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The National Council of Vocational Education and Training seeks views/ comments/ suggestions on the 'Guidelines for Adoption of Qualification by multiple Awarding Bodies', 2021.

Views/ Comments/ Suggestions on this guideline may be sent within 21 days (10th October 2021) by e-mail to directorpolicy.ncvet@gmail.com.



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सत्यमेव जयते

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT
& ENTREPRENEURSHIP



National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET)

GUIDELINES FOR ADOPTION OF QUALIFICATIONS BY AWARDING BODIES

Dated: 9th September 2021

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Glossary

1. **Awarding Body (AB):**An Awarding Body is an entity approved by NCVET to award certification to trainees for an approved qualification by ensuring quality training and reliable assessments.
2. **Adopting Body:**An Adopting Body is an NCVET recognized Awarding Body that adopts the NSQF aligned and NCVET approved Qualification that is developed by a different Awarding Body.
3. **Developer Body:** A Developer Body is an NCVET recognized Awarding Body which had originally developed and submitted the Qualification being adopted, for NSQF alignment and NCVET approval.
4. **National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF):** NSQF is a nationally integrated, **competency based** framework that organizes qualifications according to a series of levels of knowledge, skills and aptitude, leading to enhanced mobility through multiple pathways.
5. **National Qualification Register (NQR):** NQR is the official National Public Record of all Qualifications aligned to NSQF Levels as approved by the NCVET.
6. **National Occupational Standard (NOS):** NOSs are standards of performance that an individual must achieve when carrying out defined functions pertaining to a job role together with required knowledge and understanding.
7. **Sector:** Grouping of professional activities on the basis of their main economic function, product, service or technology.
8. **Qualification:** Qualification means a formal outcome of assessment & validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards. This outcome is actualized in the form of a formal Certificate
9. **Training of Trainers (ToT):**ToT is training of Trainers for the development and enhancement of both training delivery and domain skills of trainers/aspiring trainers for a particular qualification.
10. **Training of Assessors (ToA):**ToA is a training of Assessors for the development and enhancement of both assessment skills and domain skills of assessors/aspiring assessors for a particular qualification.

GUIDELINES FOR ADOPTION OF QUALIFICATIONS BY MULTIPLE AWARDING BODIES

1. INTRODUCTION

- a) Adoption is a formal process under structured and well-defined procedures to acquire awarding rights of a qualification. Adoption of Qualifications in context to the guidelines refers to acquiring of awarding rights of a Qualification (NSQF aligned and uploaded on NQR) developed by one Awarding Body (Developer Body) by another Awarding Body (Adopter Body) in its totality without altering anything from the basic elements of the qualification like eligibility criteria, level, mandatory NOS/ Learning outcomes, equipment, accreditation and assessment norms except under the provisions as mentioned in these guidelines.
- b) The primary purpose of introducing the Guidelines on Adoption of NSQF aligned Qualification is to obviate duplication of Qualifications, enable NCVET recognized Awarding Bodies to have alternatives/choice and access to already developed training standards in form of Qualifications, bring in spirit of competition thus allowing the trainees to take an informed decision while selecting entities offering training on a particular job role and thus ensure credibility of availability of information on NQR by regulating Uniformity / Quality Assurance in Assessment and Certification.
- c) The Guidelines for Adoption of Qualification were initially formulated and published on 23/10/19. These were implemented on a pilot basis and a number of challenges had emerged during the period related to different operational aspects of NSQF.
- d) The Adoption Guidelines have been refined based on the operational experience of the earlier Guidelines and to provide a well-defined mechanism to facilitate use of NSQF aligned Qualifications by multiple Awarding Bodies in the Skill Ecosystem under a set of defined rules and regulations.

1.1. NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- a) The National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) notified on 5th December 2018 is as an overarching skills regulator mandated to 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. One of the major functions of NCVET is 'Approval of Qualifications'.

- b) Approval of Qualifications necessarily means alignment of Qualifications to the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) which organizes Qualifications according to a series of levels of knowledge, skills and aptitude.
- c) For NSQF alignment, the Awarding Bodies submit their Qualifications to NCVET in a template called "Qualification File" along with the supporting documents like model curriculum, industry validations, accreditation & assessment norms, occupational map and evidence of need for the Qualification. A Qualification File template captures all necessary information like need of the Qualification, NSQF level, notional hours, entry requirements, progression pathway, relevance to the job role etc. to establish NSQF compliance for a Qualification.

