

ENGLISH SKILLS FOR EMPLOYABILITY: SETTING COMMON STANDARDS

A RESEARCH REPORT



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FOREWORD

British Council is a cultural relations organisation and one of our core values is that of mutuality. We aim to bring the best of UK education to India and to partner with Indian educational leaders and practitioners for the benefit of both our countries.

India has a large, young population in a growing economy: a strong combination for ensuring continued development for the country. However recent studies have shown that far too many students are graduating without sufficient skills to enter the workforce; they are unemployable.

In 2008-09, the Government of India launched a national skill development mission to fulfil the growing need in India for skilled workforce across sectors, and to narrow the existing gap between the demand and supply of skills. A major priority of the British Council has been to support this mission through our work in a number of ways. The British Council provides the secretariat and is on the board on the UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI), the largest bi-lateral partnership on education and skills in India. The British Council is also actively engaged in technical assistance projects with international agencies and the Government of India, such as Department for International Development in Bihar and the Asian Development Bank in Meghalaya.

Research conducted by the National Skills Development Corporation indicates skills gaps both in functional, vocational and workplace skills as well as soft skills, with English featuring as a core skill to complement core domain skills in many of the 21 focus sectors such as IT and ITES, media, hospitality, beauty and wellness, retail, financial services and healthcare. It is widely reported that students leave school without the knowledge and proficiency in English that would position them to take advantage of the employment opportunities that exist both in the country and overseas. English is also widely perceived to contribute

to social and cultural capital. But there are significant challenges in providing quality English language provision in a country of such scale and with such diverse labour market needs.

It is also important to remember that English is just one part of the solution; British Council funded research¹ also indicates that English language skills accrue often with gender and socio-economic variables, and that an individual's ability to communicate in local languages can be as, or even more, critical, than their ability to use English. The latest skills development policy also states that: 'Language, basic IT and financial literacy is an integral part of most job roles in the economy today. Accordingly, all skill training programmes shall include basic modules of computer literacy, finance, language and soft skills like etiquettes, social and life skills to enable the youth to be employable and market ready.' (Draft National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, May 2015)

So it is important for us to understand what is happening on the ground and ensure that resources are invested wisely.

That's why in September 2013, we partnered the National Skills Development Agency to invite senior Indian and UK stakeholders to join the English Skills for Employability Think Tank to debate these issues and identify ways we could collaborate. At the first meeting, it was agreed that discussions should focus on the five key priority areas of: 1. Standards and assessment, 2. Curricula and content, 3. Delivery mechanisms, 4. Faculty and assessor development and 5. Business and funding models.

Several meetings were held throughout

2014, and two recommendations emerged:

1. To conduct action research with three Sector Skills Councils to identify how the linguistic levels of the CEFR could be best integrated into vocational qualifications developed under the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) to aid access, ongoing skills development and career progression.
2. To develop a new entry level within the context of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), that recognises achievement pre level A1.

This research study was then commissioned and funded jointly by the British Council India, Trinity College London and Manipal City & Guilds, with support from the National Skills Development Agency. We welcome comments on the recommendations and we will work with partners to ensure that they are further debated by the English Skills for Employability Think Tank and taken forward as appropriate.



Rob Lynes

Rob Lynes
Director
British Council India

1. Erling, E. (2014) The role of English in skills development in South Asia. British Council.
www.britishcouncil.in/programmes/higher-education/internationalising-higher-education/policy-dialogues/report-role-english

FOREWORD

In India there is an increasing demand from employers for English language skills. To address this growing need, it is vital to have research such as this which identifies the essential language and communication skills that are necessary to ensure entry to the workforce for India's youth.

The decision by the government to address this skills gap means that vocational skills training has become a major focus of government efforts, aiming to develop the skills that are required for employment and to ensure that a better skilled workforce is available to safeguard the future economic growth of India.

It is widely accepted that knowledge of English is one of the keys to good job prospects and advancement. English language is recognized by the government as a core skill which is a necessary component of the development of professional skills across sectors, and has the potential to transform lives.

In an effort to understand the issues and the challenges more thoroughly, a series of round table discussions were hosted by the British Council in India to address the topic of English for Employability. The meetings brought together a wide group of stakeholders from the private and public sector to develop an understanding of language needs, and then to begin to develop strategies that redress the gap.

The first question that must be asked is what specific language skills are required, and at what level? There has been little direct research which clearly identifies the language requirements of entry level jobs across different sectors so that educational organisations and training providers can meet these demands and provide suitable training and certification. Further, it is not just language, but communication skills, which is often the goal; what is really key is

how well people are able to communicate with whatever level of language they have.

Trinity College London was pleased to join with British Council and Manipal City & Guilds to fund research which will start to provide answers to some of these questions around language and employability. While there is a general anecdotal feeling that there is a positive correlation between English language and mobility, there is actually little hard evidence to show a causal link between English and economic development.

Beyond the need to have a better understanding of what language skills and literacies are required in different sectors, and what language people are using for what particular purposes, Trinity is especially interested in research about the very low-level language learners (pre-A1). In particular, is there a need to develop guidelines and descriptors, as well as appropriate assessment measures, for those who have only acquired very limited language in their studies?

The current research report represents a step towards developing a better understanding of the language requirements of entry level jobs in three different sectors: construction, hospitality and health care.

English needs are variable across sectors, and geographies, so this research will contribute to development of a new framework to bring together both the professional skills and language requirements in the Indian context.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Kemp'.

Sarah Kemp
Chief Executive
Trinity College London

FOREWORD

Employability is a vital issue for India. It's about a person's ability to get a job, keep that job, and move on to their next job. Language and communication skills are a key foundation to employability, to which this report makes an important contribution. It recommends actions we can take to build an India-specific framework for language and identifies a new entry level for English language skills.

Across India during the past few years, defining what a person should know or the skills they should be able to demonstrate have been the subject of great efforts from all stakeholders in the skills ecosystem. The benefit of standardisation of job role definitions in the long-run will be a better match between employer expectations and prospective employees' abilities. In short, we will all better know what to train and how to assess a person's match to the job they aspire to do, and better guide people into work, or on the job. When supply fits the demand that clearly exists in India, we will reap the benefits of the demographic dividend, and the great promise of initiatives like Make in India.

As a part of so-called 'soft skills', effective communication is a fundamental building block to successful employment. A candidate's ability to present their knowledge and skills effectively to employers is vital during the selection process; and the employee's skills with language – speaking, reading, or writing – will have a major impact on their performance on the job with customers, with their supervisor and with colleagues; and as a result, their prospects for promotion to the next job.

Of course in India there are many languages, and each and every one of them is important in the particular social and employment context. Therefore while the primary focus of this report is English, its aim is to help us to understand how we can start to codify and standardise the language skills in general that are required to perform well in a job.

The better we can define these requirements in the context of a particular job role, the better we can prepare people to achieve the employability that is so important to this Nation.

This is why this report is based on a deep engagement in three industry sectors, healthcare, hospitality and construction, and three specific job roles in each of these sectors. We have tried to understand the real requirement for language – English and vernacular – in the real work that people do.

The report recommends actions that we can take collectively to build an India-specific framework for language and map against other frameworks around the World. It also identifies a new level for language skills that will provide the first rung of a ladder for people to step onto. This first rung is important for the prospective employee to gain confidence and gain employment.

At Manipal City & Guilds we are proud to have had the opportunity to collaborate with the British Council and Trinity College London, alongside the three sector skills councils in healthcare, hospitality and construction, and with the research team that have done the hard work on the ground. We thank the NSDA for their guidance and support to our work, and commend the report's conclusions to the Nation for consideration and implementation.



John Yates
CEO
Manipal City & Guilds

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

With two thirds of the region's population below 30 years of age, employment and employability is a top developmental priority for South Asian countries. Many policy making bodies view English as a core skill and one that can impact socio-economic opportunities such as employment and mobility for the large and growing mass of youth in South Asia, in a fast globalising world.

In India, creating and formally adopting a national framework of occupational standards and qualifications through the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) is an important first step to improving employability skills, up-skilling Indian workers and ensuring that the quality of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is standardised. This also ties in to the need for meaningful recognition of achievement of skills and knowledge, important for employment and progression (vertical or lateral) of workers and aspirants.

There is no mention of any language (local, English or any other) in the National Skills Qualification Framework. The NSQF is language agnostic because of the multilingual context in India, and this is because India has 22 constitutionally recognised languages and 11 scripts. Yet, English is a core skill in many job contexts. It is felt by a various range of stakeholders

that English needs to be brought into the overall frame of qualification development. 'Communication skills' do feature in the level descriptors and are very broadly defined with the primary purpose of discerning the level of the qualification and defining progression requirements. However, communication skills ideally should not be used as a proxy for language competence which, as this report illustrates, is separate and would benefit from being defined separately with a robust underpinning complementary framework of its own. Also the variance of the levels on a qualification framework may not mirror language progression levels.

Although English and communication skills are being addressed on a bespoke basis within each qualification separately, this does not capture the variance of contexts and therefore remains ambiguous in relation to real job requirements. This can make it challenging for training providers, employers, employees or aspirants to know specifically what level of English, vernacular or range of languages are required for a specific job role within a given context. The same applies to communication and soft skills.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research study addresses the following

two objectives identified by the English Skills for Employability (ESfE) Think Tank²:

- To evaluate if there is a need to develop a new entry level within the context of the Common European Reference Framework, that recognises achievement at A0 (pre-A1) level.
- To conduct action research with three sectors – construction, healthcare and hospitality – in order to develop a white paper on how the linguistic levels of the CEFR could be best integrated into vocational qualifications developed under the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF).

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND OBSERVATIONS

The research was conducted between February and May 2015 through a detailed observation and analysis of several job roles within the construction, healthcare and hospitality sectors. The sectors and roles were chosen for capturing variance within the contexts and ensuring these were representative of the real and important industry requirements.

An examination of the NSQF Qualification Packs (QPs) for the selected roles indicated that because of the way the NSQF descriptors are designed (i.e. to allow broad

2. The ESfE Think Tank was set up by the British Council, the National Skills Development Agency (NSDA) and other Indian and UK stakeholders to address the growing need of English language skills for employability in India.

comparisons to be made between learning outcomes) it is possible that different components of the qualification can be at different levels on the NSQF. This is common with qualification frameworks. Our research highlights the risk that qualification packs such as those studied, e.g. steward or phlebotomy technician, may not fully reflect English language capabilities, as the relevant role is found in various work contexts within the sector, including those where English is not the lingua franca. As one example, during a field visit to a restaurant in Delhi in the context of this research, it was witnessed that almost all work except for billing was done in the local language, which required most workers to almost never speak, read or write in English. Since the restaurant served a local cuisine, even the names of the dishes were articulated in the local dialect.

In the Indian workplace English is used variably depending on a number of factors. While examining job roles for each sector in more detail and interacting with employers, employees and training providers, it was clear that each sector had significant differences and variations impacting the use and requirement of English for effective job performance. A uniformly applied benchmark for English language skills could run the risk of becoming too high (a barrier for aspirants/workers) or too low (insufficient for effective job performance) for effective use within these differentiated work contexts.

Therefore, we conclude that a single framework for both vocational and language competence may not be suitable. A complementary framework for languages would provide the flexibility in the development of Qualification Packs to define language requirements according to context without fundamentally changing the level of the NOS or the overall QP. The descriptors

within the National Occupational Standards (NOS)-based Qualification Packs³ for each of the job roles studied as part of this research were mapped against the Common European Framework (CEFR) language competence levels.⁴ This was done to establish the level of language competence expected from the role incumbents (employees) in order for them to perform the job well.

The NOSs state expectations under each role related to language capability, whether for English or for local language. These were analysed for each skill under reading, writing, speaking and listening, captured for each job role and mapped against the expected CEFR proficiency level that would be required. They were then compared with actual language used within the workplace to arrive at an overall picture of actual usage of English within the job roles in the workplace.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

- Employers do not use a shared framework to communicate language requirements to recruiters, their own team or new employees. There are no defined benchmarks for job requirements, training or assessment and no regular support for language learning.
- All the employers interviewed during this study stated that they did not have a formal scheme or a well-defined plan to sponsor or offer opportunities for language learning of employees. Most employees on the other hand were willing to learn, and a quarter of them were even willing to pay to learn the language.
- Employers in most cases did not have specific language training as part of their regular practice for developing employees. In many cases

language training was embedded into communication training, soft skills and technical training. In some cases, especially in hospitality, such training was attempted on occasions, but was not done as part of a specific, outcome-based plan or scheduled with any regularity. Many workplaces did not provide any language training for employees, though many employees, when asked, said they would take up such opportunities if they were offered.

- In one example of a healthcare organisation where training opportunities were provided to staff for development on a regular basis, employees were motivated by this and appreciative of the opportunities. This was clearly evident where different employees spoke highly of this organisation and expressed gratitude for the opportunities they had been afforded to learn new things and develop themselves. They stated this was unlike their experience in a number of previous organisations they had worked for and that they would like to remain with this organisation for a long time to come.
- Across sectors the usage of English varies. For example, in the healthcare industry reading in English is required 100% of the time, whereas in the construction and hospitality roles it is required only 'Some of the time' (55–60%) with workers in construction saying that reading is never required. This example shows the unique requirement in each sector. Similar differences can also be noted across writing, speaking and listening.
- In construction, one role, which is at a higher NSQF level than the other two, almost uniformly shows lower usage levels of English across reading, writing, speaking and listening. This is consistent

3. A Qualifications Pack comprises the set of Occupational Standards together with the educational, training and other criteria required to perform a job role. A Qualification Pack is assigned a unique qualification pack code. www.nsdindia.org/nos

4. The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) provides a description of language proficiency across the four skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking and provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabi, curricula guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf. The six levels defined within the CEFR are A1 (Breakthrough), A2 (Waystage), B1 (Threshold), B2 (Vantage), C1 (Effective Operational Proficiency) and C2 (Mastery). Each level has been provided with 'illustrative descriptors' developed and validated for the CEF. www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf

with our earlier findings of language competence requirements when compared between two sectors based on content of the Qualification Packs for the roles.

- Even for the same role there are different English language requirements because the language is used differently across the four skills of speaking, reading, writing and listening, based on the employment context and job content. This is also evident when compared with the CEFR levels.

Some of the different requirements for English usage, and even levels, arise out of a variance in the following:

- Business segment (i.e. residential and commercial repair and maintenance roles in construction have more usage of English than for building construction, due to retail customer interaction requirements, increased requirement of paperwork, etc.)
- Market/Customer segment served (i.e. urban upscale units serving international and upper-class customers in healthcare

require higher levels of language competence than small town markets serving largely middle-class domestic customers)

- Service format (i.e. a counter service unit in the Quick Service Restaurant segment requires less customer interaction and therefore less usage of English as compared to a table service restaurant)
- Own capability and preference (i.e. in construction a worker uses English for some requirements as a matter of choice and not out of necessity or expectation of others. This may be due to the educational and exposure levels of the worker)

It is important to note that qualifications at the same level across the NSQF may have varying English language capability requirements. In some cases in actual practice, people performing in jobs corresponding to lower levels of the NSQF have and require higher English language capabilities than those in jobs corresponding to higher levels on the NSQF. This demonstrates that the level arrived at for the Qualification Packs in relation to the descriptors presented in the NSQF may not necessarily reflect an accurate hierarchy of language capabilities.

English language has a varying degree of

importance and is not generally considered to be a barrier for entry into jobs and professions in certain, even dominant, contexts within these sectors. In other specific contexts, English is considered important for effectively coping with pre-service training and job requirements, with a varying emphasis on different elements (reading, writing, speaking and listening). A similar requirement is reflected in the context of progression, where based on context it may or may not be important for immediate progression from these roles, though it is considered to be very important for long-term career growth.

Often English language learning is considered a part of technical training, communication or soft skills. Trainers are often not language teachers or specialised trainers themselves and they also need support and professional development.

Most incumbents (employees) interviewed for the study (88%) were interested in learning English, but only some of them (27%) were actively doing something to learn. The most commonly cited reasons for not participating in learning opportunities were lack of time and money, even though 24% of incumbents were willing to pay personal money to learn the language.

Often English language learning is considered a part of technical training, communication or soft skills. Trainers are often not language teachers or specialised trainers themselves and they also need support and professional development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **A Common Indian Framework of Reference (CIFR) covering all Indian languages and English could be developed as complementary to the NSQF**, using the model of CEFR and other available or purpose-/context -referenced 'can do'⁵ statements, building on the work of various international research projects for language references.⁶ To support this, the NSQF level descriptors could be reviewed to distinguish and remove references to linguistic skills, so that only references to 'soft/communication skills' remain in the level descriptors.
- **Language competence, in both English and other Indian languages, in QPs should be separately levelled according to the CIFR**, allowing for distinctions between geographical and other work-related contexts in India.
- **The CIFR should include an A0 (Pre-A1) level** to capture job role-specific language competence and serve as a recognised language level. An assessment approach and related tools would then need to be developed for this level.

A further consideration, beyond the scope of this paper, is the continued discussion of **how to benchmark and measure soft skills within qualifications** with a clearer menu of competency and statement descriptors.

RATIONALE AND WAY FORWARD

The limited language guidance provided by the NSQF requires that there is a more relevant and usable framework that serves the purpose to inform trainers, learners, employers and assessors about language requirements for employability. This will reduce the complexity within the development of qualifications and provide stakeholders with the opportunity to choose the most relevant level of language capabilities required to be developed for employability purposes. This will help in setting logical, realistic and purposeful expectations for learning, teaching and progression.

Although the need for sector-specific language does not necessarily mean a lower level than A1, there is a rationale and argument for adding A0 (pre-A1) level to the CIFR as a first recognised language level achievement. This was evidenced by the minimum requirements of a second language (such as English) for effective job performance in certain contexts. This would acknowledge achievement of specific language competences that ought to address the minimum required for dealing with essential issues such as health, safety and security, or providing assistance to others. Currently, these are being ignored in certain sectors and contexts and, as

evidenced from this study, are lower than A1 level requirements. This level of achievement will also enable prospective and current employees to feel confident about their own language learning capabilities, which serves for further engagement and willingness to progress their learning. It is recommended that this new level should have sector-specific generic and contextual components for it to be useful in the work context, especially since a number of requirements are very specific to the sector, i.e. technical trade terms, routinised contextual vocabulary or phrases.

Each sector can further define competences appropriately. This recommendation arises out of the variance in context, which, when addressed through a singular standard for language within a qualification, may either create unjustified barriers to entry or understate requirements that are considered essential for job performance in certain contexts.

The new CIFR framework suggested should be developed from the ground up. This is important, as each sector needs to determine what they require in the Indian work context. CEFR-like frameworks, are usually context agnostic, even though there are versions developed for work, tourist and study⁷ requirements though not sector specific; however, work contexts in sectors may be fairly routinised in many cases. This

5. ALTE – the Association of Language Testers in Europe – is an association of providers of European foreign language examinations. Registered in 1992 as a European Economic Interest Group (EEIG), it provides a context for transnational collaboration between some of the major international providers in the field of language testing. From the outset, one of ALTE's main aims has been to establish common levels of proficiency in order to promote the transnational recognition of certification in Europe. Work done in the furtherance of this aim is referred to as the ALTE Framework Project.

The aim of the ALTE 'Can Do' Project is to develop and validate a set of performance-related scales, describing what learners can actually do in the foreign language. The 'Can Do' statements are multilingual, having been translated so far into thirteen of the languages represented in ALTE. These languages are: Catalan, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish. They constitute a frame of reference to which different language exams at different levels can potentially be related.

www.cambridgeenglish.org/images/28906-alte-can-do-document.pdf

6. Swiss National Science Research Project, DIALANG Project, CEFR-J, et al.

7. The ALTE 'can do' project produced 400 descriptors ranging for work, social and tourist, and study purposes. This resulted in a descriptor framework for these specific broad contexts being produced aligned to the CEFR.

www.cambridgeenglish.org/images/28906-alte-can-do-document.pdf

may allow for people to work with limited and pre-defined working-level English or other language competences.

In order to identify to what levels the language requirements can be managed by contextual language competences, the first step in the development of any framework would have to start with identifying work contexts, context and levels of English or other language usage prevalent. This will result in higher validity of the descriptors generated or identified and ascribed.

The framework needs to be useful for all stakeholders, such as employers, learners and trainers. Sectors could identify these requirements based on their own sector needs, expectations and practices and input these on to a resultant sector framework.

A national level framework should emerge from an aggregation of these rather than from a top-down description. The sector bodies in areas of demand could further benefit stakeholders by informing them which languages, including English, should be focused on in which areas, for which purposes and to what level. They could then assist in the acquisition and recognition of relevant language capabilities for learners, by encouraging and supporting these interventions where required.

For example, a hospital in the State of Odisha valued employees' ability to speak

in Bengali more than in English, due to their predominant customer base of patients of the neighbouring state of West Bengal. A recognition of requisite language capabilities in Bengali are likely to tip the employer in favour of such a candidate, to the overall satisfaction of all stakeholders involved and utilisation of capabilities which could potentially be laid to waste. Similarly, in another context, a worker of the healthcare sector in the National Capital Region complained of having weaker English language proficiency than a few years ago, because of having worked for a number of years in environments that didn't utilise or require him to exercise his English language capabilities. A recognition of his language capabilities could have helped him project them to prospective employers where his skills would be better put to use, again potentially to the improved overall satisfaction of key stakeholders involved.

This will also help build understanding of stakeholders who will engage with the framework and its requirements at different levels.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Abbreviation/acronym	Full form
AVCE	Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education
ALTE	Association of Language Testers in Europe
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CIFR	Common Indian Framework of Reference
CII	Confederation of Indian Industry
EEIG	European Economic Interest Group
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
GDA	General Duty Assistant
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LIS	Low Income States
LV	Low Voltage
MLT	Medical Lab Technician
NCR	National Capital Region
NOS	National Occupational Standard
NSDA	National Skills Development Agency
NSDC	National Skills Development Corporation
NSQF	National Skills Qualifications Framework
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
QP	Qualification Pack
QCF	Qualifications Credit Framework
QA	Quality Assurance
QSR	Quick Service Restaurant
RCC	Reinforced Cement Concrete
SCQF	Scottish Credits and Qualifications Framework
SSC	Sector Skills Council
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

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1. BACKGROUND

This research study was recommended by the English Skills for Employability Think Tank (Appendix 1) and then commissioned by a research committee comprising Manipal City & Guilds, Trinity College London, the British Council India, and the National Skills Development Agency. This Think Tank was set up in 2013 by the British Council and the National Skills Development Agency to debate the English language skills gap in functional and workplace skills. The Think Tank involved key participants from government, Sector Skills Councils, private and public organisations as well as academic institutions committed to working together to address the challenges of providing quality English language and skills development training to the large numbers of young people in India seeking employment.

