
GUIDELINES FOR ACCREDITATION, AFFILIATION AND CONTINUOUS MONITORING OF TRAINING CENTRES



VERSION 1.0

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1. Background

Skills and knowledge are the motivating forces of the financial growth and economic development of any country, and India is no exception.

As India moves progressively towards becoming a global knowledge economy, it must meet the aspirations of youth and aim towards skilling them with the best possible standards. The skill development of the working age population is currently one of the top priorities for the country. This is evident by the progress India has made in recent years in this sector.

However, till 2016 there was no comprehensive and standardised mechanism to assess the capability of training institutes. Such standardised mechanisms are followed across every Industry and are crucial for holistic growth of the Industry. Considering this gap, there was a requirement for a standardized methodology which would guide and assess the infrastructure and training capability of Training Centres to provide quality skill training.

The formulation and launch of Guidelines for Accreditation, Affiliation, and Continuous Monitoring of Training Centres in year 2016 was the initial step in this direction with below mentioned key objectives:

- To provide an umbrella for all the skilling activities being carried out within the country, thereby providing quality benchmarks in the concept, establishment and running of the various skilling initiatives
- To align various skill development programs to standardized norms and processes, thereby reducing multiplicity of norms and parameters that result in avoidable difficulties in implementation of the skilling initiatives
- To monitor compliance to standards and norms by all training centres in an objective manner
- To increase the capacity and capability of the existing system in order to ensure equitable access and one stop solution to all
- To foster excellence in training centres through a rating-based approach thereby ensuring effective and competency based training
- To enable trainees and other stakeholders to make informed choices with regard to training centre selection

A significant role of these Guidelines is in standardizing the quality parameters across various Skill schemes. Based on the learning of past two years, need was felt to review the guidelines (released in

2016), therefore the guidelines here in are the Version 1.0 of the Accreditation, Affiliation and Continuous Monitoring guidelines and supersedes the previous version of guidelines.

It is to be noted that these guidelines shall be reviewed periodically, depending upon the feedback from stakeholders and learning as various schemes progress. All updates shall be published on SMART website (<http://smart.nsdindia.org>). The stakeholders are advised to regularly check these websites for amendments/changes, if any.

2. Skill Management and Accreditation of Training Centres (SMART)

SMART provides a single window IT application that focuses on the Accreditation, Affiliation and Continuous Monitoring of the Training Centres (TC) in the Skill Ecosystem and intends to address the important issues like evaluating skill providers in an objective manner, fostering excellence in Training Centres, enabling trainees to make informed choices with regard to Training Centres etc. SMART aims at convergence of efforts of all the stakeholders in the skill ecosystem in providing the standardized infrastructure. Accreditation and Affiliation through SMART covers various Central and State Government Schemes, Private initiatives, CSR etc. thus making it a scheme agnostic platform.

2.1 Various features of SMART

- Single portal interface across multiple Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) and Schemes
- IT enabled paperless system for accreditation and affiliation of Training Centres
- Transparent and Time bound delivery of accreditation & affiliation services
- SSC guided standardized lab specifications
- SSC guided trainer qualification and experience

2.2 Services offered on SMART

- Extendable to all Skill Development Schemes
- Web based application for TC Accreditation/Affiliation
- Mobile App based TC CAAF submission, Inspection & Continuous Monitoring
- One Stop platform for SSC Affiliation across job roles
- Online repository for TC/TP details at pan India level
- Dashboards & MIS for various stakeholders such as SSCs, SSDMs and various other schemes
- E-Payment of Accreditation & Affiliation fees
- Physical Inspection of each TC based on CAAF

- Standardization of training infrastructure and equipment for all NSQF Job roles across all SSCs
- Common Norms aligned Transparent Grading of TCs

3. Stakeholders - Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MoSDE)** - is a governing body and aims to create a balanced ecosystem to remove disconnect between demand and supply of skilled manpower, to build new skills and innovative thinking for existing and futuristic jobs. Ministry for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has been formed to focus on enhancing employability of the youth through skill development.

