

SOP for OPERATIONALIZATION OF NATIONAL CREDIT FRAMEWORK (NCrF) in HIGHER EDUCATION

Introduction:

The National Education Policy 2020 envisions a disruptive transformation in education system to make India a 'global knowledge superpower- Vishwa Guru'. It lays emphasis on making the education more holistic, multidisciplinary, and effective by integrating general (academic) and vocational/ skill education while ensuring the vertical and horizontal mobility of students and learners between academic and vocational streams. To realize the intent and objectives of National Education Policy 2020, the Government of India constituted a High-Level Committee (HLC) to formulate the National Credit Framework (NCrF). Members from UGC, AICTE, NCVET, NIOS, CBSE, NCERT, Department of School Education and Learning & Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, DGT, and Ministry of Skill Development were part of the HLC. The NCrF provides for creditization of all learning including academic, vocational/ skills & experiential learning, and assignment, accumulation, storage, transfer & redemption of credits, subject to assessment; removes distinction between subjects and establishes academic equivalence between vocational & general education while enabling mobility within & between them, and its operationalization through the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC).

The National Credit Framework, duly approved by the Government, has been notified by UGC on 10th April 2023. Subsequently, the Department of Higher Education vide its order dated 10th May 2023 constituted a High-Level Committee (HLC) to oversee the operationalization and implementation of NCrF. The first meeting of the committee was held on 8th June 2023 wherein, three different sub-committees, each catering to requirements of school education, higher education and vocational education were constituted.

1. The Sub-Committee for Higher Education was constituted to develop SOPs and guidelines for operationalization of NCrF in Higher Education (**composition at Annexure I**). The TOR of the Committee are as follows:
 - i. Create SOP for integrating Higher Education with vocational education, training & skilling;
 - ii. Create an SOP on establishing equivalence within and between Higher Education and Vocational Education, Training & Skilling for a NCrF level, including the requirement of additional learning, if any;
 - iii. Create SOP for the assignment, accumulation of credits for courses/ qualifications/ programs earned in the same assessment band, and also setting up of broad learning outcomes for each NCrF level as defined under NCrF;
 - iv. Suggest a detailed credit transfer mechanism for establishing entry eligibility in

academics at different levels for various streams in consultation with other regulators, subject to fulfilment of their defined conditions;

- v. Define the specific modalities for catering to students with the varying pace of learning and defining special assessment criteria, including the basis of assigning and assessing credits, for students and learners with exceptional achievements/ performance in games and sports, performing/ fine arts, social work, NCC, or another similar subjects/ category;
- vi. SOP for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in higher education including Technical education.

The Committee has been empowered to include any other TOR which it considers important for the formulation of the overall report.

The sub-committee for higher education held three meetings viz. 1st meeting on July 18th, 2023, 2nd meeting on August 7th, 2023 and the 3rd meeting on August 9th 2023. The subcommittee also sought comments, suggestions and recommendations from all the IITs. Based on all the recommendations in NCrf, National Higher Qualification Framework (NHEQF) and Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) document and on suggestions given by the members of the committee, and the comments received from the IITs, the following SOPs and guidelines are recommended for implementation of NCrf in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs):

- 4.1. The National Credit Framework (NCrf) notified by UGC shall act as the broad enabling and guiding frameworks which shall be supplemented by these SOPs and guidelines for all organizations and institutions. The NCrf is available at <https://www.ugc.gov.in/Ncrf.aspx>. The following references in the NCrf may be referred to and read with this document for detailed understanding of this SOPs/Guidelines:
 - i. Section 3.2.5- learning hours- components of learning- detailing components that need to be considered as part of the notional learning hours for counting credits.
 - ii. Section 3.2.5, Table 2- elaborates the learning hours per year across the various academic grades in Higher Education, School and Vocational Education, Training and Skilling.
 - iii. Section 3.2.9, Table 3- details out the NCrf levels for different academic Grade/Vocational Education, Training and Skilling and the Assessment Bands and equivalence.
 - iv. Section 3.2.10, Figure I- the NCrf caters to creditization of three dimensions of learnings i.e Academic Education (School and Higher), Vocational education, Training and Skilling and relevant experiential learning & proficiency/professional levels achieved.

- v. Section 3.3.2, para I-Table 4; Para – II, Table 5; Section 3.3.3 -Table 6: Detail the NCrF levels and credit assignment in School education, Higher education and Vocational Education, Training and Skilling respectively.
 - vi. Section 3.3.4, Table 7- Credit Assignment for Relevant Experience and Professional/ Proficiency Level Acquired including the calculation of overall credit earned.
 - vii. Section 3.4.1, Table 8- refers to National Credit Framework Levels (NCrF) and corresponding Academic Levels (National School Education, National Higher Education Qualifications Framework), and Vocational Education and Skills Levels (National Skill Qualifications Framework) and conditions for academic equivalence.
- 4.2. Apart from the provisions of NCrF, the following provisions of various other Guidelines may also be referred to:

4.2.1. Major Relevant Guidelines notified by UGC/Higher Education

- i. Table 2 (Minimum credit requirement to award degree under each category) of document Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programmes: https://www.ugc.gov.in/pdfnews/7193743_FYUGP.pdf to understand the structure of the Undergraduate Program in the.
- ii. National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF): <https://www.ugc.gov.in/NHEQF.aspx>
- iii. UGC (Establishment and Operationalization of Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) Scheme in Higher Education) Regulations, 2021: https://www.ugc.gov.in/academic_bank_of_credits.aspx
- iv. Curriculum and Credit Framework for Postgraduate Programmes (https://www.ugc.gov.in/pdfnews/3826733_Draft_PG_Curriculumn.pdf)
- v. Guidelines for Multiple Entry and Exit in Academic Programmes offered in Higher Education Institutions: https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/abc_doc.pdf
- vi. UGC Guidelines for Higher Education institutions to offer Apprenticeship/ Internship embedded Degree programmes: https://www.ugc.gov.in/pdfnews/9105852_ugc-guidelines_ApprenticeshipInternship.pdf
- vii. 12. Guidelines for providing Skill Based Education under National Skills Qualifications Framework: https://www.ugc.gov.in/pdfnews/6556003_Guidelines-for-providing-Skill-Based-Education-under-NSQF.pdf

4.2.2. Relevant Guidelines notified by NCVET:

- i. National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) Notification (<https://ncvet.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/National-Skills-Qualification-Framework-notification-June-2023.pdf>)
 - a. Section 5.1 and Annexure I: to understand Level Descriptors to determine the Learning outcomes of at NSQF level.
 - b. Section 5.2 and 5.3: refer to defining National Occupation Standards (NOS) and Micro-credentials (MC)
 - c. Section 5.4 and Annexure II: explains the minimum entry criteria and minimum range of notional hours for both short-term and Long-term training required to achieve the learning outcomes prescribed for a particular NSQF level.
- ii. Guidelines for Recognition and regulation of Awarding Bodies (AB): <https://ncvet.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Guidelines-for-Awarding-Bodies.pdf>
- iii. Guidelines for Recognition and Regulation of Assessment Agencies' (refer <https://ncvet.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Guidelines-for-Assessment-agencies.pdf>)
- iv. Guidelines for Blended Learning for Vocational Education, Training & Skilling by NCVET: <https://ncvet.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Guidelines-for-Blended-Learning-for-Vocational-Education-Training-Skilling.pdf>
- v. Guidelines for Development, Approval & Usage of National Occupational Standards (NOS) & Micro Credentials (MC) by NCVET: <https://ncvet.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Guidelines-for-Development-Approval-Usage-of-National-Occupational-Standards-NOS-Micro-Credentials-MC.pdf>
- vi. Guidelines for Creditisation of Skilling & Training Courses & Qualifications of Multinational Companies (MNCs) and Leading Indian Enterprises by NCVET
- vii. Guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) by NCVET- <https://ncvet.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Final-RPL-guidelines.pdf>
- viii. Guidelines on Multiskilling and Cross-Sectoral Skilling by NCVET- <https://ncvet.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Multiskilling-and-Cross-Sectoral-Skilling.pdf>
- ix. 20. Guidelines for Diploma Qualifications in Vocational Education, Training & Skilling: https://ncvet.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/DiplomaGuidelines_20230515.pdf

A. SOP for integrating Higher Education, Technical Education and Vocational Education, Training & Skilling

1. Integration of higher education, technical education and vocational education, training & skilling is possible by removing the silos that exist among them and allowing students to earn, store, accumulate and redeem credits through the Academic Bank of Credit (ABC).
2. Subject to the provisions of NCrf and National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF), every HEI is allowed imaginative and need based curricular structures and encourage creative combinations of subjects and disciplines.
3. Every HEI must ensure flexibility for students to choose their learning trajectories and career choices and specify the broad learning outcomes for each course/ subject along with competencies, NCrf level and assessment bands as defined under NCrf and the flexibility so provided to students to attain those learning outcomes through different authorised sources/ platforms, thus allowing them to develop and follow their own academic and career paths.
4. There is a need to transform education and training systems to prepare all learners for the emerging skill requirements for life, work, future of work and sustainable development. Therefore, vocational/ skill-based courses are to be made an integral part of the course/ curricular structure.
5. All the Universities/ Higher Education Institutes may integrate the vocational education training & skilling (VETS) based courses/ qualifications as per the following guidelines:

A. Integration of VETS in Higher Education as part of Curriculum/ as Additional courses for their students enrolled in UG/ PG Programs

- i. As per the provisions in the NCrf, upto 50 percent of the total credit requirement of a UG/ PG program can be fulfilled by earning credits from the Skill based courses / Qualifications of appropriate NCrf levels (4.5 to 8).
- ii. Every HEI may offer, as part of their UG and PG curricular structure, vocational and skill-based courses/ qualifications of the appropriate NCrf levels which are either designed/ developed by their HEI as per National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF) and approved by the highest academic body of HEI concerned or adopt the NSQF aligned and approved courses available on National Qualification Register (NQR) Portal at www.nqr.gov.in as per the requirement. Thus, such skill-based courses/ qualifications and may be implemented in different ways by the HEIs for their students as given below:
 - a. **As part of the UG/ PG curriculum** - Such courses/ qualifications, may be NHEQF or NSQF aligned, and are integrated as part of the curricular structure of the UG/PG program.