A series of think tank meetings identified five priority areas;

- Standards and assessment
- Curricula and content
- Delivery mechanisms
- Faculty and assessor development
- Business and funding models

that were further debated through a number of round table discussions.

As a logical next step to these discussions, it was decided to commission this research study in order to better understand how English language was actually being used in the workplace. The main purpose of this research was to investigate whether introducing an additional lower level of benchmarking based on the Common European Framework of Reference for

Languages would be helpful in terms of workplace entry as well as possible progression opportunities. In order to do this it was decided to look in detail at job roles within three specific sectors to produce a narrow, in-depth study to enable a clearer understanding of issues and realities on the ground.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

The research aimed to address the following questions:

- What languages (English and vernacular) do employees within the selected job roles currently use in the workplace and for what tasks?
- How and where did those individuals acquire these skills?
- If taught, by whom and in which formats (school, online, on-the-job, face-to-face, structured language courses, one-on-one tutoring, etc.)?
- Is there a perception that English might be a potential barrier to entry and to promotion for individuals in these roles?

These questions in turn inform the overall research aims:

- To evaluate if there is a need to develop a new entry level of linguistic achievement within the context of the Common European Reference Framework, that recognises achievement pre-A1 level.
- To conduct action research with three sectors (construction, healthcare and hospitality) in order to develop a white paper on how the linguistic levels of the CEFR could be best integrated into vocational qualifications developed under the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF).

The NSQF is relatively new in India. Creating and formally adopting a framework of standards through the NSQF is an important first step to up-skilling Indian workers and ensuring that the quality of vocational education is standardised.

Currently language levels and communication skills for vocational qualifications within the NSQF are described only in a broad context. This can make it challenging for training providers, employers and employees to know what level of language is required for a specific role.

The Common European Framework (CEFR) is a recognised framework of reference for describing language proficiency. It was designed to provide a transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses and curriculum guidelines, the design of teaching and learning materials, and the assessment of foreign language proficiency. It is used in Europe, but also in other continents, and is now available in 39 languages.

Mapping language related to job roles against this framework is a useful exercise because it also helps to sharpen the focus on employment-related aspects of language learning.⁸ This can in turn better help and support education and training providers so that their language training programmes are more pragmatic and results-focused.

There is a need for a clearer language framework for vocational qualifications which will help to inform trainers, learners, employers and assessors about the relevant language requirements for employability. This will in turn help to reduce any complexity with development of qualifications. A framework also provides stakeholders with the opportunity to choose the most relevant level of language capabilities that need to be developed

for employability purposes. This will help in setting logical, realistic and purposeful expectations for learning, teaching and progression.

This research report aims to address the two objectives through a detailed observation of several roles within the chosen industries, analysing the data obtained and using this to make recommendations. To this end over 99 employers, training providers and employees were interviewed.

Some of the preliminary discussions connected with the research project also outlined the need to show the research study as a model in terms of focus and methodology, so that this might be replicated within other sectors and job roles across the country to arrive at relevant and better conclusions.

This project was limited in its scope and resourcing and was focused on a narrow but critical aspect of the need for success in employability interventions and related planning. The purpose was to highlight how penetrative studies can be used to draw out critical evidence for specific action, as opposed to generalisable findings or commentary. This focus and corresponding objectives, balanced with need, context and limitations, defined the overall approach of the study.

8. ec.europa.eu/languages/policy/strategic-framework/documents/languages-for-jobs-report_en.pdf

3. METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

This section of the report details the methodology used and approach taken to address the two research objectives and four research questions presented in the previous section.

3.1 METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

The methods used to undertake this study included the following.

- **Interviews:** The primary methodology was to conduct in-depth interviews with a range of stakeholders to get their views and ensure that there was clarity on questions asked and responses. Given the limited sample size it was extremely important to ensure the responses were well understood and necessary

clarifications on both sides provided for accurate understanding. Responses were recorded and transcribed so that they could be referred to for accuracy and any quotes that helped to substantiate findings.

- **Questionnaires:** Questionnaires were developed to standardise the range of questions to be asked. These were used as a template and provided guidance for the interviews conducted. These questionnaires were developed for trainers, employers and incumbents in each role.
- **Focus Group Discussions:** Focus group discussions were held with a number of employees in the job roles selected for the study. This was done with a set of pre-selected questions.

- **Secondary research:** Research was conducted on various reports and studies in relation to various aspects of this study. These included reports on language frameworks, English for vocational and employment purposes, migration and employment reports, etc.

The following structure, including four phases, were finalised for carrying out the research, relying on a penetrative, pragmatic and collaborative approach as Table 1 shows:

Table 1: Four phases of the research

Phase of research	Approach and considerations
Phase 1: Preparatory phase collecting and researching background information and preparation of research tools, methodology, scope and schedule	This was done taking into consideration the core objectives of the study derived from previous Think Tank meetings and briefings. Other important considerations were limitations of time and cost, value proposition for key stakeholders and related contextual factors and influences. Therefore research into areas such as labour migration, composition of the sectors, voluminous and dominant job roles within the sector, etc. were included in the scope of the study.
Phase 2: Fieldwork	Fieldwork included face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. Questionnaires were used to guide the researchers for individual interviews with key stakeholder categories and for focus group discussions. Both researchers conducted most of these interviews together during two sets of field visits in February and March 2015 in Delhi and Odisha. This phase involved developing a comprehensive picture of the key sectors and assessing what is happening on the ground. The field research included interviews and meetings with employers, training providers and other stakeholders in order to create case studies and guidelines of how the skills can be developed in different phases of an individual's learning pathway in each sector.
Phase 3: Secondary and desk-based research	This included comparing skill descriptors related to language and communication in the qualification packs for each role researched and mapping these against the Common European Framework for Languages. The NSQF descriptors were also compared with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), Qualification Credit Framework (QCF) and the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) to discern similarities and variances between these.
Phase 4: Data analysis, conclusions, recommendations and report writing	This phase included aggregating, interpreting and assimilating the data gathered in order to reach logical conclusions and relevant recommendations. Key objectives of the study were addressed and the case for our recommendations was developed and presented. It is important to bear in mind the various audiences for whom this research study will be relevant and recommendations have been made for different stakeholders. The scope of recommendations has been increased in order to make the study more valuable and to highlight critical related aspects.

English Skills for Employability Research Project

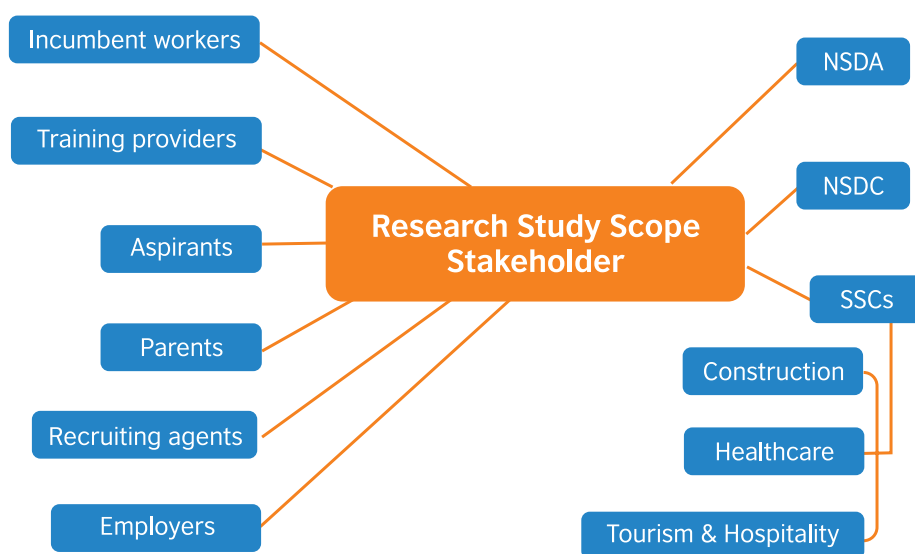


Figure 1: Range of stakeholders impacted by this research study

Table 2: Key stakeholders and relevant aspects of study

Stakeholders relevant to the study
National Skills Qualification Framework – NSQF (NSDA)
National Occupational Standards and Qualification Pack content (SSC)
Employer expectations and practices (employers)
Recruitment practices and entry level barriers (recruiters and employers)
Current workforce capabilities, job requirements, promotion and entry level guidelines and practices, language development of employees
Aspiring workers and future employment pool, existing capabilities and gaps, candidate background (aspirants, parents, training providers and educators)

3.2 QUESTION TYPES

Focus group discussions, visits and interviews

Questionnaires for employers, employees and training providers were created and validated in the field. Focus group discussions were conducted with employees where possible, as well as a range of interviews. The full questionnaires are available on request and all interviews and focus groups were recorded and transcribed in full.

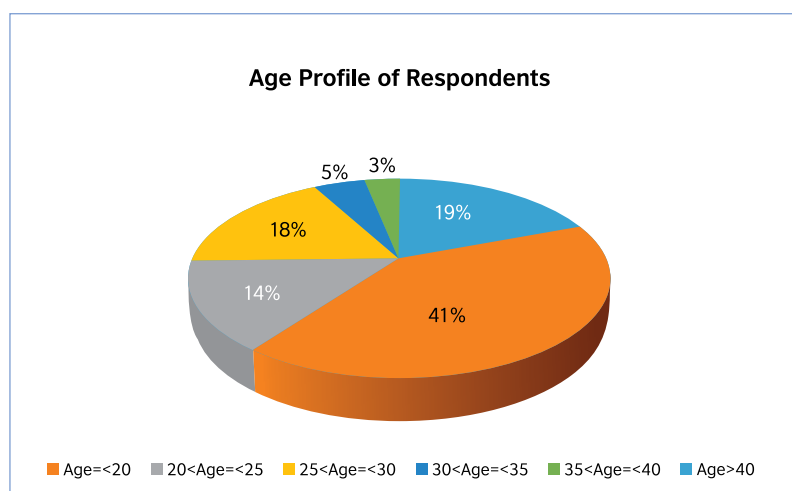
The summary below shows the range of question types and what we hoped to find out by using them:

- **Open-ended questions:** These were used for finding out broad information; for example, a student's motivations for learning the language (which may include a range of responses) can help us ask a follow-up question. These questions were used where unbiased and complex views were to be uncovered.
- **Closed questions:** These were used for eliminating or choosing options and for getting more background information from the interviewee. For example, the level to which they may have studied or if they have ever participated in/completed a formal language learning course; or if their employers have ever provided them with a formal opportunity for language development.
- **Likert scale questions:** These types of questions were used to understand the interviewee's level of satisfaction and usage with their current language capabilities for professional success in their current occupation, or the level of support they get from employers for their professional development.
- **Semantic differentials:** These were used where expected relative and perceived opinions were to be uncovered. For example, 'How important do you consider English language capabilities for succeeding in your career aspirations?', where at one end of the scale would be 'not important at all' and on the other end 'absolutely critical'.
- **Dichotomous questions:** These included 'yes' or 'no' questions. Example: 'Are you aware of the CEFR?'
- **Ranking order questions:** These were used to find out preferences where interviewees had to rank responses in a specific order. Example: 'Rank the following options which you think are most effective ways to acquire language learning capabilities, with 1 being most effective, 2 the next best alternative ...'
- **Multiple-choice questions:** These were used to encourage the respondent to select the most likely/preferred option from a range of finite options.

3.3 AGE AND EDUCATIONAL PROFILE OF THE INTERVIEWEES

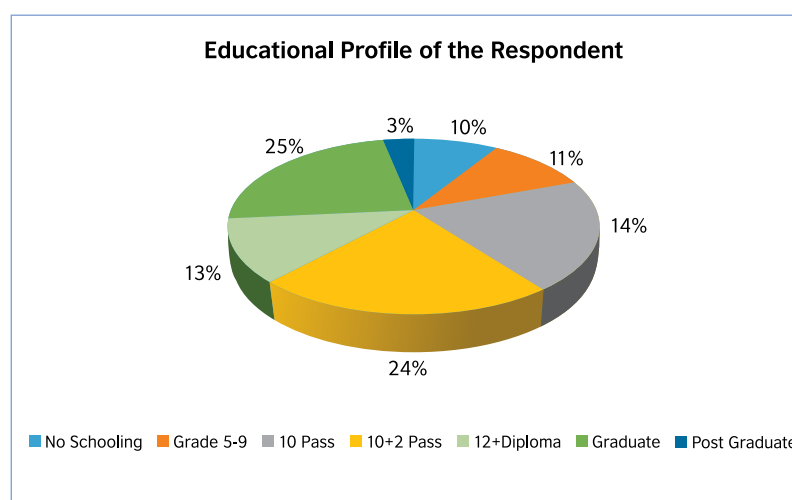
The majority of respondents across the job roles were under the age of 30, which reflects the average for India: over 60% of the population is under 30 years old. Roughly a quarter of those spoken to were graduates, a further 35% had reached the end of secondary school and the remaining 40% spread out of lower schooling with 10% with no schooling at all and a further 11% with schooling only up to the ninth grade. While this is not to reflect on the composition of the workforce, these numbers are to highlight the diversity of the interviewees included in the coverage of the study. The incumbents interviewed across the three sectors included 29 from hospitality, 13 from healthcare and 21 from construction.

Chart 1: Age profile of the interviewees



Source: Primary research data from all sector employees interviewed; N=63

Chart 2: Educational profile of the interviewees



Source: Primary research data; N=63



3.4 TRIANGULATION AND MULTI-METHOD RESEARCH

The research methodology focused on multi-method research and triangulation⁹ for the purposes of arriving at conclusions and verifying findings.

Data triangulation, investigator triangulation and method triangulation formed part of the methodology of planning and implementation. This was particularly important due to the limited, focused, but narrow and deep, scope of the study. Between-method triangulation was used for most aspects of the research, with a limited application of within-method as well.

This triangulation of the data was important because the methodology did not involve direct standard-based testing of employees. Language testing was not done in this study because the purpose was not to define absolute levels of English but rather to study the variances and to better understand how English was actually being used in the workplace.

9. The use of triangulation can be traced back to Campbell and Fiske (1959) who developed the idea of 'multiple operationism'. They argued that more than one method should be used in the validation process to ensure that the variance reflected that of the trait and not of the method. Thus, the convergence or agreement between two methods '... enhances our belief that the results are valid and not a methodological artefact' (Bouchard, 1976: 268).

This kind of triangulation is labelled by Denzin (1978: 302) as the 'between (or across) methods' type, and represents the most popular use of triangulation. It is largely a vehicle for cross-validation when two or more distinct methods are found to be congruent and yield comparable data. For organisational researchers, this would involve the use of multiple methods to examine the same dimension of a research problem.

4. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

Defining the scope of any research project is vital in order to arrive at a set of valid and reliable conclusions. Since this was to be a relatively small-scale study with time and cost limitations, it was decided to make the scope of the research narrow and focused. It was therefore important that the samples were as far as possible representative of the sector and also the variance within it, given the fact of the vastness of the country.

The project scope, therefore, had a bearing on the methodology chosen. Given the limitations, it was decided not to administer actual standards testing for establishing CEFR equivalences of the roles that were examined. Instead a mapping exercise was undertaken using the NSQF descriptors for language and communication skills for a specific job role. These were then mapped to the CEFR descriptors for that level and compared with what was actually encountered on the ground when interacting with employees and trainees, in line with the triangulation methodology outlined in section 3.4.

The scope had the following elements, outlined below:

- 4.1 Sectors and English language needs
- 4.2 Geographical scope
- 4.3 Job roles
- 4.4 Employer type
- 4.5 Stakeholders
- 4.6 Employee/trainee profile

4.1 SECTORS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEEDS

The sectors (construction, healthcare and hospitality) were selected largely by the English Skills for Employability Think Tank group and were further validated while defining the overall scope.

These sectors were chosen for the following reasons.

- They are significant industry sectors with relatively large numbers of employees entering each industry.
- Each has a range of employer categories that reflect the range of employment roles within the sector.
- Each has both organised and unorganised elements, defining unorganised (informal) sector as consisting of 'all unincorporated private enterprises owned by individuals or households engaged in the sale and production of goods and services operated on a proprietary or partnership basis and with less than ten total workers'¹⁰
- Each sector has different English language needs:
 - In **hospitality** sometimes there is a tendency to assume that English is

largely relevant because of the high level of roles connected with guest interaction as well as globally integrated systems of reservations, business tie-ups, etc. These require communicating with international audiences.

- In the **construction industry** the assumption is that English language skills are not very relevant since large amounts of on-site labour tend to only require communication with internal, back-of-the-house workers, who are mostly – and often only – conversant with the local language.
- In **healthcare** the assumption is that the need for English language skills varies based on client-facing roles and back-of-house roles. The need may also vary depending on whether the provider works with domestic or international clients. In this sector the assumed lingua franca is English.

Therefore a key purpose of this research was to further examine these assumptions by exploring and establishing actual language use and practices within each industry in relation to the development of language capability levels.

10. 'The Challenge of Employment in India – An Informal Economy Perspective', NCEUS, 2009

4.2 GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

The geographical scope of the study was limited to the state of Odisha and the Delhi National Capital Region (NCR). NCR also includes areas such as Gurgaon, Ghaziabad, NOIDA, Greater NOIDA (Gautam Budh Nagar) and Faridabad. Within these the scope included locations between Tier I (Delhi and NCR), Tier II (Bhubaneshwar) and Tier III (Cuttack and Puri) cities.

These areas were selected because they were felt to be sufficiently contrasting in terms of the following.

- **Migration:** Odisha is one of the states from where there is large migration taking place for employment purposes. A section of this also favours Delhi and NCR as its destination, particularly in the sectors selected for this study. Given the focus of the study it was considered important to capture the impact of language on mobility and employment in these two regions.¹¹ There was a need felt to understand relevant migrant education levels, language demands that may be placed on candidates for employment purposes and whether requirements at

different levels nudge people towards learning Hindi or English, as well as what media, support and opportunities they might have for learning.

- **Language:** A key factor in selecting Odisha was that, while Delhi is part of the Hindi-speaking belt with over 80% speaking Hindi, Odisha forms part of the non-Hindi part of the country with less than 10% speaking Hindi.¹² It is important to understand whether L1 (first language) makes an impact on employment, English language learning and usage, because Odia is the L1 in Odisha, spoken by 85% of the population,¹³ and Hindi is the L1 in Delhi and NCR.
- **Demographics:** Odisha is a state based in East India and is considered to be one of the Low Income States (LIS) of the country. It also has a significant rural and tribal population as compared to Delhi and NCR, where the urban population exceeds the rural population significantly.

Apart from broad geographic location, the scope also explored locations between Tier I (Delhi and NCR), Tier II (Bhubaneshwar) and Tier III (Cuttack and Puri) cities.

4.3 JOB ROLES

The following job roles were selected in consultation with project stakeholders:

Construction: Senior Quality Assurance (QA) Technician, Assistant Electrician and Shuttering Carpenter

Hospitality: Steward, Room Attendant and Front Office Associate

Healthcare: Medical Lab Technician, Phlebotomy Technician and General Duty Assistant

These roles were selected because they had the following areas in common which were likely to contribute to the depth and focus of the study:

- The roles are dominant in that they either have the most numbers within organisations relative to other roles, or they are roles where there are the highest numbers of employees within and across the sector.
- Entry level positions and in some cases the next logical level of progression.
- The roles are across comparable NSQF levels.
- The roles are present in both the organised and the unorganised sector (10 or fewer employees). Organised/Informal – formal sector roles only.
- Each has a mix of front-end and back-end roles.

11. Odisha state migration report – Studies, Stories and Canvas (July 2014) - p 18-23: , July 2004

12. Graddol, D. (2006)

13. www.orissa.gov.in/people/language.htm, n.d.

- The roles are found within 'typical/most' types of employers within the sector.
- These roles are core sector function roles (not 'support or generic cross-sector function' roles).
- The roles are inclusive (i.e. gender, age, special needs, etc.).

Table 3: Job roles selected for study (NSQF level-wise and sector-wise)

NSQF Levels	Hospitality	Healthcare	Construction
Level 3	Room Attendant Steward	General Duty Assistant	Assistant Electrician
Level 4	Front Office Assistant	Phlebotomy Technician Medical Lab Technician	Shuttering Carpenter System (Final)
Level 5			Sr. QA Technician

4.4 EMPLOYER TYPE

The employers interviewed were typical employers within the sector, with a mix as follows:

Table 4: Criteria for selection of employers across sectors

Mix of employers representing		
Size	Primary Clientele Category Served	Type of Business
Large	International	Niche
Medium	Domestic	Integrated
Small	Local	Diversified

There was a mix of organised and unorganised sector employers chosen for the study across each of the three sectors. This was important in order to get a more appropriate view of employment, which even, according to differing estimates, converge to state that the majority of the workforce is employed in the unorganised sector. By one estimate in a 2005 International Labour Organisation published study, the unorganised sector employs about 86% of the workforce.¹⁴ The unorganised

sector refers to those enterprises whose activities or collection of data is not regulated under any legal provision or who do not maintain any regular accounts.¹⁵

These are typically small businesses and enterprises with fewer than ten employees.

Table 5 below shows the range of employers and training providers interviewed:

Table 5: Sector-wise list of employers/training institutions covered in the study

Sector	Employers/Training Institutions interviewed
Hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resort hotel in Puri • Premium brand of mid-scale hotel in Delhi • Economy brand of mid-scale hotel in Delhi • Mid-range food service chain outlet, organised sector in Delhi • Mid-range food service standalone outlet in the unorganised sector in Delhi • Two training institutes catering to the under-privileged segment in Bhubaneswar, Odisha: one delivering customised training for an employer, the other delivering generic training • Sector Skills Council for the sector
Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-end hospital and training centre in Healthcare, Greater Noida • Low-end training centre in Cuttack, Odisha • Leading chain of diagnostic testing in Gurgaon • Unorganised stand-alone diagnostic centres in Gurgaon • Collection centre in Gurgaon • Mid-range hospital in Bhubaneswar, Odisha • Sector Skills Council for the sector
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training centre in Ghaziabad catering for underprivileged workers in the unorganised sector • Workers from the unorganised and organised sector in Ghaziabad • Sector Skills Council for the sector

14. T.S.Papola, (2014)

15. www.arthapedia.in/index.php?title=Informal_Sector_/Unorganised_sector

4.5 STAKEHOLDERS

The scope of stakeholders defined relevant to the study and the numbers of each interviewed are as follows:

Table 6: (Category-wise) Stakeholders interviewed for the study

Stakeholder	Number of interviews
Employers (HR managers/Training managers)	11
Supervisors, Line managers	6
Employees within each selected role (29 Hospitality, 13 Healthcare and 21 Construction)	63
Training institution representatives	12
Sector Skills Council representatives	6
National Skills Development Agency (NSDA)	1
TOTAL	99

Including recruitment agencies within the scope was considered; however, interactions with employers revealed that recruitment for the roles examined was either done directly or through referrals and direct applicants.