3.2 **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** - is a Not-for-Profit company set up as a Public Private Partnership Company in order to create and fund vocational training institutions, and create support systems for skills development. It acts as an implementing agency for the various skill development initiatives. NSDC is a unique model created with a well thought through underlying philosophy based on the following pillars:

- **Create:** Proactively catalyze creation of large, quality vocational training institutions.
- **Fund:** Reduce risk by providing patient capital. Including grants and equity.
- **Enable:** the creation and sustainability of support systems required for skill development. This includes the Industry led Sector Skill Councils.

The main objectives of the NSDC are to:

- Upgrade skills to international standards through significant industry involvement and develop necessary frameworks for standards, curriculum and quality assurance
- Enhance, support and coordinate private sector initiatives for skill development through appropriate Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models; strive for significant operational and financial involvement from the private sector
- Play the role of a "market-maker" by bringing financing, particularly in sectors where market mechanisms are ineffective or missing
- Prioritize initiatives that can have a multiplier or catalytic effect as opposed to one-off impact.

"NSDC has provided a one stop solution for registration of Training Provider and Training Centre through their SMART"

3.3 Training Provider (TP) - Any organization being legally established as society, trust, proprietorship, company/ LLP/ Government Institute/ Organization etc. can register on SMART as Training Provider (TP). A Training Provider registers Training Centres on SMART and acts as an umbrella organization for its respective Training Centres. It is solely the responsibility of TP and TC regarding the mode of association they establish between them while registering on SMART.

The registration on SMART will be valid for 3 years. The Training Provider needs to perform following roles and responsibilities:

- Facilitate the establishment of Training Centres
- Ensure compliance with the Guidelines and related processes
- Ensure Training Centres compliance with the Guidelines and related processes

The Implementing Agency (NSDC) will not be a party to any dispute arising between the training provider and training centre

3.4 Training Centre (TC) - An entity registered and created by a TP to conduct training under various NSQF aligned job roles in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the SSC. These centres are established as per Accreditation and Affiliation norms. Accreditation of a TC will be valid for a maximum of 1 year. The Training Centre needs to perform following roles and responsibilities:

- Fill the Centre Accreditation Application Form on SMART following the required process
- Apply for renewal of Accreditation status
- Comply with accreditation and affiliation and continuous monitoring process

3.5 State Skill Development Missions (SSDMs) as Inspection Agency - State Skill Development Missions

- Schedule and perform physical inspection of training centres along with continuous monitoring visits, and share the outcome of the inspection in form of an inspection report
- Recommends an accreditation status (Conditional Accreditation/ Accreditation/ Not Accredited) for the Centres

3.6 Empaneled Third Party Inspection Agency (IA) - Inspection Agency is an independent body responsible for evaluating the Training Centres (TC) as per Accreditation and Affiliation Guidelines. The IA conducts desktop assessment for TP and TC and shares the Deemed Ready or Deemed Not Ready status.

3.7 Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) - SSCs are industry-led bodies responsible for defining the skilling needs, concept, processes, certification, and accreditation standards of their respective industry sectors. The accreditation standards are a set of practices and concepts laid down by the SSCs pertaining to each job role, that provide guidance to the TCs on all relevant aspects of skilling. The SSCs prescribe the National Occupation Standards (NOS) and Qualification Pack (QPs) for the job roles relevant to their industry and ensure that these are in accordance with the National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF). The SSC performs following roles and responsibilities:

- Define job wise specifications like lab and trainer qualifications, equipment specifications along with the job role wise additional requirements like open space, gardening area etc.
- Review the inspection reports submitted by the IA for respective job roles and accord the final status
- Provide affiliation to centres for respective job roles

3.8 State Level Appellate Committee: At first level, State Appellate committee would look into the appeal of the TC and evaluate it as per the guidelines on accreditation and affiliation and take decision on the appeal.

- Respective state would decide on the constitution of this Committee.
- In cases where a job role recommended for accreditation by the SSDM after inspection is not accredited by the SSC, such cases would be dealt by Accreditation Committee at NSDC and not by State Level Appellate Committee.

