

Statement – AB Guidelines for public comments

The National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) was notified as an overarching skills regulator on 5th December 2018 vide notification **No. SD-17/113/2017-E&PW**

The NCVET will regulate the functioning of entities engaged in vocational education and training, both long & short-term, and establish minimum standards for the functioning of such entities.

Pursuing its mandate, NCVET has developed a draft of the ‘Guidelines for Recognition of the Awarding Bodies’.

These guidelines are an attempt to standardize operations and outcomes of the Awarding Bodies (ABs) in the skills ecosystem. This will lead to improvement in quality and market relevance of skill development programs lending credibility to vocational education and training, encouraging greater private investment and employer participation in the skills space.

Guidelines define scope, criteria, tenure and detailed process of recognition as an AB. A robust mechanism of monitoring and evaluation based on well-defined parameters forms integral part of the guidelines.

The AB guidelines are structured as **eligibility criteria** and **continuance criteria**. The eligibility criteria ensures that ABs demonstrate required sustainable capacity earmarking the basic minimal organizational requirements and necessities. The continuation criteria ensures continuity of an awarding body based on its performance against the monitoring and evaluation parameters.

Comments are invited from public on the proposed guidelines within 21 days of publication of this statement at abguidelinesncvet@gmail.com

**NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**Guidelines for
Recognition of
Awarding Bodies**

September 2020

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GUIDELINES FOR RECOGNITION OF AWARDING BODIES

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. 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

Regulation of ABs ecosystem is one of the focus areas of NCVET considering the existence of multiple regulators and non-standardized norms leading to quality issues and poor outcomes of the training. The NCVET will strive to integrate fragmented regulatory system and infuse quality assurance across the entire vocational training value chain, leading to strengthened outcomes.

For the regulation of awarding bodies, two sets of documents have been developed- the guidelines for awarding body and the operational manual. While the guidelines for awarding body draw up the contours of the norms of affiliation, the operational manual for recognition of the awarding bodies 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 awarding bodies. This document elucidates the guidelines for recognition of awarding bodies.

1.2. AWARDING BODY

1.2.1. DEFINITION

An entity can be defined as an Awarding Body if it awards or proposes to award certification to trainees for an approved qualification by ensuring quality training and reliable assessments.

1.2.2. TYPES

- a. Government Bodies
 - Central Ministries
 - State Departments
 - Other bodies established by govt.
- b. Directorate General of Training (DGT)
- c. Sector Skill Councils
- d. Skill Universities
- e. School Boards
- f. Private bodies

1.2.3. FUNCTIONS

Critical Functions

- a. Award certification to learners in approved qualifications.
- b. Creation of qualifications and related learning material.
- c. Development of affiliation/ accreditation norms for training partners and affiliating/ accrediting training partners.
- d. On-boarding assessment agencies to ensure fair and reliable assessments through pre defined norms and processes.
- e. Monitor the functioning of training partners and assessment agencies.

Other Functions

- f. Set up a system of redressing grievances.
- g. Submit such information to skill related information providers as required and under the agreement granting recognition.
- h. Develop norms for Training of Trainers and Assessors.
- i. Co-operate with the Council in any inspection, investigation or audit of its activities.

1.2.4. RELATIONSHIP of Awarding Body (AB) with Various Stakeholders

S.No	Stakeholder	Terms of Relationship with AB
1	NCVET	NCVET will recognize and regulate AB as per guidelines framed by it
2	Training Entity (TE)	Training Entity will be affiliated/ accredited by recognized AB and function under its supervision. The AB will ensure that the Training Entity adheres to the broad guidelines of NCVET and affiliation/ accreditation norms of AB.

3	Assessment Agency (AA)	<p>AAs will be recognized by NCVET. AA will be on-boarded by recognized AB from a pool of NCVET recognized AAs. The ABs will, inter alia, be responsible for the day to day monitoring of the AA, elaborating assessment criteria and for ToA.</p> <p>Relationship between AB and AA will also be governed by the AA guidelines released by the NCVET separately.</p>
4	Skill Information Provider* (SIP)	SIP will solicit, collect and publish information related to recognized bodies, training bodies and trainees trained

** SIP is NCVET recognized entity mandated to collect, publish key information as mentioned above on a publically accessible electronic platform.*

SECTION 2: AWARDING BODY GUIDELINES

2.1. VISION

'To recognize and regulate Awarding Bodies and bestowing them with primary accountability of strengthening the skilling architecture/ ecosystem, leading to quality learning outcomes based on progressive self-regulation, delegated responsibility and continuous monitoring'.

2.2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Awarding Body guidelines are:

- i. Defining scope and functions of the ABs
- ii. Standardization of the norms for the recognition of the ABs
- iii. Strengthening quality assurance in the operations of the ABs
- iv. Building a robust monitoring system for continuous improvement

The '*Guidelines for recognition of the Awarding Bodies*' by NCVET also referred to as AB guidelines, is an attempt to standardize operations and outcomes envisaged for the ABs in the skills ecosystem. The guidelines focus on recognizing the diversity of the skilling ecosystem and thereby creating a system of quality assurance through parity in standards & processes leading to consistency in outcomes.

2.3. SCOPE

Para 2 of the NCVET notification no. SD-17/113/2017-E&PW, 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 Awarding Bodies get recognized as per the NCVET Guidelines for improved quality and acceptability. However, in order to implement any govt. funded training program, NCVET recognition of the concerned awarding Body shall be mandatory.

2.4. STRUCTURE

The AB guidelines are structured to retain flexibility in the ecosystem and ensure that qualifications awarded through the NCVET system are demand driven market-oriented qualifications. In line with its vision, NCVET will initiate regulation of the awarding ecosystem by overseeing and streamlining the recognition of the ABs by ensuring parity in standards and procedures and establishing central monitoring control over the operations of ABs. The AB guidelines are structured as **Eligibility Criteria** and **Continuation Criteria**. The eligibility criteria will ensure that ABs demonstrate required sustainable capacity to offer market relevant courses and certification. The continuation criteria will ensure continuity of an awarding body based on its performance against the Monitoring and Evaluation parameters.

