

National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF)

What is NSQF?

More than 100 countries have, or are in the process of developing national qualification frameworks. In India, after considerable deliberation and inter-Ministerial consultations, the Cabinet notified the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) on 27th December 2013. The NSQF is a national framework that aims to integrate general and vocational streams of education and training.

It is a competency based framework that organizes qualifications into ten levels, with the entry level being 1, and the highest level being 10. Accordingly, to be certified to have the competency needed for any level, the learner can acquire the same through formal, non-formal or informal learning. In that sense, the NSQF is a quality assurance framework.

Each of the NSQF levels is characterised by the following categories of competencies:

1. Professional knowledge – what the person must know at that level
2. Professional Skills – what the person should be able to do at that level
3. Core skills – which include soft and interpersonal skills
4. Responsibility – the degree of supervision that needs to be exercised over the person while doing the job, or the degree of supervision that person is capable of exercising over others.

Expected Outcomes

- Integration between vocational education, skill training, general education, technical education and job markets.
- Increased potential for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) of individuals who have acquired skills through non-formal channels.
- Defining competencies and progression pathways that are not completely based on either duration of the programme or specific curricula
- Creating a framework where any degree or diploma can be aligned to the NSQF – once the competencies being created through that formal qualification are ascertained.
- Creating national principles for recognising skill proficiency leading to international equivalency.
- Countering the negative perception associated with vocational education & training by development of quality qualifications that also permit acquisition of higher qualifications, including degrees & doctorates.

Key Stakeholders of NSQF



NSDA – Anchor and operationalise the NSQF

Sector Skill Councils – Develop QPs and NOSs for various job roles in their sector

Central Ministries – Ensure that all stakeholders align their programmes

State Governments – Align programmes in their state to the NSQF

Regulatory Institutions - Define entry and exit competencies and qualifications in terms of NSQF for vertical progression in both general and vocational education

Training Providers - Organise courses/programmes aligning to NSQF

Employers - Interpret the qualifications of individuals as per their competencies

Alignment of NSQF in States

- All institutions/bodies under the state government are expected to align their training programmes to NSQF. Government funding would be on preferential basis for NSQF compliant training/ educational programmes/courses. State Government should complete this exercise in 3 to 5 years of notification.
- The NSQF notification provides a Qualifications Register, which is the official national database of all qualifications aligned to NSQF levels. The States are advised to start the process of NSQF alignment of all qualifications recognised by the State Boards through this Register.

Steps to roll-out NSQF in States

- Consultative Workshops/Meetings would be held at the state level by the NSDA in co-ordination with the state governments. NSDA would visit every state in order to educate and explain the concept and process of rolling out of NSQF in the states.
- The state government would be familiarised with the concept of NSQF through these workshops
- The Qualifications offered by various institutions recognised by state governments would be defined on the basis of competencies and the outcomes would be mapped to the most appropriate NSQF levels
- The alignment process involves populating the Qualifications Register which would be the official national database of all NSQF compliant qualifications. The NSDA would provide guidance in **populating the Qualifications Register**.

Cooperation solicited from the States to roll out NSQF

- All institutions/bodies under the state government to align their qualifications to the NSQF through the Qualifications Register
- Integrate adoption of Vocational Education into curriculum of state schools, for NSQF levels 1 to 4 (Class 9 to Class 12)
- Amend State's recruitment rules as well as those of their PSUs to define eligibility criteria for all positions in terms of NSQF levels
- Establish equivalence between general, vocational, technical & higher education within State-level schools, institutions and universities

State Action expected in immediate future:

- Organisation of orientation workshop and ensure participation of all stakeholders (government departments, industries, training partners, assessors, NGOs etc.) in the workshop.