

CREATION OF SECTOR COMMITTEES

Draft ToRs

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The Notification of the 27th December 2013 stipulates that “the NSQC would be at liberty to set up specific sub-committees for addressing sectoral issues”. One of the functions of the NSQC which can be delegated to a sub-committee according to the Notification is the one of “establishing and maintaining high standards for skill training in each sector”. As part of this function, it is proposed to create a special body in charge of looking after the quality and relevance over time of the qualifications included in the National Register.

Although routine reviews will normally be carried out by single awarding bodies, regular reviews must provide an opportunity for sector experts from various bodies to work together to investigate the need for qualifications and work together to ensure that the qualifications available meet the need. This may mean reducing duplication or proliferation of qualifications and could apply within or across states. Such collaborative reviews will be carried out by a sub-committee under the NSQC denominated Sector Committee.

1. Review policy

All qualifications in the National Qualifications Register should be aligned to a clear social or economic need, be accessible to learners with particular levels of knowledge, skills and/or experience and meet a range of other NSQF requirements. Qualifications have to be reviewed periodically, and revised where necessary, to ensure they continue to meet these needs, serve these learners, and add value to the NSQF. Reviews are part of the normal lifecycle of a qualification.

Qualifications should be reviewed at least every [five] years to ensure they remain suitable for their intended use. Qualifications in sectors where there is rapid change, such as information technology or digital media, may need to be reviewed more frequently than those sectors where the pace of change is slower. A proposed date for a scheduled review of each qualification should be proposed in the Qualification File and endorsed or changed by the NSQC.

The review process will apply to the review of a single qualification or a group of related qualifications. It will evaluate various aspects of the qualification(s) including the structure of the qualification(s), demand for the qualification(s), qualification outcomes, teaching/training and learning, assessment and progression.

2. Responsibility for reviewing

The responsibility for qualification reviews will fall to NSDA [as regulator], the awarding bodies and the SC as follows:

NSDA

NSDA will be responsible for managing the review process of qualifications through a systematic review policy. The following are the roles and responsibilities of NSDA in the review process:

- tracking the dates for reviews of qualifications entered in the National Qualifications Register
- inviting the members of the SC
- developing, negotiating and publishing an annual programme of scheduled qualification reviews
- approving the review plans of the SCs
- tracking the progress of each qualification review and reporting to the NSQC
- considering and commenting on any changes to qualifications which result from the review and advising how this should be reported to the NSQC
- following up and working with any SC which do not complete scheduled reviews and taking action as appropriate.
- taking action in accordance with the findings of the review

Awarding Bodies

As owners of qualifications, awarding bodies are responsible for:

- taking part in scheduled reviews of qualifications developed by them in accordance with the review dates agreed with the NSQC
- conducting additional reviews prompted by feedback. The following factors may trigger the review of an individual or group of qualifications:
 - the review date of an individual qualification
 - identified groups of qualifications where there is duplication and/or proliferation
 - identified groups of qualifications with a direct relationship to each other (e.g. education and/or employment pathways)
 - a request from the qualification developer or accredited user, arising from major workforces changes or social, industry and technological shifts
 - changes in legislation or government policy
 - lack of use of a qualification (e.g. no enrolments after two years)
- ensuring that the approach to the review is appropriate for the number and range of stakeholders involved and ensuring their participation in the review

In planning and carrying out the review, the SC must take account of the information about their qualifications which they will gather from the concerned awarding bodies as part of their monitoring responsibilities as set out in this Manual on Qualification File. This data will include: coverage of the sector, diversity of candidates, access to qualifications, difficulties experienced by teachers/trainers and assessors, enrolment and completion numbers, progression to employment and further learning, demand for new qualifications, RPL, numbers of complaints and appeals and reasons for these.

Sector Committees

- They will meet as per the review schedule established by the NSDA.

- They should be independent of corporate interest and members of the committee should act *intuitu personae* in line with his/her personal expertise.
- Decision should be reached by consensus and lead to recommendations addressed through a Review report to the NSQC.
- Review meetings will be prepared by the concerned experts through desk work on qualification files submitted by the NSDA at least one week ahead of the meetings.

The review process of which the SC are in charge is presented below.

3. The Review Process

Qualification reviews must normally be started on or before the review date noted in the National Qualifications Register and completed within three months. Implementation of recommended changes to qualifications should begin immediately after the review report has been accepted by the NSQC. Failure to meet this timeline without reasonable explanations may result in the qualification being removed from the National Qualifications Register.

The kinds of issues which may be raised in reviews are:

- Is the qualification fully understood by stakeholders?
- Is there need to improve the capacity of teachers/trainers and/or assessors?
- Is the infrastructure required for the successful delivery of the qualification and assessment of candidates in place?
- Is there still the same need for the qualification(s)?
- Is the typical candidate for the qualification(s) the same as was initially anticipated?
- Are the assessable outcomes of the qualifications still valid (eg have they kept up with technical changes, employment profiles, or academic advances?)
- Are the users of the qualification(s) – especially learners, employers, admissions personnel – satisfied with the qualification(s) in terms of employability, RPL, progression, etc?
- Is the assessment of the qualification(s) providing valid, reliable and fair results?
- Does experience show that the learning time estimated for the qualification is appropriate?