4.6 EMPLOYEE/TRAINEE PROFILE

While the approach was to undertake a random selection, it was also intended to include in the sample employees/trainees that reflected and captured workforce diversity in terms of the following:

- age – (actual participants ranging from 19–45 although the majority were under 30 years old which reflects the context accurately)
- educational attainment (actual participants ranging from no schooling to postgraduates)
- gender (both male and female)
- mother tongue/states (at least from a few different states and native speakers of different local/regional languages)
- years of experience.

5. KEY FINDINGS

The key findings in relation to this study focus on an initial examination of the NSQF descriptors and job role as well as the Qualification Packs developed by each sector in line with the national standards¹⁶ (www.nsdindia.org/nos). These were then compared with what was seen in the field. Further descriptors within the National Occupational Standards (NOS) Qualification Packs for each of the job roles studied were mapped against the Common European Framework (CEFR) language competence levels. This was to establish the level of language competence expected from the employee in order for them to perform the job well. This prepared the groundwork for comparing these with findings from the field work.

5.1 UNDERSTANDING AND COMPARING THE NSQF DESCRIPTORS WITH QPs FOR THE SELECTED ROLES

There are a number of descriptors at each level in the NSQF, organised under the following categories:

- Process Required
- Professional Knowledge
- Professional Skill
- Core Skill
- Responsibility

Language and communication form part of the core skill category.

At Level 3 the descriptor relevant to language and communication capabilities on the NSQF states:

'Communication written and oral with minimum required clarity'

At Level 4 the descriptor relevant to language and communication capabilities on the NSQF states:

'Language to communicate written or oral with required clarity'

At Level 5 the descriptor relevant to language and communication capabilities on the NSQF states:

'... some skill of collecting and organizing information, communication'

Source: Extract from the National Skills Qualification Framework Notification, GOI, 27 Dec 2013 (www.skilldevelopment.gov.in)

An EU project team¹⁷ organised the level descriptor into a summary, integrated narrative to make it easier to interpret. Relevant extracts from the document are provided below.

NSQF LEVEL 3

Summary

'Individuals employed to carry out these job roles will be expected to be able to communicate clearly in speech and writing and may be required to use arithmetic and algebraic processes.'

NSQF LEVEL 4

Summary

'Individuals employed to carry out these jobs will be expected to be able to communicate clearly in speech and writing and may be required to use arithmetic and algebraic processes.'

NSQF LEVEL 5

Summary

'Individuals employed to carry out these jobs will be expected to be able to communicate clearly in speech and writing and may be required to apply mathematical processes. They should also be able to collect and organise information to communicate about the work. They will solve problems

16. www.nsdindia.org/nos

17. India-EU Skills Development Project: Guidance on Levelling Qualifications in the NSQF version 1/19 Dec 2014

by selecting and applying methods, tools, materials and information.’¹⁸

Implications for the study

1. There is no mention of any language (local, English or any other) in the NSQF. The NSQF is language agnostic because of the multilingual context in India because India has 22 constitutionally recognised languages and 11 scripts.¹⁹
2. The descriptors at Level 3 and 4 are not sufficiently differentiated or specifically detailed to embrace English language competences, in part due to (1) above and also because most qualification frameworks have broad descriptors and having a set of five descriptors (as in the Indian NSQF) with the principle of

best fit applicable, means there can be overlap between levels.

3. Given the same logic above, the descriptors are not sufficiently detailed for a common or shared understanding of specific language competences. This makes it challenging to use the framework alone to accurately define language competences for informing prospective or current training providers, employers or learners.

Overlap between qualification levels in practice, as opposed to principle, is common especially at Levels 3 and 4 where there is considerable overlap of competence, as the example from the UK Qualifications Framework shows (see Table 7).

In order to understand and highlight the differences between qualifications across sectors and levels and their correlation to the NSQF descriptors, qualifications at Level 3 and Level 4 were compared across two different job roles in different sectors and relevant NSQF descriptors.

The following two roles were randomly selected: Shuttering Carpenter at Level 4 and Room Attendant at Level 3. This is set out in Table 8.

Table 7: Extract from UK Qualifications Framework

4	Vocational certificates/ diplomas	Certificates of higher education	Specialist learning involving detailed analysis of a high level of information and knowledge for people working in technical and professional jobs, and/ or managing and developing others
3	Vocational certificates/ diplomas NVQ3	A-levels Advance Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE)	Ability to gain and apply a range of knowledge, skills and understanding; involves obtaining detailed knowledge and skills; appropriate for people wishing to go to university, people working independently, or those supervising and training others

18. India EU Skills Development Project – NSQF User Interface – National Skills Qualification Framework Levels version 1/19 Dec 2014

19. Guidance for using level descriptors within the Qualifications and Credit Framework – Qualifications and Credit Framework – QCDA (2010)
www.tdil-dc.in/index.php?option=com_vertical&parentid=1&lang=en, n.d.)

Table 8: Comparison of NSQF level descriptors and related job role QP content related to language skills

	Shuttering Carpenter (Level 4 – NSQF)	Room Attendant (Level 3 – NSQF)
NSQF Descriptor	‘Language to communicate written or oral with required clarity’	‘Communication written and oral with minimum required clarity’
Reading and Writing	<p>The user/individual on the job needs to know and understand how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write in one or more language, preferably the local language at the site • read one or more language, preferably the local language at the site • read sketches/routine working drawing or instructions provided for the work • read various sign boards, safety rules and safety tags , instruction related to exit routes during emergency at the workplace • list out the assigned works and targets • read communication from co-workers, superiors and notices from other departments as per requirement of the level • fill safety formats for near miss, unsafe conditions and safety suggestions • read sign boards, notice boards relevant to safety 	<p>The user/individual on the job needs to know and understand how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read and interpret instructions, procedures, information and signs relevant to housekeeping activities in the workplace • interpret and follow operational instructions and prioritise work • read and interpret information correctly from various job specification documents, manuals, health and safety instructions, etc. applicable to the job in English and/or local language • complete documentation accurately • document call logs, reports, task lists and schedules with co-workers • prepare status and progress reports • read and interpret signage, e.g. ‘Do not disturb’, ‘Clean the room’ to know customers’ requirements • read and understand essential information • communicate essential information in writing • write effective communications to share information with the team members and other people outside the team • read and comprehend basic content to read labels, charts, signage • read and write an accident/incident report in local language or English
Oral Communication (Speaking and Listening)	<p>The user/individual on the job needs to know and understand how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speak in one or more language, preferably one of the local languages at site • listen and follow instructions given by the superior • listen and follow communication shared by co-workers regarding standard work processes, resources available, timelines, etc. • communicate effectively with co-workers and subordinates • listen to instructions/communication shared by site EHS and superiors regarding site safety, and conducting tool box talk • communicate reporting of site conditions, hazards, accidents, etc. 	<p>The user/individual on the job needs to know and understand how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss task lists, schedules, and work-loads with co-workers • question customers appropriately in order to understand the nature of the problem and make a diagnosis • check and clarify task-related information • liaise with appropriate authorities using correct protocol • communicate with people in respectful form and manner in line with organisational protocol • avoid using jargon, slang or acronyms when communicating with a customer, unless it is required • follow instructions accurately • use questioning to minimise misunderstandings • communicate with people in respectful form and manner in line with organisational protocol • use gestures or simple words to communicate where language barriers exist • communicate effectively with others when carrying out housekeeping tasks • actively listen to discuss requirements of the customer • give clear commitments to customers • keep customers informed about progress

NSQF Descriptor	'Language to communicate written or oral with required clarity'	'Communication written and oral with minimum required clarity'
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicate essential information to colleagues face-to-face or through telecommunications • question others appropriately in order to understand the nature of the request/complaint • question co-workers appropriately in order to clarify instructions and other issues • give clear instructions to co-workers, subordinates, others

This example highlights the fact that the actual language capabilities and usage as expected and listed in the QP at a higher level (Level 4 in this case) in one sector is actually lower than as listed in the QP at a lower level (Level 3 in this case) in another sector. This is because the needs of the role are different and is another explanation of why the framework is not very detailed.

The guidance notes provided by the EU Skills team support this:

'NSQF level descriptors are designed to allow broad comparisons to be made between outcomes of learning and it is not the case that every qualification will or should have all of the characteristics set out in the level descriptors.'

'Where a qualification is made up of clearly distinguished parts or components (such as modules, units or courses), the individual parts of the qualification can be at different levels.'

*It may also happen that different aspects of a component of a qualification are at different levels. So, for example, different outcomes of a unit might match different NSQF levels, or an outcome might require skills at one level and knowledge at a different level, and so on.'*²⁰

For most levels capabilities are usually grouped together, i.e.:

- mathematical and numerical ability
- environmental awareness and understanding
- decision making (higher levels).

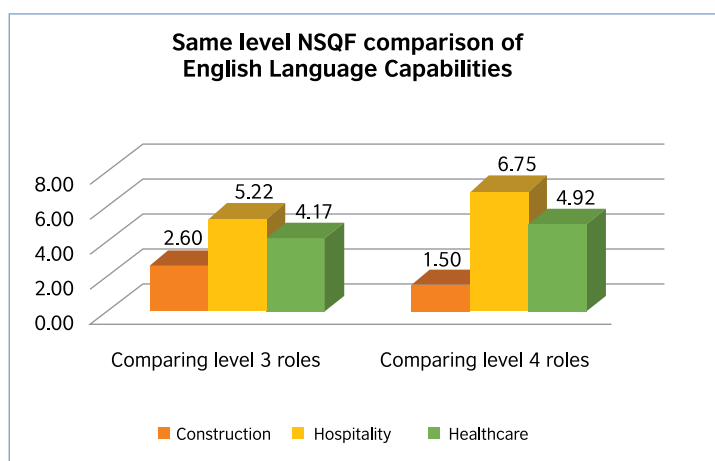
Language capabilities tend not to influence the overall level of the qualification.

5.2 COMPARISON OF LANGUAGE CAPABILITIES ACROSS COMPARABLE NSQF LEVEL ROLES ACROSS SECTORS

Employees were asked to rate themselves on their level of English language in relation to their respective job role.

When language ratings of incumbents as collected from field research were compared, for job roles at the same level it was found that each sector had a significant relative variance of English language capability as Chart 3 below shows:

Chart 3: Data from all sector employees at Level 3 and 4 roles



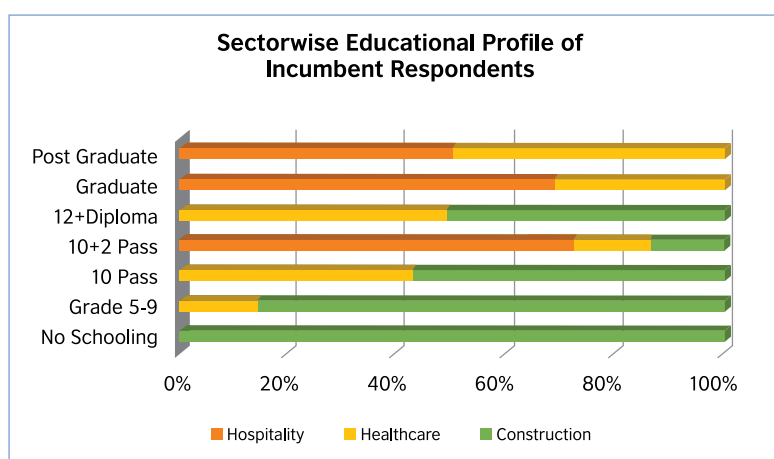
Source: Primary research data; N=60

In order to explain this variance further we explored the educational profile (as a factor) of the people interviewed within the sectors. In the construction sector there was perceptible alignment with the language capabilities, both at high and low levels. In the healthcare sector, however, the educational profile was more towards the higher end of the spectrum; and in the

hospitality sector, it was clustered in two segments, middle to lower and the higher segment.

If educational profile was the only factor that explained the variance then we could assume that healthcare should have shown a greater level of language capability than hospitality, but this was not the case.

Chart 4: Educational profile of employees interviewed across sectors



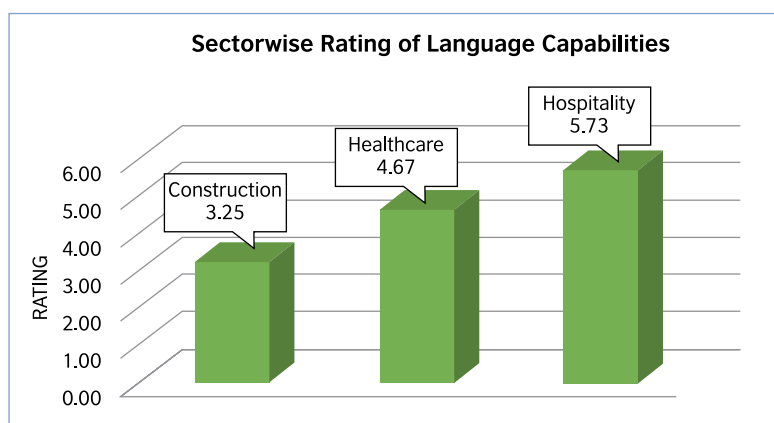
Source: Primary research data; N=63

5.3 COMPARISON OF LANGUAGE CAPABILITIES ACROSS COMPARABLE NSQF LEVEL ROLES WITHIN SECTORS

Interviewees in the three sectors were asked to rate their own English language capabilities. These also reflect different levels of competence.

The applicants were given a rating scale and were asked to rate themselves on their overall English language capabilities. The clear distinctions required further exploration to try to establish the reasons for such variance and its implications. The sectors characterised by various contextual differences within which these roles are embedded.

Chart 5: Rating of language capabilities across sectors



Source: Primary research data; N=63

We found that in order to understand the desired and actual language capabilities, it was important to better understand the context of operations within each sector. Highlighted below are the primary field research findings pertaining to relevant role language capabilities within each sector and the corresponding context variances. These findings are from how employees across the different sectors rated their own language capabilities in relation to their job role during our interviews. The findings are supported by what was found to be the case in the field.

HOSPITALITY

- The English language competences self-ratings for a front office associate (Level 4) were at a higher level than those of a (Level 3) room attendant and steward.
- The front office associates interviewed were from hotels, as were the room attendants. Even though these were spread across different geographical locations, they were still from the organised sector: medium to large hotels with a similar service format, though the clientele varied to some extent.
- The stewards interviewed were from hotels, stand-alone restaurants and Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) chains. In each of these segments employees had significantly different self-rated levels of language competences. Observations from discussions with employers further verified and supported the rationale that the variances were due to the types of customer served and the service formats adopted by the establishment. These led to different recruitment standards and requirements for English.
- In terms of location when stewards in hotels across different locations were compared, the urban capital city location stewards did not always rate themselves higher than a relatively smaller town.

As seen in the analysis of the sector there exists variance of English proficiency ratings, across various job contexts. These findings are based on field observations and incumbent views in the field. It is of course well accepted that it is difficult to draw valid conclusions from self-ratings alone. Therefore, as mentioned in section 3.4, triangulation was important in this study and it has helped to establish relative variance and indicative range of potential causes, but not absolute levels or definite causes. So while a further detailed investigation is recommended for arriving at specific categories or reasons for variance, for the purposes of this study the level of investigation allows us to substantiate conclusions and recommendations.

Some of the reasons for this variance could also include or be contingent upon the following factors:

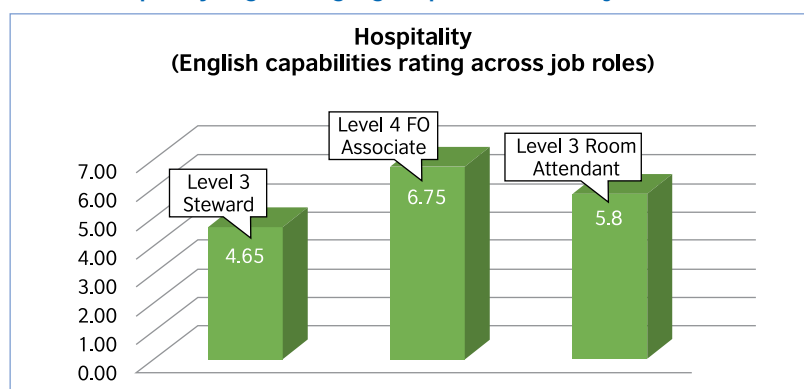
Norm - Perhaps stewards in the smaller city rated themselves higher because the benchmarks they were using were informed by generally lower standards of language competences as seen in their environment, with co-workers, etc. They may have rated themselves more highly than metropolitan city workers who have a higher comparable benchmark and examples in their working environment.

Work experience - It was found that the workers in the Odisha hotel tended to be generally more experienced than workers in the Delhi hotels.

Available talent - Hiring standards of the hotels vary based on the available talent pool in the region relative to the options for employment for those with better language capabilities. One would also have to explore the salary expectations in relation to the jobs available and capabilities of the workers.

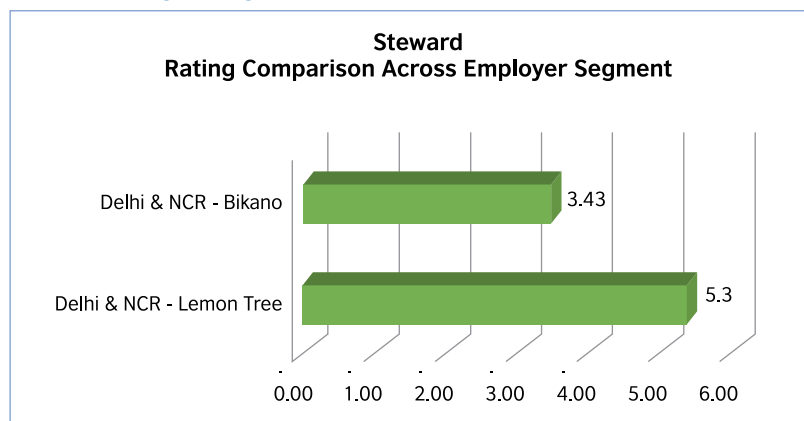
The hotel visited in Odisha is one of the leading hotels in the city, thereby perhaps attracting the best talent in the city, whereas the Delhi hotel was probably competing with other more or equally luxurious and upscale hotels.

Chart 6: Hospitality English language capabilities across job roles



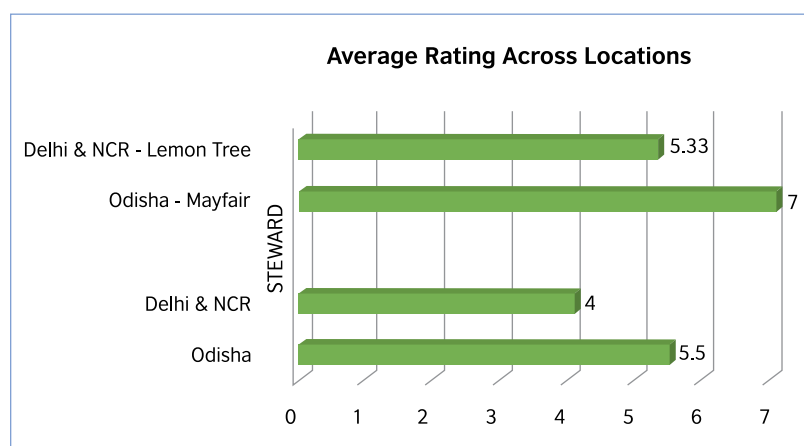
Source: Primary research data of hospitality workers; N=29

Chart 7: Average rating of a steward across locations



Source: Primary research data; N= 11

Chart 8: Average self-rating across locations



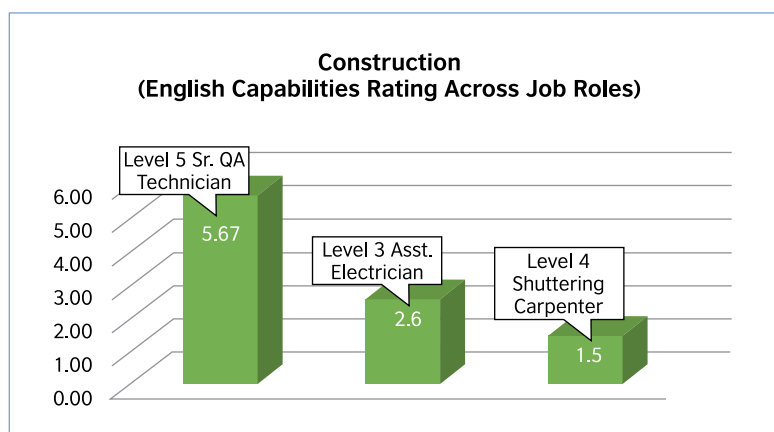
Source: Primary research data; N = 15

CONSTRUCTION

In the construction sector the following observations were made.

- A level 4 shuttering carpenter had much lower English language competences than the Level 3 assistant electricians.
- A significant number of workers interviewed in the construction segment were illiterate and could not read or write in English or their local language.
- Most of these workers had not undergone any formal structured training and had learned their trade from others on the job.
- The workers addressed reading and writing requirements through a team-based approach, drawing on each other for support if they needed to read or write documentation for the role.
- When asked about reading safety signage, the workers responded by stating that they used the images on signage to understand its purpose and they relied on others in their environment to point out and explain the meaning of these.
- Senior QA technicians at Level 5 could all work in English. While they were not tested for accuracy and level of complexity, they used English for report writing and they read plans, manuals and gave instructions in English.

Chart 9: Construction – English language self-ratings across job roles



Source: Primary research data; N = 21

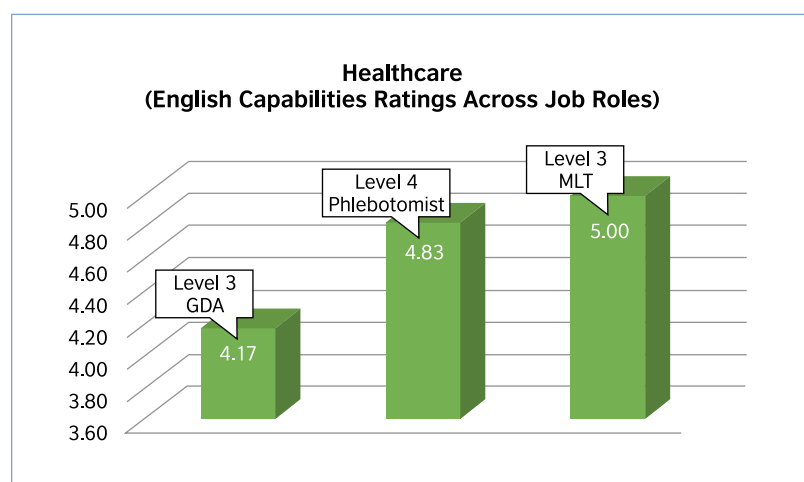
HEALTHCARE

The following was observed in the healthcare sector.