- b. **As additional courses/ qualifications, not integrated within the curriculum of a UG/ PG program or offered as a standalone course/ qualification** - The HEIs may offer relevant skill-based courses/ qualifications over and above their approved curricular structures with provision of additional credits. While additional course/ qualification may be related to the curricular stream of the student/learner, the standalone course/ qualification could be totally unrelated to the curricular stream of the UG/PG Program. Such courses/ qualifications could either be NHEQF or NSQF aligned.
- iii. HEIs may offer Skill-based NHEQF courses/ qualifications developed by them with the approval of their highest Academic Body/ authority. The HEIs may also implement NSQF aligned and approved skill-based courses/ qualifications **to their enrolled UG/ PG students**, carry out assessments to ascertain the learning outcomes and issue their own certificates for such courses/ qualifications subject to successful assessment.
- iv. At present, the curricular structure/ design in Higher Education for their UG program is based on the guidelines for Four Year UG program, which includes Vocational Education, Training and Skilling as an important component of learning. The table in **Annexure III** gives an illustration on how skill-based courses/ qualifications can be integrated with the curricular structure of a UG program. The skill-based courses/ qualifications can also be implemented as:
 - a. Ability Enhancement Course, Skill Enhancement Course, Value added common courses or as Summer Internship programs.
 - b. The foundational or upskilling courses/ qualifications which may form part of skill/ability enhancement courses.
 - c. As part of the Major or Minor stream in the curriculum.

B. Offering Standalone Skill-Based NHEQF courses/ qualifications by HEIs to the learners beyond their regular UG/ PG students

- i. HEIs may offer Skill-based NHEQF courses/ qualifications developed by them with the approval of their highest Academic Body/ authority **to the students/ learners beyond their regular UG/ PG students** subject to their jurisdiction as permitted by their Statutes.
- ii. The learners may be issued an HEI Skill Certificate by the HEI concerned with Skill India branding for such NHEQF courses/ qualifications.

C. Offering Standalone Skill-Based NSQF courses/ qualifications by HEIs to the learners beyond their regular UG/ PG students

- i. In case any HEI wants to operate in the VETS ecosystem and offer the NSQF aligned and approved Skill based courses / qualifications of appropriate NCrf levels 4.5 and above as standalone courses, to learners beyond their regular enrolled UG/ PG students, the HEI may do so if it is a recognised Awarding body (AB) of NCVET.
 - ii. As an AB, HEIs may implement NSQF aligned and approved skill-based courses/ qualifications, to the students/ learners beyond their regular UG/ PG students subject to their jurisdiction as permitted by their Statutes, and issue NCVET certificates, with Skill India branding, for such courses/ qualifications subject to successful assessment.
 - iii. As an AB, HEI may also develop an NSQF course/ qualification with the approval of National Skills Qualification Committee (NSQC). NSQC includes members /representatives from UGC and AICTE
 - iv. As an AB, the HEIs may also adopt NSQF aligned and approved qualifications out of more than 1300 courses / qualifications of NCrf level 4.5 and above (including 340+ future skill qualifications) in various sectors (list available at www.nqr.gov.in).
6. As long as the NSQF courses are being offered as part of the curricular structures which are duly approved by the highest academic body concerned of the HEI, no approval of NCVET would be necessary. The HEIs may implement and carry out the assessments in respect of the NSQF courses, assign credits and award certificates. The credits earned from such vocational/ skill-based courses from an HEI would not require further validation or approval from NCVET.
7. The credits assigned to the NSQF aligned course/ qualification integrated within curriculum or offered as additional/ standalone course/ qualification would be same as the credits specified in the NQR.
8. To ensure quality and adherence to the required industry standards while implementing the NSQF courses, the HEIs would ensure that all the essential requirements of infrastructure, teachers/ trainers, assessors, skill/ practical labs/ workshops, and learning material etc are met with in accordance with the prescribed guidelines with respect to the courses/ qualifications concerned. In case the HEIs does not have the adequate facilities and resources to implement the course/ qualification, they may seek the assistance and support from the Sector Skill Councils, the Awarding Bodies or the Assessment Agencies concerned.
9. All skill based courses certificates by any HEIs or any other institution would have a common branding of **Skill India with Logo**.



