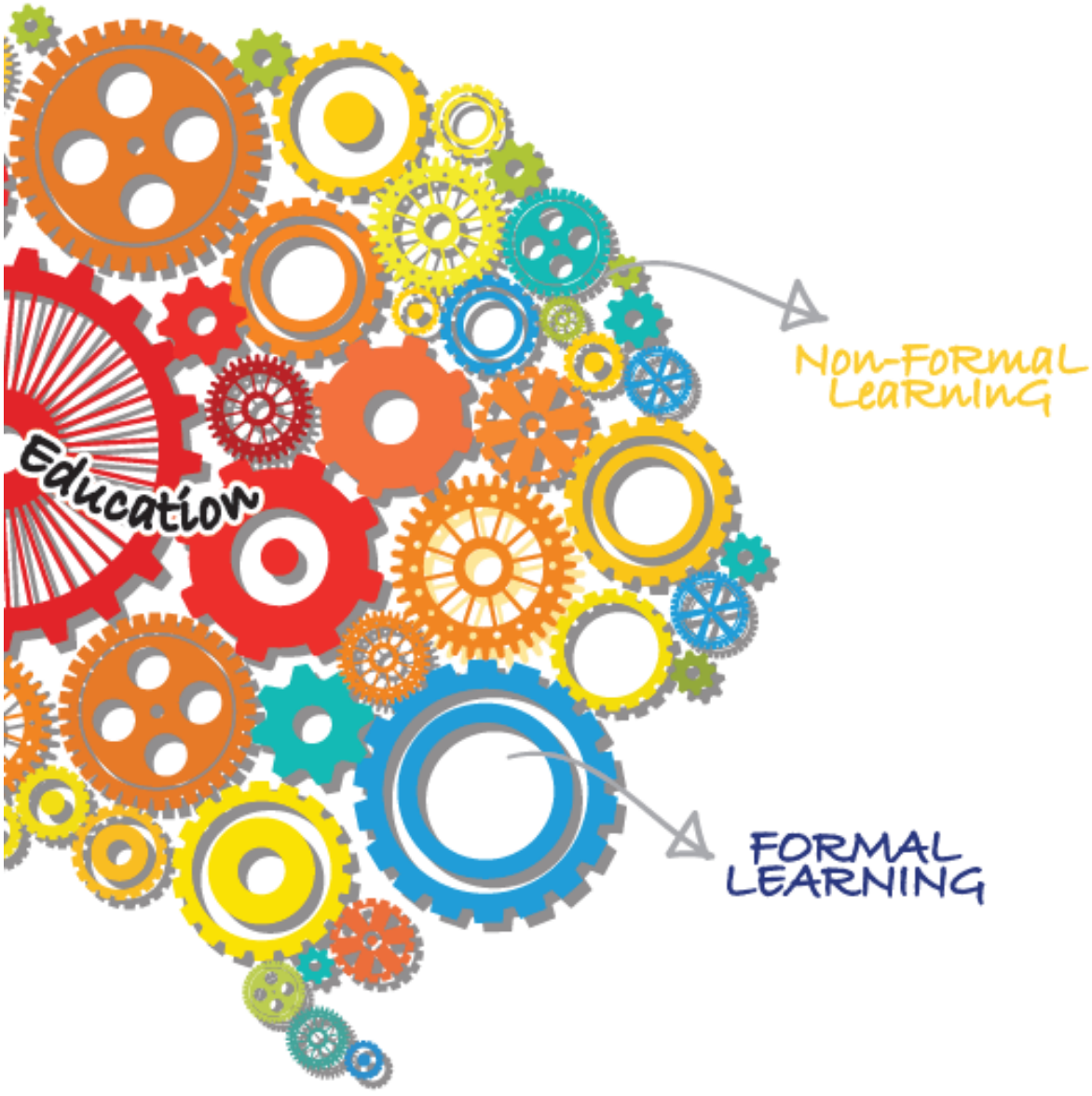
Agensi Kelayakan Malaysia
Malaysian Qualifications Agency

GUIDELINES TO GOOD PRACTICES : ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FOR CREDIT AWARD [APEL (C)]



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© Malaysian Qualifications Agency 2016
ISBN: 978-967-0996-07-3

All the Agency's publications are available on our website: www.mqa.gov.my

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FOREWORD

Lifelong learning has been identified as a strategic shift that will propel Malaysia towards achieving the status of a high income economy and developed nation. To support the national agenda, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) introduced the provision of Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) for the purpose of providing access to higher education programmes and also academic recognition for individuals who have acquired non-formal and informal learning throughout their work and life experiences.

Following the successful implementation of APEL for Access [APEL(A)] into the Certificate, Diploma, Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes of study, MQA has undertaken the subsequent step to embark on APEL for Credit Award, known as APEL(C). The notion behind APEL(C) is to provide an avenue to assess relevant experiential learning of the individual against the course learning outcomes; which ultimately leads to the award of credits for courses within a programme of study. APEL(C) aims to avoid duplication of learning; potentially provide time and cost savings for individuals to complete a study programme and more importantly, provide recognition to deserving individuals.

As such, I am pleased to present the Guidelines to Good Practices: APEL for credit award [GGP:APEL(C)]. I hope the GGP will provide essential information pertaining to the principles, processes and procedures in the implementation of APEL(C) to the HEPs, learners and the relevant stakeholders.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the development of this GGP: APEL(C), in particular the panel members (Refer Appendix A) and the institutions involved in the pilot test throughout the development of this document.

Thank you.

Dato' Prof. Dr. Rujhan Mustafa
Chief Executive Officer
Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA)
2016

ABBREVIATIONS

APEL	Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning
APEL(A)	APEL for Access
APEL(C)	APEL for Credit Award
GGP	Guidelines to Good Practices
HEP	Higher Education Provider
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MOOC	Massive Open Online Courses
MPU	General Education Modules (Mata Pelajaran Umum)
MQA	Malaysian Qualifications Agency
MQF	Malaysian Qualifications Framework
MQS	Malaysian Qualification Statement
TST	Test Specification Table

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In support of lifelong learning, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) through its MQA Act 2007 (Act 679) has an on-going commitment to widen access and provide opportunities for individuals to pursue tertiary education. Through the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) initiative, MQA recognises the value of learning that takes place beyond the formal classroom settings as well as learning that occur throughout work and life experiences; regardless of when, where and how it was acquired.

APEL is a systematic process of identification, documentation, assessment and accreditation of prior experiential learning. In the context of lifelong learning, APEL can be used as a mechanism to recognise prior experiential learning for the purpose of programme entry requirements; award of credits for courses within an accredited programme of study as well as the award towards a specific qualification.

In Malaysia, APEL has been identified as a pathway to access the various levels of qualifications set under the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF). Following the successful implementation of APEL for Access [APEL(A)] into the Certificate, Diploma, Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes of study, MQA has taken the subsequent step to introduce the APEL for Credit Award, known as APEL(C). This document presents the Guidelines to Good Practices (GGP): APEL for Credit Award.

