



NOS DEVELOPMENT & APPROVAL POLICY

National Council for Vocational Education & Training

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Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Occupational Standards	2
3. National Occupational Standards	2
4. Purpose of NOS	2
5. Components of NOS	3
5.1 Competence and Skill	3
5.2 Knowledge and Understanding	3
6. NOS in India	3
7. Need for NOS based Approval	4
8. NOS Approval Mechanism:	5
9. Scope:	6
10. Adoption of NOSs:	6
11. Certification of NOS:	6
12. Duration:	7
13. Types of NOS	6
a) Applicability wise:.....	6
b) Approval wise:.....	6
c) Duration Wise:.....	7
d) Structure wise:	7
14. Structure of a NOS & Format for NSQC Approval:	7
Annexure 1	8



Introduction

1. The National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2015 reiterates the idea of “One Nation One Standard” to ensure that national standards and quality for skilling are globally aligned and learning outcomes are consistent. Standards-based training and assessment shifts training away from traditional theory-based approaches to practical delivery and assessment, an approach that emphasises upon the achievement and demonstration of skills required to perform at a specified standard demanded by industry.

2. Occupational standards including related training standards and assessments are an essential link between workplace employment requirements and human capital development (i.e. education and training programs) that affect individual citizens throughout their life span. Occupational standards can make a major contribution to the design of high-quality education and training programs by ensuring they are directly linked to the needs of the workplace and overall economy.

National Occupational Standards

3. National Occupational Standards (NOS) specify the standard of performance an individual must achieve when carrying out a function in the workplace, together with the knowledge and understanding they need to meet that standard consistently. Essentially NOSs are evidence-based benchmarks of good practice that have been agreed to by a representative sample of employers and other key stakeholders. Each NOS defines one key function collating the related performance criteria in relation to the specific function in the job role concerned. Put together, these NOSs form a Qualification which is used to train learners for a particular job role.

4. NOSs have been developed by many nations and carry with them different names, such as National Occupational Standards (NOS) in the United Kingdom, National Competency Standards (NCS) in the Republic of Korea, Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) in Singapore. NOSs are typically part of broader national workforce development efforts (Lee & Jacobs). NOSs have been generally defined as formal documents that describe the requirements for individual qualification to enter and perform successfully in a specific occupation (Heneman & Ledford, 1998).

Purpose of NOS

5. Currently, NOSs are used for two main purposes namely, for development of unit based functional competency w.r.t. job roles at different skill qualification levels and enabling the curriculum for the delivery of training; and to develop assessment instruments and tools for the assessment and certification regarding the competency of learners.



Although NOS are often used to build qualifications and training programmes, sectors, organisations or individuals can use NOS as the platform for almost any other aspect of human resource management and development, for example:

- a) workforce planning
- b) performance appraisal and development systems
- c) job descriptions
- d) workplace coaching
- e) reflective practice

Components of NOS

6. NOS describes occupational competence detailing performance outcomes w.r.t. the function. Competency is the consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace. It embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments. Competency focuses on the outcome of the application of skills and knowledge as opposed to the activity undertaken.

- a) **Competence and Skill:** NOS describes occupational competence. It is important not to confuse occupational competence and skill. While people need skills to be competent, competence is about applying skills (and knowledge) to achieve a work function. Welding is a skill. Repairing a broken plough (which involves welding) is a function valued by the farmer. Welding in itself has no purpose for an employer or customer. Repairing a plough does. Being able to add and subtract is a skill. Producing a profit and loss account is a work function. You need one to do the other, but they are not the same thing.
- b) **Knowledge and Understanding:** NOS includes knowledge and understanding of facts, principles and methods which ensure that the person who measures up to the standard can be effective in other organisations related job roles and work contexts and be better placed to deal with the unusual or unexpected.

NOS in India

7. To reap the demographic dividend India possesses and to cater to the evolving & rapidly rising demand of skilled personnel in the industry, the focus of Vocational Education & Training (VET) & Skilling policy shifted to industry led short term training programs in the early 21st century. Institutional mechanisms were built in the form of National Skill Development Corporation & Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) who pioneered the development of occupational standards in India. At the same time concept of National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) was evolving which led to the establishment of the National Skill Development Agency (NSDA) for implementation of NSQF. The concept of qualification &



NOS etc. was notified and a process of development & approval of training standards was put in place.

8. Currently, National Council for Vocational Education & Training (NCVET) which has subsumed NSDA anchors NSQF and approves qualifications for NSQF alignment through an apex committee called the National Skills Qualification Committee (NSQC).

9. However, currently the NSQF alignment and approval is carried out for Qualifications (corresponding to a job role) as a whole and not for individual NOSs. Largely the qualifications of only SSCs are NOS based although other ABs are now adopting the NOS based system.