10. Any credit from NSQF aligned skill-based courses earned by a student/ learner from an HEI, which remained unredeemed/ un-utilised, can be used for issuance of a skill certificate by the concerned HEI within the timespan prescribed and such certificate shall carry the name and level of the courses so completed. However, the skill certificate issued will be that of the HEI concerned and not an NCVET certificate unless the HEI is a deemed AB/ AB. Such certificate will also carry a Skill India Logo.
11. In case of professional courses regulated by the statutory bodies (UGC, AICTE, NCVET, NCTE etc.), their norms standards and guidelines shall apply while offering and implementing the skill-based courses/ qualifications.
12. All the HEIs implementing skill-based courses/ qualifications whether as part of the curriculum or for outside their regular UG/PG program for other learners shall ensure registration on Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) as well as share data with Skill India Digital (SID) regarding the Skill-based courses/ qualifications as per the prescribed process. The HEIs to also ensure registration of their students/ learners on the ABC through the APAAR id.
13. Bridge courses may be conducted offline or online or bended mode or through SWAYAM portal or similar online platforms duly recognised by the regulator concerned for the purpose.
14. For offering and creditising the courses conducted by an educational technology company (known as edTech companies) and making these as part of the curriculum, the guidelines of the respective regulators shall apply.
15. To enable the interested HEIs to seamlessly design, develop and offer NSQF courses and qualification without the need to approach NCVET, the NCVET Council has already decided to grant the status of deemed awarding bodies to all the Institutes of National Importance (INIs), including all IITs, NITs, IISERs, NIDs, IIMs, Central Universities and Deemed Universities etc. These deemed AB HEIs would have full powers to act as a dual Awarding body (AB) with PAN India jurisdiction.
16. The deemed Awarding Bodies will also have access to all the available Vocational Education, Training and Skilling resources including model curriculum, e-content, Training of Trainers (ToT) & Training of Assessors (ToA) resources, skill training assistance and support from the Sector Skill Councils, Awarding Bodies and

Assessment Agencies concerned in implementation of the NSQF aligned and approved courses/ qualifications.

17. The other interested HEIs may also get the status of a recognised awarding body for the purpose of developing and implementing the NSQF aligned Qualification in their authorised jurisdictions to the learners other than their regular students. For this purpose, a simplified process of Awarding Body recognition has been put in place by NCVET for HEIs.
18. If a student from vocational education wishes to enter the general education at the next higher NCrf level or vice-versa, an expert committee of the HEI concerned (as detailed in the SOPs of Higher Education) may identify any gaps between the skill and education and suggest suitable bridge courses for establishing the eligibility or for admitting the students to general education/ vocational education.
19. The details of parameters and provisions for integration of VETS courses/ qualifications in Higher Education Institutions/ Universities including General Universities and Skill Universities are given in the Annexure-II. The detailed guidelines for implementation of Skill based qualification/course in Higher Education Institutes may also be referred to in the SOPs for operationalising of NCrf in Higher Education.

B. SOP on establishing equivalence within and between General/ Higher Education and Vocational Education, Training & Skilling for a level and flexibility to earn credits

1. Every HEI should clearly provide its students, the percentage or number of credits that can be earned from outside the parent institution, semester-wise/ per semester (which may differ as per the category of courses i.e. core courses, multidisciplinary courses, skill based courses etc.) or in a programme or as may be applicable. It may be noted that as per NCrf up to 50% of the total credit requirement for a program can be earned from the skill based courses/ program.
2. The HEI may need to undertake appropriate mapping of their curricular programs to establish Equivalence for credits earned from different credit awarding bodies. While establishing Academic Equivalence, the institution may also prescribe additional requirements, if so required.
3. Learning outcomes of courses, competencies achieved and the NCrf levels attained shall be the basis for drawing equivalence for considering lateral entry of students/ learners as well as for the purpose of counting the credits earned from outside the parent university/ HEI. Therefore, carefully framing the 'Learning Outcomes and Competencies' of each course is important.

4. Every University/Autonomous institution will frame curriculum as per the guidelines given in NHEQF clearly specifying the outcomes and competencies of the courses. Following are the points which may be taken into consideration while framing the Learning Outcome of the courses:

- i. Every course (paper) must have well defined learning outcomes and competencies which are measurable and duly aligned with NHEQF/ NSQF.
- ii. Such learning outcomes and competencies of a course must have co-relation with the course objectives.
- iii. Learning outcomes and competencies must be framed from the perspective of what the student will be able to do after completion of the course, stating
 - a. what knowledge & understanding he/she will be able to develop/ describe,
 - b. what practical/ hands-on skills he/she will be able to demonstrate,
 - c. where and how he/she will be able to apply the knowledge and skills so acquired.
 - d. what analysis he/she will be able to do
 - e. what new innovation can be done, created or developed using the knowledge and skills so gained.

Note: each course (i.e. paper) may or may not have all the five attributes stated above.

5. An expert committee will be formed at the institutional level to examine the equivalency of the credit on the basis of the learning outcomes, numbers of credits to be considered at the multiple entry levels etc.

6. For determining Academic Equivalence, a HEI:

- i. can undertake direct assessment in the Learning outcome prescribed and issue relevant award (Certificate/Diploma/Degree) in case the learner clears the assessment.
- ii. may determine the additional/bridge courses that a learner needs to undertake to earn an award.

