a third-party arbitrator/ legal counsel as a representative in the said committee
- c.** Establishment of a POSH committee within the entity
- d.** Availability of a dedicated helpline number to address grievances

Section 6: Applicability of Guidelines to different AAs

Eligibility Criteria	Government Entities				Private AAs	School Boards	Skill Universities
	Central Ministries	State Dept.	Other Govt. Bodies	D GT			
Legal Status	x	x	✓	x	✓	x	✓
Financial Viability	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓
Sectoral Credibility ¹	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geographical Credibility ²	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prior Experience	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓
Infrastructure & Accessible Tools	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Governance, Admin & Manpower ³	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assessment Planning & Delivery	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Data Management System	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Industry Linkages	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓
Comprehensive Business Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓
Grievance Redressal ⁴	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

[1]: *Central Government Ministries, State Departments, other Govt. bodies, School boards and DGT shall be exempted from the following clause:*

“To establish sectoral credibility, the entity should have evidence of having conducted assessments in a sector for which recognition is sought”. (Section 5.5.a.i)

[2]: *School Boards shall be exempted from the following clause:*

‘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’ (Section 5.5.b.i)

[3]: *Central Government Ministries, State Departments, other Govt. bodies, School Boards and DGT shall be exempted from the following parameters under this criterion:*

‘Presence of clearly earmarked full-time legal head with no additional responsibilities’

[4]: *School Boards shall have their own grievance redressal mechanism.*

Section 7: Monitoring and Evaluation

NCVET mandates a dynamic and robust monitoring mechanism to ensure standards of quality and reliability are maintained amongst all AAs. During the tenure of a recognized body both continuous and periodic evaluation of performance shall be undertaken based on clearly defined parameters and evidence.

NCVET monitoring mechanism is an outcome-based system which will help AAs to identify the risks and mitigate the same through corrective actions.

7.1 Objectives

The objectives of monitoring processes for AA are as follows:

- Evaluate if the AA continues to meet the requirements of a recognized AA under NCVET.
- Ensure that the assessments meet the compliance and standards earmarked by NCVET.
- Ensure that the AA and its affiliates operate ethically and considers the needs and well-being of learners and other related stakeholders.
- Investigate any complaint made against a recognized AA or its assessors/proctors

7.2 Mechanism

The recognized AAs will be subjected to a three-fold monitoring process:

i. Annual Review

Annual Review shall be conducted by NCVET to evaluate yearly performance of the recognized AA. As a part of the annual review, the AA would be required to submit a self-evaluation form to NCVET along with necessary evidences associated with it. Based on evaluation by NCVET, risk rating of the AA will be computed. Subsequent action will be taken based on the risk rating of the AA as detailed in the Operational Manual.

ii. Continuous Performance Monitoring

The performance of AAs shall be continuously monitored by the ABs throughout the tenure of the recognition based on the quality norms prescribed in the guidelines. In case of any malpractices at any point in the assessment lifecycle, the AB is obligated to report the same to NCVET immediately. Entities with Dual recognition, shall set up a monitoring unit within their organization to monitor the assessment function as per NCVET prescribed norms.

iii. Inspection

NCVET promotes a culture of self-monitoring and self-regulation for the AAs. The AAs would be urged to self-regulate and enhance their performance in line with overarching principles of quality stipulated by NCVET, as their proper functioning is quintessential to the health of the VET ecosystem in the country.

As a proponent of self-regulation, NCVET believes that the AAs should set up in-house mechanisms in line with the performance metrics of NCVET to drive their operations and those affiliated by it like assessors and proctors. Hence, site inspection of the recognized AAs will be carried out only on a need basis and under extraordinary situations like serious complaints, fraudulent activities and high-risk ratings of the recognized AAs. NCVET may also undertake random visits to the training/assessment centers as deemed fit.

7.3 Continuation Criteria: Parameters for Monitoring

While the eligibility criteria lays down the basic parameters of entry for entities to be recognized as AAs under NCVET, the continuation criteria provides indicators of minimum standards required for effective performance and efficiency in their working. The continuation criteria have been created to evaluate and examine the credibility and rigor of the agencies to continue to be associated with NCVET.