The answers to some of these questions will point to a need for improvements in communication or a need for capacity-building, but in some cases the outcome will be evidence of a need for revisions to the qualification, or even a replacement of the qualification by a more valid, manageable or up-to-date version.

Sector Committees will also work to rationalise and otherwise improve provision where appropriate – eg to ensure that the range of qualifications, and associated further educational or employment opportunities, are easy to understand for providers, learners and employers.

The Review report will be drafted by one of the experts by should express the views of the whole committee and be endorsed by all.

The normal review process is as follows:

- When a Qualification File for a qualification is submitted to the NSQC a date and month for the review of the qualification is included. This date should be no more than five years from the

submission of the qualification file. NSQC may either accept or amend this date. The date accepted or set by the NSQC will be called “the scheduled review”.

- Regulatory and awarding bodies must establish the means of gathering feedback on the qualifications immediately the qualification has been entered in the National Qualifications Register.
- Where feedback on a qualification prompts an additional review, the regulatory body or the awarding body will inform the NSQC.
- NSDA will keep a record of scheduled and additional review dates for all qualifications in the National Qualifications Register.
- Each January, NSDA will remind SCs of reviews which are scheduled from April that year to March the next year and invite their members to confirm their intention to take part in these reviews. NSDA will appoint a lead officer for each review.
- Sector Committees will inform NSDA of the start and completion dates for the review. (It may be possible to delay the review of a single qualification to allow it to be included in the review of a suite of qualifications.)
- NSDA will prepare and publish a timetable in March of each year, listing the reviews which are due to start in the coming twelve months.
- Where an awarding body indicates that it will not submit a qualification to a scheduled review, NSDA will inform the NSQC and start procedures to remove the qualification from the National Qualifications Register.
- The SC will conduct the review and report on the results and any action required using a qualification review report form – see Annexure. This report should normally be available to NSDA and NSQC within six months of the start of the review.
- Where the review indicates that a qualification requires to be revised, the awarding body will indicate to NSDA how and over what time period the revision will take place. It should include and predicted dates for the completion of the revisions and re-submission of the qualification(s) to the NSQC.
- The awarding body submits the appropriate paperwork for revised qualifications to NSDA for the approval of the NSQC.

This is summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The Review Timeline

<p>AT POINT OF SUBMISSION & APPROVAL OF QUALIFICATION</p> <p>Awarding Body submits Qualification File and proposes date of review.</p> <p>NSQC approves qualifications and schedules review</p> <p>NSDA enters qualification in the National Qualifications Register</p> <p>NSDA records date of scheduled review</p> <p>Awarding Body sets up processes for gathering feedback</p>
<p>AT ANY TIME</p>

Awarding Body informs NSDA if additional review is required on the basis of feedback
<p>EACH YEAR</p> <p>JANUARY</p> <p>Sector Committees make a plan of all qualifications to be reviewed in the year based on the qualification Register.</p> <p>NSDA reminds SC members about scheduled reviews</p> <p>SC members confirm their intention to take part in reviews</p> <p>MARCH</p> <p>NSDA publishes a global timetable of review starts and completions for the next 12 months</p> <p>APRIL TO THE FOLLOWING MARCH</p> <p>Sector Committees conduct the reviews and report within 6 months on the results</p> <p>NSQC approves SCs' proposals for action on review</p>
<p>ONGOING</p> <p>Awarding Bodies revise qualifications and discontinue qualifications as required</p> <p>NSDA removes unreviewed qualifications from the Register</p>

As part of its guardianship of the NSQF, NSDA is responsible for qualifications listed on the National Register and in this role is the final decision-maker on the outcome of a qualification review. It is anticipated that in the great majority of reviews there will be consensus over the outcome of the review process.

If an individual qualification owner or stakeholder proposes an outcome that NSDA is unable to accept, then NSDA will consult with the affected parties over its proposed final decision. In making its final decision, NSDA will take into account the views expressed in the consultation and will also explain its decision.

4. Revising Qualifications

Recommendations by SCs may be followed by actions from the awarding bodies. Reviews by the SCs may show that no action is required by the awarding body, or that the actions required do not involve changes to the qualification(s) reviewed.

Where reviews point to a need for a changes to the qualification(s) available, this may take one of the following forms:

- minor changes to one or more qualifications
- major changes to one or more qualifications
- the development of one or more new qualifications
- discontinuing one or more qualifications

Minor changes

Minor changes do not materially affect the key aspects of the qualification in the National Qualifications Register – ie the outcomes, the assessment criteria, the level of the qualification or its credit value. Arrangements for this kind of change, including a timetable, can be agreed with the NSDA case officer and reported formally to NQSC. The arrangements will involve revising all materials associated with the qualification, changing the entries in the Register, and informing all providers and users of the qualification about the changes. The arrangements will have to balance speed with steps to ensure that all those involved can easily implement the changes.