The **Eligibility Criteria** are a set of parameters that earmark the basic minimal organizational requirements for recognition while delineating the terms of reference of association with the NCVET.

The **Continuation Criteria** aims at infusing quality assurance in the processes of the AB operations. A risk assessment framework based on such criteria has been designed to ascertain risk category under which an AB falls at a given point of time. Such categorization of risk will decide the action/s to be taken by both NCVET and AB.

The parameters enlisted as Eligibility Criteria and Continuation Criteria are mandatory in nature. The NCVET recognized ABs will be mandated to abide by various guidelines released by the NCVET from time to time. However, certain variations in the applicability of the eligibility for various categories of the ABs are indicated in section 4.2. of the AB guidelines.

The processes of application by an entity for recognition, scrutiny of such applications by NCVET, monitoring and evaluation along with timelines and relevant templates have been detailed in the Operational Manual of the Guidelines.

2.5. FEATURES

The AB guidelines are also an effort to make the regulations self-sufficient to weed out the existing irrelevant qualifications from the system. NCVET also seeks to dissociate the assessment and training functions by bringing in a system which ensures that the awarding, training and assessment functions are at arm's length. NCVET as a regulator strives to establish an awarding ecosystem of credibility and quality through standardized

national norms leading to identification and promotion of best in class ABs. This will be promoted through risk rating of ABs.

The ABs influence several critical steps in the training value chain. Hence, the AB guidelines also prescribe recommendations for third-party agencies working under their fold, to ensure quality in their operations. The ABs will be recognized by the NCVET for awarding certificates only for the NCVET approved qualifications. Some major features of NCVET are elaborated below:

i. Self Regulation

NCVET seeks to envision a self-regulated ecosystem by inculcating culture of self monitoring and improvement. ABs are expected to administer controls on their operations and come up with continuous self improvement and risk mitigation plan/s during their recognition period. NCVET will not intervene or regulate the day to day operations of the ABs, or in other words recognized ABs will not be under administrative control of the NCVET.

ii. Delegated Regulation

NCVET recognized ABs influence several critical steps in the training value chain. Hence, the AB guidelines also prescribe recommendations for partner agencies/ entities working under their fold, to ensure quality in their operations too. NCVET will not directly control and monitor the partner agencies/ entities working with the AB. It will be the responsibility of the AB to ensure that the partner agencies/ entities adhere to the recommendations of the AB guidelines. Such delegated regulations empower an AB to take punitive/ corrective action against partner agencies/ entities in cases of non-adherence to the AB guidelines.

iii. Market Driven Regulation

NCVET Guidelines mandates industry participation in all the critical functions of a recognized AB so that the outcomes of all such functions are market relevant. This will also ensure that qualifications awarded through the NCVET system are demand driven & market-oriented while weeding out irrelevant qualifications from the system.

iv. Ring Fencing

NCVET seeks to dissociate the assessment and awarding functions by bringing in a system which ensures that both the functions are at an arm's length. Accordingly, in general, no AB shall be recognized as an AA and vice versa. However, where an AB is recognized under the dual category as mentioned in the section 3.4. to maintain the sanctity and separation of training and assessment functions special ring fencing through extra parameters/ norms has been provided.

v. Performance Linked Categorization of ABs

NCVET as a regulator strives to establish an awarding ecosystem of credibility and quality through standardized norms leading to identification and promotion of best in class ABs. This will be promoted through risk rating of ABs which forms part of monitoring and evaluation of AB by NCVET. This rating is based on quantifiable outcome indicators which are based on performance of an AB.

SECTION 3: RECOGNITION OF AWARDING BODIES

3.1. DEFINING RECOGNITION

Recognition of an entity as an AB by NCVET means that the entity has been authorized to award certificate to trainees post successful completion of training and assessment for an approved qualification along with performing all such other functions of an Awarding Body as specified in section 1.2.3 of the guidelines.

3.2. SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

- i. **Qualification:** NCVET recognition holds validity with respect to qualification/s for which an AB has obtained the approval of NCVET

Qualification means a formal outcome of assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards. This outcome is actualised in the form of a formal Certificate

- ii. **Sectoral:** NCVET recognition holds validity with respect to sector/s for which approval of NCVET has been obtained.

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

- iii. **Territorial:** NCVET recognition holds validity with respect to jurisdictional/ operational/ territorial boundaries defined as per the Act/ notification/ any such order under which the recognized body was created. In absence of any such instrument of incorporation, NCVET shall demarcate the territorial boundary of operations of an AB based on demonstrated strength of capacity.

Territory here means a geographic area of operations for which an awarding body has been recognized by NCVET.

3.3. ADVANTAGE OF BEING A RECOGNISED AWARDING BODY

- i. Recognition by GoI
- ii. Uniform pan India certification

- iii. Eligibility for Government funding
- iv. Enhanced market acceptability & recognition
- v. Use of NCVET logo as per guidelines
- vi. Enhanced quality outcomes through standardized procedures and parameters
- vii. Continuous improvement through self regulation

3.4. CATEGORIES OF RECOGNITION

i. **STANDARD RECOGNITION**

Awarding body certifies but does not conduct assessment of learners. Eg. Sector Skill Councils

ii. **DUAL RECOGNITION**

Awarding body certifies and also conducts assessment of learners.

Possible cases under Dual Category Recognition

- a. An existing awarding body seeking recognition as an assessment agency only for training directly imparted by it for its approved qualifications. Eg. Skill Universities, specialized training institutes of the Govt.
- b. An existing awarding body seeking recognition as an assessment agency for all trainings (including third party) conducted for its approved qualifications. This shall be applicable only for long term training*. Eg. DGT

**Long term training means vocational training program undertaken for a year and above.*

Following requirements are to 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

An existing Assessment Body shall not seek recognition as an Awarding Body under Dual Category.

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.