7. Credits from a foreign university may be counted subject to the recommendations of the expert committee regarding equivalence of the credit in accordance with the relevant Guidelines of UGC/AICTE.

8. Credits are generally transferred along with grades but there are several systems of awarding grades nationally and internationally. Institutes must devise a mechanism by constituting a committee of experts in that area to decide the equivalency of grades.

9. The National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF) may be referred for learning outcomes and competencies for different NCrf levels.
(https://www.ugc.gov.in/pdfnews/7193743_FYUGP.pdf)

10. Flexibility to earn credits- Students and learners should be able to earn credits by –

- i. studying courses offered by various academic institutions and platforms (such as SWAYAM or any other platform duly recognised by the concerned regulatory body), subject to assessment – anytime, anywhere and any level of learning;
- ii. Undergoing skill/vocational courses in a formal set up;
- iii. experiential learning in an informal set up (for awarding Credits for such experiential learning, the HEI concerned will need to conduct assessment).
- iv. Experiential learning in a formal set-up in the form of internship or apprenticeship, work-embedded program as part of the curriculum.

(Please refer to https://www.ugc.gov.in/pdfnews/9105852_ugc-guidelines_ApprenticeshipInternship.pdf)

11. Credits and credit mobility -

- i. Credits will be calculated in the following manner:
 - a. One credit is equivalent to one hour of teaching [lecture or tutorial] or two hours of practical work/ field work, or three hours of experiential learning per week. Accordingly, one Credit would mean equivalent of 15 hrs of theory or 30 hrs of workshop/ lab work or 45 hours of experiential learning in a semester. (one year or 1200 hours of learning works out to be 40 credits, which on an average is 30 hours per credit including lectures and tuorials, practical work/ field work, and experiential learning)
 - b. For internship/field work, the credit weightage for equivalent hours is 50% of that for lectures/tutorials.
 - c. For apprenticeship, the credits would be calculated in terms of duration instead of notional hours. A three-months apprenticeship programme will earn 10 credits. It is important that in all such cases the learning outcomes with NCrF levels need to be pre-defined and subsequently assessed for award of credits.
- ii. As per NCrF, the minimum number of credits that can be awarded in a year is 40. Typically for a 3-year and 4-year degree programmes, minimum number of credits are 120 and 160 respectively.
- iii. Institutes offering minor degree, in a 3/ 4 year UG program, may suitably decide 24 to 32 credits for the minor degree within 120/ 160 credits only and may award degree in major with minor.

C. SOP for the accumulation of credits for courses/ qualifications/ programs earned in the same assessment band

1. All credits for courses/ qualifications/ programs are to be accumulated in the Academic Bank of Credit (ABC).
2. Every Higher Education institutions (HEI) will register on the Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) portal.
3. Every HEI shall ensure that their students register on the ABC portal and create an APAAR (Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry) Id for the purpose of accumulating the credits and redeeming them for award of Certificate/ Diploma/ Degree.
(refer to https://www.ugc.gov.in/pdfnews/9327451_Academic-Bank-of-Credits-in-Higher-Education.pdf)
4. Credits stored in ABC portal are normally valid for seven years. After seven years, re-entry into a programme of study will be based on the validation/ re-validation of prior learning outcomes through fresh assessment. In case of VETS courses, the validity of the credits earned may vary, which will be defined within the course/ qualification itself.

D. SOP for establishing entry eligibility in academics at different levels for various streams & for Transfer of Credits

1. All HEIs and their students who are registered on ABC portal shall be enabled to opt for credit transfer and migration through this portal.
2. Admission to programmes of study can be conducted as per the entry criteria transparently based on merit. Merit may be drawn by conducting a common entrance test if there are large number of aspirants for fewer seats. Appropriate mechanism in this regard may be devised by the HEI concerned.
3. Lateral entry into the programme of study at a particular NHEQF level will be based on the validation of prior learning outcomes through a pre-defined assessment, including those achieved outside of formal learning or through learning and training in the workplace or in the community, through continuing professional development activities, or through independent/ self-directed/ self-managed learning activities. The guidelines issued by the UGC and AICTE for general and engineering programmes respectively in respect of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), work-embedded degree programs or apprenticeship embedded engineering / vocational programs would be followed by the HEIs in this regard.
4. Lateral entry and credit transfer between/ among HEIs for a student who has completed the required NHEQF/ NSQF courses for a particular NCrF level can be

done based on the fulfilment of the eligibility criteria to enter the next higher level as well as having the per-requisites of the courses of the lateral entry level. For example, a student after completion of NCrf Level 4.5 in HEI - 1 may opt for lateral entry into Level 5 in HEI- 2 if she/ he has fulfilled the per-requisites of the courses listed to be offered/ studied at NCrf Level 5 in HEI-2. The academic council of the HEI-2 admitting the students would be the authority to decide if the student fulfils the pre-requisites or should be allowed entry to Level 5 in HEI-2 by provisioning bridge the courses to overcome such gap.

