

Frequently Asked Questions on Guidelines and Operational Manual for Recognition and Regulation of Assessment Agencies

Q. Who will be called an Assessment Agency (AA)?

Ans. An agency which tests or conducts examinations to assess whether a Learner has met the requirements necessary to be qualified and competent with respect to a skill or qualification is termed as AA.

Q. What type of Organizations are eligible to apply as an Assessment Agency (AA)?

Ans. Entities applying for AA should be legally recognized to operate within the jurisdiction of India. The entity must be registered/affiliated with the appropriate authority in India under a relevant act as a Company/Society/Charitable Trust /Limited Liability Partnership/Consortium/Joint Venture.

Q. What are different categories of recognition?

Ans. Recognition can be categorised as under:-

1. **Standard Recognition.** An entity recognized for conducting assessment of learners shall acquire standard recognition.
2. **Dual Recognition.** An entity recognized for conducting assessment as Assessment Agency and certification as Awarding Body shall acquire Dual Recognition.
3. **Recognition for Imparting Vocational Education in Schools:-**
 - a) Recognition of the School Board under dual category as Awarding Body (AB) and Assessment Agency(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.

Q. Once recognition to an agency is granted for conducting assessments, what will be its major functions?

Ans. The primary function of an Assessment Agency (AA) would be to conduct quality assured standardized assessment and recording of results. In addition, an AA must also develop assessment strategy and SOPs to ensure availability of accessible standardized assessment tools, certified Assessors/Examiners allocating them to training batches, performance rating of assessors and proctors, setting up of

grievance redressal mechanism and co-operation with the Council in case of any inspection or audit.

Q. Why is it essential for Assessment Agency (AA) to be recognized by NCVET?

Ans. The dynamism of the skilling ecosystem leads to multiplicity of norms, procedures and standards in assessment processes creating inconsistent outcomes. In order to bring uniformity among the entities engaged in carrying out assessment delivery processes, it is essential for entities to be recognized by NCVET as an AA for improving the quality outcomes and adhere to minimum standards set by the regulator for their functioning.

Q. Would existing Assessment Agencies (AA) get suo-moto recognition once NCVET comes into force?

Ans. As per the mandate of NCVET and subsequent public notice issued dated October 29, 2020 on 'Implementation of NCVET Guidelines', NCVET recognition is essential for any Awarding Body (AB) and AA implementing Government funded Training Programmes in the skilling ecosystem.

A transition period of maximum one year will be provided to all existing AB & AA from 27th October 2020. All such bodies are requested to seek NCVET recognition within 6 months from the date (as per the Guidelines), to enable NCVET to process their application before the expiry of transition period.

Q. What would be the eligibility criteria for the Assessment Agency (AA) to get NCVET recognition?

Ans. Any AA fulfilling the eligibility criteria laid down in the Section 5 of the Assessment Guidelines may apply for NCVET recognition. However, relaxations may be provided in some cases based on the various factors like organizations operating in niche areas, new sectors, North Eastern states and others. The application form is placed as Annexure I & II in the Operational Manual.

Q. Can an AA apply for NCVET recognition in multiple sectors? If yes, what is the process for applying to multiple sectors?

Ans. An Assessment Agency (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 'Sector and Geographical Credibility' point (Section 5.5) of the Eligibility Criteria.

Q. How can an Assessment Agency (AA) seek NCVET recognition in multiple states?

Ans. An AA can seek recognition in multiple states by submitting evidence of its experience and competency as outlined in the 'Prior Experience', 'Sector and Geographical Credibility' points of the Eligibility Criteria of the AA Guidelines.

Q. Can an Awarding Body (AB) become an Assessment Agency (AA)?

Ans. The 'Guidelines on Recognition and Regulation of AA has a provision for 'Dual Recognition' (refer Section 3.3.) A recognized AB is eligible to apply for recognition as an AA for training directly imparted in its campus for its approved qualifications. Central Ministries/ State Departments/ Government Institutions or bodies are eligible to apply for Dual recognition. For Dual recognition, an entity will have to fulfill and abide by criteria mentioned in the AB Guidelines and the AA Guidelines.

Q. Can an Assessment Agency (AA) apply for Dual recognition?

Ans. Yes, an AA can apply for Dual recognition. As specified in the Guidelines, an entity needs to be registered as an Awarding Body prior to seeking Dual Recognition.

Q. Is there a fee for NCVET recognition?

Ans. Yes, an entity applying for recognition as an Assessment Agency(AA) will be required to pay a recognition fee of Rs 100000/-(Rupees One Lakh only), as specified in the Guidelines. The mode of payment has been mentioned in the NCVET website- <http://www.ncvet.gov.in>.

Q. Is the Assessment Agency (AA) recognition fee refundable?

Ans. Yes, 50% of the recognition fee (i.e. Rs 50000/-) shall be refundable at Step 4 of the recognition process (Section 3.4) in case of rejection of the proposal submitted.