Types of NOS

10. Currently there are following types of NOSs:

(i) **Applicability wise:**

- a) **Generic NOS** – Applicable across sectors & job roles as common competencies
- b) **Domain NOS** – Applicable specifically to a job role or related job roles in a sector

(ii) **Structure wise:**

- a) **Mandatory NOS:** Implementation is mandatory as part of a qualification
- b) **Optional NOS:** Implementation is optional as part of a qualification

(iii) **Approval wise:**

- a) **Standalone NOS** – Approved as standalone NOSs by NSQC
- b) **NOS As Part of Qualification** – Not Approved individually but is a part of an approved & aligned qualification.

Need for NOS based Approval

11. With the advent of new policies like recognition of multiple awarding bodies, cross sectoral & multi-sectoral skills, adoption of qualifications a need has been felt to provide more flexibility in design of the qualifications. Moreover, standalone NOSs can be used in upskilling and as bridge courses to meet the needs of the rapidly changing job requirements. Following are the major reasons establishing requirement of NOS approval & alignment:

- a) **Facilitating Cross Sectoral & Multi Sectoral Qualifications design:** With new concepts of designing of qualifications for job roles catering to multiple sectors and/or multiple job roles there is an inherent need to approve individual NOSs which can be used as building blocks for such qualifications.



- b) **Facilitating use of available knowledge:** ABs are required to design & develop NOSs as part of their qualifications even if such NOSs of some other AB already exists. There is a requirement of NOS approval to allow easy adoption of NOSs.
 - c) **Facilitating Up Skilling:** For upskilling mostly smaller unit of competencies are required which are not available for implementation as of now. NOS approval shall provide ABs, industries, employers and learners with the opportunity to choose unit of competencies as per requirement.
 - d) **Facilitating Bridge Courses & RPL with upskilling:** For recognition of prior learning of candidates most of the times bridge courses are required. As there is no provision existing for standalone individual NOS, a standard bridge course is offered to all which does not serve the purpose. With individual NOSs each candidate can be offered customized and relevant bridge courses for RPL with upskilling and otherwise also.
 - e) **Facilitating Lifelong Learning:** With flexible options of learning a person can choose small training modules easily which will not affect his/her work life and thus facilitate lifelong learning with ease.
 - f) **Facilitating Multiple Entry & Exit Pathways:** NOSs can be used to bridge various gaps while moving within and from VET & skill to academics or vice versa. A person can also earn credits as required for entry into a program without having to pursue and complete a whole qualification. Individual NOS certification will also facilitate a person to exit skill training in between and resume it at a later stage to complete the remaining portion only.
 - g) **Better channelization of resources:** With availability of smaller unit of competencies as NOSs, industry, academia, employers and learners will have the option to only address the requirement and not implement a whole qualification. This will save time, efforts & money of all the stakeholders involved including the learners.
12. In consideration of the above and to keep pace with the ever-agile digital world, these Guidelines lay down the NOS development and approval policy for both, NOSs which form a part of the already approved and NSQF aligned qualifications at different NSQF levels, as also individual independent standalone NOSs to meet the industry needs of skilling up skilling and reskilling.

NOS Approval Mechanism:

13. The following will be the approval mechanism for a standalone NOS:

- a) An NCVET recognized Awarding Body shall be eligible to design & develop NOSs. Standalone NOSs can be used in upskilling or as bridge courses etc. NOSs shall be developed in consultation with the industry/employer as per the process outlined by NCVET.
- b) A standard format shall be issued by NCVET for submission of individual/standalone



NOSs for NSQC approval, detailing the various information required with respect to the NOS.

- c) Industry Validation: There can be following scenarios:
- If a NOS is developed for specific requirement of an industry/ employer, reasoned justification by the industry/ employer concerned would be required.
 - In case of other NOSs industry validation would be required, the number of which can be decided.
 - In case of NOS for academic purpose for entry/ equivalence through a bridge course, the regulator concerned would decide on need basis.
- d) Once approved the individual NOSs shall be uploaded on NQR for various stakeholders.
- e) NOSs shall also have a validity of three years after which the submitting body will be required to resubmit the NOS for revision as is currently applicable to the NSQF aligned and approved Qualifications.
- f) Individual certification in a standalone NOS shall be allowed.
- g) NOS shall be developed by the recognized entities in the sector they are recognized and shall be implemented in the territorial geography for which they have been recognized by NCVET.
- h) It will be the responsibility of the Awarding Body to develop the learning material/ curriculum for the NOS.

Adoption of NOSs:

14. Adoption of NOSs will be permitted as per the NCVET Adoption Guidelines. The recognized ABs can adopt both the approved and aligned standalone NOSs as well as NOSs which form a part of already aligned and approved qualifications. NOS of an aligned and approved qualification can be adopted for use in developing a new qualification or for using as a standalone NOS for upskilling, etc. A flexibility of 20% shall be provided to the Adopter Body while adopting such NOSs to cater to its local & specific requirements. This shall facilitate use of an already available NOS by all NCVET recognized ABs while developing a new qualification and reducing the duplication of efforts & resources. However, any Awarding Body wanting to use a NOS from already aligned and approved qualification either for development of a qualification or for use as a standalone NOS, shall have to seek NCVET approval. It will be the responsibility of the adopting Awarding Body to develop/ make available the learning material for the NOS.

