

These guidelines are formulated by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in consultation with multiple stakeholders including Skills Universities. These are placed in public domain for comments/ feedback (if any). Comments and suggestions may be sent at paritosh.gupta95@nic.in. **Deadline to submit comments has been extended till 21st October 2018.**

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Guidelines for Skills Universities in India

(Draft for discussions & consultations)

1. Background

- 1.1** As per the National Policy for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, 2015- “National Skills Universities and Institutes will be promoted in partnership with States as centres of excellence for skill development and training of trainers, either as de-novo institutions or as a part of existing university landscape. It is desired that these institutions become aspirational for candidates as other premier institutes around the country. These institutions, apart from skilling candidates through affiliates and training the trainers, will also conduct extensive research to enhance the quality and delivery of skill training by keeping abreast with latest developments in the skills space”.
- 1.2** At present, the country faces a skill demand-supply mismatch, as the economy needs more ‘skilled’ workforce than created annually. Besides, a majority of the contemporary institutions of higher learning are quite disconnected with the requirements of employers. Skill oriented courses available in the country on the average, have low credibility and acceptability with the employers, low aspirational value and are perceived as options of last resort. Further, the existence of a large, disaggregated base of training providers and the need for effective implementation of recognition of prior learning (RPL), competency-based modular courses and credit

framework across educational streams for transferability of learning, has highlighted the requirement of a university-based system to lend credibility to the skills ecosystem.

- 1.3 Skills Universities – conceived and constructed with a clear mandate for skills education would create a parallel vocational counterpart to general education. These institutions would offer practical real-world training in industrial & services sector setting with employer linkage as the primary driver of skills education which will lay the foundation for a successful skills training system in the country. Such universities shall cater to the national and international job markets across sectors. Through such network of Skills Universities, skills based education will acquire aspirational value and social acceptability in the society and the economy.
- 1.4 Skills Universities will fill the long pending need for higher level institutions in the Skills space and would help harvest latent value in India’s existing skills landscape.

2. Existing Scenario

- 2.1 In India, higher educational institutions can offer degree courses as per Section 22 of UGC Act, 1956. University Grants Commission (UGC) has laid down guidelines which comprise of minimum standards in terms of infrastructure, curriculum, assessment, certification, etc. that a higher educational institute needs to adhere to, to be recognized as a “University” as per Section 2 (f) of UGC Act, 1956.
- 2.2 With a view to integrate competencies required for specific job roles within the undergraduate level of higher education in order to enhance employability of the graduates and meet industry requirements, the UGC launched a scheme on 27 February, 2014 for skills development based higher education as part of college/ university education, leading to Bachelor of Vocation (B. Voc.) degree.
- 2.3 Further, in the wake of Skill India Mission, a number of universities with the nomenclature of “Skills Universities” have come up. Most of these universities are awarding certificate, diploma, advanced diploma, degrees, etc. as per UGC guidelines. However, each one is following a different model and varying nomenclature for the degrees awarded, in the absence of common standards in the skills field.
- 2.4 Skills based education differs from its general counterpart in terms of curriculum, pedagogy, faculty, mode of delivery, eligibility and assessment criteria, etc. and thus, would require a separate set of norms. The purpose of these guidelines below is to lay

down minimum norms for the establishment and working of Skills Universities to ensure a level of standardization as India ventures into these new skilling avenues. Since skills-based education is still an evolving field, guidelines have been kept at a bare minimum and institutions are encouraged to exercise constant ingenuity and come up with innovative models.

- 2.5 These guidelines do not intend to supersede the extant UGC norms regarding the regulation of higher education in India. Grant of recognition as a “University” falls under the domain of the UGC, and thus any institution seeking such recognition has to follow the applicable provisions of the UGC Act, 1956. However, institutions that seek recognition as institutions for “skills” including those offering B. Voc. programs have to follow these guidelines of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).
- 2.6 The MSDE is in the process of establishing the national skills ecosystem regulator, namely, the National Council for Vocational Education & Training (NCVET). One of the major functions of the proposed regulator is to formulate norms and standards for Skills Universities. Further evolution of these guidelines will therefore be as determined by the NCVET.
- 2.7 These guidelines shall apply to every Skills University established by or incorporated under a State Act or Central Act or any other permissible legal instrument.