Q. Is there any provision of relaxation in eligibility criteria?

Ans. Yes, provision of relaxation has been provided in the 'Prior Experience' (Section 5.3) of the Eligibility Criteria. These relaxations are provided to certain types of bodies, certain regions, and to specific sections of the society. The applicability of guidelines to different types of Assessment Agencies is clearly mentioned in Section 6 of the Guidelines.

Q. Can an entity re-apply if the application is rejected?

Ans. Yes, an entity can re-apply as a fresh applicant after 3 months of the rejection of the application by the scrutiny/screening team, which will take place with the approval of the competent authority. However, if the application of a prospective Assessment Agency (AA) is rejected by the Review Panel or Council, the applicant organization may re-apply only after 6 months. The modalities for submitting application and re-application for the AA are given out in Section 3 of the Operational Manual.

Q. Does an Assessment Agency (AA) have to get itself empanelled with the Awarding Bodies (AB), after being recognized by NCVET?

Ans. Once the AA is recognized by NCVET, there is no further need for affiliation/empanelment with any AB. AA may enter into an agreement with the concerned AB for conducting assessments as per the norms prescribed in the NCVET guidelines as well

as for sharing of assessment fees. However, AB cannot charge any additional fees for affiliation/accreditation from AA.

Q. What would be the tenure of recognition of an Assessment Agency (AA)?

Ans. As per the Guidelines, the initial period of recognition of an AA will be 3 years, extendable upto 5 years as mentioned in Section 3.6 of the AA Guidelines.

Q. What are the actions that NCVET can take if an Assessment Agency (AA) does not comply with the guidelines?

Ans. The Council may give a private warning, a public warning, impose penalties, suspend or de-recognize an AA based on the nature of the breach of agreement granting recognition.

Q. What will be the fee sharing arrangement between Awarding Bodies (AB) and Assessment Agency (AA)?

Ans. The assessment fees will be as per various Government of India Scheme guidelines under which the training will be funded, of which minimum 60 % shall be given to the AA.

Q. Can fees be waived off for recognition as an Assessment Agency?

Ans. No, there is no such provision for waiving the recognition fees.

Q. Can a Training Partner become an Assessment Agency (AA)?

Ans. Training partners are not eligible to apply as AA to prevent conflict of interest.

Q. I am an Assessment Agency (AA). My turnover for last year was 80 lakh. Am I eligible to apply as an AA?

Ans. If the cumulative turnover of the entity seeking NCVET recognition over the past 3 years is 3 crore, they are eligible to apply.

Q. I am an Assessment Agency (AA) and I am not qualifying for NCVET recognition due to inability to meet the Financial Viability and/or Prior Experience. What can I do to be eligible?

Ans. An entity seeking recognition as an AA may enter into a consortium with other businesses pertinent to skill development. In this case, there should be a clearly identified lead partner, who would be required to apply. NCVET recognition to such a consortium is subject to meeting conditions as specified in the Eligibility Criteria of (Section 5) the Guidelines

Q. Will the guidelines be applicable to all players of the skill ecosystem?

Ans. All Assessment Agencies (AA) functioning in the vocational skill domain in India shall be required to seek NCVET recognition. All relevant stakeholders like assessors,

proctors etc shall be regulated as per the Guidelines for Recognition & Regulation of AA.

Q. Will the guidelines be applicable to all kinds of bodies? Will there be difference in applicability according to the kind of applicant?

Ans. Section 6 of Assessment Agency guidelines can be referred to for detailed applicability of the guidelines across different kinds of bodies.

Q. What are Category I and Category II states?

Ans. The classification of states into Category 'I' and 'II' is based on youth population as per the census 2011. This categorization is listed in Operational Manual Annexure IX for Recognition and Regulation of Assessment Agencies.

Q. I am an Assessment Agency operating in Manipur and Mizoram and my prior experience does not meet the criteria of eligibility in the Assessment Agency Guidelines. How can I apply?

Ans. The Eligibility Criteria of Prior Experience may be relaxed on the discretion of NCVET for the following:-

1. Government bodies.
2. Industry bodies.
3. Those operating in niche areas/emerging technologies/traditional and heritage skills.
4. Those operating in difficult terrains like LWE areas, North-Eastern states, hilly areas, Jammu & Kashmir, etc.
5. Those working for specific sections of society with special needs of PwD, women, etc.
6. Entities wishing to establish independent Assessment Centers.

Q. What are the benefits for being registered as an Assessment Agency?

Ans. Major benefits are enumerated as under:-

1. Recognition by GoI.
2. Enhanced market acceptability & recognition.
3. Enhanced quality outcomes through standardized procedures and parameters.
4. Eligible for assessments of training through government schemes.