3.9 Accreditation Committee - A committee comprising suitable representatives from NSDC and SSCs to review and provide decisions pertaining to accreditation status of training centres. The committee reviews appeal cases and post deliberation, reaches a final conclusion regarding their appeal. The additional responsibilities of the Accreditation Committee include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Review of standards, policies, procedures, and issues regarding accreditation, including the accreditation fee structure.
- Advocate the importance of accreditation of the TCs in the skill ecosystem and amongst the stakeholders.
- Suggest the corrective measures where ever required with respect to the Centre Accreditation Process.

**The decision of the Accreditation Committee will be final.*

4. About Centre Accreditation

Centre Accreditation is a quality assurance process, under which the TCs are evaluated against the required parameters. Accreditation focuses on learning and self-development, and encourages the TC to pursue continual excellence.

The process involves an external evaluation to grade the TCs as per their adherence to the laid down accreditation and affiliation guidelines.

The Centre Accreditation helps to process effective management and delivery of the competency based training. Centre Accreditation and Affiliation ensures:

- To assess the TCs and their selected job roles against the prescribed quality standards.
- The process provides assurance to a number of vital stakeholders, such as the trainees, the employers, and the public in general, that the TC has met the established standards necessary to impart training for the specific job roles. The responsibility for assuring the quality of a TC rests with the TC itself.
- Centre Accreditation is a voluntary process. It is, however, mandatory for a TC to go through the process if it wishes to impart trainings aligned to National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) in order to participate and implement any skill development scheme funded by the Government of India.

“Accreditation and affiliation does not guarantee target allocation under any government or non-government funded scheme”

4.1 Centre Accreditation and Affiliation - Process Definitions

- **TP Registration** - An entity needs to register as a Training Provider on SMART. After registration and form submission, Training Provider will receive login credentials. This registration will be valid for a period of 3 years from getting the Deemed Ready Status.
- **CAAF submission** – Centre Accreditation Application Form (CAAF) is a form that TC submits online on SMART for getting accreditation and affiliation for selected job role(s). The Centre submits geo-tagged and time-stamped pictures for respective fields through a mobile app. The SMART TC mobile app can be downloaded from the Google Playstore. On submission, a tentative grading is allocated to the centre based on the information provided.
- **Desktop Assessment** - The Inspection Agency reviews the CAAF submitted by the concerned Training Centre (TC), post which it provides it a status of ‘Deemed Ready’ or ‘Deemed Not Ready’. This process is called Desktop Assessment

- **Deemed Ready** - The status denotes that the information provided in the CAAF complies with the centre accreditation and affiliation criteria/ guidelines. If Deemed Ready, a “Letter of Registration” is issued to the TC.
- **Deemed Not Ready** - The status denotes that the information provided in the CAAF is not as per the centre accreditation and affiliation criteria/ guidelines - the information submitted may be incomplete or incorrect. In such cases, the Inspection Agency shares a deficiency report with TC regarding the gaps, giving detailed comments/ justification.
- **Physical Inspection** - This is a process to validate the information provided by the training centre through an onsite inspection of the centre at the address provided in the CAAF, and also by interaction with the trainers and other relevant staff of the Training Centre (TC). The Inspection Agency captures the information via Mobile Application. If the centre is found fit as per centre accreditation and affiliation guidelines, the inspection agency recommends the centre for accreditation to the SSC.
- **Review by SSC** - The inspection report submitted by the Inspection Agency along with the recommended accreditation status and grade of the TC, shall be sent to the concerned SSC for their final decision on accreditation status of the centre.
- **Appeal** - An aggrieved TC, which is not satisfied with the result of the accreditation process, can file an appeal through the SMART portal, along with a payment of requisite fees. The TC has to make an appeal within the stipulated timeline of marking the result of the accreditation status on TC’s dashboard on SMART.
- **Conditional Accreditation/ Affiliation** - A centre may be marked as conditionally accredited when it complies with all the mandatory requirements of the guidelines except the following:
 - SSC ToT certified trainers for all job roles
 - NIESBUD Certification
 - AEBAS

These parameters have to be fulfilled within stipulated timeline from the date of centre accreditation, to be eligible for full accreditation. Conditionally accredited centres will be granted a conditional affiliation status on payment of the affiliation fees.

