
NASSCOM ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCE (NAC)

INFORMATION NOTE

An initiative by **NASSCOM**[®]
(in association with the BPM industry)

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1. Introduction

The Indian BPM industry is growing at a great pace and is contributing heavily to the Indian economy. India has established its leadership position globally in the off-shoring market due to availability of skilled manpower being one of the key strengths that it has.

National Association of Software & Service Companies (NASSCOM), *the association for IT, BPM & Services Companies in India*, has been working with the Indian BPM (Business Process Management) majors to create a national assessment - the **NASSCOM Assessment of Competence (NAC)**. The initiative is aimed at creating a robust and continuous pipeline of talent, which will be done by continuously assessing candidates on 'key skills', making it easier for firms to screen candidates and also provide them with training-need-analysis. This will then be tied in to training and development efforts to help more candidates become competent to work in the industry.

NASSCOM is following a multi-pronged approach to facilitate manpower development for the short and long term. NASSCOM is aiming to build a pool of BPM manpower, which is pre-certified, in tune with the needs of the industry and thereby gear up for the future requirements of the sector.

2. Industry endorsement

Following companies helped create NAC and defined the roadmap for it:

1. Genpact (India's largest BPM company)
2. IBM
3. Accenture
4. Convergys
5. EXL
6. HCL
7. Infosys
8. WNS
9. Deloitte

As endorsing companies for the NAC, they would give preference to the NAC candidates and will connect directly to those who have performed well in the assessment. NASSCOM to take up this exercise with all its BPM member organizations, who will be roped in as this initiative is taken forward.

3. Target audience

NASSCOM will take a gradual approach to run NAC, in which, various States in the country, different Universities/Colleges, other Private Institutes, etc. will be involved. This is, now, supported by the 'Retail Model', where independent (authorized) test centers, across the country, administer NAC for individual candidates.

The target audience will be the **"final-year students from all non-technical / general streams"** who will be venturing into the job markets after a year. The intent behind assessing these students is to analyze the level of talent, which is available in various parts of India, especially in tier-2 and tier-3 cities. Gauging this would eventually help identify the various regions in India where the readily available BPM-fit talent pool exists.

4. Key benefits of NAC to various stakeholders

Job Aspirants / Test Takers

- A transparent recruitment process across BPM companies
- No need to sit through the same tests at the time of recruitment (however, some companies may like to check the same skills at a higher level)
- Ability to identify self strengths and weaknesses through test scores
- Ability to do a 'training need analysis', which will help them improve on weak areas through training programs
- Employment facilitation using the NAC scores

Educational Institutes

- Identifying the training needs of students and analyzing the gaps
- Aligning the course curricula with industry requirements – bridging the “education” to “employability” gap
- Preparing the students on skills that act as pre-requisites to work in the industry
- Contributing to the industry by preparing the students through a pre-defined approach

State Governments

- Assessment of talent pool available in the region, that is suitable for the industry
- Employment generation through increased employability of talent
- Help in attracting serious investors
- Will help create a concept of ‘education’ to ‘employability’

Industry

- NAC is about moving from a ‘company test’ to an ‘industry test’ for entry-level hiring
- Caters to both ‘voice’ as well as ‘non voice’ segment
- Standardized recruitment test, conducted across the country, leads to greater transparency even amongst the job seekers, hence they can prepare
- First-level filter for companies, which helps them look only at the deserving / potential lot, resulting in huge cost/time/resource savings
- Ease of benchmarking for individuals processes

5. NAC Test Matrix

Skill	Duration (in mins.)
Speaking & Listening - Sentence Mastery - Vocabulary - Fluency - Pronunciation	10
Analytical Ability	20
Quantitative Ability	20
Writing - Grammar - Content - Vocabulary - Spelling & Punctuation	20
Keyboard Skills	05
<i>total duration</i>	75 mins.

6. NAC website

NASSCOM's official website for NAC Initiative is www.nac.nasscom.in

7. Key features of NAC

- **Instant results** – Score card is issued to test taker immediately after the test since the test is 100% automated (online)
- **Eligibility**
 - Any candidate appearing in 'final year' of under-graduation or an equivalent course is eligible to sit for NAC assessment
 - Each College / University should be able to provide at least 70-80% of their 'final-year student population' to take NAC assessment
- **Commercials**
 - Regular pricing: The fee per test is **Rs.360** (plus taxes, if any). It is College's / University's prerogative to charge students 100% or subsidize the fee; however, in the interest of the students and to promote this program, it is recommended for College / University to pay the full amount for the first round.
 - Retail pricing: NAC will also be conducted at regular intervals at the 'designated retail centers' across the country. The fee per test, in this model, will be **Rs.430** (plus taxes, if any) – i.e. Rs.360 (test fee) + Rs.70 (centre fee)

8. Scope of work (for participating College / University)

- Sensitize / Educate students about the NAC initiative
- Facilitate smooth conduct of the test
- Provide venue with right infrastructure (see point #9 of this document) for holding the test
- Ensure financial compliance w.r.t. payment for the test
- Endorse NAC and use it for all subsequent batches

9. Test centre infrastructure requirements

Description	Client PC (Test Taking PC) (with a Monitor, Mouse & Keyboard)
Operating System	Windows® XP SP3+, Vista, or 7
CPU	Pentium® IV and higher
RAM	512 MB RAM and above
HDD	At least 500 MB free disk space
Web browser:	Internet Explorer 7.0® (or higher)
Broadband Internet connection	(T1, DSL, or cable) with a bandwidth of at least 1 Mbps for 25-30 users
Sound Card with necessary audio and video drivers	Yes (Should support recording & playback capabilities)
Headset with Microphone	- Headset with a USB headset is strongly recommended - A room is required that is acoustically appropriate for the Speaking test
Java Scripts	Enable

UPS (assuming that generator will be used during power failure)	1.5 Hour Battery Backup	
Generator (may be used for 8 hours or more if needed)	Yes	
CD-ROM Drive	Yes	
USB Ports	Yes	
Antivirus	Yes	
Screen resolution	1024 x 768 pixels	
Test Environment – For Speaking & Listening Test		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network security access to allow Cdtclient.exe application to access https://www.ordinate.com (port 443) • Disable pop-up blocker • Headphone Features: 		
Headphone features	Sound mode	Stereo
	Ear piece	Double
	Driver Unit Size	32 mm
	Frequency Response	20 - 20000 Hz
	Impedance	32 ohms
Microphone features	Frequency response	100 - 12000 Hz
	Impedance	3320

10. Employment facilitation for NAC test takers

Scores of all NAC test takers are made available to all NASSCOM member companies and are shared, primarily with the endorsing companies, where companies directly connect to those who perform well in the NAC assessment and meet defined job criteria. This ensures great visibility for the test takers and, at the same time, strengthens companies' reach to the potential/deserving lot of candidates, leading to a win-win, both for companies and the candidates.

11. Way forward

Over time, the intent is that the industry should be hiring only the candidates who come through this assessment. State governments can facilitate the process by trying to make this employment enhancing assessment mandatory to all its final-year students (in the non-technical streams) until it is the preferred choice of the students, recognizing its value-add to their career pathway. The learning from the NAC post assessment and post job interviews will identify other educational interventions required that support a sustainable long-term approach to enhancing employment in the State. NASSCOM will facilitate all such education initiatives working towards a corroborative effort in achieving equity in quality educational and hence enhancing employability. It is strongly recommended that State Governments consider NASSCOM's skill-development training program in the BPM space, called **GBFS (Global Business Foundation Skills)** that encompasses training for all the foundation / skills that are critical and important from industry's perspective at the entry level. The details of GBFS program can be provided on request.