It will be mandatory for all recognized Assessment Agencies in any category (standard recognition, dual recognition or as independent Assessment Centers) to abide by Continuation criteria. Entities seeking recognition as dual agencies will be required to submit evidences for all these conditions for assessment and awarding functions individually.

1. Financial

- a. Ongoing viability of operations:
AA must ensure continuity of its operations through strong financial health.
- b. Financial record keeping: AA must ensure prudent and transparent record keeping through the following:
 - i. Compliance with established and accepted accounting principles
 - ii. Systematic Book Keeping
- c. Adherence to business plan formulated and submitted at the time of application.

2. Governance & Manpower

a. Governance

AAs must ensure that strong governance structure based on principles of management exists and functions as per its mandate through the following:

- i. Management structure is largely stable over time and any change of control/ ownership is reported in time to NCVET.
- ii. The line of authority is clearly demarcated through well-defined and transparent organization structure.
- iii. AA has a sound business plan encompassing market research, financial projections, timelines etc.

b. Assessment Staff

Core Assessment Staff of an AA comprises of SMEs, assessors/examiners and proctors. They shall be liable to fulfil the following criteria:

- i. AA shall have adequate assessment staff (full time/ part time) across states and sectors of operation, who are qualified and competent to deliver the tasks assigned to them at all times.
- ii. AA shall adhere to the selection and recruitment policies as developed and submitted during the application. Any change in the same, must be notified to NCVET.
- iii. AA shall adhere to performance review parameters for all its staff in line with the recommendations of NCVET.
- iv. It will be the responsibility of the recognized entities to hire assessment staff in line with the recommendation of the concerned qualifications.
- v. Details of core assessment staff shall be shared with NCVET and AB.

Subject Matter Experts (SME)

- (i) Every AA should have at least one SME for each sector. However, there will be a separate SME for sub sectors within a sector for seamless assessment delivery process.
- (ii) The qualifications and industry experience of the SMEs shall be as per the minimum criteria prescribed. SMEs may be hired as full time or part time personnel depending on the norms of the entities.
- (iii) Key responsibilities of the SMEs must include, amongst others, the following:
 - Preparation of the question banks for both theory and practical components.
 - Planning and structuring of assessments in line with the qualification.
 - Undertake a process of proctor and assessor calibration as applicable, on

qualifications for which assessment is to be delivered.

- Provide support and guidance to design and develop assessment tools.

Assessors (For Third Party Assessment)

- (i) The assessors will be recruited by the Assessment Agencies. Their qualification and experience should be in line with the requirements as elaborated in the qualification which they would be assessing and also meet the basic assessor guidelines as laid down by NCVET from time to time. In case the qualification and experience of assessor is not mentioned in the qualification file, then either of the following criteria shall be adhered to:
- Advanced Diploma / Diploma / ITI Certificate / in the relevant discipline with minimum 3 years of experience in their professional fields (including minimum 2 years of relevant industry experience)
 - RPL certification on the same qualification (same or higher level) for which assessment is to be conducted with minimum 5 years of experience in their professional fields (including minimum 4 years of relevant industry experience)
 - Training in the same or higher qualification with 7–8 years of experience, either in industry or as a trainer
- (ii) Only certified assessors will be able to conduct assessments. The responsibility of getting the assessor certified will be that of the AA. The responsibility for Training of Assessors (ToA) will be that of AB. The assessor shall give priority to AA which has enabled the ToA certification for 6 months.
- (iii) Repository of the assessors with their qualification and number of years of work experience, along with Aadhaar No / Aadhaar application number (Aadhaar number to be masked), should be shared with NCVET and AB by AAs concerned. This repository will be maintained by NCVET or any other agency as directed by NCVET.
- (iv) Assessment agency shall provide logistics support to the assessor and make reasonable payment in a timely manner
- (v) Assessor should be different from the instructor who has taught the batch.
- (vi) AA shall ensure that an assessor is not affiliated with more than 4 AAs simultaneously.
- (vii) In the due process of assessment, the following should be maintained:
- AAs to inform the allotment of the assessors to ABs.
 - The selected assessors should be able to reach the place of assessment within 24 hours (travel time).
 - The assessor should verify the availability of assessment tools and equipment in the training centre, conduct assessment in regional

languages if required etc. The same will be a part of the SLA requirement that ABs and AAs must adhere to.

