RECOGNIZING YOUR LEARNING:
ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING - APEL

2014

APEL HANDBOOK FOR LEARNERS: ADMISSION TO MASTER LEVEL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. GLOSSARY

2. PART I: INTRODUCTION

3. PART II: APEL SCOPE

4. PART III: ADMISSION TO THE STUDY

5. PART IV: STUDENTS COMPETENCY LEVEL BASED ON MALAYSIAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

6. PART V: APEL CERTIFICATION PROCESS

7. APPENDIX

    Appendix 1 - Part I: APEL Application Form
    Appendix 2 - Part II: APEL Portfolio
    Appendix 3 - List of Evidence

GLOSSARY

a. Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning

A systematic process that involves the identification, documentation and assessment of prior experiential learning, i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes, to determine the extent to which an individual has achieved the desired learning outcomes, for access to a programme of study and/or award of credits.

b. APEL certification process

An APEL certification process is an indication of the applicant's competencies and readiness to pursue a particular programme.

c. Aptitude Test

Aptitude test is a formal examination which the applicant must pass.

d. Course

Course is a component of a programme. The term course is used interchangeably with the term module or unit.

e. Formal learning

Intentional learning/programme of study delivered within an organized and structured context (pre-school, primary school, secondary school, technical college and university) that may lead to formal recognition/a recognized qualification.

f. Higher Education Provider (HEP)

A higher education provider is a body of a corporate, or an organization, or other body of person(s) which conducts higher education or training programmes leading to the award of a higher education qualification.

g. Informal learning

Learning which takes place continuously through life and work experiences (sometimes known as experiential learning).

h. Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF)

An instrument that classifies qualifications based on a set of criteria that is approved nationally and benchmarked against international best practices.

i. Master's Degree

A master's degree provides for the furtherance of knowledge, skills and abilities obtained at the Bachelors level.

j. Non-formal learning

Learning that takes place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training. It may be assessed but does not normally lead to a formal certification.

k. Programme

A set of courses that are structured for a specified duration and learning volume to achieve the stated learning outcomes, which usually leads to an award of a qualification.

l. Portfolio

Portfolio is a compilation that documents the applicant's prior experiences which include formal, informal and non-formal learning.

PART I: INTRODUCTION

Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) through the MQA Act 2007 (Act 679) haves an on-going commitment in assisting individuals in utilizing their prior learning as much as possible. MQA assists in identifying learning that have taken place through various types of experiences throughout life that are not formally certified.

This process is called Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) and was set under the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF). APEL allows individuals to progress in the context of lifelong learning and widens the mobility of student participation and adult learners.

After the implementation of the APEL assessment to the public for the purpose of admissions to the **Bachelor's programme** (level 6, MQF) on the **1st September 2011,** MQA continued to implement the APEL assessment for admissions to the **Certificate** and **Diploma** programs beginning on the **1st February 2013**. Accordingly, the implementation of APEL will be extended for student admissions to the Master's program beginning on the **18th February 2014.**

APEL in Malaysia is upheld by the following core principles:

i. Prior experiential learning should be recognized regardless of how and where it was obtained, provided it is related to learning or a form of competency acquisition;
ii. Assessment will be based on authentic, flexible, current and reliable evidence;
iii. Assessment will be conducted by practitioners/experts in the subject, in the related field;
iv. The method of assessment will be tailored to the level and experience of the learners, thus providing an opportunity for learners to demonstrate their acquired competencies;
v. Decisions of APEL assessments should be transparent and subject to appeal and review;

vi. Information and support services will be actively publicized, taking into account the diversity of the student; and
vii. Quality assurance mechanisms should be clear and transparent.

PART II: APEL SCOPE

APEL is only offered to Malaysians seeking recognition of their prior learning. The APEL certification is an indication of the applicant's competencies and readiness to pursue a particular programme. However the certification does not guarantee admission into a Higher Education Provider (HEP). Applicants are still subjected to the procedures and additional requirements (if any) as determined by the HEP.