5. Lateral entry to an institution shall be permissible subject to vacancies or provision of supernumerary seats available in that particular course/ programme and the admission criteria to be followed in a transparent manner as mentioned above.
6. Vacancies or number of seats opened for lateral entry shall be determined by:
 - i. The number of vacancies created by the exit of the students at the end of an even semester;
 - ii. The student-teacher ratio required to be maintained;
 - iii. Availability of adequate infrastructure; and
 - iv. Other factors which are relevant in the teaching learning process.
7. In case of lateral entry into any odd semester of the UG programme through the merit of the qualifying examination, the following points may be considered:
 - i. Mapping of at least the core courses and the NCrf levels of the relevant programme (completed by the student where such programme of study is offered);
 - ii. If the core courses are common, the student may be considered for lateral entry in another HEI without any difficulty;
 - iii. If the core courses are not common, but the receiving HEI still decides to let the student enter, it should have a mechanism for bridging the gap through a bridge course;
 - iv. Every HEI should display on its website the eligibility criteria for lateral entry and the mode of admission/ entry/ selection for the same.

E. SOP for modalities for catering to students with the varying pace of learning and defining special assessment criteria for exceptional students

1. The National Education Policy 2020 emphasises upon student centricity, flexibility and choices. Accordingly, HEIs should make provision for allowing students to learn at their own pace, as far as possible.
2. Every HEI should allow students to earn more or less credits than the prescribed for a semester to cater to fast and slow learners. The minimum and maximum credits that can be earned per semester can be specified by the HEI keeping in view the minimum

credits required for academic progression to the next higher level as well as the maximum duration required for completion of a programme of study.

3. An HEI can also devise and follow a special assessment criterion for the students with exceptional achievements/ performance in games and sports, performing/ fine arts, social work, NCC, or another similar subjects/ category, so that they are able to pursue their talent and passion concurrently with the academic/ vocational/ technical education. The special assessment for such students should be very objective, transparent and credible which may include the mode, criteria, methodology, schedule, and other attendant matters relating to assessment and related implications.

F. SOP for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in higher education

1. The NEP 2020 envisions the recognition of all forms of prior learning with a focus on non-formal, informal, and experiential learning outcomes creating new routes for learners to be integrated with main-stream education, resume formal studies. The NCrF has enabled provision for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) thereby creditizing the existing knowledge and skills of the students, learners and the workforce acquired through various formal, non-formal or traditional or any other methods.
2. The process for recognizing the learning that has been developed through experiential learning including relevant experience and proficiency/ professional levels acquired and/or previous formal, non-formal, and informal learning contexts shall be subject to assessment of their existing knowledge, skills, competencies, and learning outcomes.
3. Evidence of possessing the necessary skills and knowledge is to be assessed against the learning outcomes of the recognized formal programmes prescribed under the NHEQF/ NSQF. Thus, RPL is based on the Learning Outcome (LO) based assessment approach recognizing learning through informal methods, and providing access and opportunity for further education and skilling.
4. The assessment of such learners shall have to be very objective, transparent and credible and may include the mode, criteria, methodology, schedule, and other attendance matters relating to assessment and related implications. The procedure to assign credits for relevant experience and professional/ proficiency levels acquired is given in detail in clause no. 3.3.4 of the National Credit Framework available at <https://www.ugc.gov.in/Ncrf.aspx>.
5. RPL shall have reference to NHEQF/ NSQF levels and level descriptors prescribed therein. Credits earned by the student/ learner through RPL shall be multiplied by the

weightage of the NCrF level for calculating the credit points earned.

6. The guidelines issued by the UGC and AICTE for general and engineering programmes respectively with respect of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), programs would be followed by the HEIs in this regard

G. Guideline for assessment and award of Certificate/ Diploma/ Degree

1. Assessment strategy:

- i. Every HEI should develop effective mechanisms for assessing learning outcomes.
- ii. Assessment is mandatory for creditisation of every course and has to be done to determine whether the student/ learner has achieved the desired/ prescribed learning outcomes for that course after its completion. Therefore, the mode and system of assessments have to be guided by the learning outcomes.
- iii. The NEP 2020 emphasizes upon formative and continuous assessment rather than summative assessment. The scheme of assessment may have components of various types of assessments, such as formative assessments, summative assessment, norm referenced assessments, criterion referenced assessments, industry validation assessment, AI based assessment, diagnostic assessments, peer to peer randomised assessment, ipsative or self-referenced assessments, self-assessment after self-learning etc. The HEIs may opt for appropriate assessment strategies as applicable, as per details in the NCrF.
- iv. In case of exit after completion of Level 4.5 or 5, an additional 4 to 10 credits employability skill-based course as an Exit module will be undertaken by the Student/ Learner to be offered by the HEI, to award the UG certificate or UG diploma, as the case may be. HEI may make provision to earn the credits of such Exit Module during the semester preceding their planned exit, if a student so desires. The Exit Module may be framed keeping in view the skills set required for the relevant employability options.
- v. If a student has earned credits from multiple HEIs, normally the degree would be awarded by the last HEI attended by him subject to fulfilment of other conditions required for award of degree. However, the award of degree can be mutually decided by the HEIs.
- vi. In case of NSQF aligned and approved VETS courses, the prescribed assessment strategy/ methodology for vocational/ skill qualifications may be followed in consonance with the relevant guidelines.