3 Objectives

- 3.1 Skills Universities will emerge as foremost institutions of skills based education recognised by employers, nationally and internationally. These higher educational institutions will provide opportunities for flexible learning, RPL, competency-based modular courses and credit accumulation/ transfer across educational streams for continuous learning.
- 3.2 Develop competent, skilled and capable youth imbued with skills, learning and the spirit of entrepreneurship to meet the world-wide demand for skilled workforce.
- 3.3 Promote skills education in an integrated and holistic manner with general education so as to ensure pathways for progression and mobility across forms of education and skills.

4 Essential Features

- 4.1** Skills Universities shall offer sector specific certificate, diploma and degree programs directly related to the job roles in demand. These programs shall be higher than the ones offered by ITI/ Polytechnics and also different from the conventional degree courses offered by academic institutions such as B. Sc. Electronics, B. Sc. Computers, etc. (These are illustrative and not exhaustive).
- 4.2** Strong employer connect would be the basis for any skills program for the purpose of identifying the courses corresponding to the job roles in demand, designing the course curriculum, skill assessments, student & faculty training, apprenticeship, on job training, placements, joint research projects etc.
- 4.3** On the Job Training (OJT) and apprenticeships shall form an integral part of a skills-based programme.
- 4.4** It shall develop as a hub of skilling activities including – offering skills-based programmes, fostering apprenticeships & placements, counselling, conducting Training of Trainers & Training of Assessors. It should take lead in developing NSQF based curriculum, teachers’ manual, assessors’ manual, mentoring training institutes, conducting research related to assessing skills gap, etc.
- 4.5** It shall support RPL and provide opportunities for admissions to non-formally and informally skilled workers in to higher learning programmes through development of bridge courses in accordance with the credit framework.

5 Functions

- 5.1** Define norms and parameters of skills education, teaching and instruction, consistent with the credit framework and curriculum packages, in such skills and allied areas as the Skills University may deem fit;
- 5.2** Impart instruction, in accordance with the credit framework and curriculum packages, in such skills and allied areas as the Skills University may deem fit, for the dissemination of knowledge and skills training;
- 5.3** Award degrees, diplomas, certificates and other distinctions that conform to the National Skills Qualification Framework;

- 5.4 Design the program structures, curricula, credit system, teaching learning methodology, evaluation pedagogy and adopt all measures in respect of study, teaching and research, relating to the courses offered by the University, to keep the programs outcome skill based and in line with industry requirement.
- 5.5 Recognise, in such manner and in accordance with such parameters as may be specified by its Statutes and ordinances, institutions of skills education or training establishments and affiliate such institutions and training establishments;
- 5.6 Define norms of examination or any other measure of assessment of knowledge and competency of a student including modalities of industry based assessment, industry based projects, internships, on the job training & any related activities of students admitted to the Skills University or institutions of skills education affiliated to it;
- 5.7 Hold examinations or other assessments of knowledge or competency, or accredit the examination or other assessment systems of institutions of skills education affiliated to it, as the Skills University may, from time to time, determine;
- 5.8 Lay down parameters for assessment and accreditation of skill educators and training providers in accordance with the norms specified by or under the National Skills Qualification Framework, or in their absence, such norms as may be determined by the Skills University.
- 5.9 Engage and promote constant engagement with industry to understand the skilled manpower needs of industry and build partnerships for youth to learn in a practical and real-world environment;
- 5.10 Skills Universities shall also work towards developing training methodologies for skills of the future in order to better equip the labour market to changing conditions.

6 Nomenclature of degrees

- 6.1 Presently, skill based courses are being offered under degrees of varying names. There is a need to have a uniformity in nomenclature to differentiate between the conventional technical courses and the skill development degree level courses. In view of this, Bachelor of Skills (B. Skills) or Bachelor of Vocation (B. Voc) shall be used instead of all the other nomenclature being used for such bachelor level programs in the country.

On a similar line, master level degree programs shall be known as Master of Skills (M. Skills) or Master of Vocation (M. Voc).