APEL certification can only be used for the purpose of applicants furthering their studies in the chosen field. It is not equivalent to the knowledge and competencies of a particular academic degree programme. The certification cannot be used for the purpose of seeking employment.

PART III: ENTRY REQUIREMENT FOR MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMME THROUGH APEL

Entry requirements for admission into the **Master's program (level 7, MQF)** through APEL as approved by the Ministry of Education (MOE). Applicants must be/have:

i. **a Malaysian citizen;** and
ii. **at least 30 years** of age in the year of application; and
iii. at least **STPM/Diploma/equivalent qualifications**, and
iv. relevant work experience.

PART IV: STUDENT COMPETENCY

The required competencies for the APEL assessment are guided by the MQF learning domains. Therefore the APEL assessments conducted by MQA aims to ensure that applicants will have the following competencies:

i. knowledge;
ii. practical skills;

iii. skills and social responsibility;
iv. values, attitudes and professionalism;
v. communication skills, leadership and teamwork;
vi. problem solving skills;
vii. information management skills and lifelong learning; and
viii. management and entrepreneurial skills.

PART V: APEL ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION PROCESSES

APEL certification determines an applicant's eligibility to apply for admission into the Master's program at any public or private HEPs. Given the fact that APEL assessment processes may take as long as (involving the aptitude test, an interview and a portfolio assessment) 2 to 4 months, applicants are advised to apply for APEL certification well in advance of the date of admission into the desired HEPs.

Applications process for APEL certificate is shown in Figure 1 overleaf.