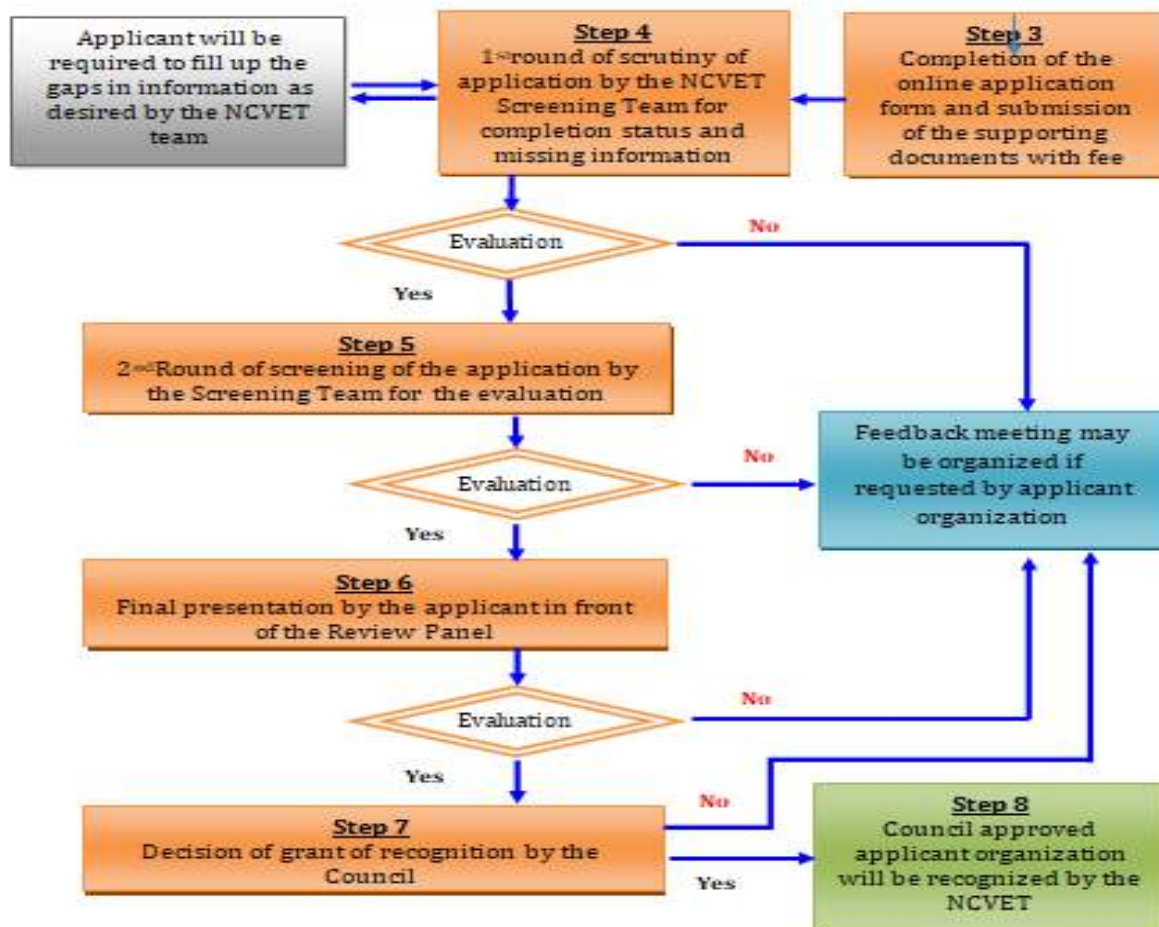
For classes where vocational education is imparted in form of orientation or introduction, recognition from NCVET is not required. However, where training in specific job oriented vocational qualification/s is either being imparted or proposed to be imparted, the concerned schools boards would be encouraged to seek recognition as an AB from NCVET.

However, considering various unique aspects specific to schools like age appropriateness, safety, resource constraints etc certain flexibility in NSQF norms and recognition guidelines shall be provided to facilitate compliance by the school boards. Recognition by NCVET will provide advantages like additional NCVET certification; enhanced market acceptability and recognition; progression pathways to other aligned courses. Variation in applicability of eligibility criteria of recognition has been elaborated in section 4.2 of the guidelines.

3.5. PROCESS

The application process for the empanelment of the ABs will be open throughout the year. The detailed process is outlined in the Operation Manual. The snapshot of the process is given below:

Step 1 and 2 An organization which fulfills the eligibility criteria as indicated in the AB guidelines, based on self-review, can express interest to NCVET for recognition on the dedicated portal and a NCVET case member is nominated



Post recognition, a Letter of Intent (LoI) will be issued by NCVET to the recognized AB indicating sector/s and territorial jurisdiction for which the said body has been recognized. The recognized Body will be thereafter given a maximum period of 3 months for submitting its qualification/s for NCVET approval. The tenure of recognition with NCVET will be applicable from the date of signing the agreement between NCVET and the recognized Awarding Body, post approval of the first qualification of an AB.

Note: Till such time that NCVET rolls out an online system, the application process will be executed in the offline mode. In such cases, 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. Application Form and the contact details will be available on the NCVET website.

Approval of Qualification:

NSQF is a competency based skill framework which organizes qualifications according to a series of levels of knowledge, skills and aptitude. The NSQF is anchored at the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) which also has a mandate of qualification approval. Creation of industry-oriented qualifications and aligning them to the NSQF is quintessential and non-negotiable for any recognized AB. NCVET has prescribed norms, procedures and templates for NSQF alignment of qualification which shall be followed by all recognized ABs. No separate norms for approval of qualifications are mentioned in these guidelines.

All the approved qualifications are stored in a digital national repository called National Qualification Register (NQR) which can be accessed at www.nqr.gov.in

3.6. FEE

An entity applying for recognition as an awarding Body will be required to submit an amount of Rs. 100000/- (50,000/- refundable in case of rejection) through channel prescribed by NCVET. This fee is payable at step 3 of the recognition process along with completed application form and supporting documents.

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

3.7. TENURE OF RECOGNITION OF AWARDING BODY

The recognition of the ABs and mandates of the AB guidelines will be applicable from the date of signing of the agreement between NCVET and the recognized Awarding Body, post approval of the first qualification of an AB. The tenure of recognition will be as follows:

- i. Initially, an AB will be recognized by NCVET for a period of 3 years.
- ii. Post the completion of the said duration, AB will submit an application for fast track renewal, which if approved would extend the recognition for another 2 years from the original date of recognition. This renewal will be based on the performance of an AB as per the risk rating framework, elaborated in the Operational Manual.
- iii. Post completion of the total tenure of 5 years, an AB would be required to submit a fresh application for seeking recognition as an AB.