H. Guidelines relating to teaching learning and flexibility

1. Flexibility and choices of subjects (in disciplines/ institutions) provided to students may be with respect to the following:

- i. Choice of disciplines as major and minor
- ii. Choice of multidisciplinary courses to enable a holistic and comprehensive understanding of the subjects and disciplines.
- iii. Inclusion of choices of courses that will enable students to enhance their employability, life skills as well as rootedness to culture, ethics, constitutional values etc. to provide holistic education.
- iv. Courses on the Indian Knowledge System
- v. Provisioning for range of skill courses that can lead to a vocation/ profession/ job employment, if the student so desires. Such skill courses must include the skills which are relevant in the local context and are desirable in line with ‘vocal for local’.
- vi. Embed internship, apprenticeship, work, research, projects, outreach within the degree / diploma / certificate structure.
- vii. The minimum credits to be earned from each category of courses may be as prescribed under the UGC Curricular and Credit Framework/ National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF).
- viii. The UGC “Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programmes” and “Curriculum and Credit Framework for PG Programmes” may be referred for curricular contents and credit structure for UG and PG programs.

2. Detailing of courses: It is advisable to provide with clarity the following in respect of every course (paper) so as to enable students and prospective learners of a course to make informed choices:

- i. Course objectives and
- ii. Learning Outcomes
- iii. Credits and NCrF level
- iv. Eligibility criteria for entry
- v. Prerequisites for the courses, if any
- vi. Credits & credit distribution in terms of Lecture, Tutorial and Practical/ practicum/ fieldwork components i.e. LTP
- vii. Skills/ practical component of the course
- viii. The occupational path it may lead to, if any

Percentage for core courses, departmental elective courses, non-departmental courses and skill based courses must be clearly spelled out to bring multidisciplinary culture and holistic education in the institutions.

3.3. Innovative Pedagogy:

- i. All HEIs shall encourage development and use of standardized frameworks as appropriate for educational content, technology, and pedagogy.
- ii. The pedagogy(ies) that may be used while teaching and learning a course will depend upon the nature of the course and its learning outcomes, mode/ platform of teaching-learning and the diversity of students in the classroom in terms of their academic (science/ arts/ social science stream), social, geographical (urban/rural, including regional), and cultural background as well as their learning styles and capacities.
- iii. The UGC Guidelines on Innovative Pedagogical Approaches & Evaluation Reforms may be referred to for determining the appropriate pedagogy for the course. (refer to https://www.ugc.gov.in/pdfnews/1031121_Guidelines-Innovative-Pedagogical-Approaches-Evaluation-Reforms.pdf)

Note: -

1. These SOPs/guidelines are model guidelines subject to local refinements by the HEIs. which are recommendatory. **However, any refinements in these guidelines/ SOPs can only be made conforming to the provisions of National Education Policy 2020, National Credit Framework (NCrF) and the Qualification Frameworks** through a due consultative process with the stakeholders.
2. All autonomous institutions like **IITs, IIMs, NITs, IISERS, etc. may also devise additional guidelines/ SOPs, wherever necessary**, through a due consultative process with the stakeholders.
3. All such guidelines/ SOPs may be **transparently displayed** on their websites.

Sub-Committee for Operationalization of NCrf in Higher Education

1. Prof. Rajive Kumar, Member Secretary, AICTE	Chairman	
2. Prof. Manish Joshi, Secretary, UGC	Co-Chairman	
3. Prof. A. K. Bhakthavatsala NIT, Trichy	Member	
4. Prof. Prathap Haridoss, Dean, IIT Madras	Member	
5. Prof. J. Prakash, Dean, MIT, Anna University	Member	
6. Prof. K. Sankaran, Registrar, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeeth	Member	
7. Prof. K. Ratnabali, Dean, University of Delhi	Member	
8. Prof. Jyotirmay Mathur, Dean, MNIT, Jaipur	Member	
9. Prof. Divesh Bhatia, IIT Delhi	Member	
10. Prof. Sudhir Singh Bhadauria, Rajiv Gandhi Proudyogiki Vishwavidyalaya, Bhopal	Member	
11. Mrs. Deepti Swarup, Deputy Secretary, NCTE	Member	
12. Col. Gunjan Chowdhury, Director, NCVET	Member	
13. Dr. N. Gopukumar, JS, UGC	Coordinator	

Provisions and Parameters Applicable to Skill Universities and General Universities

The Government of India, vide its order no. MSDE (DGT)(19/09) 2022CD dated 10th April 2023, constituted a committee to examine various issues related to skill universities (SU) including the flexibility and norms for skill universities viz-a-viz the general universities.