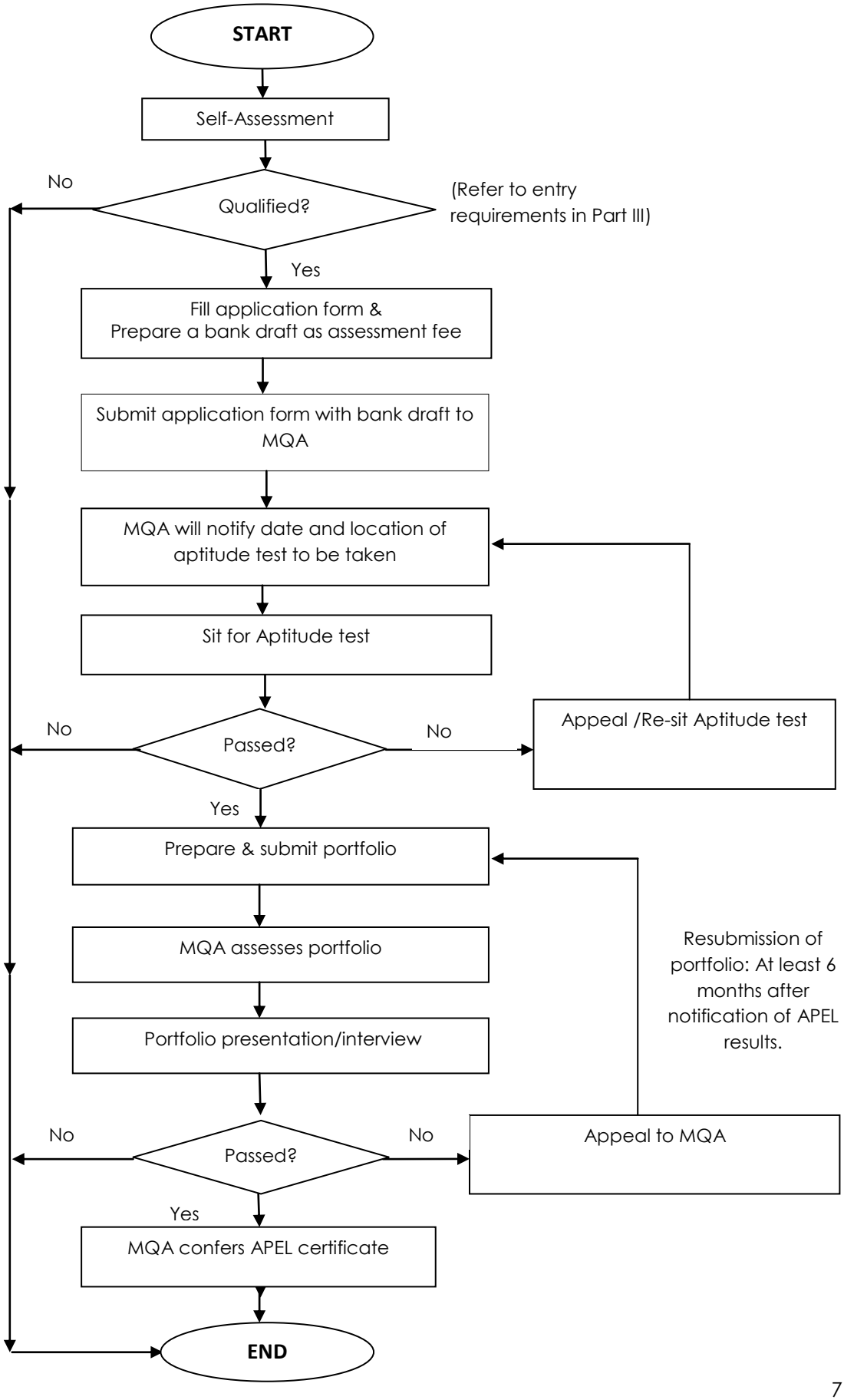

FIGURE 1: FLOW CHART OF APEL CERTIFICATION PROCESS

NOTE

Self-Assessment:

In the beginning, applicants must first ensure that the basic entry requirements set by the Ministry of Education (see Part III) are met.

Apart from being a Malaysian, and meeting the age and academic qualification requirements, applicants must also assess the relevancy of their prior learning experience to the field of study.

It is important for the applicant's to understand the learning needs of the desired programme. If the applicant feels he has the potential to pursue a master's degree in the desired field and have met the basic requirements, the applicant may apply to be assessed through APEL.

Application process:

Applicants must complete an application form as shown in **Appendix 1.** The application form and the APEL assessment fee, in the form of a bank draft made payable to **Agensi Kelayakan Malaysia** should be submitted to the MQA.

The MQA will contact the applicant after receipt of the application form and the bank draft. Subsequently the date and location for taking the aptitude test will be set.

APEL assessment:

An Aptitude test is a formal examination which the applicant must pass. It is the first assessment and has a weightage of 40% of the total APEL assessment.

The purpose of the Aptitude test is to assess the applicant's competencies and readiness to pursue a master's programme. Aspects of assessment that will be tested include knowledge in Mathematics, English, Bahasa Malaysia and General

Knowledge/Critical Thinking. The table below provides an overview of the content and structure of the Aptitude test:

Aptitude Test estimated time : 2 hours 30 minute

ASPECT OF ASSESSMENT	TOPICS	DESCRIPTION OF QUESTION
Mathematics	• Basic mathematics • Basic Algebra • Problem solving	**Part A** : Objective questions 25 questions **Part B** : Structured question 1 questions
English	• Reading & Comprehension • Grammar & Prose • Spelling • Vocabulary • Correction of errors	**Part A** : Objective questions 12 questions **Part B** : Structured question 1 questions
Bahasa Malaysia	• Reading & Comprehension • Grammar & Prose • Spelling • Vocabulary • Correction of errors	**Part A** : Objective questions 13 questions **Part B** : Structured question 1 questions
General knowledge / Critical thinking	• Logical reasoning • Classification skills • Pattern recognition	**Part A** : Objective questions 25 questions **Part B** : Structured question 2 questions

After passing the Aptitude test, the applicant can proceed to the preparation of the portfolio.

A portfolio is a compilation that documents the applicant's prior experiences which includes formal, informal and non-formal learning. Applicants must provide a portfolio according to the format shown in **Appendix 2**.