2. OVERVIEW OF GUIDELINES

- a) The guidelines are structured to infuse flexibility in the skill ecosystem w.r.t awarding function. The guidelines aim to define a mechanism which facilitates use of already approved Qualifications by other recognized Awarding Bodies, based on usability of the qualifications and capacity & quality of the Awarding Bodies. These guidelines have been framed after taking in perspective the learning of the earlier guidelines for adoption of Qualifications by different recognized Awarding Bodies.

2.1. DEFINING ADOPTION

- a) Adoption of a Qualification means acquiring awarding rights of an already NSQF aligned Qualification which has been developed by another Awarding Body and approved by NCVET. Acquisition of such rights is subject to fulfillment of parameters/ conditions listed in these Guidelines and subsequent approval by NCVET. Adoption of a qualification does not shift awarding rights from Developer Body to the Adopting Body. It only serves as a sharing mechanism where the adopter is also enabled with awarding rights along with Developer Body. However, primary responsibility of the Qualification in terms of revision, Training of Trainers (ToT), Training of Assessors (ToA) and withdrawal remains with the Developer Body.

2.2. NEED/RATIONALE

a) NSQF mandates all recognized Awarding Bodies to align their qualifications with the framework. Over the years more than 4000 Qualifications across various Awarding Bodies are aligned to NSQF and uploaded on National Qualifications Register (NQR). During implementation, certain issues were observed which are described as follows:

i. Duplication of Qualifications

At present, similar Qualifications aligned by different Awarding Bodies exist on NQR. Such Qualifications are duplicate in terms of content, nomenclature etc. and approval of such duplicate Qualifications leads to avoidable multiplicity of Qualifications and standards for the same/ similar occupation. The existence of multiple standards for a single job role not only creates confusion in the ecosystem but also leads to wastage of resources.

ii. Uniformity / Quality Assurance in Assessment and Certification

Multiple standards for a single job role by different Awarding Bodies in terms of training, assessment, course & curriculum etc. pose hindrance in maintenance of quality due to lack of uniformity.

iii. Market Credibility

Multiple standards for a single job role by different Awarding Bodies leads to dilution of credibility of NSQF certificates in the market as employers are no longer able to equate multiple certificates for the same job role.

iv. Capacity of Government Organizations

Mostly the Government Organizations especially at the state level largely focus on implementation of programs/schemes at ground level rather than development of Qualifications. Govt bodies running large scale Govt programs should be able to utilize available resources/Qualifications. NCVET has already approved more than 4000 Qualifications.

v. Resistance in Sharing the Awarding Rights

Since creation of qualification involves reputation and resources in terms of money, time and effort, often the Developer Bodies resist sharing of awarding rights.

2.3. OBJECTIVES/PURPOSE

- a) The guidelines intend to facilitate adoption of Qualifications by different Awarding Bodies that can help in following: -
- i. Access to Standardized Qualifications**
Various Awarding Bodies in the skill ecosystem can have access to standardized Qualifications that are already aligned to NSQF.
 - ii. Learner Centric- availability of choice for the Learner**
A similar Qualification being offered by various Awarding Bodies will lead to competition in the ecosystem where a Learner can choose an Awarding Body amongst many for the same Qualification.
 - iii. Better utilization/channelization of resources**
With the option of adopting NSQF aligned Qualifications, the effort/ resources spent on developing similar qualifications may be reduced, making the process more efficient and productive.
 - iv. Focus on traditional skills by the States**
Considering that the States may not require working on development of common Qualifications that may be already aligned to NSQF, they can focus on strengthening and working towards development of traditional crafts/state native skills that may get neglected otherwise.
 - v. Incentivisation**
These guidelines aim at ensuring smooth adoption of qualifications by addressing the needs of both the adopting and developer body.