1.1 Definition of APEL(C)

APEL for Credit Award [APEL(C)] is the **award of credits for the prior experiential learning towards a course in an accredited programme** of higher education provider (HEP). APEL(C) provides the mechanism to recognise the individual's prior experiential learning that is relevant and specific to a course within a programme of study. The credit award is granted on the basis of the knowledge and skills acquired through informal and non-formal learning.These forms of learning which emphasise experiential learning will need to be formally reviewed and assessed. The process will determine if learning has in fact occurred and is in line with the learning outcomes of the course(s) concerned. It is the **learning and not the experience** of the learners which is being evaluated.

The term APEL for Credit Award and the acronym APEL(C) are used interchangeably throughout the GGP.

1.2 Justifications for APEL(C)

The justifications for the implementation of APEL(C) are as follows:

i. To provide recognition for learning acquired from non-formal and informal sources;
ii. To reduce the duplication of learning, or learning of the same/similar content;
iii. To encourage the participation of adults in higher education by recognising their prior experiential learning in the form of credits awarded; and
iv. To potentially reduce the time and cost of completing a study programme.

1.3 Core Principles of APEL(C)

All APEL(C) provisions should be underpinned by, and operated within, a set of core principles. The aim of the core principles is to ensure an effective, transparent, quality-assured practice that will instill confidence in all stakeholders in the outcomes of the APEL(C) process. The core principles are as follows:

i) Learner-centered voluntary process

APEL(C) encourages continuous learning and promotes the positive aspects of an individual's learning experience. The core of APEL(C) revolves around the process where a learner initiates the application for credit transfer through the assessment of his/her prior experiential learning. It is the learner's responsibility to provide sufficient documentation and evidence for the assessment. Although the process is undertaken by the learner in a voluntary manner; it must be facilitated by HEPs.

ii) Accessibility

APEL(C) should be an accessible and inclusive process available for registered learners of study programmes at all levels of the MQF. HEPs must have clear and comprehensive guidelines for the APEL(C) process. There must also be adequate mechanisms (in terms of human and technical resources) to manage and support learners throughout the process. Information on APEL(C) should be made readily available and communicated to the relevant stakeholders.

iii) Flexibility

A range of different approaches shall be adopted by HEPs in the implementation of APEL(C) in terms of both support and assessment. This is to address the diversity of learner's needs, goals and experiences across the various disciplines of study.

iv) Reliability, transparency and consistency

APEL(C) processes, procedures, practices and decisions should be reliable, transparent and consistent to safeguard the credibility and integrity of the entire assessment system. This is necessary to ensure that all stakeholders can be confident of the decisions and outcomes of the APEL(C) processes.

v) Clarity of role definition

The appointment of individuals involved in the APEL(C) assessment process must be made with clear roles and responsibilities outlined. The individuals involved include:

- Advisor: a staff who advises the learner on the preparation and submission of an APEL(C) application.
- Assessor: an academic staff (subject matter expert) who decides on the mode of assessment and develops the assessment items to assess prior experiential learning. The Assessor will also be involved in the Challenge Test evaluation and Portfolio assessment. The role of an Assessor should be separated from that of an Advisor.

vi) Quality

All APEL(C) processes shall adhere to the same standards and rigorous quality assurance and monitoring mechanism as in any other form of learning and assessment. This quality assurance process shall be available for scrutiny by relevant external quality assurance bodies/agencies at all times.

1.4 Purpose and Objective

The purpose of the GGP is to provide HEPs and relevant stakeholders with essential information pertaining to the processes and procedures in the implementation of APEL(C). This GGP acknowledges the different needs or requirements of the various courses/programmes. Hence, it is not intended to be prescriptive; rather it provides a range of measures and good practices which HEPs can adopt in assessing prior experiential learning.

Specifically, this GGP is meant to fulfill the following objectives:

i) To outline the policies on the implementation of APEL(C);
ii) To highlight the assessment instruments used to award credits;
iii) To describe the APEL(C) application procedures for learners and HEPs;
iv) To explain the roles of MQA and HEPs in administering APEL(C); and
v) To emphasise the quality assurance of APEL(C).

1.5 Scope

This GGP is only meant for the consideration of the award of credits through recognition of prior experiential learning which may comprise non-formal or informal learning. It is of paramount importance that this document be read together with other quality assurance documents and policies set by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency and other related agencies. These documents include, but are not limited to:

i. Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) and MQA Policies on Credit Transfer;
ii. Guidelines to Good Practices: Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (GGP:APEL);
iii. Guidelines on Credit Transfer for Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC); and
iv. Other relevant quality assurance documents developed by MQA/MOHE from time to time.

Whilst every care has been taken to ensure the comprehensiveness of this document, MQA is to be consulted for any provision that may not be covered by this GGP.

2.0 APEL(C) POLICIES

HEPs which intend to implement APEL(C) shall adhere to all the APEL(C) policies outlined below:

2.1 General Policies

i) The APEL(C) provision is applicable to learners registered at any Higher Education Institution regardless of the mode of entry; whether through the conventional or APEL(A) route.

ii) APEL(C) encompasses the assessment of prior experiential learning for the purpose of credit award. Learning acquired through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) or any other methods of self-learning should also be considered under this provision.

iii) All HEPs can implement APEL(C) at their respective institutions **ONLY** after obtaining MQA's approval. HEPs which intend to implement APEL(C) must comply with the prescribed APEL(C) policy.

iv) APEL(C) will be implemented for all areas and levels of qualifications in the MQF. For postgraduate level of study, the credit award is limited only to the courses in programmes conducted via coursework and mixed modes.

v) APEL(C) is confined to courses in programmes that have obtained at least provisional accreditation from MQA.

vi) Courses that form part of the programme structure under professional bodies may be considered for APEL(C), subject to acceptance by relevant professional bodies. HEPs shall be responsible for securing such approval.

2.2 Award of Credits

i) The award of credits through APEL(C) is in the form of credit transfer where it does not involve the transfer of grades. However, the credits awarded for the course will be counted towards the total credit requirement for graduation.

ii) The maximum percentage of credit transfer through APEL(C) is 30% of the total graduating credits of a specific programme of study. This percentage is in addition to the credit transfer provision based on the existing formal credit transfer policy. The maximum credit transfer allowed through APEL(C) at the various MQF levels is as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Maximum credit transfer allowed through APEL(C) at the various MQF levels

Award based on the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF)	Minimum graduating credits	30% from the minimum credits of the coursework component
Level 8: Doctoral Degree (Applicable only to coursework or mixed mode programmes)	80	24
Level 7: Master's Degree (Applicable only to coursework or mixed mode programmes)	40	12
Level 7: Postgraduate Diploma	30	9
Level 7: Postgraduate Certificate	20	6
Level 6: Bachelor's Degree	120	36
Level 6: Graduate Diploma	60+6 (MPU)	20
Level 6: Graduate Certificate	30+6 (MPU)	11
Level 5: Advanced Diploma	40	12
Level 4: Diploma	90	27
Level 3: Certificate	60	18

iii) Credits awarded through APEL(C) can be transferred automatically to another programme within the same institution if the course for which credits have been awarded through APEL(C) has the same learning outcomes.

iv) The credits awarded must be equivalent to the credit value of the course applied for APEL(C). Award of partial credits will not be allowed.

v) Credits awarded for a course are only applicable to the specific course applied for. Credits are not automatically applicable to prerequisites (if any) of the specific course.

vi) Assessment for credit award should be carried out separately for each course[1]. Credit award cannot be granted on a block basis.