For both **(ii) and (iii)** an AB must submit their applications '**6 months prior to completion of recognition period**'. Upon re-application/ request for fast track renewal by recognized ABs, the recognized body shall continue to have privileges of recognition, till a decision on extension or discontinuation is made by NCVET. AB should ensure that any training batch should not spill over the recognition period

3.8. SUSPENSION/ DE-RECOGNITION

A recognized AB may be suspended under the following scenarios:

- a. Any recognized AB which does not have at least one active qualification* after a year of recognition.
- b. Recognized AB 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.
- c. ***Such an AB 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***

Following shall result in de-recognition of an Awarding body

- i. Any AB proven to be indulging in corrupt and/ or fraudulent malpractices and recommended by Council for de-recognition
- ii. Any AB failing to ensure compliance with the guidelines after 6 months of suspension

**An active qualification for the above would mean a qualification with at least 25% enrolment against the estimated uptake of the qualification*

SECTION 4: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION OF AWARDING BODIES

4.1. LIST OF ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Taking cognizance of the significant role played by the ABs, the eligibility criteria sets the ground for some of elementary organizational capacity and reputation. The eligibility criteria as the name suggests are the clauses defining suitability and aptness of any entity/ organisation to be associated with NCVET in the capacity of an AB. These entry requirements have been developed keeping in view the various kinds of prospective ABs who could be associated with NCVET. The detailed eligibility criteria for the recognition of ABs are as follows:

1. Legal Status

- a.** The entity must be a Government institution /Autonomous Body / Academic Institution / University / Company/ Not-for-Profit Society or Trust/ Limited Liability Partnership and must be registered with the appropriate authority in India.
- b.** A consortium arrangement with a clearly identified lead partner would be allowed to apply. If at point in time, the lead partner abdicates the consortium, the said entity would cease to be recognized.
- c.** The entity should hold a valid Permanent Account Number (PAN) and have the required Goods and Services Tax (GST) registration details.
- d.** If any foreign entity intends to associate with the NCVET, they must adhere to the following norms:
 - i.** Application must be made by an Indian subsidiary registered in India.
 - ii.** The entity must adhere to Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) guidelines and norms.
- e.** The entity should not have been blacklisted by any Indian Government body/Public Sector Undertaking/autonomous bodies or any other regulatory body.
- f.** The entity seeking recognition should be registered as a not- for profit enterprise.

2. Financial Viability

- a.** Financial viability for the purpose of these guidelines will focus on the following:
 - i.** Entity should be able to generate sufficient income to meet operational requirements for at least one year
 - ii.** Entity should have a positive net worth
 - iii.** Quantum of debt commitments of the entity

- b. The entity must ensure that it has sufficient financial resources and facilities to enable it to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with the recognition criteria laid down in the guidelines.
- c. The entity must ensure that accounting and financial monitoring systems are in place for performing the function of awarding certificates.

3. Prior Experience

- a. The entity should be in the “business” continuously for the period indicated in (i) below from the date of the application:
 - i. The “business” for the purpose of the guidelines will focus on functional experience in the vocational education and training space which must include at least one of the following:
 - Awarding function – continuously in business for 5 years
 - Training delivery - continuously in business for 7 years
 - Conducting assessments - continuously in business for 7 years
 - ii. For the entities in training and assessment business, it should have experience of working in skill development and vocational education with state/ central government or their agencies/bilateral or multilateral agencies/ large and public limited companies/ large private limited companies/ scheduled commercial banks.
- b. This norm may be relaxed by the NCVET for –
 - i. Industry driven new age technology-based institutions
 - ii. Institutions preserving traditional and heritage skills
 - iii. Those working in niche areas

4. Sectoral Credibility

- a. The entity should demonstrate sufficient sectoral capacities to support the award of the qualification in that particular sector.
- b. In case the said entity seeks to award certificates in more than one sector, the said entity will have to establish sectoral credibility for each of the sector it seeks recognition for.
- c. The entity should ensure the following to demonstrate sectoral credibility:
 - i. Continued support of the industry in building the capacity of the ABs.

- ii. Availability of sector experts/ subject matter experts/ industry experts to facilitate awarding function and capacity building of the trainers and assessors.
- iii. Formal representation of industry in the operations of ABs specifically in creation & validation of qualifications, training delivery, training of assessors and trainers, placements, on job training and apprenticeship. Tie-ups/representation from small, medium as well as large industries which has to be continued throughout the period of recognition.
- iv. Sectoral credibility will also be established if the entity is established as an autonomous institution through the support of the line ministry.

5. Creation of Qualifications

- a. For an entity to be recognized as an AB the entity will have to create and submit qualification/s for approval to NCVET. Therefore, an entity must demonstrate its capacity related to qualification creation and review.
- b. Entities intending to award certificate to Persons with Disability (PwD) need not necessarily create qualifications. In that case, they will be subjected to following parameters only:
 - Due diligence regarding market acceptability and job opportunities with respect to PwDs
 - They should be amenable to PwD requirements

6. Infrastructure Requirements

- a. The entity should have a registered office in India and the premises should be necessarily be separate/independent of the office of the Promoting Organization (if any).
- b. The entity should have sufficient IT infrastructure and systems to support the development, delivery and award of qualifications. They should have high speed internet connectivity amongst other essentials.
- c. The office premise should be well connected by public transport with ease of accessibility for the public/users/stakeholders at large.
- d. The entity should have an operational website at the time of application to NCVET containing the following critical details:
 - Qualifications/courseware/ curriculum offered

- Details (geographical spread, contact details and courses offered) of the training entities operating under the fold of the ABs
 - Training of Trainers and Training of Assessors training calendar (if any)
 - Names and contact details of the operational team at the AB
 - Major achievements of the AB on a monthly and quarterly basis
 - Information on industry linkages - Details of industry members and demand aggregation of the sector they are aligned to
 - Information on linkages with State Governments (if any)
 - Grievance Redressal Mechanism
 - Governing Council/Executive Body Members' details
- e. The entity should have effective, reliable and secure systems for capturing data pertaining to training and outcomes implemented under their ecosystem.