2.4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- a) The key guiding principles to be followed for adoption of NSQF aligned Qualifications across various Awarding Bodies are as mentioned: -
- i. Quality:** The Awarding Body adopting the Qualification must ensure quality of the Qualification in terms of its NOS/Learning Outcomes, curriculum, list of tools,

training norms, ToT requirement, training delivery tools, etc. as specified and required in the original Qualification. Assessment norms as spelt out in the original Qualification need to be followed by adopting bodies.

- ii. **Accountability:** An Awarding Body adopting the Qualification should take ownership of the Qualification in its totality like quality of training delivery, fair and reliable assessment process as per the norms laid down by developer of Qualification.
- iii. **Flexibility:** It is also important to consider that some flexibility in addressing specific local needs or respective job specific needs be provided during adoption. Therefore, guidelines provide for flexibility while adopting a qualification as per prescribed norms.

2.5. SCOPE

- a) These guidelines permit all NCVET recognized Awarding Bodies to adopt NSQF aligned qualifications in accordance with the prescribed norms. The adoption rights shall be available to only those Awarding Bodies which have already developed and aligned their qualification/s to NSQF.
- b) However, in case of Skill Universities owing to their enhanced capacities in terms of infrastructure, Governance and human resource and mandate to run higher level courses, all Skill Universities having developed minimum 10 Qualifications of NSQF Level 5 and above shall be eligible for adoption. The details of Qualifications adopted and related information shall be displayed in NQR. Detailed scope of adoption is as follows: -
 - i. **Sectoral:** Adoption shall be permitted only in the sectors for which an Awarding Body has already been recognized by NCVET.
 - ii. **Territorial:** Adoption shall be permitted only in the territory for which an Awarding Body has already been recognized by NCVET.
 - iii. **Qualification:** Adoption shall be permitted only for NSQF aligned short term Qualifications i.e. Qualifications of the duration of less than one year.

Delegation: Adoption of the qualification shall only be permitted from the original Developer body through NSQC. The Adopting body does not acquire the rights to further transfer/delegate/outsource the awarding rights w.r.t. the adopted qualification to any other Awarding Body except in a case where the adopter body has acquired the status of the original Developer Body under para 2.6(iii).

Exemption: All qualifications adopted/taken over/aligned for training of Persons with disabilities (PwD) and school education shall be exempt from these Guidelines.

NOS based adoption: National Occupation Standards developed by Awarding Bodies shall be available for adoption to other recognized Awarding Bodies, once a mechanism of NOS based approval and NOS depository is in place at NCVET. Payment w.r.t. adoption of NOS will be as prescribed by NCVET. NCVET will lay down a mechanism for adoption of NOS

2.6. OPERATIONAL MECHANISM

- a) Adoption of qualification shall only be available to NCVET recognized Awarding Bodies in the sector/s for which they have been recognized post compliance to the following norms: -
- i. **Capacity:** The adopting body will have to additionally establish its capacity and capability in terms of training, assessment and related aspects of the qualification/s being adopted as prescribed in quality assurance form as per Annexure I.
 - ii. **Constancy:** Adoption of Qualifications in context to the guidelines refers to taking the Qualification/s in its totality without altering the basic structures like eligibility criteria, NSQF level, notional hours, NOS/ Learning outcomes, accreditation and assessment norms (for the qualification), review date and list of tools & equipment etc. However, keeping in mind 'flexibility' as one of the guiding principles of adoption, minor modifications to address the local or job specific requirements are permitted as per the specifications listed below: -
 - aa) There shall be no deletion/curtailment of the mandatory component (NOSs/ LOs) of the qualification.

- ab) Addition of up to 10% shall be allowed in the mandatory component of the qualification which would be counted in terms of notional hours. If the qualification does not mention mandatory NOSs/LOs, NCVET in consultation with the Developer Body shall decide the mandatory components of the qualification/s.
- ac) An overall modification of 20% in the qualification shall be permitted provided that point 'aa' & 'ab' mentioned above are adhered to.
- ad) Subsequent changes, due to modification, in notional hours, training delivery, assessment criteria, training and assessment tools shall be well recorded and submitted to NCVET along with the justifiable reasons for such modification in the prescribed format Annexure II.
- ae) No modification shall be allowed in case where only NOS/s is/are being adopted by an Awarding Body.