(viii) NCVET will also lay down parameters for the performance rating of assessors, to be used by the Assessment Agency and the same would be reported periodically. There shall also be a mechanism to incentivize well performing AAs.

(ix) AB may formulate a SOP on unethical practices by Assessor. AA can de-recognize/blacklist assessors for justifiable reasons. AA shall report to NCVET within a week's time. NCVET will maintain a list of such blacklisted assessors.

Proctors

- (i) AA should hire proctors, wherever necessary in line with the requirement of the qualification to be specified by the AB.
- (ii) AA shall ensure that only certified proctors are engaged in the invigilation of assessment.
- (iii) AA shall be encouraged to align proctors for online assessments that are conducted:
 - Face-to-face at a physical center
 - online proctored for a virtual assessment at the candidate's own place/ station
 - remote auto proctored at the candidate's own place/ station
- (iv) Repository of proctors along with their qualification and experience to be shared with NCVET/AB by AA.

c. Continuous Professional Development

- i. AA shall ensure that assessors and proctors are trained and certified and are provided any need-based bridge training for new qualifications.
- ii. CPD courses must be undertaken for all other staff for enhancing their functional performance.

Entities with Dual Recognition

- a. Where assessment is conducted through a centralized mechanism of an AB, mostly in the case of bodies with dual recognition, it shall be ensured that there is adequate and qualified assessment staff across states/sectors to undertake all assessment activities.
- b. Entities with dual recognition shall ensure that they have their own examiner. In this case, examiner should be different from the instructor who has taught the batch.
- c. The requirements of SME and Proctors as outlined above shall be adhered to.

3. Accessible Assessment Tools

AAs must have the ability to design and develop assessment tools for different job roles and ability to continuously improve the assessment tools as per the feedback received from various stakeholders.

- i. AAs shall ensure that they have a ready repository of the tools and aids which are aligned to the needs of the qualifications.
- ii. AAs 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.
- iii. The tools developed for assessing the qualifications should be able to map the skills, knowledge and competencies of the learners, should be accessible and commensurate to the learner's needs. AAs shall also ensure that the tools of assessment adequately support the delivery of assessments for learners with disability.
- iv. AA shall ensure that all assessors and proctors are trained to use the assessment tools and assessment guides appropriately.

a. Questions Banks

- i. AAs shall be responsible for preparing multiple sets of questions for each qualification to be assessed.
- ii. Question banks shall be approved by the concerned ABs. Any change in the same should be duly informed to the ABs.
- iii. A process for periodic review of question banks must be defined by the AAs and every cycle of review should be approved by the concerned ABs.
- iv. Question banks should be available in local vernaculars and dialects too, if required.
- v. Sample questions should be readily available on the website of concerned ABs.
- vi. The question banks should have a proportional mix of easy, medium and hard questions as guided by ABs.

b. ICT tools

- i. AA shall enhance the use of technology viz, AI base test engine, computers, tablets, mobile applications, video communication tools, etc. to deliver domain specific assessments.
- ii. ICT tools and processes to be used by AAs for the assessment delivery shall be approved by the concerned ABs.
- iii. ICT tools to be used for assessment delivery should be aligned to the competencies as defined by the AB in its qualification.
- iv. ICT tools shall be used for the assessor verification (during the time of assessment), conducting assessment in online mode and recording of results.
- v. The tools used should be disabled-friendly.