[1] Assessment for the Accounting (I) course should be made separately with Accounting (II).

vii) APEL(C) is applicable for all courses[2] except for final year project-based courses and dissertations.

viii) For Executive Diploma programmes, the provision of 30 credits based on 3 years' work experience as prescribed in the *Standards: Executive Diploma* is to be assessed using the APEL(C) instrument.

2.3 Implementation Process

i) Learners may apply for APEL(C) at any time during their studies. However, learners may be advised to submit their applications for APEL(C) during the first year of study.

ii) Learners are not allowed to apply for APEL(C) for courses which the learner has already registered and undertaken during the period of study.

iii) The course that has been awarded credit through APEL(C) will appear in the transcript of the learner as 'CT(APEL)'. It will not be taken into account in the calculation of GPA/CGPA. However, the credits will be counted towards the total credits required for graduation. HEPs have to issue the Malaysian Qualification Statement (MQS) as a supplementary document for learners who have been awarded APEL(C).

iv) Learners who are not successful in the APEL(C) assessment will have to complete the course through the usual process in their respective programme of studies.

v) It is the responsibility of HEPs to ensure that the implementation process of APEL(C) is in accordance with this GGP. This is to ensure that the process is transparent, equitable and evidence-based.

[2] Industrial training which includes practicum can be considered based on the suitability of the field.

3.0 ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT OF APEL(C)

The assessment of prior experiential learning for the purpose of APEL(C) will encompass the comparability of the experiential learning acquired by learners to the learning outcomes of a course within an existing programme. The assessment should strictly be made in correspondence to the credit value of the course and level of the programme.

For the APEL(C) assessment, learners can opt to undertake either a Challenge Test and/or submission of Portfolio depending on the nature of the course and upon advice by the appointed APEL (C) Advisor.

3.1 Challenge Test

A Challenge Test is a proctored standard test to assess if the learner has achieved the course learning outcomes. A Challenge Test can be in the form of a written test, oral examination and/or performance assessment; depending on the nature and discipline of the course. For example, the Challenge Tests for specific disciplines such as performing arts, public speaking and music composition, may take the form of a presentation or even skills demonstration. **Appendix B** provides a list of the various types of assessment that can be used by HEPs to measure prior experiential learning. HEPs may adopt a combination of several types of assessment to ensure appropriate measure of the course learning outcomes.

Once the type of assessment has been determined, the next course of action is to prepare a Test Specification Table (TST). A TST lists the test items prepared by the assessor based on the specific course learning outcomes. This is to ensure that a fair and comprehensive assessment is being made. A sample TST is presented in **Appendix C**.

3.2 Portfolio

A portfolio is a formal document that contains a compilation of evidence documenting the learner's prior experiential learning and his/her articulation of learning acquired over a period of time. It is prepared by the learner with the objective to demonstrate that the learning acquired is relevant and specific to each of the course learning outcome for a particular course.

HEPs shall develop a standard portfolio template to assist learners in documenting their prior experiential learning. The template should contain information relevant to the course applied for and a mapping of individual learning (in the form of learning statements and the origin of learning supported by documentary evidence) to the course learning outcomes. A sample of the portfolio template is provided in **Appendix D**.

Subsequently, to evaluate the portfolio submitted by the learner, the HEPs must appoint assessors with appropriate competencies and well-defined terms of reference as indicated in **Appendix E.** The assessor appointment process is crucial to ensure the integrity and credibility of the portfolio assessment.

During the evaluation process, assessors must ensure that the contents and evidence of the portfolio submitted by the learner reflect the achievement of the course learning outcomes. Assessors may use one or several assessment types as outlined in **Appendix B** to validate the evidence and claims put forward by the learner. This ensures that the competency level of the learner is in line with the learning outcomes of the course assessed.

In addition, assessors must also develop an assessment rubric to ensure that a valid, credible and fair assessment is carried out. The assessment rubric constructed will facilitate the determination of the level of achievement of the course learning outcomes based on the learner's prior experiential learning. An example of an assessment rubric is illustrated in **Appendix F**. In developing the criteria to judge a claim for prior experiential learning, the following widely accepted assessment criteria can be used to determine whether the evidence presented is satisfactory and appropriate:

i) Acceptability: In order to ensure that there is a good **alignment/matching** between Course Learning Outcomes and the evidence presented, the evidence has to be **reliable** (the assessment can be repeated with the same outcomes) and **valid** (the assessment must be able to identify the knowledge and skills it purports to assess).

ii) Sufficiency: There is sufficient breadth and depth of evidence, including evidence of reflection which is able to demonstrate the achievement of Course Learning Outcomes or competences claimed.

iii) Authenticity: The evidence clearly reflects the learner's own effort and experience or the learner's subsequent learning for which award of credit is being sought.

iv) Currency: The evidence provided must reflect currency of knowledge/skills as required by the discipline of the course.