Any deviation found from the original form of the qualification as approved by NCVET for adoption may result in penal action including withdrawal of awarding rights by NCVET.

iii. Validity: The validity of adoption shall commence from the date of approval by NCVET. The adopted qualification shall remain valid till the 'Date of Planned Review' as mentioned in the originally approved qualification file by NSQC and will continue as per subsequent revisions. The adopting body will have to comply with all the conditions mentioned in the revised qualification as approved by NCVET. Some possible cases which may arise affecting the validity of a qualification are given below:

aa) Case 1: If the Developer Body is de-recognized

In the case of a developer body having been de-recognized, the awarding rights of the qualification shall be transferred to the adopter body which has adopted the qualification first and will acquire the status of 'Developer Body' for the said qualification. Post development of "Rating Mechanism" by NCVET, adopting body with the highest rating shall acquire such status of awarding rights. If the said adopting body is unwilling to accept such awarding rights, these shall pass on to the next eligible adopting body in the same manner as prescribed above.

ab) Case 2: If the Developer Body withdraws the qualification

In the instant case the adopter body/ies wishing to continue with the withdrawn qualification will have to furnish justification to NCVET in terms of industry requirement, market demand, placement etc. along with data (As per Annexure III). If NCVET approves, 'developer body status and consequent AB rights' shall be transferred in the same manner as mentioned in para '2.6(a)(iii) (aa)' above. Developer Body shall also apprise NCVET of reasons of withdrawal.

ac) Case 3: If the Developer Body replaces the qualification with a new one

In this case the adopter body/ies shall automatically acquire the awarding rights of the new qualification unless they wish to continue with the old qualification. In the latter scenario, the adopter body/ies will have to furnish justification along with data to NCVET (as per Annexure III). If NCVET approves, developer body status, consequent AB rights shall be transferred in the same manner as mentioned in para '2.6 (a)(iii) (aa)' above.

Replacement of a qualification will mean development of a new and better qualification for the same job role. Any qualification leading to some other job role may not be counted under replacement.

In all the cases where awarding rights are shifted/transferred from a Developer Body to Adopter Body along with the 'developer body status' the new developer body shall be responsible for the comprehensive revision of the qualification as per the original date of review.

Any adopting body shall be free to surrender its awarding rights w.r.t adopted qualification/s. However, it shall provide clear and accurate information about such surrender to learners, training centres and other stakeholders who are likely to be affected. Such decision shall be duly communicated to both the NCVET and the Developer Body clearly specifying the manner in which the interests of the learners in relation to that qualification will be protected.

- iv. Incentivisation:** To promote research and development regarding qualifications and to compensate the original Developer Body for resources spent on development of qualifications, there is a need to incentivise the Developer Body. Incentivisation shall be done in the following manner:

aa) Payment:

- ba) A Developer Body has awarding rights of a qualification for the validity of a qualification as approved by NSQC. If other Awarding Bodies want to adopt such qualification/s, they shall have to pay:

- i. **Fixed Cost:** This is a one-time initial payment payable to the Developer Body by the adopting body. Both the parties shall arrive at a mutually acceptable amount for the same, if not, then following shall apply as standard fix cost for adoption of each qualification: -

Time Period	Payable to Developer Body (Rs/Qualification)
(New qualification) Before First Revision	1,50,000
Old qualification (After First Revision)	75,000

Revision refers to resubmission of the Qualification by a Developer Body for extension of validity (with or without changes) at NCVET

- ii. **Recurring Cost:** This is a periodic cost payable to the developer body by the adopting body at a standard rate of 25,000/- every three years from the date of adoption of qualification,
- iii. **Processing Fee:** This is the fee payable to the NCVET by the adopting body for processing the proposal initially, at the time of adoption and subsequently every three years from date of adoption as follows:

Processing Fee	At the time of adoption	Every three years
Amount in Rupees	25000	10000

ab) TOT/TOA Rights:

- ba) In order to acknowledge and appreciate the developmental functions and ensure sustainability of operations in the long run, the rights to conduct (either directly or through third party), Training of Trainers (ToT) and Training of Assessors (ToA) shall remain with the Developer Body unless both the adopter and the developer body mutually agree to transfer such rights to the adopting body. Such decision shall be documented and communicated to NCVET for approval.
- bb) In case the original developer delays/refuses TOT/TOA activities up to three months of submission of request by Adopter Body, then the adopter body can file the grievance at NCVET for the same. To ensure timely and quality Training of Trainers and Assessors, the NCVET may

give suitable directions, as deemed appropriate and it shall be obligatory on part of the Adopter and Developer Body to abide by such directions.