- All the workers had completed formal schooling.
- All work carried out involved some English and all reading and writing was done in English. All pre-service training course materials and reference books were in English.
- The NSQF level of English of a phlebotomist and medical lab technician was at a higher level than a general duty assistant but quite comparable to each other as the role was performed by many incumbents interchangeably. The role of medical lab technician was seen to have a higher status within the hospital and/or lab settings; in some hospitals and labs the same person was performing both roles.

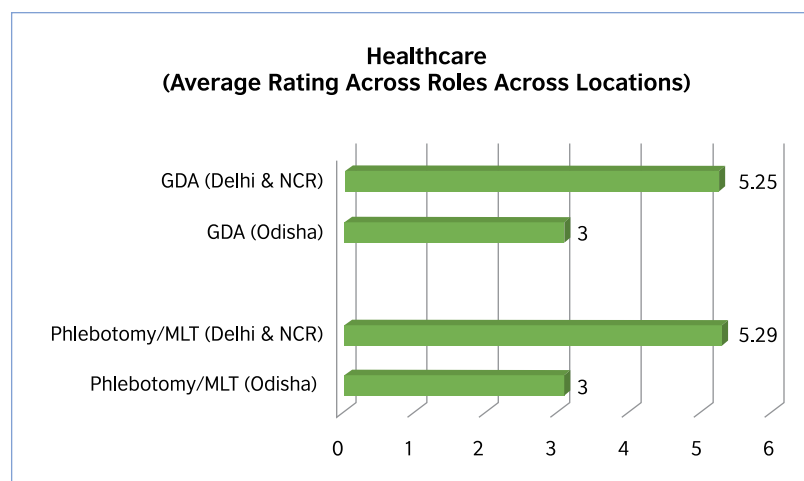
When the self-reported language ratings of these roles across locations were compared, a significant difference in ratings was discovered verified by our observations of language used in the field, with the urban Delhi and NCR having ratings much higher than Odisha for all job roles:

Chart 10: Healthcare – English language self-ratings across job roles



Source: Primary research data; N=13

Chart 11: Average rating across Healthcare roles



Source: Primary research data; N = 13

5.4 COMPARING QUALIFICATION PACK LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS TO THE CEFR AND ACTUAL ENGLISH USAGE

The descriptors within the National Occupational Standards (NOS) Qualification Packs for each of the job roles interviewed were mapped against the Common European Framework (CEFR) language competence levels. This was to establish the level of language competence expected from the employee in order for them to perform the job well.

The NOSs state expectations under each role related to language capability, whether for English or for local language. These were analysed for each skill under reading, writing, speaking and listening. These skills requirements have been captured for each job role and mapped against the expected CEFR proficiency level that would be required for job performance. This was then cross-referenced with actual use of English language within the workplace.

Table 9: Job roles across sectors and NSQF levels

NSQF Levels	Hospitality	Healthcare	Construction
Level 3	Room Attendant Steward	General Duty Assistant	Assistant Electrician
Level 4	Front Office Assistant	Phlebotomy Technician Medical Lab Technician	Shuttering Carpenter System
Level 5			Senior QA Technician

COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK

The language examples are based on the British Council benchmarking exercise for English language in the workplace conducted in Sri Lanka in November 2013.²¹ This work focused on examining workplace use of English language. Another study conducted in India by Confederation of Indian Industry and the University of Cambridge²², this involved testing workers in the services sector, including from the tourism, retail and hospitality sector. Both these studies were used as a reference point for examining the English language observed from interacting with employees, the interviews and the Indian workplaces we visited.

21. In November 2013 the British Council undertook a benchmarking exercise across various industries in Sri Lanka mapping the language used within these job roles to the CEFR. Benchmarking methodology: We interviewed around 24 members (representing roles) of the staff at the Participating Company.

We asked questions on the four skills of English (Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking) to find out:

- when and why they used English at work
- what exactly they needed to communicate about
- what level of complexity the issues were that they used English to communicate in, on the basis that the more complex, the higher the level of language competence they would need
- who they used English to communicate with and what the expectations of those (internal and external customers) were – in terms of language competence.

22. Walker, Ms Christine and Blackhurst, Dr Andrew; ESOL Examinations report on Benchmarking English language skills required for entry level jobs in the Indian services sector

Table 10: English language competences as described in the NOS and mapped to the CEFR

Shuttering Carpenter	Speaking	Writing	Reading	Listening
CEFR Level	B1	B1	B1	B1

Table 10 shows the language levels within the CEFR mapped to the communication and language descriptors set out in the Qualifications Pack. However, the actual requirement of English within the job role is lower than B1.

Industry: Construction

Role: Shuttering Carpenter System – NSQF Level 4

Carpenter – System is responsible for making shutters and assembling system formwork for Reinforced Cement Concrete (RCC) structures such as columns, beams, slabs, walls, foundations and other similar structures. The individual should have good knowledge of safe working practices.

Skill	Descriptor in NOS	Mapped to CEFR levels – proficiency level required	Actual use in workplace tested by researchers
Speaking in English	<p>Speak in one or more language, preferably one of the local languages at site (<i>English is not specified</i>)</p> <p>Communicate reporting of site conditions, hazards, accidents, etc.</p> <p><i>Comment: No descriptions here of what kind of language to be used.</i></p> <p><i>These descriptors are not tested as part of the qualification.</i></p>	<p>B1</p> <p>Is confident to speak about routine matters.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>Can hold conversations about daily issues using simple language.</p> <p>There will be lots of grammar mistakes, inaccurate choice of words and hesitations, and the more complex or less routine the issue being discussed, the more strained, inaccurate and hesitant they will become.</p> <p>It will often be necessary to change to the mother tongue sooner or later if communication is not to break down.</p>	<p>The group of Shuttering Carpenter trainees that were met spoke virtually no English.</p> <p>The only Carpenter who said that there was English speaking required 'sometimes only' was one who offered services to retail customers as well.</p> <p>This indicates that if B1 were compulsory to get a job then English may be a barrier to entry. However, from our observations although the NOS descriptor was aligned to B1 the English actually used in the workplace was not.</p>
Writing English	<p>Write in one or more language, preferably the local language at the site</p> <p>Fill safety formats for near miss, unsafe conditions and safety suggestions</p> <p><i>Comment: not specified if this is English or not and this descriptor is not tested</i></p>	<p>B1</p> <p>Is confident enough to speak, write about and understand routine matters.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>Can write emails and texts about daily issues using simple language.</p> <p>There will be lots of grammar mistakes and inaccurate choice of words.</p>	<p>The group of Shuttering Carpenters that were spoken to, had limited to no English writing skills and many were not literate even in their own native language. This meant that many were operating in the job even without being at even at a minimum A1 English. Wherein the job requirement of language capabilities expected as per the qualification pack is B1. This means that incumbents' English proficiency ranges from pre-A1 level to potentially B1 level.</p>

Skill	Descriptor in NOS	Mapped to CEFR levels – proficiency level required	Actual use in workplace as tested by researchers
Reading English	<p>Read one or more language, preferably the local language at the site.</p> <p><i>Comment: English not explicitly mentioned.</i></p> <p>Read sketches/routine working drawings or instructions provided for the work; read various sign boards, safety rules and safety tags, instruction related to exit routes during emergency at the workplace.</p> <p>Read communication from team members regarding work completed, materials used, tools and tackles used, support required.</p>	<p>B1</p> <p>Is confident enough to speak, write about and understand routine matters.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work.</p> <p>Can deal with most situations likely to arise.</p>	<p>The group that were spoken to had very limited reading skills although one or two were able to cope with routine signage.</p> <p>The group explained that they would rely on other team members with better English language skills to help them with reading.</p> <p>This meant that many were operating in the job even without being at even at a minimum A1 English. Wherein the job requirement of language capabilities expected as per the qualification pack is B1. This means that incumbents' English proficiency ranges from pre-A1 level to potentially B1 level.</p>
Listening and understanding	<p>The user/ individual on the job needs to know and understand how to:</p> <p>Listen and follow instructions given by the superior</p> <p>Communicate reporting of site conditions, hazards, accidents, etc.</p> <p><i>Comment: English not explicitly mentioned.</i></p> <p><i>This area is tested within the qualification but likely to be in the local language.</i></p>	<p>B1</p> <p>Is confident enough to understand routine matters.</p>	<p>Most respondents in the construction sector stated that they rarely needed to be able to listen in English in the workplace.</p> <p>The only circumstances for listening in English arise when materials lists or specific technical terms are being used, such as beams, angle, tools and quantities of materials, etc.</p> <p>This meant that many were operating in the job even without being at even at a minimum A1 English. Wherein the job requirement of language capabilities expected as per the qualification pack is B1. This means that incumbents' English proficiency ranges from pre-A1 level to potentially B1 level.</p>

Table 11: English language competences as described in the NOS and mapped to the CEFR

Assistant Electrician	Speaking	Writing	Reading	Listening
CEFR Level	B1	A2	A2	B1

Table 11 shows the language levels within the CEFR mapped to the communication and language descriptors set out in the Qualifications Pack for an assistant electrician. However, the actual requirement of English within the job role observed is lower than A2/B1.

Industry: Construction

Role: Assistant Electrician – NSQF Level 3

Assistant Electrician will be assisting Level-4 electrician or superior in electrical work for the installation, repair, and maintenance of temporary LV electrical connections at the construction sites and permanent connections at residential and commercial buildings. The individual will be engaged in laying conduits for Low voltage (LV) single phase wiring with appropriate selection and use of hand and power tools efficiently.

Skill	Descriptor in NOS	Mapped to CEFR levels – proficiency level required	Actual use in workplace as tested by researchers
Speaking in English	<p>Speak in one or more language, preferably one of the local language at site</p> <p>Orally and effectively communicate with team members</p> <p>Orally communicate with co-workers regarding support required to complete the respective work</p> <p><i>Comment: No clear descriptors here of what kind of language to be using.</i></p> <p><i>Tested under teamwork:</i></p> <p><i>Interact and communicate effectively with co- workers, superiors and subordinates across different teams.</i></p> <p><i>Support co-workers, superiors and subordinates within the team and across interfacing teams to ensure effective execution of assigned task</i></p>	<p>B1</p> <p>Is confident to speak about routine matters.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>Can hold conversations about daily issues using simple language.</p> <p>There will be lots of grammar mistakes, inaccurate choice of words and hesitations, and the more complex or less routine the issue being discussed, the more strained, inaccurate and hesitant they will become.</p> <p>It will often be necessary to change to the mother tongue sooner or later if communication is not to break down.</p>	<p>Communication with team members as specified in the Qualification Pack is likely to be in local language and as long as they are able to communicate effectively between them there really may not be a great need for them to speak English unless they are working in the residential services sector and need to use English to respond to customers who speak only English. The feedback here from the respondent was that they are able to respond and get their message across, albeit with less fluency or grammatical accuracy.</p>
Writing in English	<p>Write in at least two languages, preferably the local language at the site and basic English.</p> <p>List out the assigned works and targets</p> <p>Fill safety formats for near miss, unsafe conditions and safety suggestions</p> <p><i>Comment: English is specifically mentioned here.</i></p>	<p>A2</p> <p>Has learned some basic English.</p> <p>Can greet, ask for and give simple information: what someone wants, who s/he wants to see, invite them to sit, say if someone is in or not, where to go within a building, count, tell the time, talk about prices etc.</p> <p>Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.</p>	<p>English writing required was more in the organised sector where maintenance of residential and commercial properties was being looked at.</p> <p>In the building construction segment writing in English was not required except in a case where a person voluntarily used English for the preparation of material lists for example.</p>

Skill	Descriptor in NOS	Mapped to CEFR levels – proficiency level required	Actual use in workplace as tested by researchers
			<p>In the maintenance sector the electricians use English quite often, especially for reporting, for checklists and for requisitioning of materials, etc. Most writing did not require connected sentences. Where required there was a greater need to understand specific technical vocabulary and some general English terms in order to be able to complete forms and lists as described. This reflects a requirement and usage of pre-A1 level of English achievement which suffices for job performance in this context.</p>
Reading in English	<p>Read in at least two languages, preferably the local language at the site and basic English</p> <p>Read and interpret manufacturers' specifications, guidelines, SLDs as per applicability</p> <p>Read and interpret safety sign boards, signage, tags, etc. provided at workplace</p> <p>Read instructions related to exit routes during emergency</p> <p>Read communication from co-workers, superiors and notices from other departments as per requirement of the level</p> <p><i>Comment: English is specifically mentioned here and likely relates to manufacturer specifications, signage and so on and less likely to necessarily relate to communication between co-workers.</i></p>	<p>A2</p> <p>Has learned some basic English.</p> <p>Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance. Again this is likely to be specific technical vocabulary related only to the job.</p>	<p>English writing required was more in the organised sector where maintenance of residential and commercial properties is part of the job.</p> <p>In the building construction segment writing in English was not required except in a case where a person voluntarily used English for reading of material lists, or in some cases drawings etc.</p> <p>If an employee did not have sufficient English there was a tendency to rely on other team members to check understanding.</p> <p>In the maintenance sector the electricians use English most of the time, especially for reading status reports, checklists, requisitions, logbooks, invoices, etc. Most writing did not require connected sentences, though some parts did. There was a greater need to understand specific technical vocabulary and some general English terms in order to be able to complete forms and lists as described.</p> <p>This meant that many were operating in the job even without being at even at a minimum A1 English. Wherein the job requirement of language capabilities expected as per the qualification pack is A2. This means that incumbents' English proficiency ranges from pre-A1 level to potentially A2 level.</p>

Skill	Descriptor in NOS	Mapped to CEFR levels – proficiency level required	Actual use in workplace as observed by researchers
Listening and understanding	<p>Listen and follow instructions/ communication shared by superiors/ co-workers regarding team requirements or interfaces during work processes.</p> <p><i>Comment: unknown if this would be in English or not.</i></p>	<p>B1</p> <p>Is confident to speak about routine matters.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>Can hold conversations about daily issues using simple language.</p> <p>There will be lots of grammar mistakes, inaccurate choice of words and hesitations, and the more complex or less routine the issue being discussed, the more strained, inaccurate and hesitant they will become.</p> <p>It will often be necessary to change to the mother tongue sooner or later if communication is not to break down.</p>	<p>Most respondents in the building construction sector stated that they never needed to listen to English at work and respondents in the residential maintenance sector said they only needed this some of the time. Interaction between workers and supervisors is in local language; only occasional customer interactions require some English listening comprehension.</p> <p>This meant that in the building constructions sector many incumbents were operating in the job even without requiring even a minimum A1 English level of listening proficiency, whereas in the residential sector it is of a higher level. Wherein the job requirement of language capabilities as expected is the qualification pack is B1. This means that incumbents' English proficiency levels range from pre-A1 level to potentially B1 level.</p>

Table 12: English language competences as described in the NOS and mapped to the CEFR

Phlebotomy Technician	Speaking	Writing	Reading	Listening
CEFR Level	B2	B2	B2	B2

Table 12 shows the language levels within the CEFR mapped to the communication and language descriptors set out in the Qualifications Pack for a phlebotomy technician. It was found that the language used within the job role reflected a B2 level. However, there was still likely to be variation in the spoken English required depending on where the healthcare worker is based geographically. The requirements for writing and reading English are likely to be the same. It was found that training for this sector also varied significantly.

Industry: Healthcare			
Roles: Phlebotomy technician – Level 4			
Individuals in this job need to draw quality blood samples from patients and prepare those specimens for medical testing..			
Skill	Descriptor in NOS	Mapped to CEFR levels – proficiency level required	Actual use in workplace as tested by researchers
Listening and speaking in English	<p>Identify characteristics of effective communication</p> <p>Demonstrate effective communication techniques</p> <p>Distinguish between patterns of communication when communicating with patients of all ages, supervisors, and peers/co-workers</p> <p>Discuss requirements with colleagues</p> <p>Interact with a supervisor if required</p>	<p>B2</p> <p>Can communicate spontaneously and fluently on most issues, including non-routine and complex ones, without strain and without needing to revert to the mother tongue.</p>	<p>Use of English in the healthcare industry at this level depends heavily on where the technician is working – while visiting Odisha it was found that healthcare workers predominantly use local language and don't need to use English at all.</p>

Skill	Descriptor in NOS	Mapped to CEFR levels – proficiency level required	Actual use in workplace as tested by researchers
	<p>Avoid using jargon, slang or acronyms when communicating with patient/donor, colleagues or the medical officer</p> <p>Use proper manner for greeting and interacting with patients</p> <p>Discuss the protocol for preparing a patient for laboratory testing</p> <p>Interact with the patient</p> <p>Collect all necessary information regarding the patient's condition</p> <p>Collect personal information regarding the patient, like his/her address</p> <p>Calm the patients through kind words and gentleness</p> <p><i>Comment: some of these communication descriptors relate to softer skills, i.e. 'effective communication techniques' and 'calm the patient through kind words and gentleness' – there are no descriptors in place for what these might look like in practice.</i></p> <p><i>Comment: in the NOS these were listed in the descriptor under both listening and speaking skills so they are replicated here in this way for the same reasons.</i></p>	<p>There will still be noticeable inaccuracies in grammar and choice of words, especially when dealing with the more complex issues; however, these will seldom prevent the message coming across.</p>	<p>In Delhi, team interactions were all in the local language, though all technical terms were spoken and heard in English.</p> <p>However, in the urban private hospitals and some clinics there is a greater need for English, especially for customer interaction. Apart from general greeting, they need to ask questions regarding basic personal information like name and age. The technicians also needs to understand customer queries regarding process and concerns as well as to be able to answer customer queries on safety precautions and pass on basic instructions such as:</p> <p>to be seated, wait, extend their arm, to apply pressure, collect reports from the reception at stated time and date.</p> <p>In many cases this was done with limited fluency and grammatical accuracy as told by the supervisor.</p> <p>The level observed in upscale private hospitals was much higher compared to the low-end hospitals.</p>
Writing in English	<p>Write at least one local/official language used in the local community</p> <p>Write well enough to be classified as literate</p> <p>How to verify patient info and patient records and update them</p> <p>Record information in LMIS</p> <p>Complete all written communication</p> <p>Match and send all required paperwork to the appropriate office</p>	<p>B2</p> <p>Can communicate spontaneously and fluently on most issues, including non-routine and complex ones, without strain and without needing to revert to the mother tongue.</p> <p>There will still be noticeable inaccuracies in grammar and choice of words, especially when dealing with the more complex issues; however, these will seldom prevent the message coming across.</p>	<p>In the healthcare industry all documentation, manuals and guidance are in English. There is a requirement to complete documentation related to work using English and to understand complex medical terminology.</p>

Skill	Descriptor in NOS	Mapped to CEFR levels – proficiency level required	Actual use in workplace as tested by researchers
	Keep records carefully Label samples clearly Perform basic clerical tasks and assist patients as needed Document reports, task lists, and schedules Prepare status and progress reports		Training for those entering this job role varies greatly. One training provider that runs accredited courses (Bharat Sevak Samaj), which include English and basic IT, uses a freelance trainer for the English language component. Although students there are keen to learn English, attendance is poor due to the lessons not being sufficiently interesting by their own acknowledgement. The centre did not see the need for English for employment or further progression but more for the purpose of learning technical trade terms. There were no clearly defined outcomes for language competences. The primary purpose of the training was for work placement.

Table 13: English language competences as described in the NOS and mapped to the CEFR

Medical Lab Technician	Speaking	Writing	Reading	Listening
CEFR Level	B2	B2/C1	B2/C1	B2

Table 13 shows the language levels within the CEFR mapped to the communication and language descriptors set out in the Qualifications Pack for a medical lab technician. It was found that the language used within the job role overall reflected a B2/C1 level. However, there is still likely to be variation depending on where the healthcare worker is based geographically for spoken English. In non-urban locations the requirement for speaking English is virtually non-existent thus rendering the level much lower on the CEFR. The requirements for writing and reading English are likely to be the same.

Industry: Healthcare

Roles: Medical Lab Technician – Level 4

The Medical Laboratory Technician performs complex tests for diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease. These professionals are responsible for supporting and assisting doctors and scientists in their day-to-day healthcare work in a variety of roles. They function as the main support to biomedical scientists in pathology laboratories. They are also sometimes responsible for imparting training and supervision to the staff.

Skill	Descriptor in NOS	Mapped to CEFR levels – proficiency level required	Actual use in workplace as tested by researchers
Listening and speaking in English	Listen and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences Communicate effectively with all individuals	B2 Can communicate spontaneously and fluently on most issues, including non-routine and complex ones, without strain and without needing to revert to the mother tongue.	Use of English in the healthcare industry at this level depends heavily on where the technician is working. In Odisha it was found that the medical lab technicians in a local hospital predominantly use local language and don't need to use English at all.