5. Assessment Strategy

- a. Assessment Strategy should outline the detailed process of delivery of assessment and ensure adherence to the same before, during and after assessment.
- b. AA shall follow the Assessment Guide developed by Awarding Bodies for each qualification based on the performance criteria laid in the qualifications. The Assessment Guide will be shared with AAs by AB.
- c. Assessment guide shall necessarily include (i) SOP/proper checklist on preparedness for schedule assessments (ii) need and nature of formative (if applicable) and summative assessments (iii) frequency of the same (iv) mode of assessment (v) content of assessment (vi) timeframe for the conduct of the assessment (vii) evaluation matrix for the answers (viii) environment and location for assessment (ix) duration and validity of assessment scores (x) role of the ABs and training partners in the delivery of the assessments (xi) clear bifurcation between theory and practical components (xii) Assessor guide on each QP.
- d. AAs should ensure that assessment whether online or offline, is structured in such a way that it assesses the competencies as per the ‘Assessment Criteria’ outlined in the qualification concerned.
- e. All competencies should be adequately mapped through the assessment and no such assessment would be created which is beyond the scope of the said qualification.
- f. AA must adhere to the conditions defined by the ABs under which a learner will be allowed to take the assessment. They may include the following:
 - Threshold of performance in formative assessment (as applicable)
 - Minimum attendance required by learners to be eligible for the assessment
 - Proof of identity to be carried by learner and procedure for its verification
- g. AA shall ensure confidentiality of storage of assessment material and all stages of assessment process.
- h. The assessment exercise must happen within the stipulated timeline of the assessment as defined by the NCVET guidelines.

6. Delivery of Assessments

The AAs would be responsible for the planning and the seamless delivery of the assessment concerned. The following steps should be necessary in the delivery of assessments:

a. Before Assessments

It is a critical stage in the planning and delivery of the assessment and hence AAs should ensure adherence to the following:

- i. Adherence to Assessment Guide developed by AB for each qualification.
- ii. Creation of Question Bank as per strategy outlined in the Assessment Guide.
- iii. After the Question Bank is approved by the concerned Awarding Body, AA shall

prepare a Question Paper.

- iv. Leverage ICT tools for ensuring that questions do not get repeated.
- v. Secure the storage of assessment material.
- vi. Mode of assessment shall be in line with the qualifications and formats decided by the awarding body.
- vii. Availability of certified assessors/proctors as required.
- viii. Co-ordinate with the SPOC of the training partner to ensure that the venue has all the required tools for conducting the assessment (if the assessment is conducted at the training center).
- ix. Assessment Agency shall inform the concerned Awarding Body of the assessor/proctor being allocated to a training batch, wherever applicable.
- x. Prescribe the proof of identity to be carried by learner and procedure for its verification.

b. During Assessments

The AAs at this stage must ensure the following:

- i. Certified assessors/examiners and proctors for each assessment must reach the venue for assessment delivery in time.
- ii. Protocols in line with the assessment strategy should be followed by the assessors/examiners for the assessment delivery.
- iii. The assessor - learner ratio, wherever applicable, shall be as defined by ABs. However, it should not be more than 20:1 in case of manufacturing sector and 30:1 in case of service sector.
- iv. AAs should ensure that all assessment activities, whether online or offline, are conducted in line with the following requirements:
 - The venue (offline or blended) and physical resources for conducting the assessment meet the requirements as stated by the qualifications developed by the ABs and regulations set by NCVET. In case of any shortfall, the same may be reported to AB.
 - The identity of each learner should be verified and confirmed so that only authorized individuals are present during the assessment process. Learners should receive instructions about assessment appropriately.
 - The assessors/examiners and proctors should complete the required records as applicable w.r.t. their assessment.
- v. At all assessment centers, assessors/examiners and proctors, as applicable, shall follow consistent administrative procedures, including those relating to the maintenance of confidentiality of assessment.
- vi. At all assessment centers, assessors/examiners and proctors, as applicable, shall ensure upkeep of the safety and protection protocols in case of manufacturing and/ or hazardous

occupations.