Accordingly, a meeting was held on 2nd August 2023, wherein Chairperson UGC, Chairperson AICTE, Chairperson NCVET, Chairman, NETF & NAAC, and Senior Economic Advisor, MSDE were present. The following were discussed and agreed upon on various provisions and parameters applicable to skill universities and general universities:

S. No	Parameters	General Universities	Skill Universities
1.	Overall Regulation	By UGC under the UGC Act and Regulations	By UGC under the UGC Act and Regulations
2.	Types of programs	Multi-disciplinary	Primarily VET/S
3.	% of Skill Based Program	As per UGC norms	Minimum 50% of program to be skill based
4.	% Skill based courses in a program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per UGC norms • Upto 25% inter-disciplinary subject • Upto 50% of skilling component in a program 	Upto 70% of skilling component in a program
5.	Minimum Admission criteria	Minimum 10+2 / (12 th Grade pass) or Equivalent	For Diploma - 10 Grade Pass or completed 2 year ITI after 8 th
6	ME-ME Options and Entry Qualifications - Models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ME-ME Options • 1st year UG- certificate • 2nd year UG- Diploma • 3rd year UG- Degree • 4th year UG- Degree with Honours and Honours with Research 	In addition to ME-ME, can follow Integrated Model: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10+2 years = ITI Certificate + 12 Grade • ITI certificate + 2 years= Diploma / UG Diploma • Diploma +1 year= BS degree • Diploma + 2 year= BS Degree with Hons
7.	NCrF Levels applicable	Level 4.5 and onwards	Level 3.5 and Onwards (as entry is allowed after 10 th Grade)
8.	Level of Skill Courses/ Qualification/ Job Roles being offered	Level 4.5 and above <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHEQF courses - Level 4.5 & above (as per UGC guidelines) • NSQF Qualifications - Level 4.5 & above (As per NCVET guidelines) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHEQF courses - Level 4.5 & above (as per UGC guidelines) • AICTE Diploma Courses- Level 3.5, 4.0 and 4.5 (As per AICTE guidelines) • NSQF Qualifications- Level 3.5 & above (As per NCVET guidelines)

9.	Norms/Provision: Staffing and Infrastructure Norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHEQF- UGC regulations • NSQF- NCVET Guidelines/ Norms, NSQC approved qualifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHEQF- UGC regulations • NSQF- NCVET Guidelines/ Norms, NSQC approved qualifications
10.	Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHEQF- UGC regulations • NSQF- NCVET Guidelines/ Norms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHEQF- UGC regulations • NSQF- NCVET Guidelines/ Norms
11.	Internships and on the job training (OJT) Norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHEQF- UGC regulations • NSQF- NCVET Guidelines/ Norms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHEQF- UGC regulations • NSQF- NCVET Guidelines/ Norms
12	Apprenticeship And Work/ Apprenticeship Embedded program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree (Level 4.5-8)- UGC to decide, Regulations by UGC • Diploma (Level 4.5) - Regulations by AICTE • Diploma (VET&S) (Level 4.5 - 5)- Guidelines by NCVET 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree (Level 4.5-8)- Regulation by UGC • Diploma (Level 4.5)- Regulation by AICTE • Diploma (VET&S) (Level 4.5 - 5)- Guidelines by NCVET
13.	Standards, Norms and Parameters for the NIRF/ NAAC ranking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per Standards, Norms and Parameters by UGC and Chairman NAAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards, Norms and Parameters to be suitably modified in consultation with the stakeholder
14.	Provision for aspirational nomenclature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Degree, Diploma by UGC and • Diploma (VET&S) By NCVET 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree, Diploma by UGC and • Diploma (VET&S) By NCVET
15.	Embedding of VET/S in HE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-disciplinary courses/Employability Skills qualifications from NHEQF & NSQF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and Development of higher order skills-based qualifications

Note: AICTE is regulating 3 years Diploma or one year advance diploma programs where entry level is 3 and 6 respectively. All diploma or advance diploma programs may run either AICTE/ State Technical Education Boards approved or NSQF aligned and approved courses/ Qualifications of appropriate levels.

Annexure 3

Skill Component in the Curricular Design for Four Year Undergraduate Program (FYUGP)

S. No	Broad category of Course	Minimum Credit Requirement	Minimum Credit Requirement	
		3-year UG	4-year UG	
1	Major (Core)	60	80	Upto 50% of these could be from Skill based Courses
2	Minor Stream can be 2	12+12	16+16	These may also be skill based courses
3	Multi-disciplinary	9	9	
4	Ability Enhancement course	8	8	
5	Skill Enhancement Course	9	9	These are Employability Skills/ Soft Skills, Life Skills
6	Value added course common for all UG	6-8	6-8	
7	Summer internship	2-4	2-4	
10	Research Project/ Dissertation	-	12	
	TOTAL	120	160	