Skill	Descriptor in NOS	Mapped to CEFR levels – proficiency level required	Actual use in workplace as tested by researchers
	<p>Listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences</p> <p>Communicate the important information to patient and co-workers effectively</p> <p>Provide information to supervisors, co-workers, and subordinates by telephone or in person</p> <p>Communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand</p> <p>Listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences</p> <p>Speak at least one local language</p> <p>Discuss task lists, schedules and workloads with co-workers</p> <p>Give clear instructions to patients and co-workers</p> <p>Keep patient informed about progress</p> <p>Avoid using jargon, slang or acronyms when communicating with a patient</p> <p><i>Comment: some of these communication descriptors relate to softer skills i.e. 'communicate effectively with all individuals' - there are no descriptors in place for what these might look like in practice. There is also some overlap i.e. 'communicate ... so that others will understand', 'communicate information to ... effectively' and 'avoid using jargon or slang'. There is an emphasis on listening skills in terms of interaction and interpersonal skills too.</i></p> <p><i>Comment: In the NOS these were listed in the descriptor under both listening and speaking skills so they are replicated here in this way for the same reasons.</i></p>	<p>There will still be noticeable inaccuracies in grammar and choice of words, especially when dealing with the more complex issues; however, these will seldom prevent the message coming across.</p>	<p>However in the urban upscale private sector there is a greater need for English because of medical tourism and an international and urban upper-class clientele. A medical lab technician in the unorganised sector did not require as much and displayed a much lower listening and speaking ability of the language, even in an urban setting. Their English language spoken and listening requirement was largely limited to technical terms in conversation with lab staff.</p>

Skill	Descriptor in NOS	Mapped to CEFR levels – proficiency level required	Actual use in workplace as tested by researchers
Writing in English	<p>Communicate effectively with others in writing as needed</p> <p>Document and maintain records of blood collection</p> <p>Record information in LMIS</p> <p>Record the unusual findings</p> <p>Communicate effectively with others in writing as indicated by needs of the task</p> <p>Provide information to supervisors, co-workers, and subordinates in written form</p> <p>Enter, transcribe, record, store or maintain information in written or electronic/magnetic form</p> <p>Write clearly and concisely</p> <p>Use effective written communication strategies</p> <p>Record the significant changes and process while performing the procedure</p> <p>Ensure that laboratory results are accurately documented and retained in accordance with existing legislation</p> <p>Provide written requests for additional supplies when required</p> <p>Write effective communications to share information with the team members and other people outside the team</p> <p><i>Comment: some of these skills also include IT skills regarding the recording and storing of information.</i></p> <p><i>There are no clear descriptors for communicating 'effectively' with others in writing or for writing 'clearly and concisely'.</i></p>	<p>B2</p> <p>Can communicate spontaneously and fluently on most issues, including non-routine and complex ones, without strain and without needing to revert to the mother tongue.</p> <p>C1</p> <p>Can communicate smoothly and effortlessly on all matters in highly accurate and sophisticated language.</p> <p>There may be the very occasional minor error in grammar or choice of word, (and these may in fact be the accepted norm with English usage in India), but these will be virtually unnoticeable and very rarely interfere with the accuracy of the message.</p>	<p>Written communication skills are very important in the healthcare industry because of the need to keep and maintain accurate records.</p> <p>There is a requirement to complete documentation related to work using English and to understand complex medical terminology. In this sense reading and writing skills are inextricably linked and both are needed to a high level, possibly higher than speaking or listening, and this is certainly the case in local hospitals where English may not be spoken but records are still maintained in English. The same was visible even in the unorganised sector where all reports produced in the lab were in English as well, as much as the customer information captured in forms.</p>

Skill	Descriptor in NOS	Mapped to CFR levels – proficiency level required	Actual use in workplace as tested by researchers
Reading in English	<p>Read and understand information and clinical notes presented in writing</p> <p>Read and understand handling and storage instructions on the labels of laboratory materials such as reagents, dyes, preservatives and cleaners</p> <p>Read the MSDS (Material Safety Datasheet)</p> <p>Read and comprehend user manuals to ensure familiarity with the functioning of laboratory equipment</p> <p>Read and understand information and ideas presented in writing</p> <p>Read and understand patients' hospital care records or medical files for information which validates or explains test results</p> <p>Read and comprehend standards of practice, laboratory policies and procedures, health and safety guidelines and other regulations and standards to ensure processes, procedures and practices are compliant with industry standards and institutional requirements</p> <p>Read and comprehend manuals and internal reports to evaluate their accuracy and quality</p>	<p>B2</p> <p>Can communicate spontaneously and fluently on most issues, including non-routine and complex ones, without strain and without needing to revert to the mother tongue.</p> <p>C1</p> <p>Can communicate smoothly and effortlessly on all matters in highly accurate and sophisticated language.</p> <p>There may be the very occasional minor error in grammar or choice of word, (and these may in fact be the accepted norm with English usage in India), but these will be virtually unnoticeable and very rarely interfere with the accuracy of the message.</p>	<p>As mentioned above there is a requirement to complete documentation related to work using English and to understand complex medical terminology in healthcare. A lack of skill here could lead to serious errors.</p> <p>In this sense reading and writing skills are inextricably linked and both are needed to a high level, possibly higher than speaking or listening, and this is certainly the case in local hospitals where English may not be spoken but records are still maintained in English.</p> <p>The same was visible even in the unorganised sector where all reports produced in the lab were in English as well, as much as the customer information captured in forms.</p>

Table 14: English language competences as described in the NOS and mapped to the CEFR

General Duty Assistant	Speaking	Writing	Reading	Listening
CEFR Level	B2	B1	B1	B2

Table 14 shows the language levels within the CEFR mapped to the communication and language descriptors set out in the Qualifications Pack for a general duty assistant. It was found that the language used within the job role reflected a lower level as workers rely on templates for completing written documentation. This is also acknowledged within the NOS and there is a recognition that the healthcare worker at Level 3 may not have sufficient English skills and so they are encouraged to check with supervisors accordingly.

In higher-end hospitals GDAs tended to have higher aspirations in terms of career progression and they saw English as vitally important for this.

Industry: Healthcare

Roles: General Duty Assistant– Level 3

A General Duty Assistant provides patient care and helps maintain a suitable environment. Some of the key responsibilities of the General Duty Assistant are to provide patients' daily care, patients' comfort, patients' safety and patients' health needs.

Skill	Descriptor in NOS	Mapped to CFR levels – proficiency level required	Actual use in workplace as tested by researchers
Listening and speaking in English	<p>Discuss procedures with the patient and make him/her feel comfortable</p> <p>Answer questions that patient may have</p> <p>Discuss the dressing procedure with the patient and make him feel comfortable</p> <p>Take verbal orders from the provider</p> <p>Answer the questions that patients have with regard to their dressing needs, including the type of clothing</p> <p>Explain to the patient the dressing procedure while performing it to minimise resistance and reduce pain</p> <p>Inform the ward nurse on completion of the procedure</p> <p>Understand and respond to patients questions during the feeding process</p> <p>Motivate the patient to consume recommended amount of food to hasten healing</p> <p>Motivate the patient during elimination to avoid subsequent spoiling or repeats</p> <p>Check frequently with patient about their elimination needs</p> <p>Explain to the patient what is happening and where he is being moved</p> <p>Communicate with the patient and count till three so that the patient knows when to move</p> <p>Instruct the patient on what to do during the transferring process</p>	<p>B2</p> <p>Can communicate spontaneously and fluently on most issues, including non-routine and complex ones, without strain and without needing to revert to the mother tongue.</p> <p>There will still be noticeable inaccuracies in grammar and choice of words, especially when dealing with the more complex issues; however, these will seldom prevent the message coming across.</p>	<p>Speaking and listening in English depends entirely on hospital location, local language and patient demographic. If the General Duty Assistant is working in the private health sector and dealing with a lot of English-speaking patients he/she will need to be able to speak in English. Our observations of GDA in Odisha were fairly contrasting with the GDA in upscale hospital in Delhi. The GDA in Odisha was barely able to speak in English.</p> <p>In one such case a General Duty Assistant at a leading Hospital just outside Delhi which also has a large in-house training institute spoke with relative higher level of English compared to other GDAs in the hospital and sees English as extremely important to his career growth. His spoken language capabilities were significantly higher than that of the GDA in Odisha as observed by the researchers and indicated by the self-ratings.</p>

Skill	Descriptor in NOS	Mapped to CFR levels – proficiency level required	Actual use in workplace as tested by researchers
	<p>Check with the patient if he/she is comfortable regularly during the transferring process</p> <p>Listen patiently</p> <p>Provide feedback (verbal and non-verbal) to encourage smooth flow of information</p> <p><i>Comment: Emphasis on listening and communicating effectively one-to-one with the patient: 'communicate effectively with patient at every stage of procedure'</i></p>		<p>Most GDAs aspire to become supervisors and housekeeping department heads in the hospital and they see the importance of English in those roles as critical.</p>
Writing in English	<p>Use templates for recording all information related to the patient for all procedures, i.e.:</p> <p>Record observations made during the procedure on the template</p> <p>Record changes in odour, texture or colour of the elimination on the template</p> <p>Record and report the output quantity on the template</p> <p>Record when and where the patient is being moved, in case of GDA not able to write the needs to inform the provider and get that recorded <i>Comment: It is not entirely clear what is meant here. Also see this example:</i></p> <p>Record and report infection control protocols in case GDA has the required skills to capture that else inform the provider to record</p> <p>Record and report communications received and sent on the template</p>	<p>B1</p> <p>Is confident enough to speak, write about and understand routine matters.</p> <p>Can hold conversations and write emails and texts about daily issues using simple language.</p>	<p>Although, as for other roles in healthcare, English is important for reading and writing, for this role it is required at a basic level and templates are used.</p> <p>However, it is still vital for the role to be able to understand and be comfortable with medical terminology. In terms of vocabulary, this is likely to be above B1 level, but in terms of actual use and manipulation of language for written communication, lower.</p>
Reading in English	<p>Read the doctor/nurse instructions and interpret it correctly and confirm that with nurse before taking any action</p> <p>Read the procedures and if the individual is not able to then seek the help of nurse</p> <p><i>Comment: There is acknowledgement here that the worker may not be able to read accurately though not clear if this is related to literacy or another reason. Below the descriptor also mentions checking with nurse or doctor before taking action:</i></p> <p><i>Know the patient by registration number and name while being moved/transferred from/within the hospital</i></p> <p><i>Follow instructions as specified in the patient file and seek the help of provider if not having the skills</i></p> <p><i>Follow instructions as specified in the patient file in case GDA has reading skill otherwise take the instructions from nurse</i></p>	<p>B1</p> <p>Is confident enough to speak, write about and understand routine matters.</p> <p>Can hold conversations and write emails and texts about daily issues using simple language.</p> <p>But also overlap with A2:</p> <p>Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance</p>	<p>Reading is important as for other roles in healthcare, but there is an acknowledgement here that this skill may not be sufficiently high for the GDA to carry out their work – there is reference to checking with others and seeking help if the skill is not sufficient.</p> <p>They are expected to read instructions, labels and signage.</p>

Table 15: English language competences as described in the NOS and mapped to the CEFR

Front Office Associate	Speaking	Writing	Reading	Listening
CEFR Level	C1	A2/B1	A2/B1	C1

Table 15 shows the language levels within the CEFR mapped to the communication and language descriptors set out in the Qualifications Pack for a front office associate. Because this role is so customer-facing it can clearly be seen that a higher level of English is required for this role and this was verified by what was found in the field.

Reading and writing skills are confined to very specific and formulaic documentation. What is interesting here is that in the Qualification Packs there are significant sections on interpersonal skills, team skills, self-management skills and communication skills. Although all the QPs have these additional softer skills, for this role in particular they are far more due to the high interaction expected with customers.

Industry: Hospitality			
Role: Front Office Associate – NSQF Level 4			
The individual at work is responsible for representing the hotel, receiving the guest, handling guest registration processes, room allocation and attending to any guest requirements. It also includes performing cashiering processes and handling guest accounts during stay.			
Skill	Descriptor in NOS	Mapped to CEFR levels – proficiency level required	Actual use in workplace as tested by researchers
Speaking and listening in English <i>As to be expected for this sector there are numerous communication skills competences expected of this role.</i>	Communicate effectively with guests and respond to their queries Communicate with people in respectful form and manner in line with organisational protocol Interact in language the guest is comfortable with Develop a rapport with customers Listen carefully and interpret their requirement Suggest possible solutions to customer Discuss with front office associate on guest and room details Ask more questions of customers and identify their needs Possess strong knowledge of the product, services and market Brief the customers clearly Communicate with the customers in a polite, professional and friendly manner Build effective but impersonal relationship with the customers <i>Comment: This is the actual wording from the descriptor – ‘impersonal’ is probably not what was intended but ‘professional interpersonal’</i> Listen actively in a two-way communication	C1 Can communicate smoothly and effortlessly on all matters in highly accurate and sophisticated language. There may be the very occasional minor error in grammar or choice of words (and these may in fact be the accepted norm with English usage in India), but these will be virtually unnoticeable and very rarely interfere with the accuracy of the message.	This is a highly customer-facing role and in hospitality a high level of English is required to work in a front office role. All workers spoken to in this role acknowledged the high level of English required and this was supported by employers. However, it is not just English that is vital within this role but also the softer skills of communication and customer care which are inextricably bound up with language. In both locations it was found that employees in customer-facing roles needed English for speaking purposes. Employers and employees alike responded that this role required spoken English most of the time.

Skill	Descriptor in NOS	Mapped to CEFR levels – proficiency level required	Actual use in workplace
	<p>Be sensitive to the gender, cultural and social differences such as modes of greeting, formality, etc.</p> <p>Avoid interrupting the customers while they talk</p> <p>Ensure to avoid negative questions and statements to the customers</p> <p>Inform the customers of any issues or problems beforehand and also on the developments involving them</p> <p>Seek feedback from the customers on their understanding as to what was discussed</p> <p>Interact with team members to work efficiently</p> <p>Communicate effectively with supervisor</p> <p>Communicate effectively with the customers by building a good rapport with them</p>		
Reading and writing in English	<p>Read and interpret instructions, procedures, information and signs in the workplace</p> <p>Interpret and follow operational instructions and prioritise work</p> <p>Complete appropriate documentation</p> <p>Fill guest registration form by getting details from guests</p> <p>Read job sheets, company policy documents and information displayed at the workplace</p> <p>Read notes/comments from the supervisor</p> <p><i>Comment: These skills are grouped together as they are set out in the NOS in this way also</i></p>	<p>A2</p> <p>They can read and write very simple emails and notes, or complete logs requiring a few routine words and phrases.</p> <p>Overlapping to B1 - Is confident enough to write about and understand routine matters.</p> <p>Can write emails and texts about daily issues using simple language.</p> <p>There will be lots of grammar mistakes, inaccurate choice of words, and hesitations, and the more complex or less routine the issue being discussed, the more strained, inaccurate and hesitant they will become.</p>	<p>The reading and writing required for this job role is predicted and specific to the industry with routine forms and documentation.</p> <p>The documentation is very specific to the role and the level of English needed here is lower than that of speaking.</p>

Table 16: English language competences as described in the NOS and mapped to the CEFR

Room Attendant	Speaking	Writing	Reading	Listening
CEFR Level	A1	A1	A1	A1

Table 16 shows the language levels within the CEFR mapped to the communication and language descriptors set out in the Qualifications Pack for a room attendant. From talking to employees it was clear that their English language levels were very basic or non-existent and that they were taught rote phrases and vocabulary for use in the workplace and are often unable to progress beyond these as no further training is given once they are in the role.

Industry: Hospitality

Role: Room attendant– NSQF Level 3

A room attendant identifies housekeeping requirements, procedures and gathers resources for the guest rooms and defined areas, completes assigned housekeeping tasks and monitors and maintains cleanliness and tidiness at the workplace.

Skill	Descriptor in NOS	Mapped to CEFR levels – proficiency level required	Actual use in workplace
Speaking and listening	<p>Discuss task lists, schedules, and workloads with co-workers</p> <p>Question customers appropriately in order to understand the nature of the problem and make a diagnosis</p> <p>Check and clarify task-related information</p> <p>Liaise with appropriate authorities using correct protocol</p> <p>Communicate with people in respectful form and manner in line with organisational protocol</p> <p>Avoid using jargon, slang or acronyms when communicating with a customer, unless it is required</p> <p>Follow instructions accurately</p> <p>Use questioning to minimise misunderstandings</p> <p>Use gestures or simple words to communicate where language barriers exist</p> <p>Communicate effectively with others when carrying out housekeeping tasks</p>	<p>A1</p> <p>Has picked up and memorised a few words and phrases</p> <p>‘Hello’, ‘Yes’, ‘No’, ‘My name is Ajith,’ ‘Can I help you?’ ‘Does your room need cleaning?’</p> <p>May be able to read and write a few words, but cannot hold even a short conversation.</p>	<p>Workers in this role are likely to have been taught set phrases such as ‘Can I clean your room now?’ or ‘Good morning, Ma’am’ – the workers spoken to at the Lemon Tree Hotel in Delhi had only very basic English some may have been at A0 (pre-A1) level. However, it was not evident that speaking English would necessarily help them progress in their careers.</p> <p>The NOS has a lot of references to ‘self-management’ in terms of time management, dress code and following set orders and procedures, avoiding distractions, etc.</p>

Skill	Descriptor in NOS	Mapped to CEFR levels – proficiency level required	Actual use in workplace
Reading and writing <i>These were grouped together in the NOS</i>	Read and interpret instructions, procedures, information and signs relevant to housekeeping activities in the workplace Interpret and follow operational instructions and prioritise work <i>Comment: Prioritising work is a softer skill</i> Complete documentation accurately Read and interpret information correctly from various job specification documents, manuals, health and safety instructions, etc. applicable to the job in English and/or local language <i>Comment: Note first reference here to English</i>	A1 Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.	All documents, manuals and signage in the hospitality industry are in English and require the ability to read and write in English. This documentation is likely to be fairly formulaic using templates and predictable information. From our observations it was difficult to tell if interviewees had basic English reading and writing skills. Employers told us that they train employees in these skills so that they can cope with documentation within their work. However, this does not mean that they have a corresponding level of English to do this. It is possible that for those employees with very low levels of English this could be a barrier to entry. However, it was found that employers do not test English reading and writing skills during the recruitment stage.

Table 17: English language competences as described in the NOS and mapped to the CEFR

Steward	Speaking	Writing	Reading	Listening
CEFR Level	B2	B1	B1	B2

Table 17 shows the language levels within the CEFR mapped to the communication and language descriptors set out in the Qualifications Pack for a steward. As can be expected speaking and listening skills for customer-facing roles are higher than reading and writing required. Although reading and writing skills are sector-specific, speaking with customers and dealing with their needs requires an ability to respond spontaneously as well as an array of softer skills connected with problem-solving and decision-making.

Industry: Hospitality

Steward - Level 3

The role involves serving food and beverages to guests of the hotel, restaurant or banquet function. It entails greeting and seating of guests, taking down their orders, providing them with requisite tableware, food and beverage items and any other related accompaniments, and then clearing used dishes and settling the customers' accounts as per procedures.

Skill	Descriptor in NOS	Mapped to CEFR levels – proficiency level required	Actual use in workplace as tested by researchers
Speaking and listening	Communicate effectively with others when carrying out tasks Discuss task lists, schedules, and workloads with co-workers Question customers appropriately in order to understand the nature of the problem and make a diagnosis Check and clarify task-related information	B2 Can communicate spontaneously and fluently on most issues, including non-routine and complex ones, without strain and without needing to revert to the mother tongue.	This particular role could be across different contexts: in the NOS it states that this role could be in any one of these contexts: hotels, travel and tours, restaurants, facility management and cruise liners.

Skill	Descriptor in NOS	Mapped to CEFR levels – proficiency level required	Actual use in workplace as tested by researchers
	<p>Liaise with appropriate authorities using correct protocol</p> <p>Communicate with people in respectful form and manner in line with organisational protocol</p> <p>Avoid using jargon, slang or acronyms when communicating with a customer</p> <p>Actively listen to customers</p> <p>Give clear commitments to customers</p> <p>Keep customers informed about progress</p> <p>Communicate essential information to colleagues face-to-face or through telecommunications</p> <p>Question others appropriately in order to understand the nature of the request/complaint</p>	<p>There will still be noticeable inaccuracies in grammar and choice of words, especially when dealing with the more complex issues; however, these will seldom prevent the message coming across.</p> <p><i>Note: This has been mapped at B2 because of some of the spontaneous nature of communication required as well as the high level of appropriate interpersonal skills.</i></p>	<p>The extent of English used and required for this role is again dependent on context and how much communication is with the customer and how much with co-workers.</p> <p>The Sector Skills Council also referred to the importance of context in this interview extract:</p> <p>‘If we can identify what is it, how do we identify what levels does he require. So First, what is his (her) job title? (Second), how often does he (she) speak, so what is his complexity of English that he (she) needs to use, what the frequency that he (she) has to use. Third, who are his (her) target audience? So he is catering for domestic or local does he require that kind of input but if he is dealing with, so say for e.g. If I am a guide in a religious site where I get most of the domestic, local language-speaking people I might not need to use so much of English. But if I am a guide at a monument which attracts major international clients then having the same job role might require different levels of English. So that depends on the target group that I am catering to.’</p> <p>Again, there is a high correlation with softer skills such as listening effectively and sensing how best to respond to complaints.</p>
Reading and writing	<p>Read and interpret instructions, procedures, information and signs relevant to Food and beverage activities</p> <p>Interpret and follow operational instructions and prioritise work</p> <p>Read and interpret information correctly from various job specification documents, manuals, health and safety instructions, etc. applicable to the job in English and/or local language</p> <p>Read and interpret instructions, procedures, information and signs relevant to accounting practices</p> <p>Feed correct information in the billing format</p> <p>Communicate essential information in writing</p>	<p>B1</p> <p>Is confident enough to speak, write about and understand routine matters.</p> <p>Can hold conversations and write emails and texts about daily issues using simple language.</p> <p>There will be lots of grammar mistakes, inaccurate choice of words, and hesitations, and the more complex or less routine the issue being discussed, the more strained, inaccurate and hesitant they will become.</p>	<p>In the Hospitality sector a basic level of reading and writing English is required for predictable job-related tasks. However use of English is not expected for all documentation and the NOS descriptors themselves state ‘in English and/or local language’ which suggests that English language skills are not compulsory.</p>

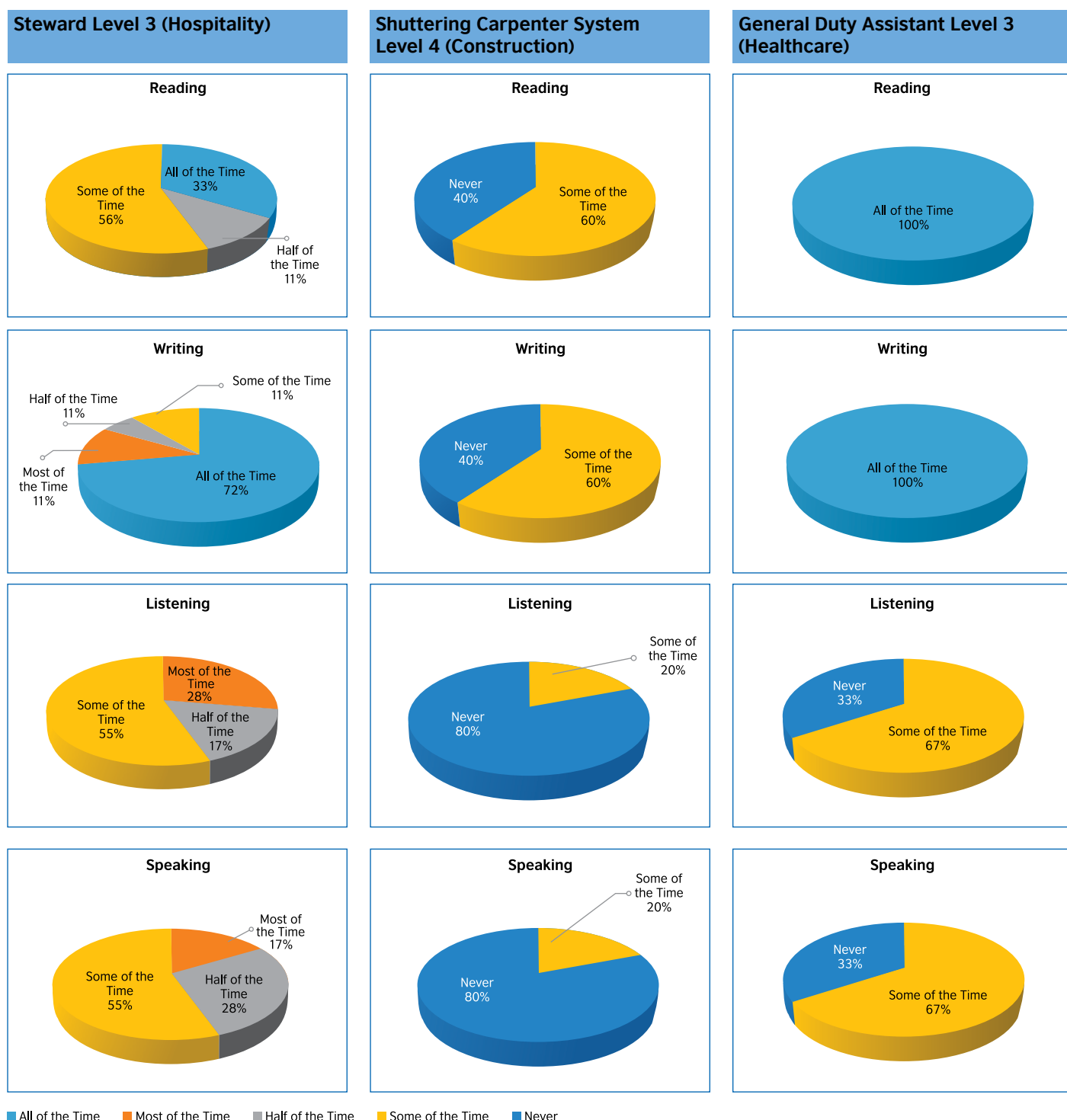
Skill	Descriptor in NOS	Mapped to CEFR levels – proficiency level required	Actual use in workplace as tested by researchers
	<p>Write effective communications to share information with the team members and other people outside the team</p> <p>Read and comprehend basic content to read labels, charts, signages</p> <p>Read and write an accident/incident report in local language or English</p>	It will often be necessary to change to the mother tongue sooner or later if communication is not to break down.	