- vii. Updated ICT tools shall be used for monitoring the assessment processes as per the assessment strategy put in place by the AAs in consultation with ABs.
- viii. For all assessing entities, to ensure compliance with quality norms, AAs/ABs/NCVET may undertake surprise/random visits of the assessment venues through the mechanism of a **Flying Squad**. For Dual recognition bodies, AB/NCVET shall undertake such random checks. The AB should make efforts to associate the State Government, SSDMs, District Skill Development Committee (DSDC), etc for these surprise visits.

c. After Assessments

- i. Assessor/staff responsible for the same, as applicable, shall record results of the assessment and share it with the AA. AA to further share the result with AB in a suitable form in the time period specified in the operational manual.
- ii. AAs shall record the feedback of the trainers, learners, assessors/examiners and proctors after the completion of the assessment.
- iii. All assessment models shall have detailed analytics that are indicative of the performance of all stakeholders concerned including the learner, AA, SME, assessor/examiner, AB, AI test engine etc.
- iv. AAs must maintain confidentiality of the results recorded.

7. Evaluation of Results

Post the conduct of the assessment, the results would be evaluated for any anomalies and plotted against the evaluation metrics provided by AB through assessment guide. The moderation of the results would be done to check for anomalies and to ensure that the assessment reflects fairness and consistency in the outcomes. Norms for moderation of results shall be provided by each Awarding Body. For entities with dual recognition, for purpose of moderation it must be ensured that the staff chosen to undertake the moderation have not been associated in any capacity with the assessment planning and delivery.

AAs must put in place safeguards to ensure that only those who are authorized to see the results can access the same.

AA shall undertake the process of re-evaluation/re-assessment, as applicable, as per the decision of AB

8. Declaration of Results

The AA/examination unit in case of bodies with dual recognition, must submit the results to the ABs as per the timelines given in the operational manual. ABs will be responsible for

publishing the results. TPs will share the results with the trainees, wherever applicable.

9. Grievance Redressal Mechanism

- a. AA must ensure that Grievance Redressal Mechanism as defined in Section 5 (point 10) of the Eligibility Criteria exists and functions.
- b. AA must ensure that broad guidelines of NCVET are adhered to.
- c. Grievances reported are recorded and resolved

10.Others

a. Research and Development

The importance of R&D has been fostered by the need for making assessment very pragmatic and ensuring employers rely on the credibility of the assessment. Hence, AA must make research a priority in their organization to constantly improve the efficiency of their operations. In view of the same, the following pathways should be adhered to:

- i. AA should align their R&D objectives with sector, state and/or national level priorities.
- ii. AA must foster collaboration with other bodies in R&D activity, including external commissioned research and organizations. They should have processes in place to ensure that internal decision-making is informed by research outcomes.
- iii. AA must gather and disseminate assessment related information, research, and developments from both national and international sources.

b. Probity

- i. The recognized AA must take all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice or maladministration in the development, delivery and award of qualifications.
- ii. The recognized AA must establish and maintain, up to date written procedures for the investigation of suspected or alleged malpractice or maladministration, and ensure that such investigations are carried out rigorously, effectively, and by persons of appropriate competence who have no personal interest in their outcome.
- iii. Entities recognized as Dual Agency shall formulate a policy on conflict of interest.

7.4 Risk Assessment Framework

NCVET would map the performance of the AAs as per the broad monitoring parameters which have been listed in Section 7.3. These parameters will form part of the Risk Assessment Matrix detailed in the Operational Manual. The parameters defined in the matrix may be amended from time to time by NCVET. The AA must adhere to the most updated version of the same.

The performance of AAs will be evaluated against each parameter. The performance rating for each parameter would be categorized in one of the three categories- low, medium and high. Each of these categories (low, medium and high) would be assigned a numerical value for calculating the total risk scores. The AAs would be adjudged as being in Low, Medium or High risk based on the total risk score obtained. This risk score will form the basis of any punitive/corrective action by NCVET.

7.5 Risk Mitigation

The process of risk mitigation would entail strategies for improvement to be undertaken by the AAs for lowering their risk. Each category of AA would need to submit a mitigation strategy document as prescribed by the NCVET. The details of various documents to be submitted have been outlined in the Operational Manual.

The risk mapping exercise of the recognized AAs will be carried out once a year. AAs which continue to show good performance in terms of low risk will be incentivized whereas those continuously falling in medium or high risk may attract punitive actions.