Certification of NOS:

15. Individual assessment & certification of NOSs shall be carried out by authorized NCVET recognized ABs. Assessments are to be conducted through NCVET recognized Assessment Agency on-boarded by the AB implementing the NOS. However, Dual Category ABs may undertake both assessment & certification of the NOSs. In addition, following shall also be



applicable with respect to NOS certification:

- a) For NOSs approved as Standalone by NSQC: Individual certification of NOS shall be allowed.
- b) For NOSs which are not approved as Standalone but are part of an already approved & aligned Qualification: Individual certification of NOS/(s) shall not be allowed except where it is adopted as per NCVET Adoption Guidelines specifically for standalone usage like upskilling, RPL.

Duration of a NOS:

16. NOS shall be developed for the duration of minimum 30 hours each in line with the National Credit Framework (NCrF) & standardization policy of NCVET. One credit under NCrF is earned for 30 hours of learning, therefore, an individual NOS shall carry one credit with 30 hours' duration. The unit lower than 30 hours will be a micro-credential, for which separate guidelines are being prepared. Also, NOSs with higher duration of 45 and 60 hours may be approved by the NSQC where there is justified requirement.

Structure of a NOS & Format for NSQC Approval:

17. A NOS may be structured with following as its basic components:
- a) NOS title
 - b) Description
 - c) Scope
 - d) Elements and Performance criteria
 - e) Knowledge and Understanding

A detailed format with definitions & explanation is attached as Annexure 1.

	Components	Description
1	BASIC CHARACTERISTICS	
1.1	Title	Information in the title should clearly reflect the purpose and intent of the capture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what the learner will know and • be able to do on the achievement of the standard prescribed in the qualification/ NOS
1.2	Code	To be given by the Awarding Body/ NCVET
1.3	NSQF Level	To be assigned by AB and approved by NCVET*
2	DESCRIPTION	
2.1	Scope	Briefly should contain the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a summary statement of NOS content • focused, useful information on how and where the unit of competency could be practically applied and who might use it
2.2	Occupation	Name of the occupation (s) for which NOS (s) is/ are being developed
2.3	Focus Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT -ITeS Sector • Cross functional requirements • Unorganised sector, • Traditional and heritage sector, • Handicraft sector, • Local skill clusters and • School Boards for vocational education
3	ELEMENTS & PERFORMANCE CRITERIA	
3.1	Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What needs to happen to achieve the 'Function' listed as NOS title? • Elements describe in terms of outcomes the significant functions and tasks that make up the National Occupational Standards.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements of competency/performance criteria are the basic building blocks of the NOS. • The elements describe, in outcome terms, the functions that a person who works in a particular area of work is able to perform—actions or outcomes which are demonstrable, measurable and assessable.
3.2	Performance Criteria (PCs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCs are evaluative statements which specify the required level of performance. • PCs enable the measurement of competence w.r.t. a learner. (We will be able to know if the learner is competent and can achieve that outcome) • PCs describe the performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element to the level acceptable in employment/ by the employer. • PC must always be viewed within the context of the overarching element.
3.3	PC – Skills & Knowledge Criteria	<p>For each NOS, identify <u>Performance (skills) and Knowledge criteria</u> by asking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘What are the activities in each NOS, which are to be performed?’(Performance/Skills) • ‘What are the required knowledge attributes which are to be understood to perform each of above activities?’ (Knowledge Criteria) • PSs in a NOS should also reflect (20-30)% the knowledge component and (70-80)% the practical component
4	ASSESSMENT	** Explained in the table below
5	QUALITY ASSURANCE	
5.1	Justification of the introduction of occupational standards	
5.2	Proponents of occupational standard and date of development	

5.3	Deadline for using an occupational standard and NOS/s for qualifications development	
5.4	Expert Opinion (Industry Validation/Sectoral Committee/Any Other)	
5.5	Date of Submission for approval	
6	TOOLS, INFRASTRUCTURE & TRAINER REQUIREMENT	
6.1	List of Tools & Equipments	
6.2	Classroom Requirement	
6.3	Laboratory Requirements	
6.4	Trainer's Minimum Qualification	
7	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	
7.1	Specific legislation directly/ pertaining to/ impacting the occupation	
7.2	Comparative International Standard (later)	
7.3	Any health risks relating to an occupation and working conditions	



7.4	Specific employment requirement of the area	
7.5	Any Other point	

Please share your feedback/comments/ suggestions on (directorpolicy.ncvet@gmail.com)

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