Table 18: Summary of the CEFR English language levels based on the mapping results

Sector	Role	Speaking	Writing	Reading	Listening
Construction	Shuttering Carpenter (L4)	B1	B1	B1	B1
	Assistant Electrician (L3)	B1	A2	A2	B1
	Senior Quality Assurance Technician (L5)	<i>QP for this role is still being developed, so no mapping conducted</i>			
Healthcare	Phlebotomy Technician (L4)	B2	B2	B2	B2
	Medical Lab Technician (L4)	B2	B2/C1	B2/C1	B2
	General Duty Assistant (L3)	B2	B1	B1	B2
Hospitality	Room Attendant (L3)	A1	A1	A1	A1
	Front Office Associate (L4)	C1	A2/B1	A2/B1	C1
	Steward (L3)	B2	B1	B1	B2

Table 18 shows the variances in language levels required in different job roles as mapped to the CEFR. When this is compared with the aggregated responses of workers across the three sectors in Chart 12 this can be cross-referenced with their self-rated language capabilities for their usage of English across reading, writing, speaking within their respective job roles.

Chart 12: Aggregated responses across the four skills



Source: Primary research data; N=27

"If English language skills are too integrated into a skills development programme, they become difficult to assess and benchmark."

– Elizabeth Erling, 'The Role of English in Skills Development in South Asia', June 2014

5.5 COMPARING LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS WITHIN THE NSQF – EQF – SCQF

In order to get a broader understanding of level descriptors within qualification frameworks for communication and language purposes, a further mapping and comparison exercise was conducted between the following frameworks:

NSQF – National Skills Qualification Framework

EQF – European Qualifications Framework

SCQF – Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

Please refer to Appendix 2 for the full analysis.

While the EQF at Level 8 of the framework does not directly provide any descriptors for communication or language competency, the SCQF provides descriptors for Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills at 12 levels. The categories of descriptors for SCQF include:

- Knowledge and understanding
- Applied Knowledge, Skills and Understanding
- Generic Cognitive Skills
- Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills
- Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others.

A similar guideline of best fit goes along with the framework of descriptors, stating that all descriptors may not apply to a particular qualification.

It is interesting to draw a parallel with the NSQF regarding the descriptors because the NSQF does not provide guidance to the terms used [i.e. minimum required clarity (Level 3) as opposed to required clarity (Level 4)]

The lingua franca in Scotland is English and all communication is expected to be in English; this is significantly different

from the Indian context where the use of English is contingent upon various factors as outlined within this report. This means that employees may carry out complex tasks thereby moving up the levels of the NSQF. At the same time they may not be necessarily carrying out required communication in English but in their local language or Hindi.

This highlights the difference between higher-level communication requirements versus language requirements.

5.6 OBSERVATION AND FINDINGS FOR TRAINING REQUIREMENTS AND LEARNING ENGLISH

The employees and trainees interviewed have developed English language skills in several different ways; 41% said they acquired most of these skills through their work environment – not necessarily through specific training courses – and only a small percentage said they had acquired English language skills through formal education.

It was observed that language training was largely embedded within communications training in most training institutes and places of work, spanning both pre-service and in-service training across the sectors researched. An attempt was made to discover the content, environment, expectations and methodology of such training and its resultant impact.

It was found that a significant amount of pre-service and in-service training in some of the training institutes or employer facilities visited as part of this study was focused on rote learning of a very limited set of words, phrases and sentences in English. For example, in one hospitality institute a training outcome was a set of ten sentences specified by an employer for whom the training was being conducted.²³ Similarly, in an employer facility, the training focused on answering specific questions with a scripted

response, such as to respond to 'where the washrooms were' by using a sentence, 'down the corridor, to your left', it was expected that this will be reproduced by even those employees who could barely produce any English on their own.

The content of training in these places comprised generic and trade-specific components within a pre-determined situational work context. These were considered sufficient by employers for working in some of the specific roles investigated under this study, without the need for any related independent production. The generic vocabulary included names of materials, ingredients, names of dishes, names of body parts, medical procedures, cooking styles and other common technical terms related to the job role such as blood, haemoglobin, etc. The generic component included greetings, yes/no, please, thank you, sorry, directions (left/right and front/back), titles of address (sir, madam and mister), etc.

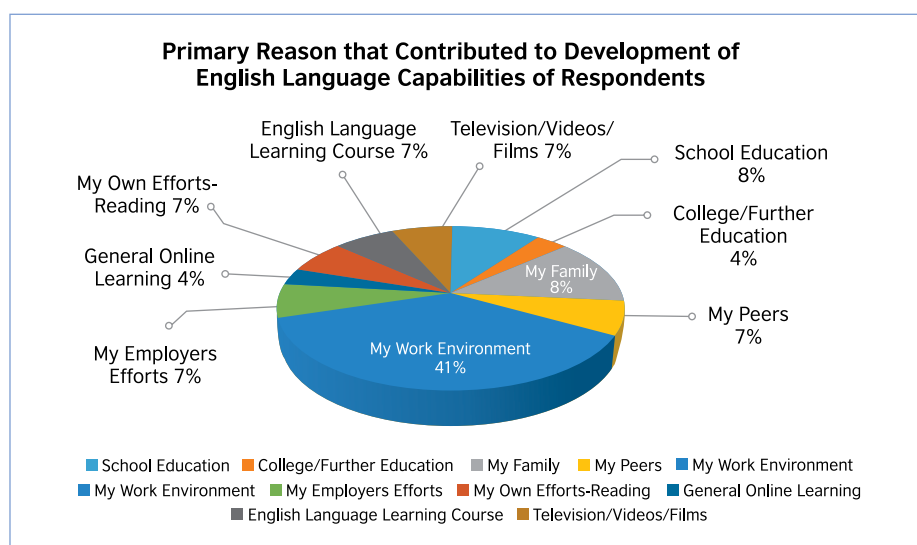
The language capabilities vary according to sector and even within the same level of qualifications within and across sectors. This level of language competence is below the A1 level of the CEFR, which relies more on reproduction rather than independent production.

Apart from the recently formulated NSQF, there is no real framework, in place or use, to articulate the language and soft skills that employers want and need. The NSQF itself was found limited in its description by Sector Skills Councils and employers we spoke to. Of course, this may be in part due to the fact that this framework, as well as the NOSs, are still under development.

Training providers and employers expressed the need for a more detailed framework. Descriptors in use for soft skills and language are ambiguous and often not part of a commonly agreed or referenced framework. Employers often used encompassing terms such

23. Interview with training project within the chain Coffee Day – February 2015

Chart 13: Primary reasons contributing to development of English language



Source: Primary research data; N=63

as the 'right attitude' to cover a range of different desirable traits and behavioural competences, without clear articulation of these.

Soft skills requirements across two sectors:

The table below shows one example of the differences in soft skills as expressed by sector.

Table19: Example of two sectors expressing soft skills needs

Sector	Soft skills required
Hospitality	Customer orientation, teamwork, discipline
Healthcare	Following instructions, willingness to learn, politeness

It is common for soft skills to be interpreted in different ways. This can mean that communicating expectations between employers, recruiters, training providers and aspirants is bound to be susceptible to misunderstandings and misalignment.

Another observation that we noted was that the trainers we interviewed, who were conducting communication or language training, were not qualified English language trainers or teachers. We were told that this was general practice across most of the industry.

In almost all the training institutions we visited, language tests or pre-enrolment screening for entry into training programmes is not conducted. There is therefore a huge variation in the language capabilities of candidates enrolled in training courses. Some candidates (often migrant workers) are not even considered suitable for learning English as the two examples below highlight.

Odisha – Hospitality

During interactions with a number of trainees, in Odisha, who were being trained for a hospitality trade, it was found that some of them were unable to articulate common basic phrases in English, while others were fairly proficient. All of them were being trained in the same cohort. The trainers mentioned that at the end of the training the employer would segregate the trainees based on their language proficiency and that would determine their place of posting.

Those with higher language capabilities were likely to get posted in metropolitan cities and other English-speaking regions of the country such as South India, whereas others would be placed in Hindi-speaking belts, smaller towns and cities, even though the job role was exactly the same. Given that the salaries in metropolitan cities tend to be higher than Tier II and Tier III cities, one can conclude that English does facilitate better migratory and earning prospects, as shown in other studies in the region. Capstick (2011) shows how fluency leads to increased opportunities for migration among migrants from Pakistan. Research from Bangladesh suggests that if migrant workers were trained in vocational skills, including English, the remittance earnings could go up by \$30 billion a year (Haque, 2010).

Interactions with trainers further revealed that some of the trainees were from tribal areas and even training them to speak Hindi properly was a challenge. The trainer would prefer to focus on developing their Hindi before they addressed their English language skills as Hindi improves their prospects for employment and migration in Hindi-speaking cities and towns. This highlights the need for a CIFR for both Hindi as L2 (second language) in specific regions and English as L2/L3. It is interesting that even for towns and cities within Hindi-speaking belts, English technical trade terms remain important to grasp. Migratory employees within this study mentioned that despite limited English language proficiency, their ability to speak Hindi not only helped them secure a job, including in a metropolitan city, but also helped them adjust to the new city more easily.

Healthcare

In a prominent and leading healthcare training institute, English on the one hand is considered essential, and training hours for English range between 30–80 hours for entry-level TVET courses; yet on the other hand candidates can pass these qualifications without necessarily knowing English, as the assessments are carried out both in English and Hindi to accommodate those who cannot deal with the language. Yet the institute claimed that all the candidates find employment post training. This goes to show that, whilst there are attempts to improve the levels of language capability and a clear need is seen, the approach and the results of current training efforts are often of variable quality. At the same time there are sufficient job opportunities in the market for those with technical expertise despite limited English proficiency.

While there is a demand for higher English language proficiency from some employers and less so from others, when it comes to actual employees and trainees within these sectors, a high percentage of them were keen to learn English, those who did not claimed that it was beyond their reach. Of respondents, 80% (56) felt the need to improve their English; over 40% (22) of these classified themselves as 'highly motivated' to learn the language. Yet only 30% (17) were actually doing something actively to improve their language capabilities themselves.

We asked employees and students about their motivations for learning English and how they would go about learning it and the reasons for doing so. The top responses are listed below:

Ranking of components indicating desire to improve English language capabilities (based on mode)

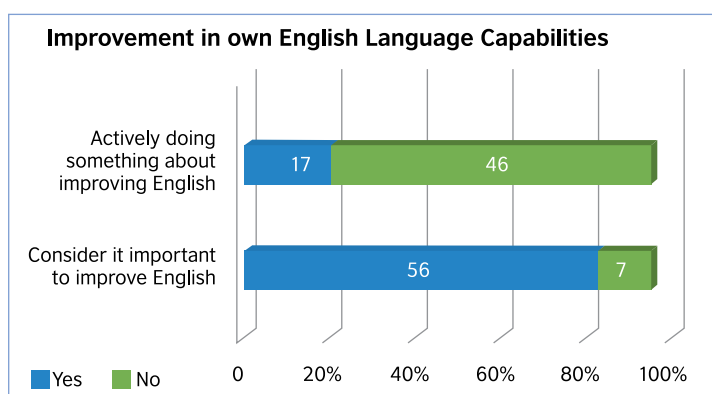
- Speaking
- Listening
- Writing
- Reading

Top reasons for learning English (in order of priority out of a list of 10)

- For professional success
- To improve my personality
- To interact with others
- To gain admission to better educational institutions

Other reasons that ranked lower out of a closed list of 10 reasons included to travel abroad, for improved marriage prospects, for social status, peer recognition and respect, to read books and journals, to watch English films and TV programmes, to be like my role model. Research on attitudes towards English often reflect a strong belief in the power of English and a desire to be one of the many who speak the language, for reasons of practicality and prestige (Erling et al, 2012). Clearly the respondents in this study rated practicality higher than prestige, though perhaps a positive result on one perhaps may lead to the other.

Chart 14: Employees' response to improving English language



Source: Primary research data; N=63

Top reasons for not making an effort to learn the language

- Lack of money
- Lack of time
- Don't want to learn alone
- Too old to learn

This was an open-ended question asked to those respondents who were not actively learning English.

Top methods used for learning the language

- Newspapers and reading books

- Interacting with others at the workplace
- Training course outside of employment

Those indicating that they were making an effort to learn English indicated the above as the top methods being used to learn the language.

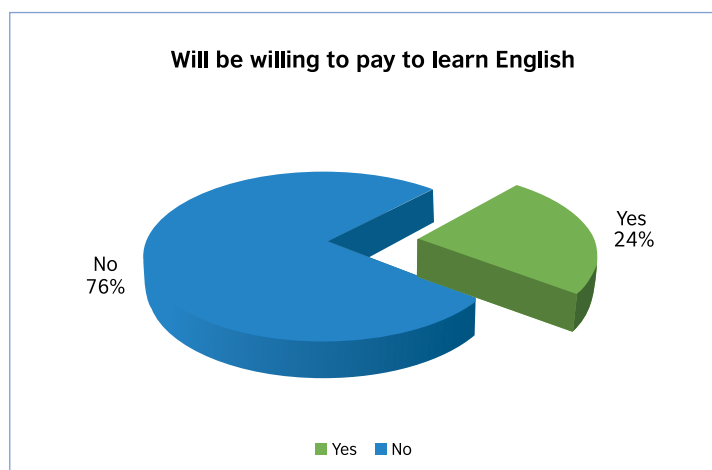
Perceptions and ideologies about the value of English are pervasive and very strong across South Asia – even for the rural poor (Erling et al., 2012; Erling & Seargeant, 2013; Coleman, 2011; Seargeant & Erling, 2011). There is clear evidence that there was a preference for learning the language and a perception that this is important for

professional success and even for other reasons, among workers and trainees across sectors and locations. There is 'an extraordinary belief, among almost all castes and classes, in both rural and urban areas, in the transformative power of English' (Graddol, 2010: 59). Many, though, had a lack of awareness of how to go about learning English and what opportunities there might be for learning it.

All the employers we interviewed said that they did not have a formal scheme or a well-defined plan to sponsor or offer opportunities for language learning of employees. Most employees on the other hand were willing to learn, and a quarter of them were even willing to pay personal money to learn the language.

Employers in most cases did not have specific language training as part of their regular practice for developing employees. In many cases language training was embedded into communication training, soft skills and technical training. In some cases, especially in hospitality, such training was attempted on occasions, but was not done as part of a specific, outcome-based plan or scheduled with any regularity. Many workplaces did not provide any language training for employees though many employees, when we asked them, said they would take up such opportunities if they were offered.

Chart 15: Percentage of employees who would be willing to pay to learn English



Source: Primary research data; N=63

In one example of a healthcare organisation where training opportunities were provided to staff for development on a regular basis, employees were motivated by this and appreciative of the opportunities. This was clearly evident where different employees spoke highly of this organisation and expressed gratitude for the opportunities they had been afforded to learn new things and develop themselves. They stated this was unlike their experience in a number of previous organisations they had worked for and that they would like to remain with this organisation for a long time to come.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 INITIAL ANALYSIS

Based on our observations and data collected above we arrive at the following initial analysis:

- Across sectors the usage of English varies. For example, in the healthcare industry reading in English is required 100% of the time, whereas in the construction and hospitality roles it is required only 'Some of the time' (55-60%) with workers in construction saying that reading is never required. This example shows the unique requirement in each sector. Similar differences can also be noted across writing, speaking and listening.
- In construction the role which is at a higher NSQF level than the other two almost uniformly shows lower usage levels of English language across reading, writing, speaking and listening. This is consistent with our earlier findings of language competence requirements when compared between two sectors based on content of the Qualification Packs for the roles.
- Even for the same role there are different English language requirements because the language is used differently across the four skills of speaking, reading, writing and listening, based on the employment context and job content. This is also evident when compared with the CEFR levels.

Our analysis clearly shows that some of the differing requirement for English usage and even levels arises out of a variance in the following:

- Business segment (i.e. residential and commercial repair and maintenance roles in construction has more usage of English language than for building construction, due to retail customer interaction requirements, increased requirement of paperwork, etc.)
- Market/Customer segment served (i.e. urban upscale units serving international and upper-class customers in healthcare require higher levels of language

competences than small town markets serving largely middle-class domestic customers)

- Service format (i.e. a counter service unit in the Quick Service Restaurant segment requires less customer interaction and therefore less usage of English as compared to a table service restaurant)
- Own capability and preference (i.e. in construction a worker uses English for some requirements as a matter of choice and not out of necessity or expectation of others. This may be due to the educational and exposure levels of the worker).

6.2 ENGLISH FOR EMPLOYMENT, CAREER PROGRESSION AND SUCCESS

There are key differences in how English is used in the workplace and the level of language competence required across the four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening). This indicates that each sector and context should be studied independently. It was interesting to get views from interviewees on how important they perceived English to be from the perspective of employment, progression in the job and for overall career success in their profession.

6.2.1 EMPLOYERS' PERSPECTIVES

Most employers we spoke to, except for the urban, upscale, premier hotel and hospital, said that English language was not a key factor for employment for the job roles we were examining. Most of them said that what was more important was the candidate's attitude, technical skills, customer orientation and soft skills.

The employers felt that any gaps in technical training were something they felt confident about addressing themselves. Some of the large employers have set up their own training institutions or jointly partnered training/educational institutions to provide this to employees or new recruits.

English as part of communication skills was

delivered by employers in the job context through operational managers, employed soft-skills trainers or freelance trainers.

All in-house training programmes in the hospitality and healthcare sectors included elements of communication skills as part of their training with varying degrees of importance given to English. However, none of this training was benchmarked to any common or unique framework with defined outcomes.

For recruitment purposes, those who required basic English language competences rely on interviews where they test basic conversational skills subjectively without any robust or benchmarked testing tools or criteria. Any testing used was developed in-house and not referenced to any known frameworks.

Most employers suggested that they would prefer to hire a candidate with better English language skills.

In terms of progression for the job roles, most employers did not consider English language ability to be very important or to be a reason for preventing progression. English did not carry much weight in overall considerations for progression for these specific roles. All things being equal, English language competences gain more importance as a factor for progression.

Most employers also suggested that the importance of English language does increase while considering promotion or recruitment to supervisory and/or management roles.

Overall, a lack of English language skills is not necessarily perceived as an impediment to advancement and progression.

6.2.2 EMPLOYEES' PERSPECTIVES

Our findings from the responses from employees suggest the following:

Construction: a substantial number of incumbents in construction did not see it as important.

Healthcare and Hospitality: the majority saw it as somewhat to very important as this

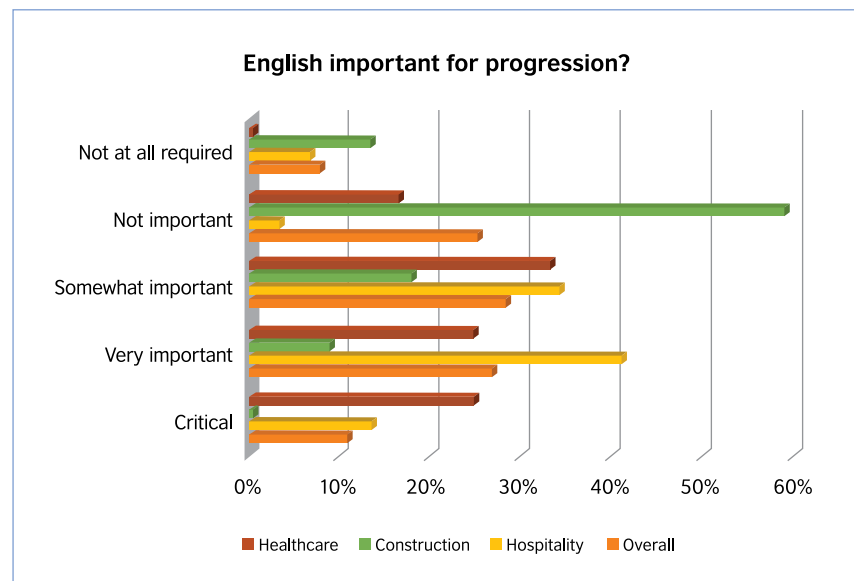
‘When we recruit somebody, we primarily look at the communicational ability. That is a primary criteria because see, we have been discussing yesterday; a person who is little know to the technical skills, the technical skills can be developed and the way of operation management hotel to be travelled, OK, the only thing is primarily we look definitely for the communication’

– Employer, hospitality, Odisha

graph shows. While no one in construction saw it as critical, both hospitality and healthcare had a point at which they did not see how they could progress further without a good command over the English language.