7. Governance and Manpower

a. Legal Head/CEO/COO and Governing Council/Executive Committee of the Awarding Body

- i. The entity should have a functional Governing Council/ Executive Body with clearly defined terms of reference.
- ii. The legal head (Head/COO/CEO) who is serving the AB has to be engaged on a full time basis with no additional charges or part time assignments.
- iii. Head/CEO/COO will necessarily have to reside in the same city/metropolitan region where the entity has its main operating office.
- iv. The Head/CEO/COO will not promote/ run parallel business which may lead to a conflict of interest with AB operations of the entity.
- v. The Head/CEO/COO or any top management official may be deemed unsuitable for that role by virtue of (a) any criminal convictions held by him or her, (b) any finding such as orders by a court or any professional, regulatory, or government body that he or she has breached a provision of any legislation or any regulatory obligation to which he or she is subject, (c) any proceedings in bankruptcy or any individual financial arrangement to which he or she has been subject, (d) any disqualification from holding the directorship of a company or a public office, or (e) any proven malpractice or maladministration, in relation to a qualification to which he or she is or has been subject.

b. Other Critical Staff

- i. The entity should have sufficient staff to manage its operations.
- ii. The entity should have adequate teams/individuals with defined roles and responsibilities and transparent lines of accountability for managing functions including but not restricted to Standards and QA, Training of Trainers and Assessors, Curriculum Design and Development, Training Delivery, IT, Business Development Executives/ Managers for Industry Interface and state engagements, Finance and Administration.
- iii. The entity should have a continuous professional development framework and well-defined recruitment and remuneration policies for both its technical and field staff together. This entity should also ensure that its associated third parties follow the same.

8. Third Party Arrangements

Where an entity arranges for a third party to undertake, on its behalf, any part of the training delivery or assessment, then they should have the following processes in place:

a. Relationship with the Training Delivery Entity

Existence of a system of endorsing training partners and training centers that they are fit for the purpose and are equipped to deliver quality training. The ABs shall be responsible for developing affiliation norms as per the NCVET guidelines.

b. Relationship with the Assessment Agencies

Existence of a system of endorsing AAs that they are fit for quality assessment of their qualification along with clearly delineated monitoring mechanisms of the AAs for their day to day operations. ABs will onboard AAs from the pool of NCVET recognized AAs as per the requirement of their qualification and norms.

9. Industry Linkages

The entity must showcase engagement of industry in key decisions of the organization

10. Comprehensive Business Plan

- a. As a measure for ensuring that the AB has taken efforts to undertaken research and planning in detailing its business foresight, the entity, must have a comprehensive business plan encompassing the following parameters:

- i. Presence of clear evidence of market research and budget projections, including details of assumptions underlying projections (revenue, learner enrollments etc.) for the upcoming fiscal year.
- ii. Stipulation of clear and timeline bound approach for achieving objectives and strategies in place including financials, resources, third party agencies (if any) and staff required for the implementation of the envisioned business plan.
- iii. Presence of a comprehensive risk plan and mitigation strategies.

b. Geographical Competence

- i. In line with the proposed business plan, the entity will be expected to furnish details of the implementation plan for the qualifications including engagement of training partners to cater to various geographies where training is proposed to be undertaken.
- ii. To cater to the geographies, the entity should ensure that AAs and required assessors are available to carry out the assessment.

c. The entity must also have appropriate controls in place for operationalizing the plan and have distinct officials recognized for mitigating the incumbent risks together with a calibrated monitoring and evaluation framework for checking adherence to the aforementioned business plan.

11. Grievance Redressal

- a.** For safeguarding the quality while maintaining the harmony of the ecosystem, the entity must ensure that a responsive grievance redressal mechanism is in place. In view of the same, the following undertakings must be submitted:
 - i. Establishment of a grievance redressal committee
 - ii. Appointment of third-party arbitrator/ legal counsel representative in the committee
 - iii. Establishment of a POSH committee (as per govt. guidelines) within the entity and in the affiliated bodies such as training partners and AAs
- b.** The entity will be expected to adhere to the new guidelines released by the NCVET from time to time in this context.
- c.** The entity should have a dedicated helpline number to address grievance and queries of multiple stakeholders.

12. Additional Criteria for Dual category recognition

Entities applying under dual category recognition will have to adhere to all the criteria's in addition to 'Additional criteria for Dual category recognition' mentioned in the section above

- a. Financial Viability:** Separate financial system for the assessment and awarding functions.
- b. Sectoral Capability:** Will be evaluated for both the awarding and assessment functions individually
- c. Infrastructure:** Separate infrastructure for both awarding and assessment function shall be ensured for the following:
 - i. IT
 - ii. Office premises – well connected by transport and easy accessibility
 - iii. Operational website with details as mentioned in para 6 of section 4 of eligibility criteria
- d. Governance and Manpower:** Separation of personnel, systems, and managerial control of the functions. Such separation should be done in such a way that both awarding and assessment arms should function as separate business units or as independent departments with necessary resources at disposal. Entities recognized as dual category AB will have to formulate a Policy on Conflict of Interest.
- e. Third Party Arrangement:** The Dual Category AB must ensure that standard protocols (similar to third party affiliation protocols) for training delivery and conducting assessment are developed and adhered to.
- f. Industry Linkage:** should be showcased for both the awarding and assessment functions individually.
- g. Comprehensive Business Plan:** should cover both the awarding and assessment functions elaborating the following:
 - i. Details of the implementation plan for the assessment including engagement of assessors to cater to various geographies where assessment is proposed to be undertaken.
 - ii. Stipulation of clear and time bound approach for achieving objectives and strategies in place including financials, resources and staff required for the implementation of the envisioned business plan.

iii. Presence of a comprehensive risk plan and mitigation strategies together with a calibrated monitoring and evaluation framework for checking adherence to the business plan.

h. **Grievance Redressal:** For the dual category agencies, the grievance redressal mechanism should be established for both the awarding and the assessment functions.