- **Accreditation** - Post review of the report submitted by the Inspection Agency, the concerned SSCs provide one of the following status to the TC, along with detailed remarks/justification, wherever applicable.
 - Agree/Disagree with the Recommended for Accreditation status
 - Agree/Disagree with the Recommended for Conditional Accreditation status

The accreditation status is valid for maximum 1 year from the date the conditional accreditation/ accreditation status is granted and does not extend beyond 1 year even if the TC

applies for re-inspection. For example, *If a TC is conditionally accredited on date X, they have T days to submit the remaining documents to attain the full accreditation status. However on submitting these documents within T days, the validity of accreditation does not change and will still be calculated from X for a 1 year period*

- **Affiliation** - Affiliation is a method for the TCs to get formally associated with SSCs in order to impart training to trainees for specific job roles aligned to NSQF. Affiliation can be granted to an Accredited as well as Conditionally Accredited Centre. Only accredited and affiliated TCs are allowed to start operations of commencing training to trainees.
- **Re-inspection** - The TC is given an option to apply for a re-inspection by paying the appropriate fees (centre inspection + job role accreditation) and may do so under the following circumstances:
 - If the TC wishes to improve the grading given by Inspection Agency
 - If the TC does not agree with the IA/ SSC's recommendation
 - If the TC does not agree with the result of the Appeal process
 - If the TC wishes to modify any details in CAAF (except TC address and TC name), like trainers, job roles etc.
- **Conditional to Full Accreditation** - The TC has to fulfill the NIESBUD and ToT parameters within stipulated timelines and AEBAS within stipulated timelines through the Conditional Accreditation to Accreditation option available on the SMART TC mobile app to achieve a Full Accreditation status.
- **Continuous Monitoring** - It is a regular process to track performance/compliance of all affiliated training centres with respect to the accreditation and affiliation guidelines.
- **De-accreditation** - A TC gets de-accredited on expiry of the validity period (1 year in case of accredited centres and 6 months for conditionally accredited centres, if not converted to full accreditation) of accreditation of an accredited/ conditionally accredited Job Role. A TC may also get de-accredited due to non-compliance or violation of guidelines.
- **Re-accreditation** - The validity of accreditation of a TC/Job role is one year from the date of accreditation. The validity will automatically expire at the end of one year and the TC will be de-accredited. An option for re-accreditation is made available to such centres on their portal 3 months prior to de-accreditation. These centres can apply for re-accreditation and submit the requisite fees for DA and physical inspection of the centres and job role accreditation.

5. Centre Accreditation and Affiliation Process

The Centre Accreditation and Affiliation comprise of following main steps:

- **Step 1: Training Provider (TP) Registration:** Training Provider (TP) fills the Application form and pays the registration fees. Inspection Agency (IA) conducts Desktop Assessment (DA) and shares the status with TP. On being Deemed Ready (DR), the TP proceeds with Training Centre creation. This registration will be valid for 3 years from the date of getting DR status. For example, if a TP gets DR on 2nd October 2016 then this registration will be valid till 1st October 2019.
- **Step 2: Centre Accreditation Application Form (CAAF) registration and Training Centre (TC) Accreditation:**
 - **Stage 1:** Training Centre (TC) fills the CAAF and submits the CAAF registration fees. IA conducts Desktop Assessment (DA) and shares the status with TC, basis which a "Letter of Registration" is shared with the TC. Post Deemed Ready status if the TC is recommended/empanelled by any donor agency/scheme, the TC shall undergo physical inspection process as mentioned below.
 - **Stage 2:** Post empanelment or recommendation the TC pays accreditation fees and applies for physical inspection. If the TC is recommended for Accreditation or Conditional Accreditation after physical inspection, the case is shared with SSC for a final review and status updation. In case a TC gets recommended for a job role other than those mentioned in the letter of registration, then the TC needs to follow stage 1 and 2 with all requisite fees for the additional job role.
- **Step 3: Training Centre (TC) Accreditation:** The respective SSC reviews the inspection report of the Training Centre and accords the TC with Accreditation/ Conditional Accreditation status and TC receives an accreditation certificate. If the SSC does not agree with the IA recommendation, the case is forwarded to the Accreditation Committee.
- **Step 4: Training Centre (TC) Affiliation:** After getting accredited/conditionally accredited status from SSC, the TC applies for Affiliation for accredited Job Roles and pays the following fees:
 - a) Continuous Monitoring