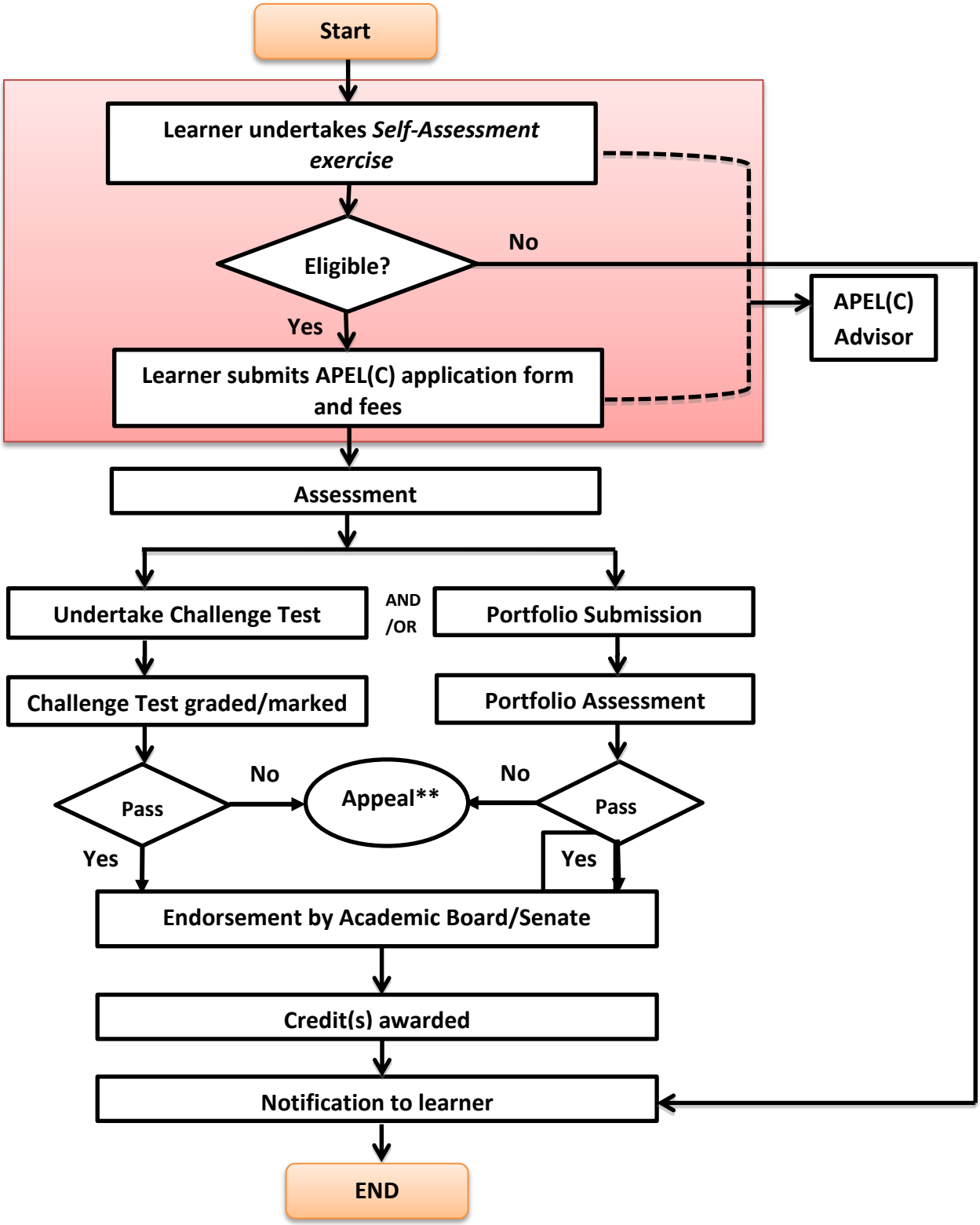
3.3 Criteria for Award

Credits that are awarded through APEL(C) must be made based on demonstrated and evidence-based learning; and not solely on the basis of claiming the experience itself. Although consideration may be given for all types of learning regardless of where, when and how it has been acquired, the learner must prove (through the identified assessments) that learning has indeed taken place. Ultimately, learning is assessed specific to the Course Learning Outcomes.

For both the Challenge Test and/or Portfolio assessment, learners must achieve at least 50% of **each** Course Learning Outcome.

4.0 PROCEDURES FOR APEL(C) APPLICATION: FOR LEARNERS

The following section outlines the key processes and procedures involved in administering APEL(C) for learners. **Figure 1** summarises the entire process.



** HEP must establish a proper and transparent mechanism for appeals.

FIGURE 1: THE APEL (C) APPLICATION PROCESS: FOR LEARNERS

4.1 Pre-Application Process

Before a learner decides to submit an application for APEL(C), the learner must know and understand each stage of the APEL(C) process and have realistic expectations of the possible outcomes of the application. All the general enquiries pertaining to APEL(C) shall be directed to the APEL(C) Centre/Unit of the HEP.

If the learner decides to proceed with the APEL(C) application, the HEP shall render appropriate support through an appointed Advisor. The Advisor will advise the learner on the appropriate mode of assessment to be undertaken for the APEL(C) application [refer **Appendix G**: Guidelines for APEL(C) Advisor]. The learner has the option of taking a Challenge Test and/or submitting a Portfolio.

4.2 Application

Prior to submitting the application, the learner must complete a **self-assessment exercise** and submit a 500-word report on a given title that is related to the course applied for. This requirement is necessary to determine if the learner should proceed with the APEL(C) application. The Advisor will guide the learner on his/her self-assessment exercise evaluation using the template in **Appendix H**. Based on the self-assessment form and the report submitted, the Advisor will determine the learner's eligibility and make an appropriate recommendation. Where the Advisor believes that the application is unlikely to succeed, the learner will be advised accordingly and the application process will cease.

If the Advisor believes that the learner's application is likely to succeed, the learner may complete the application form (**Appendix I**) and submit the relevant fees, before proceeding to the assessment stage.

4.3 Assessment and Results

It is important that learners be made aware of the assessment format implemented by the HEPs; regardless of it being a Challenge Test and/or the submission of a Portfolio. The evaluation of the Challenge Test and/or Portfolio must be made by an Assessor who is a subject matter expert using the recommended rubrics in this GGP. To satisfy the requirement of credit awards, the learner must be able to demonstrate an achievement of at least 50% of each Course Learning Outcome. All results of the assessment must be endorsed by the Academic Board/ Senate of the HEP.

Course credits will be awarded and reflected in the academic transcript as CT(APEL) for learners who are successful in the Challenge Test and/or Portfolio. Although the grades will not be used in the calculation of GPA/CGPA, the course credits accumulated will contribute towards the total credit requirement for graduation. HEPs are required to issue a supplementary MQS document to accompany the transcript.

A learner who fails the Challenge Test of a specific course will not be allowed to submit a Portfolio for assessment for the same course and vice versa. Reattempt of the Challenge Test and resubmission of new evidence in the Portfolio for the same course through APEL(C) is strictly **NOT** allowed. In this case, the learner must register and complete the course of their study programme through the usual process.

At any stage of the APEL(C) process, HEPs must ensure that the outcomes and results are announced in a timely manner to the learners.

4.4 Appeal

Learners may appeal against the results of the APEL(C) assessment. It is the responsibility of HEPs to establish a proper and transparent appeal mechanism. The HEP must appoint a different Assessor to evaluate the merit of the appeal. Learners must be informed of such a decision. The decision of this appeal is final.

5.0 PROCEDURES TO IMPLEMENT APEL(C): FOR HEPs

In ensuring that an acceptable level of quality assurance is adhered to, only HEPs with accredited programme can apply to MQA for approval to implement APEL(C). **Figure 2** shows the details of the application process for HEPs to implement APEL(C).