4.2. APPLICABILITY OF CRITERIA FOR VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF ABS

Eligibility Criteria	Government Bodies			D G T	S S C	Skill Universi ties	School Boards	Private Bodies
	Central Ministri es	State Dept.	Other Govt. Bodies					
Legal Status	x	x	✓	x	✓	✓	x	✓
Financial Viability	x	x	✓	x	✓	✓	x	✓
Sectoral Credibility	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	x	✓
Prior Experience	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓
Creation of Qualifications	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓
Infrastructure Requirement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Governance & Manpower *	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Third Party Arrangements	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Industry Linkages	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Comprehensiv e Business Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grievance Redressal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Placement Performance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓

*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
- Undertaking by the legal head (as per para 7 of section 4.1. of guidelines)

SECTION 5: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

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

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

5.1. Objective

The objectives of monitoring processes for recognized ABs are the following:

- i. To evaluate if the organization continues to meet the requirements of a recognized AB under NCVET
- ii. To ensure that training delivered by affiliated/ accredited agencies and assessment outcomes achieved meet the compliance and standards earmarked by the regulator.
- iii. To ensure that the AB and its affiliates operate ethically and consider the needs and well-being of both learners and industry partners.
- iv. To investigate any complaint made against a recognized AB or its third-party agencies which NCVET deems grave to conduct an inspection.

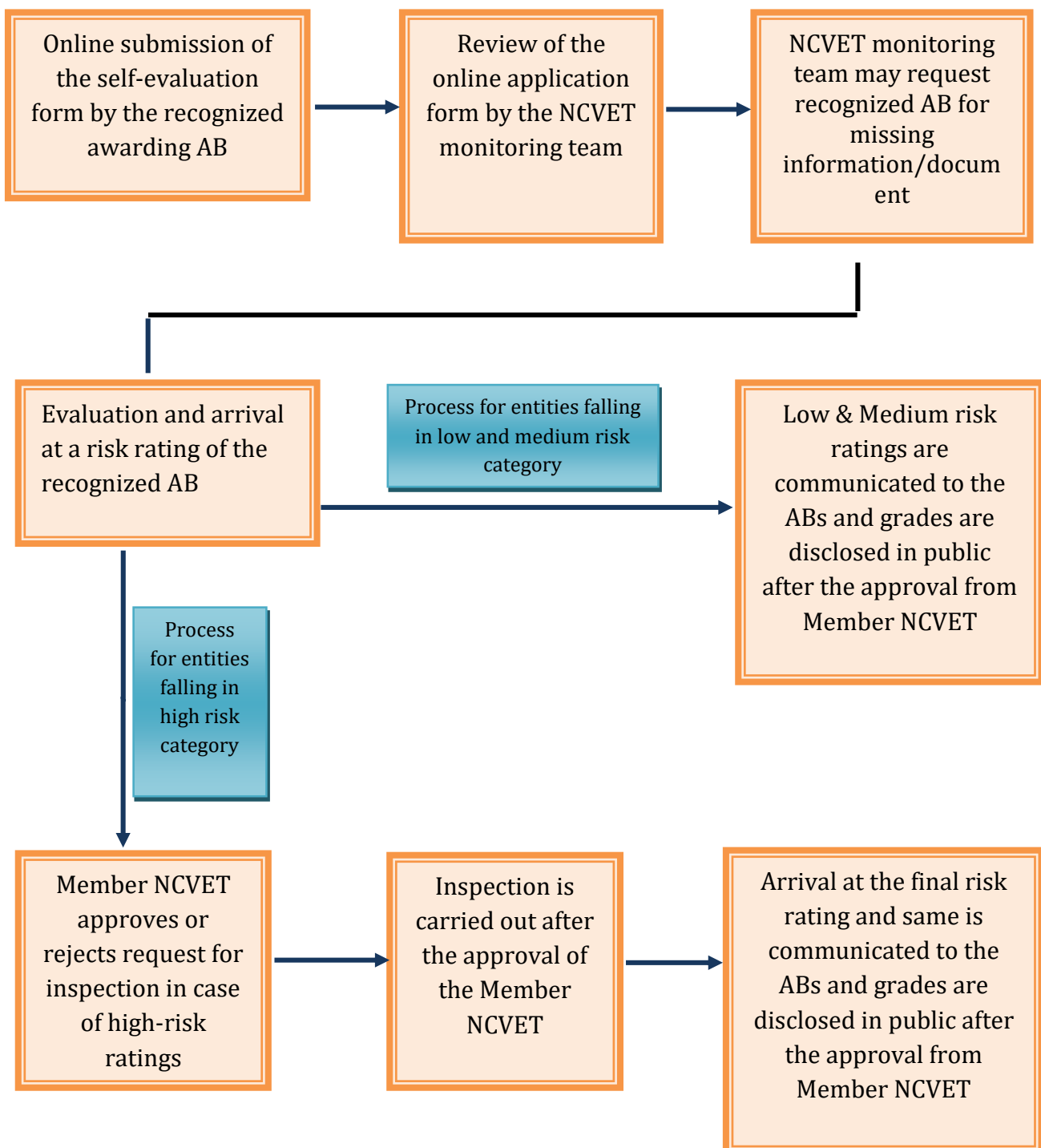
5.2. Mechanism

NCVET mandates a stringent monitoring mechanism to ensure that the standards of quality and reliability are maintained amongst all ABs. The following are the inherent components of the monitoring system created by the NCVET for recognized ABs.

- i. **ANNUAL REVIEW of an AB** would be conducted wherein yearly performance will be assessed on the monitoring and evaluation parameters enumerated in section 5.3. of the manual. Such review will happen after completion of each year during the tenure of AB starting from the date of its recognition.
 - **Risk Assessment Framework:** Based on the monitoring parameters a risk assessment framework to identify the risk category that an AB falls in has been designed. Such categorization is based on quantified risk rating of an AB and forms

basis of any punitive/corrective/rewarding action by the regulator. Details of the same are outlined in operational manual.