7 Establishment

7.1 Model

- (i) A Skills University can be set up as per any permissible legal instrument, either as a Public University or a Private University or in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode.
- (ii) Institutions can follow an integrative approach whereby they can introduce skills-based degree courses along with general conventional degree courses. Such institutes could also have a unified model offering short-term certificate courses, ITI training along with higher level skill-based degree courses. However, to qualify as a “Skills University”, they shall offer at least 5 distinct skill-based degree courses.
- (iii) Skills University shall offer multi-disciplinary courses, ideally in specific trades/ services of local need. Post 3-5 years of initial set-up, the university shall necessarily encourage research programs leading to PhD and research output by way of project reports, thesis, journal papers and patents.
- (iv) Skills University can develop as a “Centre of Excellence” capable of producing skilled manpower of the highest calibre, besides equipping those with entrepreneurial aptitude for taking up own ventures.
- (v) The focus of the university shall be on developing the skill component with adequate emphasis on language and communication skills.
- (vi) The decision-making bodies of a Skills University should try and ensure adequate representation from employers and other experts capable of promoting the adoption and development of the NSQF.

7.2 Infrastructure

- (i) Skills Universities shall have state-of-the-art infrastructure in sync with contemporary industry standards enabling face to face delivery of skills and hands-on practice. Employers and experts and Sector Skill Councils shall be

consulted for specific programs. The UGC guidelines for setting up of campus infrastructure may be relied upon for this as a guiding factor.

- (ii) In addition to the basic campus infrastructure and laboratories for practical training, one or more of the following facilities must be made available on-campus of the University for skills training:-
 - a) Specialised Skill Training Labs/Studios
 - b) Centres of Excellence developed in collaboration with industry

7.3 Curriculum

- (i) The curriculum shall be developed to meet the knowledge, skill, attitude and entrepreneurial requirements of various NSQF levels in different sectors. Since these are degree level courses, higher than those offered by ITI/ Polytechnics, curriculum should be developed accordingly.
- (ii) Skill development component including On-the-Job Training (OJT) and apprenticeship shall form at least 60% of the entire curriculum. It could be more than 60% dependent on the requirements of a specific course, as determined in consultation with employers.
- (iii) The curriculum should necessarily embed within itself, National Occupational Standards (NOSs) of specific job roles within the industry/ services sector(s). This would enable the students to meet NOSs specified learning outcomes. OJT and apprenticeship training shall also constitute an integral part of the curriculum.
- (iv) Catering to multiple exits with Certificate, Diploma, Advanced Diploma, at least one Qualification Pack (QP) of the respective level shall be embedded in the curriculum at each level. The curriculum shall be broad based embedding multiple job roles to prepare the graduating students for supervisory/managerial roles.
- (v) OJT shall be conducted largely at work premises (e.g. shop floor) or in employer integrated workshops. All bachelor level skill-based courses including B. Voc programs shall mandatorily have at least a 6-month apprenticeship component. Additionally, since students have the option to exit

at various levels, efforts should be made to include apprenticeship training every alternate semester.

- (vi) Skills Universities shall follow the standard process of curriculum development adopted in a University, i.e. stakeholder consultations and approval from Board of Studies and Academic Council, which shall have employer representatives.
- (vii) Since the nature of skill-based courses is such that it is susceptible to rapid technological and structural changes, curriculum of these courses shall be updated to align with work requirements at regular intervals.

7.4 Faculty

- (i) Currently, the UGC stipulates usage of existing faculty for the conduct of B. Voc. Courses with a provision to hire one associate professor and two assistant professors on contractual basis depending on the requirements in specific trades.
- (ii) However, it is essential for a skill-based degree level course to have certified faculty consisting of skill trainers and teachers for imparting the skill based and general education components respectively. Each department/ school of a Skills University should ideally have skill trainers and teachers in the ratio of 2:1. The faculty: student ratio should ideally be 1:10.
- (iii) Skills Universities shall follow the UGC guidelines for the appointment of appropriate level of teachers who will primarily cater to the general education component.
- (iv) The minimum criteria for appointment of skill trainers shall be as under :-
 - a) **Chief Training Officer** – Post graduate or equivalent in relevant discipline with minimum 10 years of industry or service sector experience
 - b) **Master Training Officer**- Post graduate or equivalent in relevant discipline with minimum 8 years of industry or service sector experience

- c) **Associate Training Officer** - Graduate or equivalent in relevant discipline with minimum 5 years of industry or service sector experience.
- d) **Assistant Training Officer** - Graduate or equivalent in relevant discipline with minimum 3 years of industry or service sector experience.