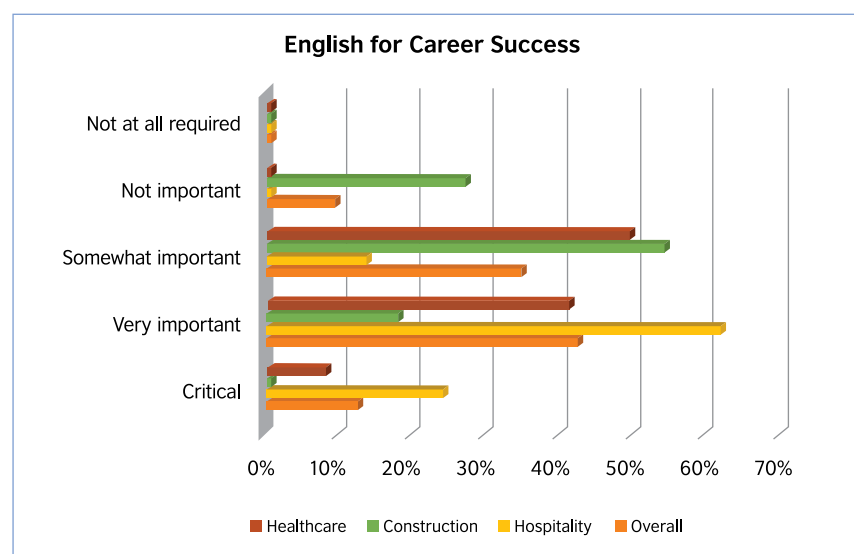
While a number of people did not consider English language essential for progression from their current role and context, when asked about requirement for English from an overall career success perspective in the profession we had the following responses:

Chart 16: How important is English for progression?



Source: Primary research data; N=63

Chart 17: How respondents saw the importance of English for career success



Source: Primary research data; N=63

This graph shows a substantial shift towards an increased requirement for English for professional success over one’s career overall. In fact the only incumbents who considered it ‘not important’ were a minority from the construction sector.

6.3 THE CASE FOR A0 (PRE-A1) LEVEL TO BE ADDED TO THE CEFR

The following points present a case for including an additional A0 (pre-A1) level to the CEFR.

- English language capabilities of interviewees for a number of the researched job roles were practically non-existent, especially in the construction sector as well as some in the hospitality sector. A number of these employees were illiterate even in their own language.
- Despite low or no level of language competence, employers were content to employ these workers. These workers picked up necessary language competences during their work tenure over a period of time, or relied on others, to get by in most routine situations. There are two factors which indicate that an A0 (pre-A1) level of achievement is desirable. Firstly, there was no focused development of the core minimum that was required by these workers to handle routine work and critical health and safety issues. Even when workers acquired this, not every worker acquired these and even when it is acquired, it is over time and in an unreliable manner. Most training interventions aimed at these learners fail to engage them and these workers were not able to cope as they seem to be pitched too high for them to be successful. This impeded their will and confidence to engage with language learning. In addition learners really only require a small amount of language ability to meet the performance requirements of a number of jobs in the sector. An A0 level offers the opportunity to address these critical minimum requirements and provide an opportunity to learners to engage with language learning, get recognition and progress further. For those who are illiterate or have dropped

out early, this may be the ideal first stepping stone to ongoing learning.

- In developing countries there is a need for mainstream integration of those who drop out of school, do not have any access to it or suffer the results of poor-quality school education. TVET is being seen as an ideal solution to this problem. TVET is increasingly recognised as a key solution to those with little or no education, including basic literacy and numeracy. The Indian Skills Policy document 2009 (currently under review) states *'School drop-outs (leaving the schools before completing XII standard), child labour and out-of-school youth need to be given alternative education coupled with skill development opportunities to bring them into the economic and social mainstream.'*²⁴ Even though 'alternative education' is not defined, it is hoped that this includes achievement of outcomes in numeracy and literacy apart from other essentials. It is a concern if TVET is only seen as a solution for circumventing school education and getting people into the workforce. This may not be entirely conducive for the development of individuals and society, especially for longer-term growth, progression and sustainability. It is essential to integrate literacy, numeracy and other basic outcomes and interventions to support achievement progressively for reasons including health and safety, accessing social services and long-term progression (as employers in all three sectors mentioned that higher-level jobs require greater language and numeracy). The NSQF also accords greater achievement outcomes in core skills at higher levels. This will allow people to access opportunities for development and make optimal use of learning opportunities in their environment.
- Another key factor, which indicates that development of an A0 (pre-A1) level for

the CEFR would be useful, especially in developing countries, is the fact that TVET training, both pre-service and in-service, is limited by pre-determined time frames, content and often costs. Our research showed each of the courses were time-defined, most of them had pre-determined content and costs were acknowledged as limitations by both training providers and employers. This may be a severe deterrent for focusing on development of the correct level of competences, especially if the competences of trainees entering the training system is lower than expected. This could be the case when the illiterate or school dropouts make up a large part of the TVET target segment. Both training institutions and employers we met during our research stated that not only do trainees find English language training uninteresting, they also achieve much lower than expected results post-training. This is one of the reasons why investment in training from employers is not forthcoming and the training institutions often undermine the importance of it, as was seen at the healthcare training institute in Odisha, where students were encouraged to make up for lack of English by focusing on computer skills since the board had a combined test and pass percentage for it.

- Employers and training providers in training use a very limited number of English words, phrases and sentences, which are often taught by rote to the trainees. This is, in effect, developing the trainees ability to reproduce chunks of functional language for a specific purpose, rather than build their skills to use language more flexibly. Even though it may seem like a futile exercise, in fact a number of routine, predictable situations are resolved with the use of these words, phrases and sentences. This was acknowledged both by training providers, employers and employees across sectors. Some of the ones we witnessed during our

24. Indian Skills Policy Document 2009, GoI - Pg 21

labour.nic.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Policies/NationalSkillDevelopmentPolicyMar09.pdf

research included, 'Toilets are down the corridor to the right', 'Good evening, may I take your order?', 'My name is _____', 'hot or cold', 'sweet or salted', 'plain or mineral water', etc.

- It can be assumed that for any real scaffolding to take place, learners need a logical way to progress. If this was to be captured or defined in a framework, given the range of language capabilities of employees interviewed, the development of language capabilities have to start from having virtually no English language. Given the limited time frames, costs, often limited trainer competence and pre-entry level competences of candidates, the framework needs to be practical and realistic. Logically and practically, a modular approach is required to build

competences. Accordingly, achievement needs to be mapped to the lowest real employability requirements as well as to progressive levels across other segments. Given the evidence and conditions witnessed, CEFR level A1 is quite high for many employment contexts within India and presumably even for other non-native English-speaking, developing countries, which warrants further research. CEFR-J²⁵ was an attempt made in Japan, which included attempts to define a pre-CEFR level among other things. This also may need to be explored further to assess applicability in developed countries too.

- We also recommend A0 (pre-A1) level on the basis of findings that a number of employed workers are not even able to read the basic necessary information such as health and safety signage, labels, directions, warnings, etc. It is a concern that such workers may be unable to listen to and interpret basic words of warning or requests in a working environment. A number of the workers we met could not even read and identify the name of the organisation they were working for.

- A number of workers we interviewed believed that learning English was beyond their grasp as either they were 'too old to learn', or they did not have sufficient time or money to devote towards learning English. In fact four of the people interviewed had enrolled in English language courses but dropped out due to inability to cope with the course.
- We believe that there is a case sufficient grounds to further explore the possibility of an A0 (pre-A1) level, which can be the first level of recognised achievement allowing learners to make their first attempt at a more realistic level of language competence. This potentially will also make learners feel more confident about their own learning abilities and give them more confidence to undertake further learning and training. A recognition of the A0 (pre-A1) level will also help focus other key value partners in the ecosystem (training providers, content developers, assessors, etc.) to develop a better understanding and responsive products and services for the targeted level and learner requirements.

25. The CEFR-J: The Story So Far (2012-2014) Judith Runnells (University of Bedfordshire)

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **A Common Indian Framework of Reference (CIFR) covering all Indian languages and English could be developed as complementary to the NSQF**, using the model of CEFR and other available or purpose-/context -referenced 'can do'²⁶ statements, building on the work of various international research projects for language references.²⁷ To support this, the NSQF level descriptors could be reviewed to distinguish and remove references to linguistic skills, so that only references to 'soft/communication skills' remain in the level descriptors.
- **Language competence, including English, in QPs should be separately levelled according to the CIFR**, allowing for distinctions between geographical and other work-related contexts in India.
- **The CIFR should include an A0 (Pre-A1) level** to capture job role-specific language competence and serve as a recognised language level achievement.

7.1 INCLUDING AN A0 (PRE-A1) LEVEL WITHIN THE CEFR

- We recommend in relation to the CEFR that a new A0 (pre-A1) level is created which has both generic and contextual components. As an example, the generic component could be specific to minimum expectations of workers in organised and unorganised sectors for spotting, reading and interpreting critical signage, health and safety information and basic information exchange with the help of key words or phrases. The contextual component could be sector-defined and include trade terms, common phrases and sentences that may need to be used

in the sector for roles where A0 (pre-A1) is considered relevant. The Sector Skills Council could assist in compilation of these to create a standard for the specific job role.

- The A0 (pre-A1) level may or may not be applicable to all sectors for all language skills. Therefore it is important to map out each sector separately to identify job roles and contexts where the A0 (pre-A1) level is applicable.

7.2 HOW THE LINGUISTIC LEVELS OF THE CEFR (INCLUDING THE NEW PRE-A1 LEVEL) COULD BE BEST INTEGRATED INTO VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS DEVELOPED UNDER THE NATIONAL SKILLS QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK (NSQF)

The NSQF may not be the operational document to illustrate the levels of English language proficiency required for various jobs and related qualifications given the variation within sectors and within levels of the NSQF.

There is no doubt a critical need for English for a number of jobs, especially within certain job contexts. At the same time there is a critical need for English for professional success in the long run across many professions and sectors. This requires a more informed and specific framework of English language proficiency across various segments.

Given that there is a need for creating international pathways for learners and workers, in a fast globalising economy, a

robust mechanism to develop English and soft skills competences is needed.

Our recommendation is to create a framework of Indian languages, English and soft skills competences for the country. This would be a CIFR or Common Indian Framework of Reference for Languages. The framework needs to include specific descriptors for Indian languages and English that can be mapped to the CEFR for global equivalences. Our recommendation is that, rather than developing this as a top-down prescriptive or impressionistic framework, this be built ground-up by offering each sector within the economy the opportunity to define these for their sector, factoring in the variances owed to sector composition, job market and performance contexts.

This will require each sector to define job contexts within the sector, categorise these based on similar language and soft skills requirements and then map, define and clearly articulate these requirements. To facilitate this, a range or menu of descriptors and competency statements for these can be provided to the sectors to allow them to use these to create standards for categories defined. An attempt can be made to aggregate these at the national level by comparing sectors and arriving at the national framework. At the national level these descriptors need to be broad enough to enable sectors to allow for the variations that exist within each sector.

Providing options of language levels and soft skills achievement within the Qualification Pack for job roles could potentially reduce the need to multiply development of QPs for different contexts with the same core technical requirements (competence and knowledge).

26. ALTE – the Association of Language Testers in Europe – is an association of providers of European foreign language examinations. Registered in 1992 as a European Economic Interest Group (EEIG), it provides a context for transnational collaboration between some of the major international providers in the field of language testing. From the outset, one of ALTE's main aims has been to establish common levels of proficiency in order to promote the transnational recognition of certification in Europe. Work done in the furtherance of this aim is referred to as the ALTE Framework Project.

The aim of the ALTE 'Can Do' Project is to develop and validate a set of performance-related scales, describing what learners can actually do in the foreign language. The 'Can Do' statements are multilingual, having been translated so far into thirteen of the languages represented in ALTE. These languages are: Catalan, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish. They constitute a frame of reference to which different language exams at different levels can potentially be related.

www.cambridgeenglish.org/images/28906-alte-can-do-document.pdf

27. Swiss National Science Research Project, DIALANG Project, CEFR-J, et al.

8. IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study was intended to be narrow and deep examining specific job roles within three industries. The approach taken in terms of carefully defining the criteria for selection of each was so that this could perhaps be replicated across other industries and sectors to reach a more in-depth understanding of the issues.

The area of soft skills is also a vital factor in terms of employability and progression. Each job role within the Qualification Packs we examined had significant sections related to soft skills such as teamwork, decision-making, critical thinking, accountability, attitude and numerous other examples. Some job roles, especially customer-facing ones, had even longer lists of soft skills compared with language and communication requirements. Employers also made it very clear that when it comes to recruiting new employees it is the softer skills that they are looking for. Like language, though, these skills are not being measured or specifically assessed. There are also assumptions being

made that English in itself is a soft skill, implying that if you have English language skills these lead automatically to being able to communicate well, to being a good team player and to making decisions well alongside all the other soft skills.

Yet soft skills are not language-dependent and are stand-alone skills of which there is a critical shortage in many industries. Further research needs to be conducted into soft skills to explore and understand the following:

- how to best define soft skills, and what is needed
- whether there are opportunities to integrate these more into English language skills training
- how to best assess soft skills, and whether a separate framework which specifically details these skills (aside from communication) would be beneficial.

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APPENDIX 1

Background on English Skills for Employability Think Tank and rationale for the research study

This research project has been commissioned based on the outcomes of several round table discussions held by the English for Employability Skills Think Tank.

In 2008-09, the Government of India launched the National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC), set up as part of the National Skill Development Policy (2009) to fulfil the growing need in India for skilled manpower across sectors, and to narrow the existing gap between the demand and supply of skills. In September 2013, the National Skills Development Agency (NSDA) was constituted to provide the overarching framework for different skills missions across India.

Research conducted by the NSDC indicates skills gaps both in functional, vocational and workplace skills as well as in soft skills, with English featuring as an essential skill to complement core domain skills in over half of the 21 focus sectors such as IT and ITES, media, hospitality, beauty and wellness, retail, financial services and healthcare. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)'s recommendations

for the Planning Commission list the 'vocationalisation' of school education and 'international collaboration' as 'recommended areas for policy focus', both of which require English language skills.

The Government of India study, National Employability Report – Graduates 2013, conducted by Aspiring Minds, a company involved in assessing various aspects of education, training and employment, reveals that nearly half of Indian graduates are not fit to be hired. 'The employability of graduates varies from 2.59 per cent in functional roles such as accounting, to 15.88 per cent in sales related roles and 21.37 per cent for roles in the business process outsourcing (BPO/ITeS) sector. A significant proportion of graduates, nearly 47 per cent, were found not employable in any sector, given their English language and cognitive skills,' the survey findings show.

With 55% of India's population below 30 years of age, as per the National Vocational Education Qualification Framework vision document (AICTE-NVEQF Vision Document, 2011), many policy making bodies view

English as a key skill that can transform the employability of India's youth. India's Planning Commission's Approach Paper to 12th Plan also states that, 'Special emphasis on verbal and written communication skills, especially in English, would go a long way in improving the employability of the large and growing mass of disempowered youth.'

With a view to addressing the growing need for English Skills for Employability in India, the British Council and Mr S Ramadorai, Chairman of the NSDA, invited key UK and Indian stakeholders to join an English Skills for Employability Think Tank.

A series of round table discussions have been held since September 2013 on five key thematic areas – see below – which emerged during the first meeting. More details can be found here: www.britishcouncil.in/english-skills-employability-think-tank

APPENDIX 2

Analysis of language requirements within the NSQF – EQF – SCQF

INDIAN NATIONAL SKILLS QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK

LEVEL	Process required	Professional knowledge	Professional skill	Core skill	Responsibility
Level 1	prepares person to carry out processes that are repetitive on regular basis, requires no previous practice	familiar with common trade terminology, instructional words meaning and understanding	routine and repetitive, takes safety and security measures	reading and writing, addition, subtraction personal financing, familiarity with social and religious diversity, hygiene and environment	no responsibility always works under continuous instruction and close supervision
Level 2	prepares person to carry out processes that are repetitive on regular basis with little application of understanding, more of practice	material tools and application in a limited context, understands context of work and quality	limited service skill used in limited context, select and apply tools, assist in professional works with no variables, differentiates good and bad quality	receive and transmit written and oral messages, basic arithmetic, personal financing, understanding of social, political and religious diversity, hygiene and environment	no responsibility works under instruction and close supervision
Level 3	person may carry out a job which may require limited range of activities, routine and predictable	basic facts, process and principle applied in trade of employment	recall and demonstrate practical skill, routine and repetitive in narrow range of application	communication written and oral, with minimum required clarity, skill of basic arithmetic and algebraic principles, personal banking, basic understanding of social and natural environment	under close supervision, some responsibility for own work within defined limit
Level 4	work in familiar, predictable, routine, situation of clear choice	factual knowledge of field of knowledge or study	recall and demonstrate practical skill, routine and repetitive in narrow range of application, using appropriate rule and tool, using quality concepts	language to communicate written or oral, with required clarity, skill to basic arithmetic and algebraic principles, basic understanding of social, political and natural environment	responsibility for own work and learning
Level 5	job that requires well-developed skill, with clear choice of procedures in familiar context	knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts in a field of work or study	a range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information	desired mathematical skill, understanding of social, political environment and some skill of collecting and organising information, communication	responsibility for own work and learning and some responsibility for others' work and learning

Level 6	demands wide range of specialised technical skill, clarity of knowledge and practice in broad range of activity involving standard and non-standard practices	factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	a range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	reasonably good in mathematical calculation, understanding of social, political environment and, reasonably good in data collecting, organising information and logical communication	responsibility for own work and learning and full responsibility for others' work and learning
Level 7	requires a command of wide-ranging specialised theoretical and practical skill, involving variable routine and non-routine context	wide-ranging, factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	wide range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	good logical and mathematical skill, understanding of social political and natural environment, good in collecting and organising information, communication and presentation skill	full responsibility for output of group and development
Level 8	comprehensive, cognitive, theoretical knowledge and practical skills to develop creative solutions to abstract problem, undertakes self-study, demonstrates intellectual independence, analytical rigour and good communication			exercises management and supervision in the context of work/study having unpredictable changes, responsible for development of self and others	
Level 9	advanced knowledge and skill, critical understanding of the subject, demonstrating mastery and innovation, completion of substantial research and dissertation			responsible for decision-making in complex technical activities, involving unpredictable study/work situations	
Level 10	highly specialised knowledge and problem-solving skill to provide original contribution to knowledge through research and scholarship			responsible for strategic decisions in unpredictable complex situations of work/study	

Source: www.skilldevelopment.gov.in

EUROPEAN QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK (EQF)

Given below are the descriptors defining levels in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

Each of the eight levels is defined by a set of descriptors indicating the **learning outcomes** relevant to qualifications at that level in any system of qualifications.

EQF Level	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
	In the context of EQF, knowledge is described as <i>theoretical and/or factual</i> .	In the context of EQF, skills are described as <i>cognitive</i> (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking), and <i>practical</i> (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments)	In the context of EQF, competence is described in terms of <i>responsibility and autonomy</i> .
Level 1	Basic general knowledge	Basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	Work or study under direct supervision in a structured context

EQF Level	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
Level 2	Basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	Basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools	Work or study under supervision with some autonomy
Level 3	Knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information	Take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study; adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems
Level 4	Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	Exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change; supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities
Level 5	Comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	Exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change; review and develop performance of self and others
Level 6	Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study	Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts; take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups
Level 7	Highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the fore-front of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research Critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields	Specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields	Manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches; take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams
Level 8	Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields	The most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice	Demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research

Source: www.ec.europa.eu/ploteus/content/descriptors-page

SCQF – SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

LEVEL 1

Recognises learning development and achievement that ranges from participation in experiential situations to the achievement of basic tasks, with varying degrees of support.

LEVEL 2

Use simple skills with assistance, for example:

- Produce and respond to a limited range of very simple written and oral communication in familiar/routine contexts.
- Carry out a limited range of simple tasks to process and access information.
- Use a limited range of simple numerical and graphical data in familiar and everyday contexts.

LEVEL 3

Use simple skills, for example:

- Produce and respond to simple written and oral communication in familiar/routine contexts.
- Carry out simple tasks to process and access information.
- Use simple numerical and graphical data in everyday contexts.

LEVEL 4

Use some routine skills, for example:

- Produce and respond to simple but detailed written and oral communication in familiar contexts.
- Use the basic features of familiar ICT applications to process and obtain information.
- Use basic numerical and graphical data in straightforward and familiar contexts.

LEVEL 5

Use a range of routine skills, for example:

- Produce and respond to detailed written and oral communication in familiar contexts.
- Use standard ICT applications to process, obtain and combine information.
- Use a range of numerical and graphical data in routine contexts that may have some non-routine elements.

LEVEL 6

Use a wide range of skills, for example:

- Produce and respond to detailed and relatively complex written and oral communication in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts.
- Select and use standard ICT applications to process, obtain and combine information.
- Use a wide range of numerical and graphical data in routine contexts which may have non-routine elements.

LEVEL 7

Use a wide range of routine skills and some advanced skills associated with a subject/discipline/sector, for example:

- Convey complex ideas in well-structured and coherent form.
- Use a range of forms of communication effectively in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts.
- Select and use standard ICT applications to process and obtain a variety of information and data.
- Use a range of numerical and graphical skills in combination.
- Use numerical and graphical data to measure progress and achieve goals/targets.

LEVEL 8

Use a wide range of routine skills and some advanced and specialised skills associated with a subject/discipline/sector, for example:

- Convey complex information to a range of audiences and for a range of purposes.
- Use a range of standard ICT applications to process and obtain data.
- Use and evaluate numerical and graphical data to measure progress and achieve goals/targets.

LEVEL 9

Use a wide range of routine skills and some advanced and specialised skills in support of established practices in a subject/discipline/sector, for example:

- Present or convey, formally and informally, information on standard/mainstream topics in the subject/discipline/sector to a range of audiences.
- Use a range of ICT applications to support and enhance work.
- Interpret, use and evaluate numerical and graphical data to achieve goals/targets.

LEVEL 10

Use a wide range of routine skills and some advanced and specialised skills in support of established practices in a subject/discipline/sector, for example:

- Present or convey, formally and informally, information about specialised topics to informed audiences.
- Communicate with peers, senior colleagues and specialists on a professional level.
- Use a range of ICT applications to support and enhance work at this level and adjust features to suit purpose.
- Interpret, use and evaluate a wide range of numerical and graphical data to set and achieve goals/targets.

LEVEL 11

Use a wide range of routine skills and a range of advanced and specialised skills as appropriate to a subject/discipline/sector, for example:

- Communicate, using appropriate methods, to a range of audiences with different levels of knowledge/expertise.
- Communicate with peers, more senior colleagues and specialists.
- Use a wide range of ICT applications to support and enhance work at this level and adjust features to suit purpose.
- Undertake critical evaluations of a wide range of numerical and graphical data.

