

File No.: AP – 17/02/2024 -O/o Dir (AT)
(E-65440)
Government of India
Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
(Apprenticeship Training Division)

New Delhi, 28-07-2026

To
CEO, All Sector Skill Council

Subject: "Review and Revision of Eligibility Criteria for Optional Trades under the Apprentices Act, 1961" – Reg.

Sir/Madam,

This is to invite your attention to the provisions of the **Apprentices Act, 1961**, which governs the engagement and training of apprentices in India. The Act does not prescribe any requirement of prior work experience or prior job-related training as a condition for eligibility for apprenticeship training.

2. Further, Section 18 of the Apprentices Act, 1961 clearly stipulates that an apprentice is a trainee and not a worker. Apprenticeship training is intended to provide initial industry exposure, skill acquisition, and on-the-job learning opportunities to candidates entering the workforce. In this context, it has been observed that certain Optional Trades developed and notified by Sector Skill Councils prescribe prior work experience and/or prior job-specific training as mandatory eligibility qualifications for engagement of apprentices. Such provisions are inconsistent with the fundamental objectives of apprenticeship training envisaged under the Act.

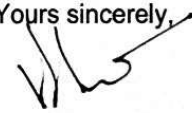
Accordingly, it is hereby clarified that:

- Apprenticeship is, by design and by law, a training engagement intended for individuals who are yet to acquire practical workplace skills.
- Prescribing prior work experience as a mandatory eligibility requirement is not aligned with the intent and provisions of the Apprentices Act, 1961.
- While minimum educational qualifications, age requirements, or specific certifications expressly permitted under the Act and applicable regulations may be prescribed, mandatory prior work experience and/or prior job-specific training should not be stipulated as eligibility conditions for apprenticeship engagement.

4. In view of the above, all Sector Skill Councils are advised to:

- Conduct a comprehensive review of the eligibility criteria prescribed for all Optional Trades mapped under the Apprentices Act, 1961.
- Identify and remove mandatory requirements relating to prior work experience and/or prior job-specific training, wherever such requirements have been specified.
- Ensure that the eligibility criteria for Optional Trades remain fully aligned with the provisions, objectives, and spirit of the Apprentices Act, 1961 and the Apprenticeship Rules made thereunder.

5. Your cooperation in ensuring uniformity and compliance with the statutory framework governing apprenticeship training is solicited.

Yours sincerely,

(V.S. Arvind)
Director (AT)

Copy to:

1. PS to Additional Secretary (AT), MSDE- For kind information.
2. CEO, NSDC, New Delhi
3. GM(AT)/ GM(IT), NSDC, New Delhi – For information and make this letter be made available on the public domain i.e. apprenticeshipindia.gov.in.
4. Guard File 2026.