Applicants need to showcase evidence and present in the order of importance and relevance to the applied field. For certificated learning, applicants must attach certified copies of the certificates or documents. For experiential learning, applicants may submit evidence in the form of a testimony from an employer/ client/colleague; job specifications, etc. **(see Appendix 3)**.

The portfolio assessment carries a weightage of 60% of the total APEL assessment. Applicants are required to present their portfolio to a panel of assessors for the applicant's to explain the acquired learning in greater detail.

Applicants will be contacted by MQA to set the date of the portfolio presentation. The portfolio assessment process is expected to be completed within 30 working days from the date of submission.

APEL assessment results:

An official notification letter to inform the results will be issued to the applicant by MQA.

Applicants who have passed the APEL assessment (aptitude test and portfolio assessments) will be awarded the APEL certification which can be used to apply for admission into any of the HEPs in Malaysia.

Appeal of APEL result:

Applicants who have failed the aptitude test may appeal for a review of the results or apply for a re-sitting.

Applicants who have failed the portfolio assessment may resubmit the portfolio assessment. However, this re-submission can only be made at least 6 months after the date of notification of APEL results.

Fees will be charged for appeals.

APPENDIX 1

APPLICATION FORM
ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING (APEL)

FULL NAME (AS IN IC)			
CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS			
IC NUMBER			
DATE OF BIRTH			
GENDER	Male / Female		
CONTACT NUMBERS	**HOME:**	**OFFICE:**	**MOBILE:**
	FAX:	**E-MAIL:**	
LEVEL AND FIELD OF STUDY APPLIED	**MASTER**	**FIELD OF STUDY; BUSINESS/IT/EDUCATION /MANAGEMENT/ARTS/OTHERS (SPECIFY)**	
HIGHEST LEVEL OF ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION	**STPM/HSC/A-LEVEL/ DIPLOMA/EQUIVALENT (ENCLOSE A CERTIFIED COPY OF THE QUALIFICATION)**		

I hereby declare that all the information/documents provided to support this application are authentic, true and accurate. I fully understand that MQA reserves the right to reject my application if proven otherwise.

Signature:

Name:

Date:

This application is subject to the following conditions:	For Office Use
a. Non-refundable application fee of **RM …..** is submitted in the form of a bank draft made payable to the Agensi Kelayakan Malaysia. Please write your name on the reverse side of the bank draft. **Please do not send cash.** b. The applicant gives permission to the Management of Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) to make references to and use the information or data in this application as may be deemed necessary. c. Documents that are not in English or Bahasa Malaysia must be accompanied by a certified translation in full. d. Applicant will be subjected to an Aptitude Test and submission of Portfolio/Interview.	Processed by: Reference number : Date:

APPENDIX 2

ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING (APEL)
PORTFOLIO FOR MASTER LEVEL

Recent photo

PART 1 : PERSONAL PARTICULARS

FULL NAME	
IC NUMBER	
INTENDED FIELD OF STUDY/PROGRAMME	
REFERENCE NUMBER (Provided by MQA)	

PART 2: DETAILS OF LEARNING ACQUIRED (start with the most recent)

a.) CERTIFICATED LEARNING/FORMAL LEARNING

TITLE OF CERTIFICATION	**LEVEL OF THE AWARD (CERTIFICATE/ DIPLOMA/ DEGREE)**	**AWARDING BODY / INSTITUTION**	**DURATION OF STUDY (MONTHS / YEARS)**	**YEAR AWARDED**	**LABEL AND ATTACHED EVIDENCE**
e.g STPM	Certificate	Majlis Peperiksaan Malaysia (MPM)	2 Years	1995	e.g Appendix 1 (STPM certificate)
1.					
2.					
3.					