On completion of three years, the fast track renewal for extension of recognition period for next two years may be given based on the total risk score, frequency of occurrence and implementation of mitigation strategy by the AA, details of which are given in the Operational Manual.

7.6 Reporting

The AA must maintain a documented policy containing a set of procedures, templates and checklists which are in consonance with the NCVET guidelines and such policy should be updated from time to time. Recognized AA shall submit, in a timely and accurate manner, data on the performance parameters, the number of assessments undertaken in each sector and geography per year for fee-based /non-fee-based programs and any other data which may be asked for from time to time, by the NCVET.

Section 8: Defining the Relationship Between Awarding Bodies and Assessment Agencies

The responsibility of key stakeholders identified below shall support the effective assessment delivery of the training programs.

	Heads	NCVET	Abs	AAs
1	Recognition of the AAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prescribe recognition norms for AAs ▪ Grant Recognition to the AAs ▪ In Online mode (Phase II) - NCVET to allocate AAs ▪ Specify fee sharing mechanism 	<p>In Phase I of Third-party assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ABs to select from NCVET recognized AAs ▪ ABs to further enter into an agreement with AAs for sharing of assessment fees etc. <p>In case of centralized assessments, awarding and assessment function to be at arm's length to prevent conflict of interest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Abide by the norms of agreement with both NCVET and ABs, as applicable.
2	Assessment Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prescribe a broad framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lay down assessment criteria in qualifications ▪ Develop Assessment guide for each qualification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follow the assessment guide as prescribed by the AB ▪ Create technology platforms for assessment
3	<p>A. Hiring Assessors/ Proctors/SME</p> <p>B.Certification of Assessor/Proctor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide broad norms for recruitment of Assessors, Proctors and SME ▪ Provide parameters for rating of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lay down requirement for assessors/proctors in the qualification. ▪ Conduct ToA ▪ Define standards for proctors ▪ Ensure assessment takes place through certified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage qualified assessors/ examiner, proctors and SME ▪ Ensure their assessors are certified ▪ Hire certified proctors for assisting in assessment

		Assessors	assessors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide risk rating for assessors
4	Question Banks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prescribe broad norms and monitor the process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vet the question banks developed by AAs. Publish sample question banks on their website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare question banks (in consultation with industry) for each qualification and get it vetted by AB
5	Assessment Scheduling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prescribe timelines for conduct of assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform AA of impending assessment at least 15 days before completion of the training. In centralized assessments, bring out a calendar with clear timelines for assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocate assessors/proctors as per the assessment schedule and inform the same to ABs In centralized assessments, AA to identify and assign examiners
6	Assessment Delivery (Section 7.3 pt 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prescribe norms for assessment delivery Prescribe norms for feedback mechanism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the assessment delivery processes. Provide format for collecting feedback on assessment from stakeholders including verification of assessor identity from TP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure assessment delivery as per the NCVET guidelines and Assessment Guide provided by AB Any discrepancy related to assessment delivery to be reported to NCVET &

				<p>AB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collect feedback after completion of assessment
7	Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prescribe norms for recording and publishing results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide format for recording of results ▪ Set the norms for moderation ▪ Publish results on their website and generate the certificates for the learners within stipulated time. ▪ AB to decide on requests for re-evaluation/re-assessment, as applicable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Record result of assessment and report the same to AB in a timely manner ▪ Assist AB in moderation of marks ▪ Conduct re-evaluation/re-assessment, as applicable, as per the decision of AB
8	Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitor AA and assessment outcomes as per the parameters defined in risk assessment framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continuous monitoring of assessment agency ▪ Monitoring of assessment process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Self-Regulation/monitoring ▪ Monitor assessments on ground including assessor/examiner and proctors through adequate ICT enabled monitoring system
9	Grievance Redressal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prescribe norms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set up a mechanism for handling grievances relating to AAs, TPs, trainees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set up a mechanism for handling grievances related to assessors/examiners, training providers, proctors.



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