- b) **Teaching & Learning Content:** Adoption encompasses all the resources available on NQR for that qualification i.e. qualification file, model curriculum, list of tools and equipment, assessment strategy, qualification pack (in case of SSC qualifications). It does not include any teaching or learning content like student textbooks and teaching manuals, etc. Both the developer and the adopting body are expected to develop the teaching and learning content on their own. However, both can decide to share the content as per terms and conditions mutually decided by them.
- c) **Reflection on NQR:** NQR will clearly reflect the Developer Body and the adopting body/ies for a particular adopted qualification. Information on the qualifications that have been adopted by various Awarding Bodies will be reflected on NQR so that the learner can make an informed choice while selecting a training programme offered by different Awarding Bodies.

2.7. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEVELOPER BODY AND ADOPTING BODY

Particulars	Developer Body	Adopting Body
Rights	Awarding rights of qualification	Awarding rights of qualification
	ToT and ToA rights	-
	Revision of qualification	
	Withdrawal of qualification	Surrender of qualification
	-	Modification as per provisions
Responsibilities	ToT/ToA: Implementation, development of content, availability of master trainers	Ensuring Training of Trainers and Assessors (through developer body)
	Review of qualification	Compliance with conditions as mentioned in the qualification as per the review
	Development of teaching and learning content	Development of teaching and learning content
	Adherence to NCVET guidelines	Adherence to NCVET guidelines

3. PROCESSES

Adoption of NSQF aligned Qualifications by various Awarding Bodies will be facilitated through a well-defined, time bound and transparent process based on the following:

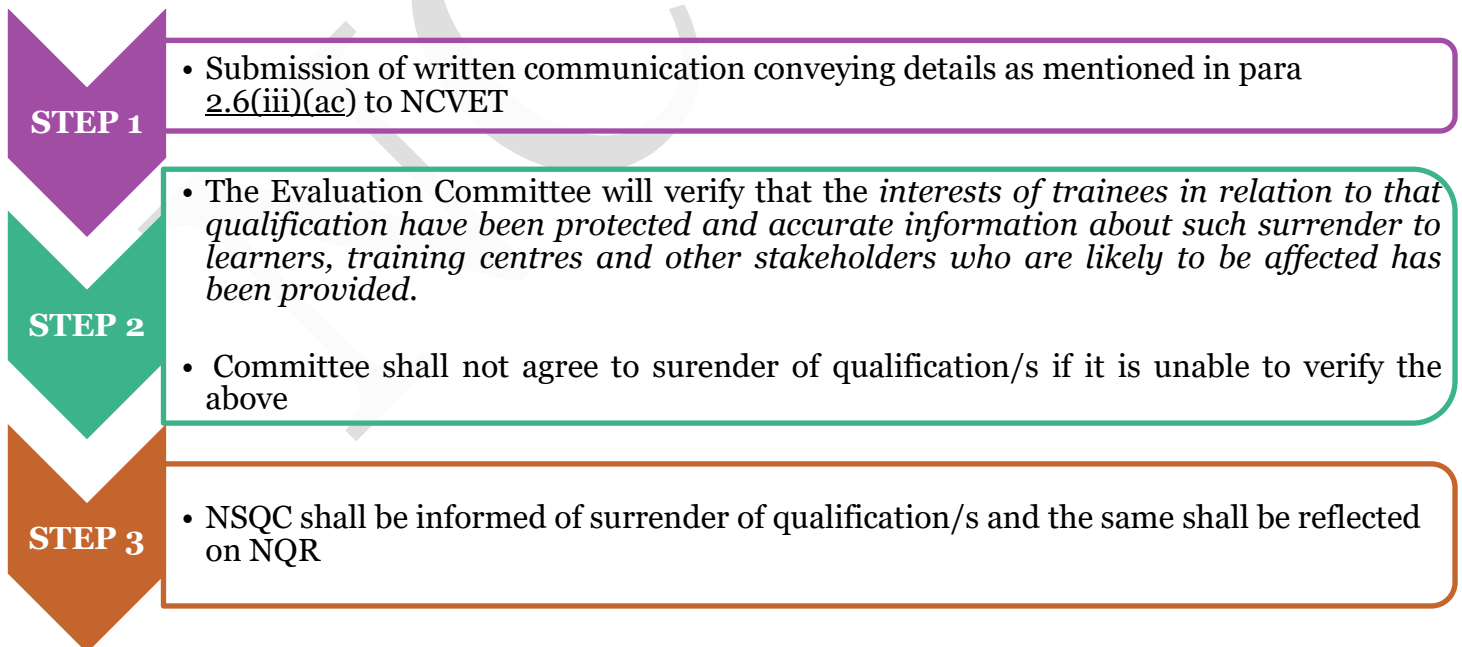
- a) A dedicated case member shall be allocated to each proposal
- b) Separate information for each qualification to be adopted shall be submitted to NCVET as prescribed in Annexure I.
- c) The Adopting Body shall remit the requisite fees for adoption to NCVET along with the application.
- d) Total timeline to process the proposal shall be 60 working days and shall be referred to as 'One Cycle'
- e) Maximum number of qualifications in a single proposal shall not exceed fifteen (15). If any Awarding Body submits multiple proposals, NCVET shall process them in the order of their receipt of the proposal, however a maximum of only one proposal of each AB shall be considered per cycle.
- f) An Evaluation Committee shall be formed at NCVET to review and scrutinize the proposals. The detailed composition and TOR of this committee shall be decided by NCVET.