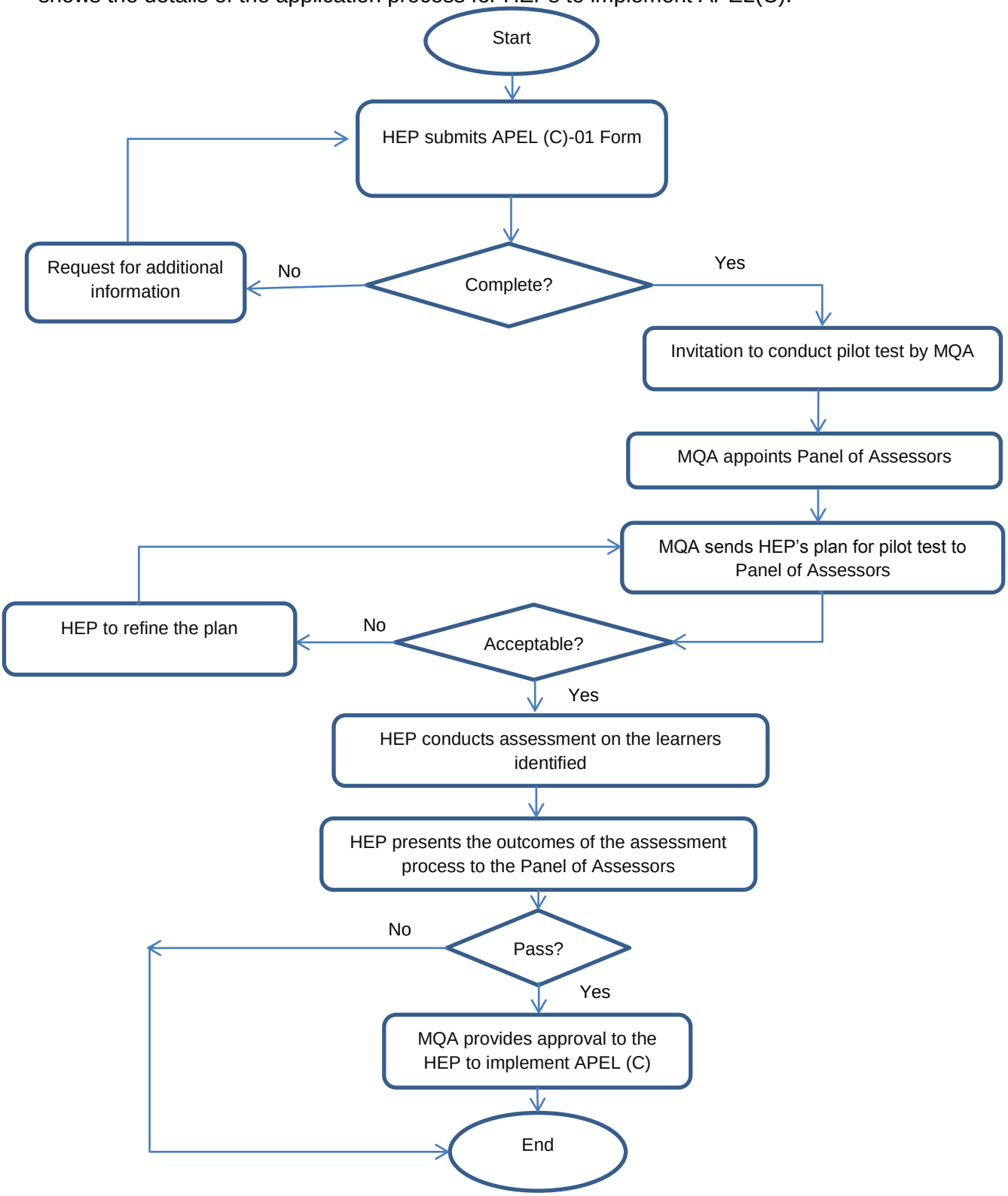


FIGURE 2: THE APEL (C) APPLICATION PROCESS: FOR HEPS

The HEP is required to submit a formal application to MQA by completing the APEL(C)-01 Form (**Appendix J**). MQA will evaluate the application to assess the readiness of the HEP to implement APEL(C).

In order for MQA to assess the preparedness of the institution to implement APEL(C), the HEP should fulfil the following minimum criteria:

5.1 Establishment of APEL(C) Centre/Unit

i) The HEP must have a dedicated centre/unit headed by an individual knowledgeable in the development and implementation of APEL(C) in Malaysia;
ii) The APEL(C) Centre/Unit must have proper organisational structure with clear job descriptions for the appointed staff.

5.2 Resources

i) The HEP must have sufficient infrastructure and expertise in managing APEL(C);
ii) The HEP must have appropriate Information Technology infostructure and applications to manage APEL(C);
iii) The HEP must provide continuous training programmes to all staff involved in APEL(C); and
iv) The HEP must develop a handbook for learners on the award of credits through APEL(C) and provide appropriate support services.

5.3 Processes

The HEP is to adopt all the processes outlined in the GGP:APEL(C) to uphold the quality of implementing APEL(C) processes and procedures.

5.4 Pilot Study

The HEP is required to present two case studies outlining the processes, procedures and instruments adopted to assess the prior experiential learning of the learners. The first case study must demonstrate the use of a Challenge Test, whilst the second case study must illustrate how a Portfolio is assessed.

6.0 ROLES OF MQA AND HEPs

The following section outlines the roles of MQA and HEPs in the process of APEL(C).

6.1 Roles of MQA

MQA has established and developed a comprehensive GGP: APEL(C) to provide the HEPs and the relevant stakeholders with information on its application and implementation. As custodian of APEL in Malaysia, MQA reserves the right to the following actions:

i) to approve/reject any application from HEPs to implement APEL(C);
ii) to retract the approval given to the HEP in the event of any malpractices found;
iii) to monitor and audit the APEL(C) processes of the HEPs; and
iv) to make amendments to this GGP as and when deemed necessary.

6.2 Roles of HEP

HEPs that intend to practice APEL(C) must submit their application and obtain a written approval by MQA prior to implementing the process at their respective institutions. The approved HEPs must adhere to this GGP, including the quality assurance aspects in managing APEL(C). It is the responsibility of the HEP to familiarise itself to this GGP and all the related quality assurance documents and policies set by the MQA and other related agencies. HEPs must consult MQA for any provision that may not be covered in this GGP.

7.0 QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality assurance is an integral part of the APEL(C) process. HEPs approved to implement APEL(C) are advised to employ the same standards and rigor through the assessment and process of awarding credits. This is aimed to safeguard the credibility and integrity of the entire APEL(C) process.

7.1 Monitoring Process and Periodic Review of the APEL(C) Processes and Procedures

The processes and procedures of monitoring and reviewing the operations of APEL(C) should be clearly defined and integrated within the existing quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms of the HEP. Mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing the APEL(C) processes and procedures may take into account the following:

i) the number of learners undertaking APEL(C);
ii) the success rate of APEL(C) claims;
iii) an evaluation of the learner experience, including the time taken by learners to undertake the APEL(C) process;
iv) an evaluation of the staff's experience, including the time spent by staff to support and manage the APEL(C) processes;
v) tracking and monitoring of the progression of learners who have undertaken APEL(C). This is necessary so that information is built on the suitability of particular qualifications or patterns of experience for the award of credits;
vi) an evaluation of the effectiveness of any collaborative arrangements with other HEPs/professional bodies; and
vii) reports from external assessors or verifiers, where appropriate.

7.2 Integration of APEL(C) Provision within the Existing Quality Assurance Framework and Systems

APEL(C) processes need to be fully integrated within the quality assurance systems of the HEPs to ensure transparency, consistency, reliability and accountability. APEL(C) processes should be available for scrutiny by appropriate external quality assurance body or agencies.

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APPENDIX A: LIST OF PANEL MEMBERS

NO	PANEL MEMBERS	ORGANISATION
1.	Dr. Andy Liew Teik Kooi *- Chairman*	Wawasan Open University (WOU)
2.	Prof. Dr. Chong Siong Choy	Finance Accreditation Agency (FAA)
3.	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ahmad Hj Mohamad	Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)
4.	Madam Lilian Kek Siew Yick	Open University Malaysia (OUM)

Further information and query on APEL(C) can be directed to MQA through Madam Mazlinawati Mohamed at mazlinawati@mqa.gov.my.