Or

ITI/ Polytechnic (min 10+2) pass out with a CITS (Craftsmen Instructor Training Scheme) certification and 5 years of industry or service sector experience.

- (v) The Skills University may decide to appoint persons working or having significant experience of working, possessing the required knowledge or competency, as adjunct, guest or visiting faculty of the Skills University on such terms and for such duration as such Skills University may decide.

7.5 Assessment & Certification

- (i) For each course of study, within a program, a student shall be assessed on theory, practical and skills component. Skills Universities shall conduct assessment as per the UGC norms prescribed for B. Voc. Programs. The skill component shall be assessed in consultation with the concerned Sector Skill Council, or by any assessment body as recognized by the proposed regulator, NCVET, in future.
- (ii) Skills Universities shall formulate outcome based assessment norms in consultation with the industry, UGC, NSDA and NSDC. The parameters for assessment may vary from program to program based on the learning outcomes.
- (iii) The students shall also have the option to exit with a Certificate, Diploma or Advanced Diploma after acquiring requisite number of credits as is being currently done under the B Voc programme.
- (iv) The certification levels shall lead to Certificate/Diploma/Advanced Diploma/ Degree in one or more areas and shall be offered under the aegis of the

University (as outlined in Table below) in conformity with NSQF & Section 22 of UGC Act, 1956.

Award	Duration	NSQF Level
Certificate	6 months	4
Diploma	One year	5
Advanced Diploma	Two years	6
Bachelor's Degree	Three/Four years	7
Post Graduate Diploma	One Year	8
Master's Degree	Two years	9
PhD	Three years (min)	10

7.6 Admissions

- (i) All admissions to every programme of study in a Skills University shall be based on transparent and reasonable criteria disclosed through its prospectus, published prior to the commencement of the process of admission, by such Skills University.
- (ii) 10+2 or equivalent (pass outs from ITI / Polytechnic) shall be eligible to apply. Preference may be given to those students coming from the vocational stream like- pass outs from ITI, Polytechnics or students from the vocational stream in the schools.
- (iii) Equivalency for admission shall be granted through RPL in such cases where the applicant does not meet standard entry requirement but has the requisite skills. Skills University shall assess such candidates having RPL skill certificate of requisite NSQF levels through an entrance exam to assess their suitability for university education and facilitate admissions at corresponding levels accordingly.

7.7 Counselling cum Placement Cell

- (i) Skills Universities shall necessarily have a counselling cell, which shall counsel and assess the aptitude of the students prior to their enrolment in a skill-based programme. Career counselling shall also be provided to the students during the period of study.
- (ii) The placement cell shall organize campus recruitment by forging appropriate linkages with the industry.
- (iii) The Cell shall also foster and build a spirit of entrepreneurship through incubation, mentoring and helping students connect to various government and non-government assistance programs and schemes for encouraging self-employment.

7.8 Credit Framework

- (i) Skills Universities shall provide vertical and lateral mobility through credit accumulation and transfer system wherein students shall be allowed to enrol for certificate, diploma or degree courses/ programs & utilize credits earned from earlier courses taken at the University.
- (ii) The credit framework for degree level skill based courses will be formed by MSDE in consultation with MHRD. Till such credit framework comes into force, Skills Universities shall follow the credit framework as per the UGC B. Voc. Guidelines.
- (iii) The credit system shall provide multi-entry, multi-exit option wherein the students shall be able to exit the system at any level with skill certification and seek credit exemptions for such certifications at a later time.

8. Others

- 8.1** A Standing Committee shall be set up by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship with representatives from UGC, MHRD, NSDA, NSDC and Skills Universities for alignment of requirements of Skills Universities and UGC norms from time to time.