3.1. STEPS OF ADOPTION

- a. **Step 1:** A recognized Awarding Body submits the proposal to NCVET along with documents as prescribed in Annexure I along with requisite fees. The receipt of such application shall be counted as day zero for calculation of the timelines.
- b. **Step 2:** NCVET shall nominate a Case Member for the proposal within two working days of receipt of the proposal and communicate to the concerned recognized Awarding Bodies.

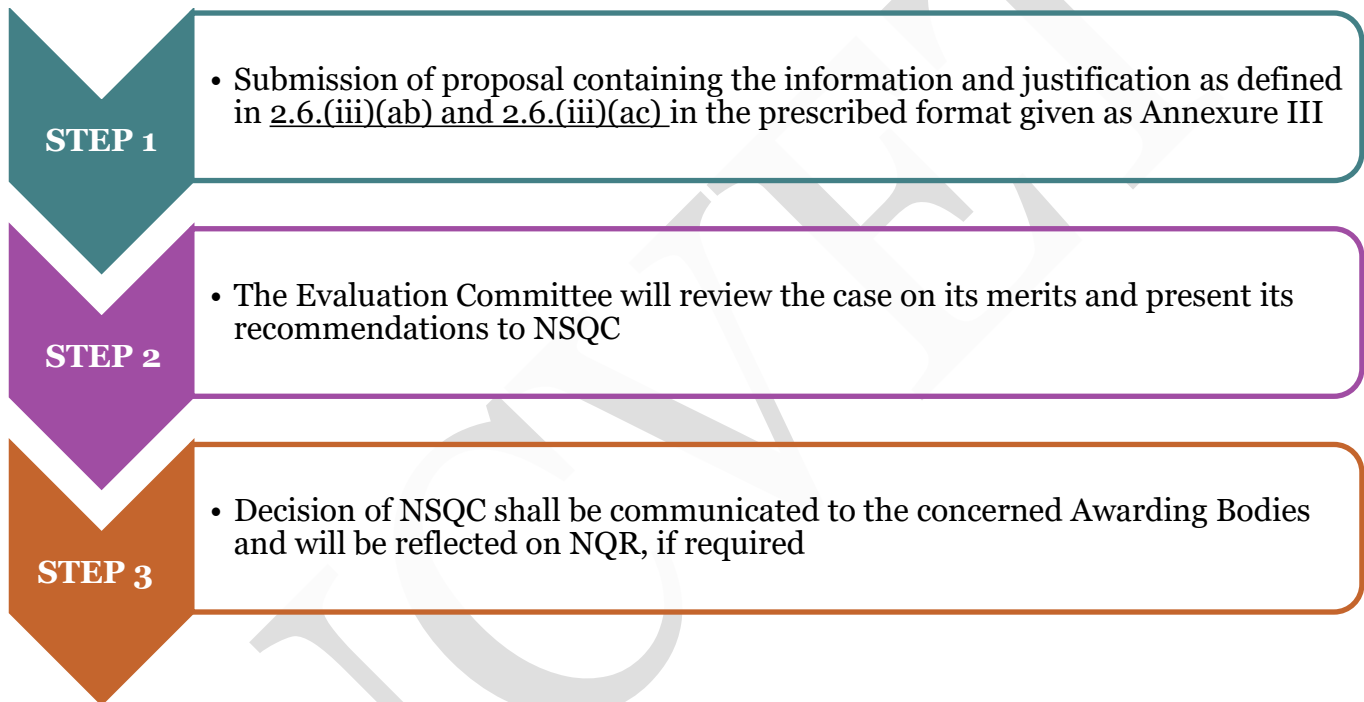
- c. **Step3:** The dedicated Case Member shall check the proposal for its completeness in-line with the adoption guidelines and seek any missing documents and information from the adopting body within seven (7) working days.
- d. **Step 4:** This step shall only commence after the complete proposal has been submitted/resubmitted by the adopting body and the processing fee has been paid to NCVET. Complete proposal shall be reviewed by the Evaluation Committee to check capacity and quality. Committee may involve the developer body in the process and seek the requisite information. Committee can also seek any additional information and/or documents from the adopting body. Committee may also decide to convene a stakeholder meeting and/or physically visit the premises of the adopting body or any of its third party/allied/affiliated entities within twenty (20) working days.
- e. **Step 5:** If the committee deems the proposal complete in all respects, then it shall be presented before NSQC in its next meeting for approval. Once approved by NSQC, adoption of the qualification will be reflected on NQR. In case committee finds the proposal incomplete, then the same shall be informed to NSQC. Decision of NSQC shall be communicated to the concerned Awarding Bodies (Both Developer & Adopter).