APPENDIX B: PROPOSED TYPES OF ASSESSMENT/VALIDATION

Types of Assessment/Validation	Description	Advantages	Constraints
I. WRITTEN TEST			
Multiple Choice	Learners select the appropriate answer from several possible responses.	Efficient and reliable. Allow a wide content sampling. Many items can be administered during a limited time period. Easy to administer and score. Scoring is objective. Measure knowledge keyed to specific learning outcomes and competencies. Can be written to test all levels of the cognitive taxonomy.	Question construction can be difficult and time consuming. May encourage guessing. A multiple choice question requires recognition of a pre-constructed response. A true or false question has a 50% chance score unless adjusted. Moreover, facts may not be categorically true or false. Not appropriate for higher level thinking, performance or attitudinal outcomes.
True or False	Learners state whether statements are true or false.		
Matching	Learners select a second statement that best compliments each presented statement.		
Fill-in-the-blanks	Learners complete phrases or sentences by filling in the blanks.		
Short Answer	Learners provide short answers to questions or complete the given sentences.	Requires recollection of correct answer. Relatively easy to construct. Guessing is minimised. Allows wide sampling of content. Tests learners' ability to organise, compose and write rather than merely recognise or recall.	Difficult to score. Tends to emphasise factual knowledge, rather than higher thinking skills, performance or attitudes.
Essay	Learners respond to questions or directions by organising and writing an answer.	Easy to prepare. Learners use their own words. Measures complex cognitive learning.	Testing is limited to a narrow sampling or content. May encourage 'padding'.

Types of Assessment/Validation	Description	Advantages	Constraints
		Eliminates guessing.	Difficult to evaluate objectively or achieve reliability in scoring and requires good scoring guides, model answers and clear criteria. Favours learners with high level language skills.
Situation-based problem solving	Learners organise and write responses to problems usually presented in a real-life context.	Able to measure complex, cognitive learning. Learners use their own words. Relate learning to real world situations. May test several competencies at once.	Time-consuming and difficult to construct. Difficult to score reliably and requires good scoring guides. May reduce the range of content that can be sampled.
II. ORAL EXAMINATION			
Structured oral test	Learners respond to pre-set questions (and answers). Notes are kept on responses.	Tends to be more reliable than an unstructured oral test. Provides direct assessment of specific knowledge and skills.	Less personal. Require training in interviewing skills and rating scales. May cause learner anxiety. May favour learners with strong speaking skills.
One-to-one interview	A face-to-face interview during which questions may flow from learners' responses.	Allows for a more complete assessment than pre-set questions. Useful in combination with portfolio assessment.	Requires training in interviewing skills and rating scales.
Panel interview	Learners are interviewed by several examiners.	Moderate subjectivity.	Costly to construct. Group process must be planned.

Types of Assessment/Validation	Description	Advantages	Constraints
III. PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS			
Simulation (Objective structured clinical examination, OSCE)	Learners perform in a real life situation.	Provides 'controlled' sample of real life and work activity. Allows for testing of complex integrated skills.	Requires clear criteria and standardised test conditions. May be costly.
Presentation	Learners verbally present learning.	Provides learner control over demonstration.	Depends on learners' confidence.
Skills demonstration	Learners physically present learning.	Clear demonstration of skill level and problem-solving ability in relevant contexts. Excellent for measuring application and synthesis levels of the taxonomy.	Can be costly and time consuming.
Role play	Learners take on roles to simulate a problem.	Practical – replicating 'real world' skills as much as possible.	Group work may not be a fair assessment of individual ability. Can create performance pressure unrelated to skills being assessed.
Observation	Observer assesses learners' behaviour in a natural setting. Assessment criteria are set in advance.	Opportunity to observe the real practice context. Often more comfortable for learners rather than simulation. Allow for collaboration with other peers/employees.	Complicated to set up. Can be time consuming and costly. A rating sheet is critical to prevent unfair test conditions. Can involve unplanned, uncontrolled events.
IV. PRODUCT ASSESSMENTS			
Work sample	Work samples are provided by learners.	Provides a real life context. Direct, practical and learner-centered. Useful when knowledge and skills are difficult to observe during product creation.	A rating sheet is critical to prevent unfair test conditions. Does not allow for process observation.

Types of Assessment/Validation	Description	Advantages	Constraints
Portfolio or evidence collection	An organised collection of materials that present and verify skills and knowledge acquired experientially.	Enable reflection on learning. May demonstrate cross-cutting knowledge and skills.	May require supplementary interviews. Require advising services. May favour learners with strong writing skills. Requires assessor training.
Self-evaluation	Learners respond in writing to criteria set for evaluating their learning.	Uses critical reflection. Can be used in conjunction with other methods. Congruent with adult education philosophy.	May not be appropriate for use as the only assessment method. May favour learners with strong writing skills.
External training programme review	Assessment of workplace and occupational training programmes or academic equivalency and credits.	Eliminates assessment of individual achievements based on successful programme completion. Essentially credit transfer.	Can be costly. Training programmes often do not have sufficient structure to justify academic credits.

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE OF A TEST SPECIFICATION TABLE

Course Information

Course Name:	Business Communication
Course Code:	XXXX
Credit:	3

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)	Description of Learning Outcomes
CLO1	To apply future technology of business communication
CLO2	To prescribe ways to improve business communication
CLO3	To administer methods to improve group communication
CLO4	To demonstrate effective oral communication
CLO5	To produce proposals for business reports and various purposes

Topic (T)	Description of Topic
T1	Understanding Business Communication
T2	Technology Enabled Communication
T3	Group Dynamics
T4	Introduction to Oral Communication
T5	Speech and Presentation
T6	Meetings, Dictating Messages and Preparing Oral Report
T7	Brief Business Correspondence
T8	Business Reports and Proposals

Test Specification Table

Course Learning Outcome (CLO)	Topic Learning Outcomes (TLO)	Question	Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Domains						
			K	C	Ap	An	S	E	Marks
CLO1	T2	Q1, Q2	X	X	X	X	X	X	20
CLO2	T1	Q3, Q4	X	X	X	X	X	X	20
CLO3	T3, T6	Q5, Q6	X	X	X	X	X	X	20
CLO4	T4, T5	Q7, Q8	X	X	X	X	X	X	20
CLO5	T7, T8	Q9, Q10	X	X	X	X	X	X	20
									100

K = Knowledge

C = Comprehension

Ap = Application

An = Analysis

S = Synthesis

E = Evaluation

APPENDIX D: PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION FORM

PERSONAL DETAILS

Name	
Identity Card No.	
Name of Programme	
Course Code & Course Title	
No. of Credits of the Course	

COMPETENCY WORKSHEET FOR COURSE-BASED LEARNING PORTFOLIOS

Course code and name			
Course synopsis			
Course learning outcomes	**Learning statements**	**Origin of learning**	**Supporting documentation**
Gather as much information as possible about the content of the course. Follow the advice of your Advisor to access course learning outcomes (what you should know after completing the course). Learning outcomes for many courses are listed in the 'Course Learning Outcomes' documents available at the HEP homepage.	Learning statements form the core of the portfolio. The language you use and details you provide here will show the Assessors what you know.	Include information regarding the location and time (where and when) the learning occurred. A location and date can be used more than once throughout your competency worksheets.	Wherever possible, make reference to supporting documentation that provides evidence of the learning you have claimed. Use tabs and cross-referencing to facilitate easy access to your supporting documents.