LEVEL 12

Use a wide range of routine skills and a significant range of advanced and specialised skills as appropriate to a subject/discipline/sector, for example:

- Communicate at an appropriate level to a range of audiences and adapt communication to the context and purpose.
- Communicate at the standard of published academic work and/or critical dialogue and review with peers and experts in other specialisms/sectors.
- Use a range of ICT applications to support and enhance work at this level and specify software requirements to enhance work.
- Critically evaluate numerical and graphical data.

Source: www.scqf.org.uk

EXPLANATION OF KEY TERMS AS USED IN THE DESCRIPTORS

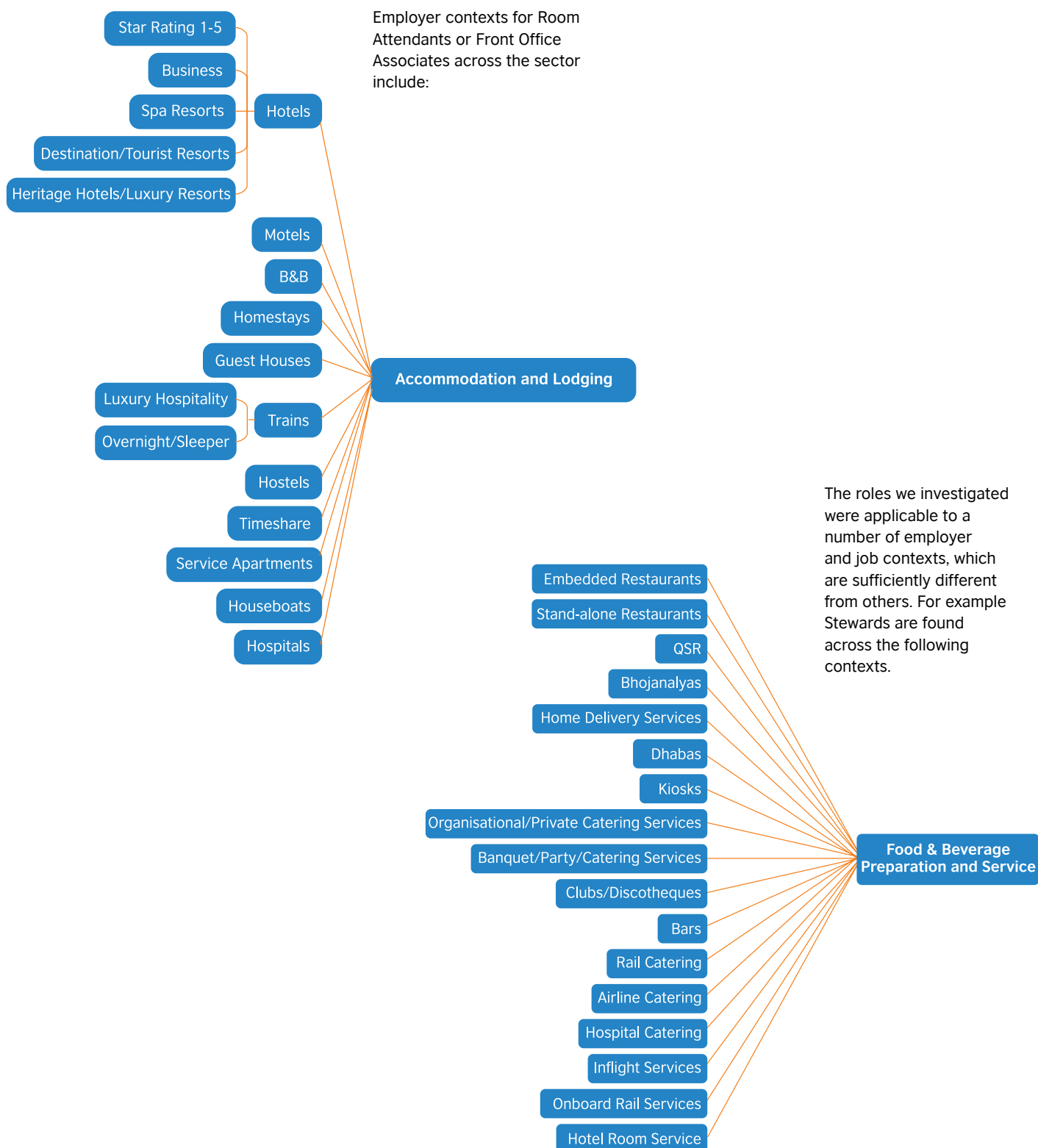
The key terms used in the level descriptors are explained below. Terms are presented with an eye to the user/practitioner who will generally be focusing on a sequence with a view to making a judgement or expressing an outcome. Accordingly, where feasible, they are presented in a group or sequence relating to characteristic and/or level rather than in strict alphabetical order.

Word Meaning in context of 2012 Level Descriptors

- Simple - Undemanding activity not necessarily part of a formal structure – not as advanced as 'basic'.
- Basic - Activity is early stepping stone on a structure or framework that can be built upon – more advanced than 'simple'.
- Routine - Used as an adjective throughout and applied to terms including skills, tasks, elements, practices, contexts, methods and problems where it describes activity that is standard, usual, unvarying, customary, common.
- Personal - An experience relating only or primarily to the person – one would expect to start here then widen out into the rest of the world, so not as advanced as 'familiar'.
- Everyday - Slightly more advanced and beyond personal but a known experience/activity encountered/applied regularly – less advanced than 'familiar'.
- Familiar - Often encountered or experienced; common; something one has a good knowledge of – more advanced than 'personal' and 'everyday', not as advanced as 'routine'.
- Unfamiliar - New territory for an activity.
- Straightforward - Clear and uncomplicated activity, but not as demanding or systematic and therefore not as advanced as 'routine'.
- Awareness - Consciousness, including a background consciousness. Can be a starting point for further exploration.
- Appreciation - A sense, perception, a hold, fix or grasp of one or more of the various aspects of a subject/discipline/sector.
- Authority - Appears at Level 12 only, where it is used in the phrase 'demonstrate substantial authority', reflecting a recognised high level and depth of expertise/expert knowledge and understanding, along with confidence. It does not mean 'exercise authority over staff and resources' etc., as that could clearly apply at earlier levels.
- Discerning - Using judgement to recognise differences but not fully equipped/informed to analyse and discuss them in depth, so less advanced than critical.
- Critical - Fully informed, capable of supporting in-depth analysis and assessment.
- Hypothetical - Supposed, assumed for the sake of argument.
- Analysis - Examine in detail with a view to explanation and interpretation.
- Synthesis - Combine discrete elements into a coherent whole.
- Originality - Often used in combination with 'creativity'. There is overlap in definition, but the defining characteristic of originality appears to be independence.
- Creativity - Often used in combination with 'originality'. There is overlap in definition, but the defining characteristic of creativity appears to be imagination.
- Professional - Used throughout as an adjective and applied to terms including level, skills, techniques, practices, contexts, and issues where it bears broad interpretation as 'behaving appropriately/doing things properly and well and to notions of accepted (including externally) prescribed standards', as well as narrow, relating to a specific occupation designated as a profession. In this latter sense, the term applies in all contexts including academic study, e.g. footnoting properly.
- Graphical data - Encompasses maps, plans, diagrams, tables and graphs.
- Present - Set out, put forward, deliver information using a variety of mediums as appropriate.

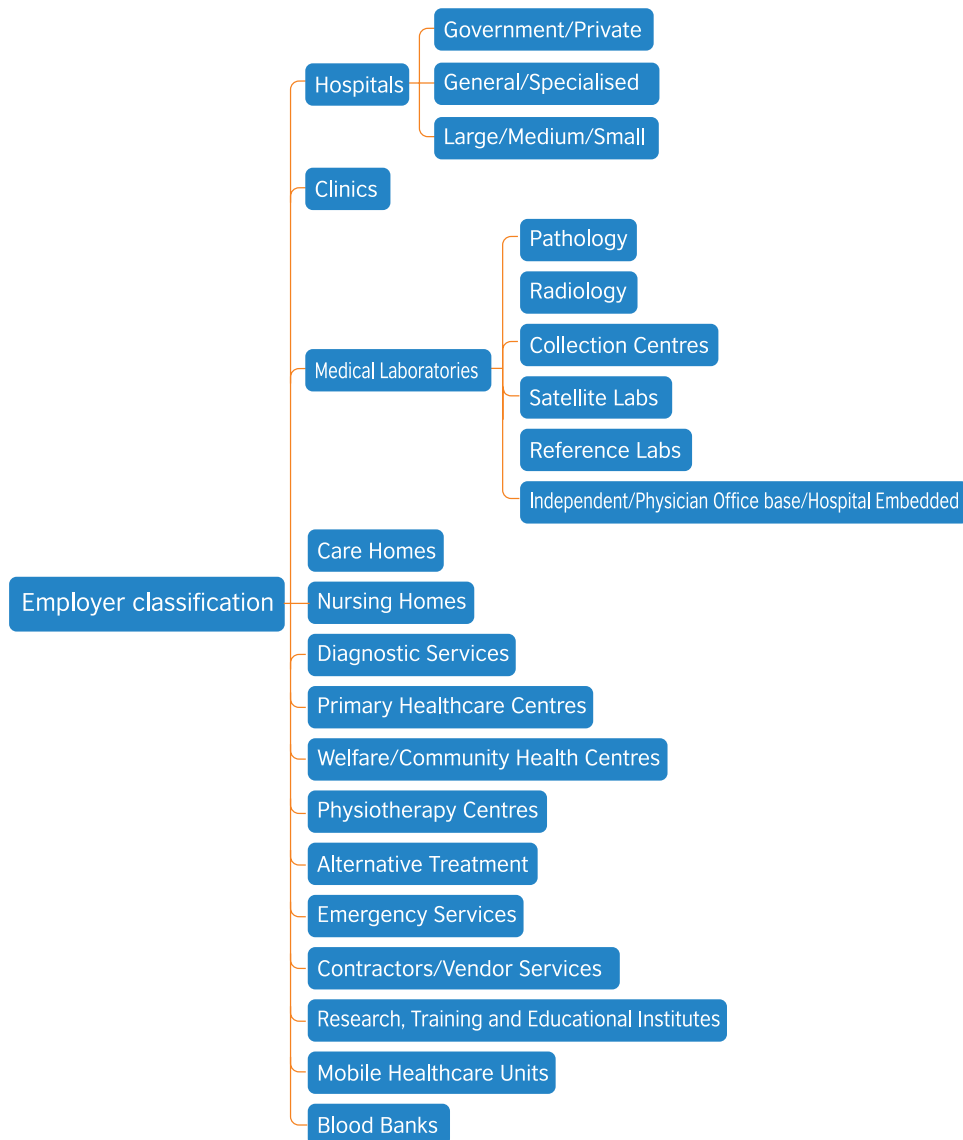
APPENDIX 3

Hospitality sector - Employer types and relevant job contexts in the sector



APPENDIX 4

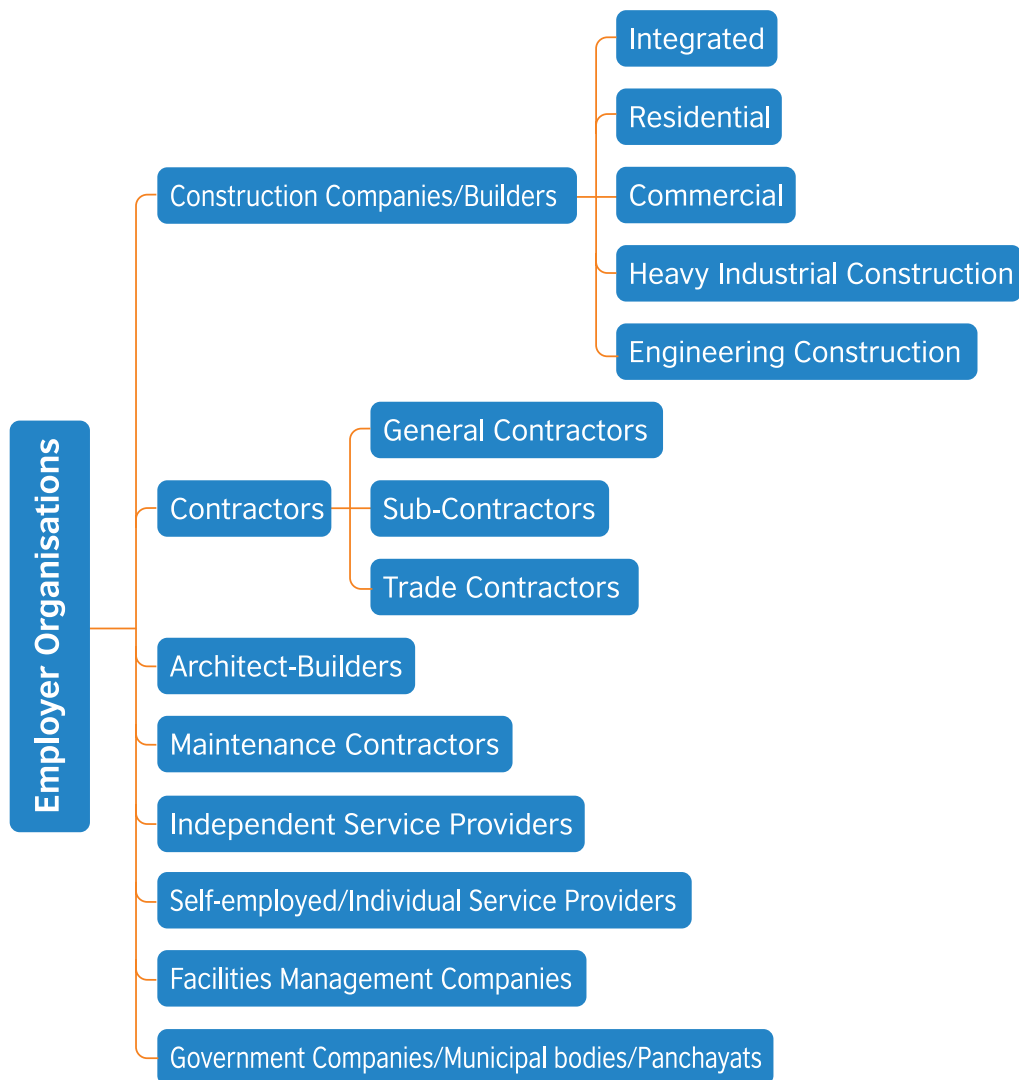
Healthcare sector - Employer types and relevant job contexts in the sector



APPENDIX 5

Construction sector - Employer types and relevant job contexts in the sector

Employer types and contexts within the sector where the roles researched may be relevant and include the following:



APPENDIX 6

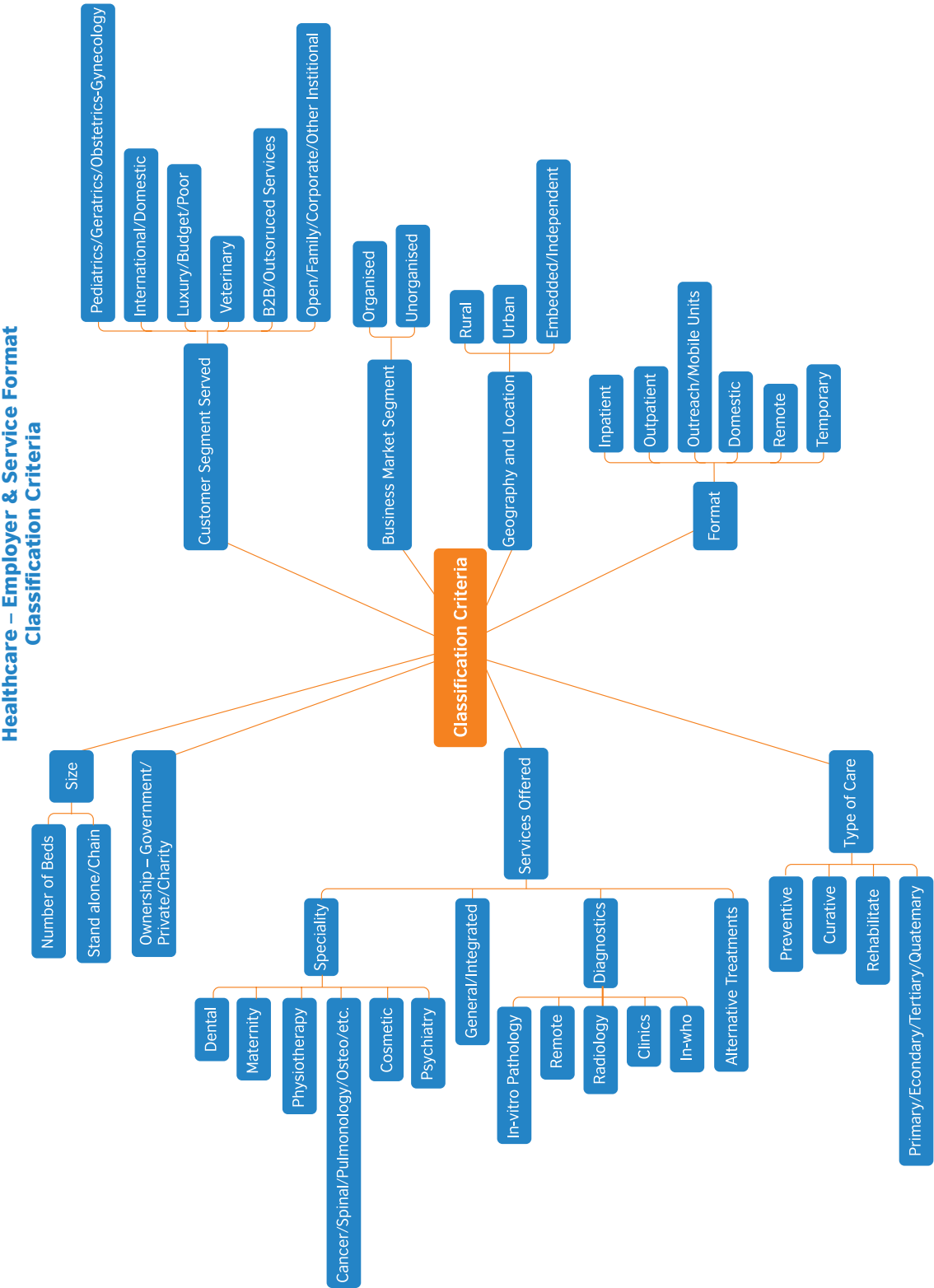
Possible criteria for classifying employment contexts within hospitality sector

Hospitality – Employer Classification Criteria



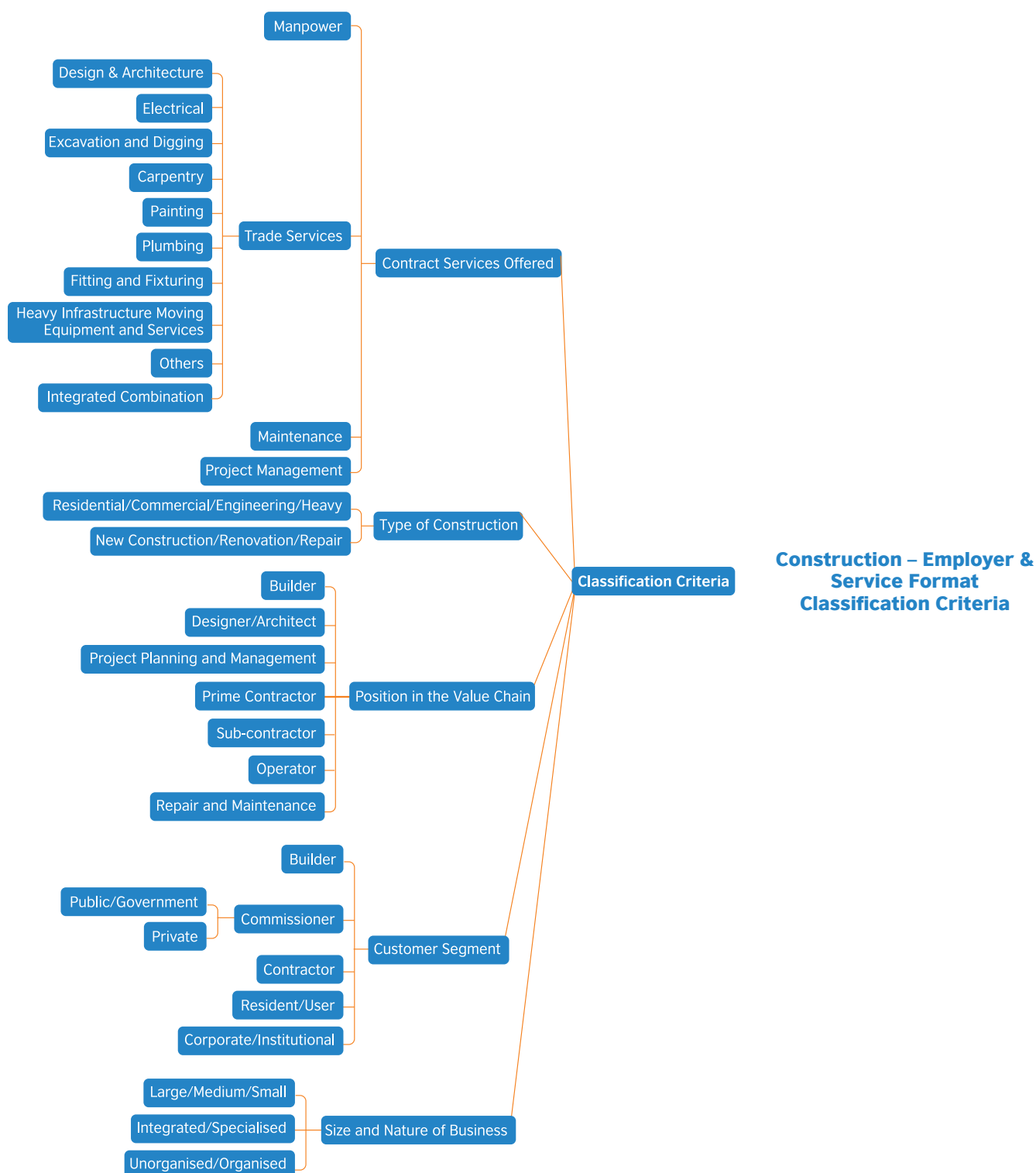
APPENDIX 7

Possible criteria for classifying employment contexts within healthcare sector



APPENDIX 8

Possible criteria for classifying employment contexts within construction sector



APPENDIX 9

Common European Framework Global Scale Descriptors

Common European Framework of References for Languages

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

The Global Scale descriptors for CEFR levels [Council of Europe 2001: 24]

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