3.2. SURRENDER



3.3. CONTINUATION OF ADOPTION IN CASE OF WITHDRAWAL/REVISION/REPLACEMENT/DE-RECOGNITION

- a) As defined in para 2.6.(iii)(ab) and 2.6.(iii)(ac) regarding **withdrawal/revision/replacement of qualification and de-recognition** of an Awarding Body, if the adopting body wishes to continue with the adoption rights, following steps shall be adhered to:-



Total timeline for this process is 60 working days

4. MONITORING

- a. The NCVET shall perform the annual performance review of the adopted Qualifications usage in terms of trainings done, placements done and other related aspects as per the format specified in the Annexure IV. The quality checks will be done for each individual qualification adopted by any entity in the ecosystem.

- b. In case, NCVET so desires, it may opt for site visit as part of the review. The Council shall also ask for any information pertaining to the adopted qualification. Failure of submission of the desired information within stipulated timelines by any Adopting Body may also result in withdrawal of their adoption rights.
- c. Adoption rights shall be withdrawn by NCVET w.r.t. qualification/s which are found to be non-active during the annual review. Any qualification under which zero/ minimum training has been registered/ recorded over the period of one year shall be considered as non-active qualification. Unless defined otherwise for a Qualification, or in any other special circumstances as permitted by NCVET, less than 10% of the estimated uptake counted yearly (as recorded in the Qualification file) shall amount to 'Minimum Training'.

5. MISCELLANEOUS

- a. Nothing in this shall prevent any Awarding Body from developing its own qualifications in a job role for which a Qualification of an Awarding Body had already been approved by NCVET, on grounds such as improvement on the existing qualification, increasing reach of the qualification from that being achieved by the Awarding Body, etc. NSQC while examining such proposals will examine the justifications provided for a new similar qualification, before granting of approval on the same.
These guidelines will supersede all the adoption orders/notifications approved and issued by NSQC/NCVET/erstwhile NSDA prior to implementation of these guidelines. All Awarding Bodies who had adopted qualifications before the date of issue of these guidelines will be required to reapply as per the terms and conditions specified in the guidelines.

ANNEXURES

All Annexure are under Development;