- **Self Improvement:** After identification of the risk category, an AB is expected to develop a risk mitigation strategy. Most significant part of such strategy is development of various self improvement plans (eg. quality improvement plan, preventive risk plan and improvement, improvement progress plan, etc) which an AB must prepare keeping its risk category in mind. This inculcates the idea of improvement through self initiation leading to reduced requirement of external regulatory control in long run.
- **Process of Annual review:** The process flow for the annual review is as follows:



- ii. **CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE MONITORING** will be carried out throughout the tenure of recognition. ABs are required to develop and maintain IT portals and MIS related to their operations. Such platforms will be continuously monitored by NCVET. Also information/data shall be furnished by ABs as and when required by NCVET. Qualification approval process at NCVET is well defined evidence based, and process oriented scrutiny mechanism to keep a parallel check on operations of ABs.
- iii. **SELF REGULATION:** NCVET as a learner centric and industry driven regulator seeks to promote a collaborative approach of working. The ABs 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 TVET ecosystem in the country.
As a proponent of self-regulation, NCVET believes that the ABs should set up in-house mechanisms in line with the performance metrics of NCVET to drive their operations and those of the third parties affiliated by it. Hence, site inspection of the recognized ABs or its third-party agencies 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 ABs.

5.3. CONTINUATION CRITERIA: PARAMETERS FOR MONITORING

The monitoring and evaluation criteria to maintain quality in the AB and third-party operations recognized under the NCVET banner are given below. The AB must ensure the following:

1. Financial

- i. Ongoing viability of operations
AB must ensure continuity of its operations through strong financial health
- ii. Financial record keeping
AB must ensure prudent and transparent record keeping through the following:
 - Compliance with established and accepted accounting principles
 - Systematic Book Keeping
- iii. Adherence to Business Plan formulated and submitted at the time of application and amended thereafter.

2. Organizational

a. Governance

An AB 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. Management
 - The line of authority is clearly demarcated through well defined and transparent organization structure
 - Management has the relevant vocational experience as per requirement
- iii. Business Planning
AB has a sound business plan encompassing market research, financial projections, timelines etc

b. Human Resource

An AB must ensure that effective and efficient Human resource Management practices are followed through the following:

- i. Sound HR policy and staff manual
- ii. Retention of staff
- iii. Adequate staff strength
- iv. Continuous Professional Development (CPD)- The entity should have a continuous professional development framework and well-defined recruitment and remuneration policies for its staff

3. Technology and Data Management

a. Technology

AB must ensure that it possess a robust and functional IT system which comprises of the following:

- i. **Tech platform/ portal:** Platform designed to support training and / or assessment across the operational network.
- ii. **MIS**
- iii. **Website**
- iv. **IT team**

b. Data Management

AB must ensure strong and effective data management system with following as key features/ components:

i. Learners data

- The recognized AB must take all reasonable steps to ensure that each learner undertaking training in a qualification, which the AB is offering, is registered in a way that permits the learner to be clearly and uniquely identified.
- At any point of time the recognized AB should have the following database pertaining to the learners and qualifications:
 - Learner's details with respect to the offered qualification
 - Training partner and training centre details where learner has undergone training
 - Scheme through which training is funded/fee based/ CSR activities etc
 - Assessment details
 - Placement record
- NCVET would maintain the repository of learners' data either through its own in-house team or through an agency mandated by NCVET.

ii. Data security

In line with Government of India directives, the recognized AB and its network of third-party agencies should maintain the confidentiality of the learner's information. A policy on data management and security adhering to all government directives on the subject must be formulated and followed.

4. Training

a. Relationship with Training Entities- Delegated Regulation

- i. For any training entity to offer approved qualification, they must seek affiliation from AB, adhere to their affiliation/ accreditation norms and subsequently enter into agreement with the recognized AB.
- ii. Keeping the spirit of the delegated regulation, NCVET has mandated AB to monitor and supervise the functioning of its training entities through an affiliation/ accreditation process. However, broad parameters like availability of learning resources, trainers, infrastructure, industry engagement, assessment, placements etc have been prescribed by NCVET which should necessarily be covered in the affiliation norms of an AB and reflect in the agreement signed with training entities. These parameters have been detailed in the Operational Manual.
- iii. It will be the responsibility of the recognized AB to ensure that relevant mandates of the AB guidelines are met through their network of training entity/entities.
- iv. ABs can take necessary actions on affiliated training entities which do not adhere to the recommendations of the AB guidelines

b. Learning Resources

The AB must ensure availability of learning resources in sufficient numbers and in vernacular languages as per the requirement

c. Training of Trainers

- i. AB should have a well defined ToT structure with dedicated resources in place. AB will be responsible for scheduling and conducting training, development of training material and availability of master trainers.
- ii. AB must also ensure that trained trainers are available for all the training being conducted under the ambit of its operations.

d. Mobilization

ABs will prepare a mobilization plan delineating techniques, target areas along with diagnostic assessment tools

e. Counseling

AB must design/ develop Counseling guidelines in order to guide and establish an effective counseling mechanism is established at implementation level. These guidelines must elaborate philosophy, techniques, processes, counselor qualification etc.

f. Training infrastructure (where training is being imparted directly by the AB)

While the training infrastructure of an affiliated/ accredited training entity is supervised by AB (detailed in the delegated regulation elaborated in section 2.5 & 4(a) of section 5.3), an AB imparting the training directly must also ensure that it has sufficient resources in terms of physical infrastructure, trainer and other learning resources.