DECLARATION:

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

Signature :
Date :

SAMPLE OF A PORTFOLIO

Course code and name	***Microcomputer Applications in Business (Windows)***		
Course synopsis	*XXX*		
Course learning outcomes	***Learning statements***	***Origin of learning***	***Supporting documentation***
Editing in Word	*Identify and use the various editing functions in Word to edit documents in paragraph and table format.* *Explain the main editing functions in Word to a learner audience, in order to clearly convey how these functions relate to preparing a document for publication.* *Prepare and deliver presentations on issues related to editing functions in Word to be identified and resolved.*	*Applied Business Sdn Bhd Administrative Assistant 1992-1994* *Disted College Course Assistant 1995-1996*	*Appendix 1: Letter of Attestation (from Manager XXX)* *Appendix 2: Letter of Attestation (Principal)* *Appendix 3: Lesson Plans, Editing Functions in Word - 1, 2 and 3*

DECLARATION:

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

Signature :
Date :

APPENDIX E: ROLES OF PORTFOLIO ASSESSOR

The following are general strategies that can be adopted by APEL(C) Assessors throughout the process:

i) Assessor knowledge and attitude

The Assessor appointed would be a subject matter expert/specialist who is able to evaluate the evidence submitted based on the assessment criteria outlined above. In addition, he/she should demonstrate the following:

a) Be knowledgeable about adult learning principles and APEL(C);
b) Have sufficient knowledge in the course that is being assessed;
c) Demonstrate an open attitude towards alternatives to traditional, behaviourist-based assessment; and
d) Ensure there is no personal interest in the assessment outcome and/or any conflict of interest.

ii) Prior to an assessment

a) Base assessment and learning recognition based on knowledge and skills, not experience;
b) Ensure clearly stated learning standards against prior learning are assessed (e.g. learning outcomes, competency standards);
c) Use existing HEPs or colleague's experience and expertise to assess prior learning;
d) Assessment tools selected are 'fit for purpose';
e) Establish procedures for assessing team-based prior learning;
f) Identify methods that measure application of knowledge and critical thinking;
g) Review previously administered assessment for ideas;
h) Design tools that assess appropriate balance of applied and theoretical learning;
i) Sector specific jargon and textbook questions are not used when developing assessments;
j) Explicit criteria for third party evidence and the assigned weight established for portfolio assessment;
k) Grading instruments to guide decision making (i.e. rubrics) established;
l) HEP policies and standards for assessment practices are followed;

m) Assessment tools are culturally inclusive and at appropriate language and literacy levels; and
n) If possible, test new assessment tools prior to use.

iii) Working with learners

a) Employ adult learning concepts;
b) Purpose of assessment (i.e. admission, academic credit, placement, etc.) clearly stated;
c) Clear, consistent, written guidelines for providing evidence given to learners;
d) Liaise with APEL(C) Advisor to support the process and troubleshoot problems;
e) Allow learners to provide input on possible assessment methods;
f) Use multiple modes for assessment and performance tasks;
g) Use established assessment principles for judging prior learning, e.g. relevance, breadth, depth, currency, sufficiency and authenticity;
h) Provide learners with criteria for assessment decisions; and
i) Assess and make judgements based on evidence of learning relevant to expected outcomes.

iv) Assessment follow-up

a) Provide learners with a written assessment results decision; and
b) Provide learners with an opportunity to discuss assessment results and appeal opportunities.

APPENDIX F: SAMPLE OF ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Course Name: Business Communication						
Sample of Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)	Scale					
	0 **None**	**1** **Poor**	**2** **Fair**	**3** **Average**	**4** **Good**	**5** **Excellent**
CLO1: Apply future technology of business communication	Not shown	Demonstrates awareness of some available technology for business communication	Demonstrates awareness of all available technology for business communication	Demonstrates awareness of the use of available technology for business communication	Demonstrates the ability to show examples of technology usage in business communication	Demonstrates the ability to compare and propose the best set of technology to be used in business communication
CLO1: (Score)				√		
CLO5: Produce proposals for business reports and various purposes	Not shown	Able to describe some elements in a business report	Shows some elements in an acceptable sample of business report	Shows an acceptable sample of business report	Shows comprehensive sample of business report	Shows comprehensive sample of business report and is able to defend it
CLO5: (Score)				√		

APPENDIX G: GUIDELINES FOR APEL(C) ADVISOR

The APEL(C) Advisors are individuals who will provide advice to the learners on the appropriateness and suitability of the assessment mode to assess their prior experiential learning. Advisors who evaluate the learner's APEL(C) application are NOT allowed to play the role of an assessor at the same time.

The following strategies can be adopted by APEL(C) Advisors in order to execute their roles effectively and efficiently:

i) General strategies

a) advocate the benefits and principles of APEL(C);
b) demonstrate a receptive attitude towards alternatives to traditional and behavioural assessment; and
c) promote the various APEL(C) assessments.

Learners must be made to realise that APEL(C) is not a soft option and that it requires confidence and rigorous individual effort. If the learner is fully informed of the nature and demands of the APEL(C) processes, he/she should be able to judge if it would be advisable to take the course through the usual process rather than seek exemption via APEL(C).

ii) Advising strategies

a) provide learners with clear, consistent, accurate and written guidelines on APEL(C) application and assessment procedures;
b) communicate APEL(C) expectations clearly and provide a supportive environment;
c) assist learners applying for APEL(C) to identify their educational and career goals;
d) assist learners in identifying their experiential knowledge and skills;
e) interview, coach and provide constant feedback to learners;
f) promote individual independence throughout the APEL(C) process;
g) link learners to appropriate resources, e.g. portfolio development workshops etc.; and
h) explain post-assessment process for unsuccessful learners.

Each stage of the APEL(C) processes must be clearly defined and appropriate support provided for each of the stage must be outlined. The support provided would not only include the APEL(C) processes but also support in the course/module/subject/vocational or professional area in which the APEL(C) claim is made. The provision of support services can be extended through the following ways**:**

- written or e-learning materials;
- individual tutorials/meetings;
- group sessions; or
- telephone/electronic communication.

APPENDIX H: APEL(C) SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM FOR LEARNERS

PART A: PERSONAL PARTICULARS

Name	
Identity Card No.	
Name of Programme	
Course Code & Course Title	
No. of Credits of the Course	

PART B: SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO) *On completion of this course, the learner should be able to…*	I have learned this through my former studies or working career and can provide paper evidence/ documents/ certificates	I know most of this but I have no paper evidence	I am willing to complete a task/ assignment or any form of relevant assessment to show I have learned this	I really need to take the module
1. CLO1				
2. CLO2				
3. CLO3				
4. CLO4				
5. CLO5				

PART C: REPORT SUBMISSION

Write and submit **a minimum of 500-word report** based on the headings below within the stipulated time:

Report Title: XXXXX

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">I confirm that all the details on this form are correct to the best of my knowledge. The submission of the report is also my own works.