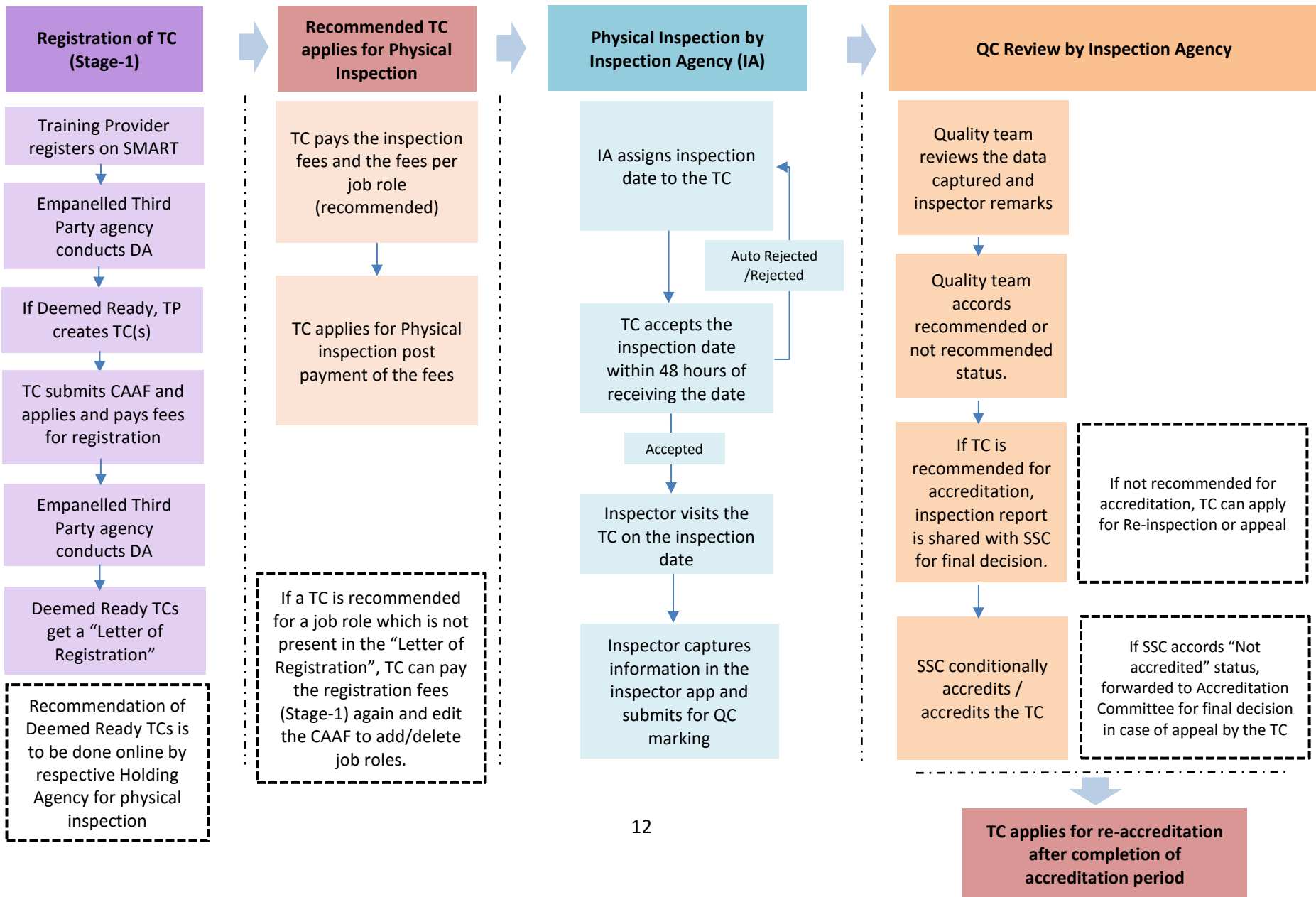
b) Affiliation fees

Affiliation is auto accorded to the TC after payment of affiliation fees.