5. Assessment

NCVET will recognize assessment agencies as per the 'guidelines for recognition of Assessment Agencies'. The recognized awarding bodies will necessarily onboard Assessment agency/ies, from a pool of AA recognized by NCVET as per their approved qualifications. For such onboarding the AB must develop and follow standardized norms keeping the guidelines of NCVET in view:

a. Relationship with Assessment Agencies- Delegated regulation

- i. Keeping the spirit of the delegated regulation, NCVET has mandated AB to monitor and supervise its Assessment Agencies with respect to their day to day functioning. However, NCVET has prescribed certain parameters which should necessarily be covered in such monitoring and reflect in the terms of mutual arrangement between AA and AB. These parameters have been detailed in the Operational Manual.
- ii. It will be the responsibility of the recognized AB to ensure that relevant mandates of the AB guidelines are met through their network of Assessment Agencies. In addition, ABs will be also responsible for the monitoring of day to day operations of the Assessment Agencies while overall monitoring of AAs will be done by the NCVET.
- iii. ABs can take necessary action against the Assessment Agencies which do not adhere to the recommendations of the NCVET guidelines. In case of grave violation, AB may recommend to NCVET blacklisting the AAs and de-recognition.

a. Assessment Strategy

- i. The recognized AB must produce a written document which sets out clear and unambiguous policy for assessment of learners. Assessment strategy should ensure that the assessments used for the qualification are appropriate for the aims and outcomes of the qualification and ensure that they are valid, reliable and fair.
- ii. ABs assessment strategies should provide an accurate or sufficiently detailed framework for delivery and evaluation of results.
- iii. ABs assessment strategies must be adapted to meet the needs of the various target groups and must clearly map to the learning outcomes as defined in the qualification.

iv. The AB must develop an assessment strategy for each of the qualifications developed and may need to develop different strategies for different delivery modes or target groups/student cohorts. Moreover, the assessment strategy must be revisited to align with the changes in industry technology and techniques, legislation, and the qualification itself.

b. Assessment Accessibility

An AB must ensure that qualified assessors are deployed at least two weeks in advance for assessment of a batch.

c. Impartial Assessment

The recognized AB must ensure impartiality of assessments through robust procedures and mechanisms. AB should also take all reasonable steps to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for:

- i. Content of assessment materials, or
- ii. Information about the assessment

d. Data management and Management information System (MIS) are in place

e. Declaration and publishing of results on a publically accessible platform within a stipulated time, as defined by NCVET, must be ensured.

f. Training of Assessors- AB shall ensure that only certified assessors are operating in the system and that they have established mechanisms for ToA.

6. Qualifications

a. Recognized AB must ensure that the qualifications are market relevant, NSQF aligned and approved by NCVET

b. Review

The AB must ensure that review of qualifications is done as per the NCVET qualification approval guidelines.

c. Withdrawal of qualification

- i. The recognized AB will be mandated to withdraw an approved qualification from NQR on following grounds:
 - Nil enrolment for a year at any given point of time, since the date of approval of qualification
 - Recognition of an AB is revoked by NCVET

Post withdrawal, AB's right to award such qualifications will cease.

ii. Under instances of withdrawal of qualification:

- The recognized AB must promptly prepare, maintain, and comply with a written withdrawal plan, which must specify how the interests of learners in relation to that qualification will be protected.
- Provide clear and accurate information about the withdrawal to learners, training centres and other stakeholders who are likely to be affected by the withdrawal.

7. Industry Engagement

A recognized AB must ensure support and inputs from industry across its vital operations through continued engagement. Few important functions requiring such engagement are designing and validating the qualifications, curriculum, training of trainers & assessors, apprenticeship, placement support, On the Job Training (OJT) and others.

Recognized AB must also ensure that the third party agencies must have a functional industry connect

8. Inclusivity

A recognized AB must ensure gender parity and affirmative action for marginalized sections

9. Grievance Redressal and Feedback

a. Grievance Redressal Mechanism

- i. AB must ensure that Grievance Redressal Mechanism as defined in section 4.1 (11) of eligibility criteria exists and functions.
- ii. AB must ensure that broad guidelines of NCVET are adhered to.
- iii. Grievances reported are recorded and resolved
- iv. AB must ensure that such mechanism exists for the third party entities

b. Feedback

Administered mechanism to solicit, record, analyze and act upon feedback received from stakeholders like trainees, employers, training entities and assessment agencies.

6. Others

a. Usage of logo

The recognized AB must ensure that the usage of NCVET logo is in line with the NCVET guidelines

b. Certification

- i. The recognized AB must ensure that the certificates issued by it are as per the format prescribed by NCVET.
- ii. The recognized AB must ensure that certificate is released to the learners within a stipulated time, as defined by NCVET.
- iii. Certificate should be available through secured online platforms.
- iv. Storage of digital certificates in National Academic Depository

c. Probity

- i. The recognized AB 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 AB 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.

5.4. RISK ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Taking cognizance of the risk assessment frameworks available globally, a Risk Assessment Matrix has been designed which seeks to assess the risk in respect of parameters under 10 broad heads of the continuity criteria namely financial, organizational, technology & data management, training, assessment, qualifications, industry engagement, inclusivity, grievance Redressal and feedback and others. The parameters defined in the matrix may be amended from time to time by NCVET. The AB must adhere to the most updated version of the same.

The objectives of the risk assessment matrix are twofold:

- i. To create an overall monitoring framework which shall ensure that ABs meet their functional and operational requirements.
- ii. To effectively respond to the risks associated with the non-compliance by an AB wrt regulatory parameters and take corrective/punitive actions as the case may be.

The risk assessment matrix will be used for continuous and periodic monitoring. A similar approach may be adopted by the recognized ABs in their monitoring systems for training and assessment delivery. The detailed risk assessment matrix is outlined in the Operational Manual.

5.5. RISK RATING

In order to arrive at risk rating of an AB following is applicable:

- i. A number of parameters have been listed under each broad head of the continuation criteria (section 5.3).
- ii. Each parameter has been assigned a weightage based on its importance and impact on AB operations.
- iii. Performance of ABs 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.

Based on the above, the total risk score for an AB, will be calculated as follows:

Total risk score = weightage x risk score of each parameter

The ABs would be adjudged as being in Low, Medium or High risk based on the total risk score obtained.

5.6. RISK MITIGATION

The process of risk mitigation would entail strategies for improvement to be undertaken by the ABs for lowering their risk. Each category of AB 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 Operation Manual.

The risk mapping exercise of the recognized ABs will be carried out once a year. Action will be taken in respect of ABs based on two factors -their risk level and frequency of

occurrence of the risk level. ABs 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 AB details of which are given in the Operational Manual.

5. 7. REPORTING

The AB 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 time to time. Recognized AB shall submit data on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in a timely and accurate manner and any other data which may be asked for from time to time, by the NCVET. The AB must establish and maintain a system of monitoring its third-party agencies and compliance reports must be submitted to NCVET as required by it.