Submitted by:

Date :</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">For office use only:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Received by:

Date :</td><td>Recommendation:</td></tr>
</table>

APPENDIX I: APEL(C) APPLICATION FORM FOR LEARNERS

Name		
Identity Card No.		
Name of Programme		
Course Code & Course Title		
No. of Credits of the Course		
Mode of Assessment Chosen		Challenge Test
		Portfolio Submission
Confirmation of APEL(C) Advisor	I hereby confirm that the above learner has been advised and is deemed eligible for the APEL(C) assessment. _____ (signature) Name of Advisor: Date :	

I hereby:

a. declare that I have read and understood all the terms and conditions stipulated under the provision of APEL(C) of my institution; and
b. declare that all the information/documents provided to support this application are authentic, true and accurate.

I fully understand that the HEP reserves the right to reject my application if proven otherwise.

I also agree to the mode of assessment recommended by the APEL(C) Advisor.

Signature :

Name :

Date :

APPENDIX J: APEL(C)-01 FORM FOR HEP

APEL(C)-01 FORM
APPLICATION TO IMPLEMENT APEL(C)

PART A: GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDER (HEP)

1. Name of the Higher Education Provider:
2. Date of Establishment:
3. Reference Number on the Approval of Establishment:
4. Reference Number and the Approval Period of the Registration of Establishment:
5. Name, Title and Designation of the Chief Executive Officer:
6. Name, Title and Designation of the Liaison Officer:
7. Correspondence Address:
8. Telephone No.:
9. Fax No.:
10. Email:
11. Website:

PART B: HEP'S COMMITMENT IN IMPLEMENTING APEL(C)

1. Provision of an institutional policy on APEL (APEL for access or APEL for credit award).

2. Provision of resources (infrastructure, infostructure and human resources)
   - 2.1 Establishment of a dedicated centre/unit in managing APEL(C)
     - 2.1.1 Objectives and functions of the centre/unit
     - 2.1.2 Organisational chart of the centre/unit
     - 2.1.3 Roles and responsibilities of the staff in the centre/unit
     - 2.1.4 Capacity building (training and development) for staff, e.g. Administrator, Advisor, Assessor, Moderator etc., involved in APEL(C)
   - 2.2 Infostructure to record and document all the relevant data of APEL(C)
     - 2.2.1 Data related to the candidate's application, assessment, results and appeal

PART C: INFORMATION ON THE MANAGEMENT OF APEL(C) APPLICATION

1. Pre-application process
   - 1.1 Counseling [Information provided to students, e.g. APEL(C) Handbook or fact sheet]
   - 1.2 Selection criteria and appointment of Advisors

2. Application process
   2.1 Completion of the Self-Assessment Form prior to completing the official Application Form for APEL(C)

3. Assessment
   3.1 Development of the assessment instruments (Challenge Test or Portfolio)
      3.1.1 Selection criteria and appointment of Assessors
      3.1.2 Structure of the assessment questions and marking guide/rubric of the assessment
      3.1.3 Moderation process
   3.2 Presence of Academic Committee/Examination Committee/Senate in deliberating and approving the results
   3.3 Appeal process

4. Monitoring and review of APEL(C): stakeholders and the processes involved.

5. Integration of APEL(C) processes and procedures in the existing quality assurance framework of the HEP.

PART D: PILOT STUDY

The HEP is required to identify TWO (2) potential learners for the APEL(C) process; i.e. one (1) learner case identified for a Challenge Test and one (1) case for Portfolio submission. The cases must outline the processes and procedures at the pre-application and application stages that have been adopted by the HEP to assess the prior experiential learning of the learners. Both cases must be substantiated with the relevant forms and documentary evidence.

PART E: HEAD OF THE HEP'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all of the information/documents provided to support this application are authentic, true and accurate. I fully understand that Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) reserves the right to reject the application if the information or details given do not satisfy the requirements stated in the 'Guidelines of Good Practices: APEL for Credit Award'.

Signature :
Name :
Designation :
Date :
Official Stamp :

GLOSSARY

1.	Accreditation	Provisional accreditation or accreditation granted from MQA.
2.	Accredited Programme	A programme which is provisionally accredited or accredited by MQA.
3.	APEL	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 for the award of credit.
4.	Assessment	Refers to the wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, measure and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition or educational needs of learners.
5.	Challenge Test	An evaluation to assess prior experiential learning against the learning outcomes of a course. It may be in the form of a written evaluation or any other tests deemed appropriate by the subject matter expert in which the format is made known in advance to the learners.
6.	Competency	A competency is an underlying characteristic of a person/performer regarding his/her knowledge, skills and abilities which enables him/her to successfully and meaningfully complete a given task or role.
7.	Credit	A quantitative measurement that represents the learning volume or the academic load to achieve

		the respective learning outcomes.
8.	Credit transfer	A process of transferring credits for a course that has been taken in a programme to a new programme. This process allows credit for these courses to be counted as part of the graduating credit of the new programme. Credit transfer can occur in two forms, i.e. **i. Credit Transfer with Grade** Applicable on the basis of horizontal credit transfer for students within the system (current students) – the credits earned will contribute to the graduating credits and the grades earned can be considered in the GPA and CGPA. Example: mobility program or student pursuing a diploma programme and transfer to another diploma programme. **ii. Credit Transfer without Grade (also known as credit exemption)** Applicable mainly for vertical credit transfer for students outside the system (graduates) or students who have attained desired competency level for the course – the credits earned will contribute to the graduating credits but the grades earned will not be considered in the GPA and CGPA. Example: credit transfer from certificate to diploma, diploma to bachelor's degree, diploma to diploma, bachelor's degree to bachelor's degree, and APEL (C).
9.	Formal learning	A learning/programme of study delivered within an organised and structured context (preschool, primary school, secondary school, college and

		university) that may lead to formal recognition or a recognised qualification.
10.	Informal learning	Learning which takes place continuously through life and work experiences. It is often unintentional learning.
11.	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 formal certification.
12.	Portfolio	A formal document that contains a compilation of evidence documenting the individual's prior experiential learning and his/her articulation of learning acquired over a period of time, prepared to demonstrate the achievement of the intended course learning outcomes.

GUIDELINES TO GOOD PRACTICES: ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FOR CREDIT AWARD [APEL (C)]

The purpose of this Guidelines to Good Practices (GGP) is to provide Higher Education Providers (HEPs) and relevant stakeholders with essential information pertaining to the processes and procedures in the implementation of APEL for Credit Award [APEL(C)]. This GGP acknowledges the different needs or requirements of the various courses/programmes. Hence, it is not intended to be prescriptive; rather it provides a range of measures and good practices which HEPs can adopt in assessing prior experiential learning. It recognises that HEPs can adopt alternative measures to assess learners' prior experiential learning.

MQA
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ISBN: 978-967-0996-07-3