- Step 5: Continuous Monitoring of Training Centres (TC):** TC is continuously monitored on SMART as per the process and metrics. The TC shall download the mobile application from Google Playstore. TC will receive quarterly push notification via the mobile application to upload certain images of the TC. Failure to do so will lead to reduction in Accreditation score of the TC. This will impact any future allocations and disbursement of funds to the TC. The TC will then have to re-apply for physical inspection to increase the score.
- Step 6: Renewal of Accreditation and Affiliation:** Post 1 year from receiving the accreditation status, the TC may re-apply for Accreditation and Affiliation. This process will be available for the TC 3 months prior to expiry of accreditation status. The TP registration will expire 3 years from receiving the DR status. Post 3 years, the TP may apply for renewal of the registration on SMART.

Indicative Timelines for TP Registration	
T	TP submits the Application form
T+4 Days	Desktop Assessment of the TP Application
Indicative Timelines for TC Registration (Stage-1)	
T1	TC submits CAAF for Letter of Registration
T1+4 Days	Desktop Assessment of CAAF
Indicative Timelines for Centre Accreditation (Stage-2)	
T2	TC applies for physical inspection & pays the fees
T2+7 days	Scheduling of Physical Inspection by Inspection Agency
T2+15 days	Physical Inspection of the TC by Inspection Agency
T3+7 days	Conducting Physical Inspection after rejection of the initial inspection date(T3)

Guidelines for Accreditation, Affiliation and Continuous Monitoring of Training Centres



6. Accreditation Standards

The Accreditation Standards are driven by a grading matrix and are related to the operations and services offered by the TC to its trainees. These standards are a set of practices and concepts, as laid down by the SSCs pertaining to each job role, that provide guidance to the TCs on all relevant aspects of skilling.

- The Accreditation Standards applicable to a TC is a combination of Infrastructure, training, health and safety related parameters categorized as Part-A and Part-B standards.
- The standards of the Part-A category are the mandatory indicators to be adhered to. It is necessary that a TC complies with all the Accreditation Standards of Part-A category to become an accredited TC.
- The standards of the Part-B category are the other indicators, on which the TC shall be scored on the predefined points. It is mandatory that the TC achieves a minimum of 40% score with respect to the Accreditation Standards Grading Metrics.
- The Accreditation Standards Grading Metrics is provided in Annexure.

7. Applicable Fees

The fees to be paid by the TPs and TCs at various stages is stated below and is to be paid online:

- Training Provider Registration Fees: INR 10,000
- TC CAAF registration: INR 3,000
- TC CAAF Editing (for addition/ deletion of Job Role(s) or any other changes in CAAF): INR 3,000
- TC Accreditation Fees: INR 10,000 + INR 1,000 per Job Role
- Continuous Monitoring Fees: INR 8,000
- Affiliation Fees: INR 6,000

Apart from the fees mentioned above, the following fees may be applicable under the mentioned scenarios:

- Re-inspection fees - INR 10,000 + INR 1,000 per job role
- TP/TC unfreezing fees - INR 2,000
- TC unblocking fees - INR 2,000
- Appeal fees - INR 10,000

Note: NSDC reserves the right to revise any of the fee components at any point of time, without stating any reasons whatsoever.

8. Acronyms and Abbreviations

AEBAS	Aadhaar Enabled Biometric System
CAAF	Centre Accreditation Application Form
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DA	Desktop Assessment
DR	Deemed Ready
DNR	Deemed Not Ready
IA	Inspection Agency
INR	Indian Rupee
MIS	Management Information System
MoSDE	Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
NIESBUD	National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development
NOS	National Occupation Standards
NSDC	National Skill Development Corporation
NSQF	National Skills Qualification Framework
PAN	Permanent Account Number
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
QC	Quality Check
QP	Qualification Pack
SMART	Skill Management & Accreditation of Training Centres
SSC	Sector Skill Council
SSDM	State Skill Development Mission
TC	Training Centre
ToT	Training of Trainer
TP	Training Provider