b.) EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING/INFORMAL LEARNING

(I) WORK EXPERIENCE

NAME OF EMPLOYER /SELF EMPLOYED	ADDRESS OF EMPLOYER	TIME SERVED (MONTH & YEAR)		POSITION(S) HELD	BRIEF JOB DESCRIPTIONS
		FROM	TO		
e.g 1 : XYZ Company	No. 123, Batu 3, Shah Alam	May 2000	April 2005	Floor Supervisor	
e.g 2: XYZ Company	No. 123, Batu 3, Shah Alam	May 2005	Disember 2006	Shift Manager	
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					

b.) EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING/INFORMAL LEARNING
(II) OTHER LEARNING ACTIVITIES

OTHER ACTIVITIES This may include your hobbies/sports/recreation/social/community service /training given / consultancy services or other activities which might be relevant to the competencies.	**YEAR**	**WHAT I HAVE LEARNT** (Relevant To The Programme Applied)
e.g: Marshall Of Local Cycling Club	1990 - PRESENT	Planning And Managing Club Activities.
1.		
2.		
3.		

c.) EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING/NON FORMAL LEARNING
TRAINING/SEMINAR/WORKSHOP

NAME/TITLE OF TRAINING OR COURSE	**LOCATION**	**DATE**	**LENGTH (Hours/Days/ Month)**	**DESCRIPTION OF KNOWLEDGE/SKILS ACQUIRED**
e.g: 5S Workshop	Hotel Eastin, Petaling Jaya	2nd May 2005	1 Day	Basics Of 5S, Managing 5s Practices
1.				
2.				
3				

d.) LANGUAGE COMPETENCY

LANGUAGE	1: POOR; 2; AVERAGE 3: GOOD; 4: EXCELLENT											
	READING				SPEAKING				WRITING			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1. BM				✔				✔				✔
2.												
3.												
4.												

e.) SELF ASSESSMENT/REFLECTION (Compulsory)

1. Why do you want to pursue this chosen area of study?

2. How is your prior learning experience applicable to / related to / relevant to your chosen field of study?

3. What are your action plans in ensuring the successful completion of your programme? (Commitment, time management, financial resources and support etc).

4. How will the completion of this programme help you in your life?

**E.g:*

I intend to pursue an MBA in General Management. I have risen from "rank a file" to a managerial post after more than 20 years of working experience. I need to improve my qualifications for a better career path. I believe that I have gathered enough hands-on experience in the supervisory field that will help me to successfully complete the programme. However I need to learn the theories relevant to management and for that reason I'm really interested in enrolling in the programme.

PART 3: REFEREES (Family members and relatives cannot serve as referees)

NAME	
POSITION	
ORGANIZATION	
PHONE NUMBER	
EMAIL ADDRESS	

NAME	
POSITION	
ORGANIZATION	
PHONE NUMBER	
EMAIL ADDRESS	

PART 4: SELF DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all the information/documents provided to support this portfolio are authentic, true and accurate. I fully understand that MQA reserves the right to reject my application if proven otherwise.

Signature:

Name:
Date:

This application is subject to the following conditions:

a. The applicant gives permission to the Management of Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) to make references to and use the information or data in this application as may be deemed necessary.
b. Documents that are not in English or Bahasa Malaysia must be accompanied by a certified translation in full.
c. Upon submission of a complete portfolio, you will be requested to attend an interview session.

APPENDIX 3

LIST OF EVIDENCE

Evidence that can be provided by the applicant

Direct Evidence	Indirect Evidence
Certificates You can provide copies of your qualifications; • School certificates • Statement of results • Courses completed at work	**Written Records** You can provide copies of; • Diaries • Records • Journals • Articles
Work samples You can provide samples of your work; • Drawings or photographs • Reports • Written materials • Projects • Objects • Work of arts	**E-mail** You can provide copies of email communication which verify; • Customer feedback • Work activities • Written skills
Records of workplace activities You can provide documents that verify your work activities; • Notes • Emails • Completed worksheets • Workplace agreement • Contracts	**Supporting letters** You can provide letters to verify your claim from; • Employers • Community group • People you have worked with (paid and unpaid work)
Documents You can provide evidence that shows what you have done in your life; • Media articles • Meritorious awards	