Q. How will NCVET monitor the performance of Assessment Agencies(AA) recognised by it?

Ans. As per the Monitoring Mechanism outlined in Section 8 of the Operational Manual the performance of AA shall be continuously monitored by NCVET to check the adherence of agencies to continuation criteria and continued relevance of the eligibility criteria in their functioning.

Q. Why is there a need for a separate Risk Assessment Matrix in the guidelines?

Ans. NCVET envisions a three-pronged monitoring mechanism based on periodic and continuous evaluation. The three monitoring mechanisms are Annual Review, Continuous Performance Monitoring and Inspection. NCVET has designed a Risk Rating Matrix to create an overall monitoring framework which shall ensure that Assessment Agency (AA) meet their functional and operational requirements and effectively respond to the risks associated. Risk Matrix and its operationalisation is explained in Section 7 of the AA Operational Manual.

Q. Is there any provision in the guidelines about the Turn Around Time of conducting the assessments, post completion of training?

Ans. Keeping in mind the best practices, NCVET has included a framework of Turn Around Time (TAT) in the Operation Manual for Recognition & Regulation of Assessment Agencies. Separate timelines have been included for long-term and short-term courses. Detailed framework can be referred to in Section 5.4 of the Operational Manual.

Q. Is there any Turn Around Time for assessments related to Recognition of Prior Learning?

Ans. Currently, there is no provision for RPL assessments in the Assessment Agency(AA) Guidelines, but it is considered that the Awarding Body would inform the AA 7 days prior to assessment date.

Q. I am an Assessment Agency. If I apply for NCVET recognition today, fulfilling all eligibility criteria, in what time frame shall I expect NCVET recognition?

Ans. As per the processes laid in the OM (Operational Manual), the application would be reviewed by the screening committee within 25 days from the receipt of application and thereafter will be placed before the review panel within 15 working days of completion of the screening team meeting, prior to according approval by the Council.

Q. What all essential documents an Assessment Agency (AA) needs to submit at the time of registration?

Ans. To ensure compliance to the eligibility and continuation criteria of the AA, the AA would be mandated to submit the evidence as enumerated in Section 4 of the AA Operational Manual in order to establish their eligibility for recognition at the time of application.

Q. What will be the role of a State Government in the assessment process?

Ans. The State Government may seek recognition as an Awarding Body (AB)/Assessment Agency (AA). Once, recognized, the State government has to comply with the Guidelines of NCVET. In case of Dual Recognition, the State Government is bound to comply with both the AB Guidelines and AA Guidelines. The State Government along with SSDMs, District Skill Development Committee (DSDC) can be a part of monitoring team. The concerned AB should make efforts to associate with the State Government, SSDMs, District Skill Development Committee (DSDC) for monitoring as mentioned in Monitoring Mechanism,

Section 7.6 of the AA Guidelines.

Q. How can an Awarding Body(AB) select the best Assessment Agencies(AA) to work with?

Ans. NCVET has instituted a system for evaluating performance rating (refer section 7.3) of AAs and their Assessors. The algorithm for allocation of AA for assessments will also take into consideration AA, Assessor and proctor ratings so that high performing AA will get a preference in the allocation process.

Q. What are the different kinds of Assessment Agencies(AA) operating models?

Ans. The AA will be recognized by NCVET based on the eligibility criteria mentioned in the guidelines. The following operational models will be applicable for AA and the details are mentioned in the guidelines:-

1. Recognition of AAs for conducting third party assessments.
2. Recognition as AA for conducting Centralized assessments.
3. Independent Assessment Centres.

Q. I am an existing Assessment Agencies (AA). Will the previous assessment experience be considered for being recognized as an AA by NCVET?

Ans. Yes, the previous experience of the entities in the skilling ecosystem would be considered to establish their eligibility for being recognised as an AA.

Q. I'm an Assessment Agency/Industry House. I want to open my own Independent Assessment Centre. What is the procedure for the same?

Ans. NCVET recognition for setting up an Independent Assessment Centre is subject to the entity meeting the eligibility criteria outlined in the 'Guidelines on Recognition and Regulation of Assessment Agencies'.

Q. Are there provisions in the guidelines for active industry engagement?

Ans. Yes, provisions have been included in the guidelines to make industry/industry associations a part of the assessment delivery process. Assessment Agencies can engage industry experts for assessment delivery, content development and creation of Question Banks. NCVET also encourages 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 an independent sector wise physical assessment centres wherein Learners with/without having undergone training can assess their skill sets for job competencies.

Q. How will training batches be allocated after NCVET recognition?

Ans. For third party assessments, in Phase-1, Awarding Bodies (AB) will have the flexibility to select any Assessment Agency/ies(AA) from the pool of recognised AAs

based on their sectoral and geographical requirement, for carrying out assessments for their qualification. Training batches will be allocated by AB as per agreement between AB and AA.