Major changes

Major changes are those which do materially affect the outcomes, the assessment criteria, or the level or credit value of the qualification or of any of its components. In this case a revised Qualifications File or a new Qualification File will have to be submitted to the NSQC along with a plan for revising all materials associated with the qualification. The revised qualification will have to be given a new code and the revised qualification will have to replace the existing entry in the National Qualifications Register. All providers and users of the qualification will have to be informed that the previous version of the qualification is being replaced. Time will have to be made available for learners already committed to the old version to switch to the new version. Arrangements for managing the introduction of the new version will have to be agreed by the NSQC.

New Qualification(s)

Where new qualifications are being created, a new Qualification File will have to be prepared, in accordance with the procedures set out in this Manual.

Discontinued Qualification(s)

Where a qualification is being discontinued, transition arrangements will have to be put in place to allow providers time to complete the discontinued qualification. If these arrangements are in place, the qualification can be removed from the National Qualifications Register.

These kinds of change, and the action required, are illustrated in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Revisions Based on Reviews

OUTCOME OF REVIEW	ACTION BY AWARDING BODY
No change to qualification	Other actions (eg improvements to communication or management of the awarding process or capacity-building) OR no action.
Minor change eg corrections, clarifications or changes of wording which do not materially affect the outcomes, assessment or level of the qualification	Agree with NSDA that changes are minor. Correct or replace Qualification File and/or other documentation in the National Qualifications Register. Inform assessors, providers and users of the qualification.

<p>Major change</p> <p>Changes which affect the outcomes, assessment or level of the qualification or of any component of the qualification</p>	<p>Inform NSDA about necessary changes</p> <p>Submit revised or new Qualification File and relevant documentation to NSQC.</p> <p>When approved, replace the old version of the qualification in the National Qualifications Register with the new version.</p> <p>Agree switch-over plan with NSDA.</p>
<p>New qualification(s)</p>	<p>Submit new Qualification File to NSQC and follow normal National Qualifications Register processes.</p>
<p>Discontinuation of a qualification</p>	<p>Agree phasing-out plan with NSDA.</p> <p>Remove the qualification as quickly as possible while protecting existing learners.</p>

Where there is a delay in commencing the review or where a review plan not submitted within the three month period, NSDA will, in the first instance, follow up with the SC to determine the reason for the non-compliance and agree remedial action to be taken. If the remedial action is not completed then NSDA will refer the matter to the NSQC for further action, which may mean removing the qualification from the National Qualifications Register.

5. Sector Committee composition

The Sector Committees will be anchored in the NSDA. They will have the composition as under:

- i. NSDA Lead Officer.
- ii. Awarding body or his Representative, such as UGC, NCVT, CBSE.
- iii. Concerned SSC
- iv. Head of one Training Institution delivering qualification in the concerned sector.
- v. CEO of large size Company in the sector or his representative as of the scheduled review
- vi. CEO of medium size company in the sector
- vii. CEO of NGO active in training in the sector
- viii. A trainer involved in the delivery of these qualifications.

The representatives could be technical persons from the concerned bodies

ANNEXURE: NSQF QUALIFICATION REVIEW REPORT

Qualification Title:

Qualification Code:

Date of approval by NSQC:

Anticipated start date of review:

Contact details of the body submitting the review proposal

Name and address of submitting body:

Name and contact details of individual dealing with the submission

Sector Committees should report on the following and indicate how the data/feedback was collected:

- numbers enrolling for and completing their qualifications,
- the extent to which the candidates for their qualifications represent the diversity of Indian society – data on candidates matched against percentages
- any difficulties experienced by individuals and providers in accessing the qualification(s)
- any difficulties experienced by teachers/trainers in delivering the qualification(s)
- any difficulties experienced by assessment bodies in providing valid and reliable assessments for the outcomes of their qualifications
- records of complaints and appeals
- progression to employment and/or further learning as a percentage of completion
- how the design of the qualification(s) are contributing to or impeding horizontal and vertical progression
- evidence of demand for progression to other sectors and the extent to which this is met by the qualification(s)
- the extent to which the qualification(s) are used for recruitment to the labour market and/or admissions to further education/training programmes
- the provision and uptake of RPL related to the qualification(s)
- evidence of the accuracy of the level and credit value of the qualification(s)
- analyses of these data related to factors which can influence success - modes of learning, types and backgrounds of candidates, etc
- infrastructure issues, eg availability of qualified teachers/trainers and assessors
- any demand for new qualifications

List of documents submitted

1. x
2. x
3. x

Areas requiring action	Proposed action	Proposed timescale for action
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		