Agensi Kelayakan Malaysia
Malaysian Qualifications Agency

GUIDELINES TO GOOD PRACTICES:

ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

FOR AWARD OF ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS [APEL.Q]

Guidelines to Good Practices: Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning for Award of Academic Qualifications

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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, as well as recognition in the form of credits 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 beginning from 2011, MQA has undertaken the subsequent step to embark on APEL for Credit Award, known as APEL.C in 2016. 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 provides time and cost savings for individuals to complete a study programme and more importantly, provides recognition to deserving individuals.

To complete the cycle of APEL, from providing access to award of credits for the individual courses in the programme, the final stage would be the introduction of APEL.Q which will lead to the award of academic qualifications. APEL.Q promotes lifelong learning through facilitation of the recognition of prior experiential learning that takes place in the workplace, as well as other forms of learning, i.e. formal, non-formal and informal continuing professional development education and training.

I am pleased to present the Guidelines to Good Practices: APEL for Award of Academic Qualifications [GGP:APEL.Q]. I hope this GGP will provide essential information pertaining to the principles, processes and procedures in the implementation of APEL.Q to the higher education providers (HEPs), learners and relevant stakeholders.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the development of this GGP: APEL.Q, in particular the panel members (Refer **Appendix 1**) and the institutions involved in the pilot test in the development of this document.

Thank you.

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ABBREVIATIONS

APEL	Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning
APEL.A	APEL for Access
APEL.C	APEL for Credit Award
APEL.Q	APEL for Award of Academic Qualifications
GGP	Guidelines to Good Practices
HEP	Higher Education Provider
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MOOC	Massive Open Online Courses
MQA	Malaysian Qualifications Agency
MQF	Malaysian Qualifications Framework
MQS	Malaysian Qualification Statement
TST	Test Specification Table

1.0 INTRODUCTION

i) Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) is committed to recognise the value of learning acquired through different phases of life. This is stipulated in the MQA Act 2007 [Act 679 Part VIII (Accreditation): Chapter 7 Prior Learning and Credit Transfer where prior learning is an integral part of higher education. This process is known as **Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning** (APEL) and is embedded in the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF). Through APEL, it recognises **lifelong learning** and enhances **social inclusion** by providing access to academic qualifications for those who might otherwise be excluded by lack of formal qualifications or work demands. Increasingly, what makes universities unique is that they are no longer confined to teaching or research but their function and ability to formally recognise prior experiential learning. APEL widens the mobility of student participation, particularly adult learners.

ii) APEL was first introduced in 2011 to assess the readiness of learners to undertake tertiary studies based on their formal, informal and non-formal learning through a specially designed instrument. This mechanism was referred to as APEL for access [APEL.A]. Subsequently in 2016, APEL for credit award [APEL.C] was introduced to recognise informal and non-formal learning, which aims to eliminate the redundancy of learning. APEL.C is the award of credit towards a specific course or courses of a programme.

iii) APEL is now taken to a higher level in the education world where the learning acquired through life experiences as a source for the growth of knowledge and competencies, when evaluated, can be deemed equivalent to an academic qualification acquired through traditional pathways. This APEL for an academic qualification award is referred to as APEL.Q. APEL.Q recognises that the learning outcomes associated with higher education can also be acquired from non-formal and in-formal in addition to the formal learning pathway. APEL.Q fits well with aspirations of learner autonomy and the high-level cognitive skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation that are typically associated with working adult learners.

iv) **APEL.Q** is designed:

a. to promote lifelong learning through facilitation of the recognition of prior experiential learning that takes place in the workplace and in non-formal and informal continuing professional development education and training;

b. as a means of ensuring greater equality of access, recognition, opportunity and practice in career progression; and

c. as a means for widening and deepening access to programmes of study through the award of the academic qualifications based on the recognition of prior experiential learning.

1.1 Definition of APEL.Q

i) APEL for Award of Academic Qualifications [APEL.Q] is the **award of academic qualifications to individual learners through the evaluation and assessment of prior experiential learning towards fully accredited programmes** offered by the higher education providers (HEPs) in Malaysia. APEL.Q provides the mechanism to recognise the prior experiential learning of an individual that is relevant and specific to a programme of study. The award of academic qualifications [APEL.Q] is granted on the basis of the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through formal, informal or non-formal learning. APEL.Q which leads to an award of academic qualifications and which emphasises on experiential learning will need to be formally reviewed and assessed to safeguard the integrity and credibility of the award of academic qualifications conferred. The process will determine, if the learning is in line with the programme learning outcomes (PLOs), the associated five clusters of learning outcomes as stipulated in the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) and the body of knowledge of the concerned programme(s) has occurred.

ii) The term APEL for the Award of Academic Qualifications and the acronym APEL.Q are used interchangeably throughout the Guidelines for Good Practices (GGP).

1.2 Justifications for APEL.Q

The justifications for the implementation of APEL.Q are as follows:

a. To recognise the value of prior learning acquired through formal, non-formal or informal sources, as well as to promote the culture of lifelong learning;
b. To encourage adults with vast related working experience to earn a relevant degree award through a different evaluation mechanism without subjecting themselves to the traditional pathway; and
c. To potentially reduce the effort, time and cost of completing a study programme through the traditional pathway

1.3 Core Principles of APEL.Q

All APEL.Q 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 instil confidence in all stakeholders in the outcomes of the APEL.Q process. This is also to safeguard the credibility and integrity of the APEL.Q evaluation mechanism and instruments. The core principles guiding APEL.Q are as follows:

a. Learner-centred voluntary process

   APEL.Q encourages continuous learning and promotes the positive aspects of the learning experience of an individual. The core of APEL.Q revolves around the process where a learner initiates the application for the award of an academic qualification through the assessment of his or her prior experiential learning. It is the duty and responsibility of the learner to provide the appropriate documentation and evidence for the assessment process and to express his/ her willingness to follow through the whole chain of the APEL.Q assessment process. Although the process is undertaken by the learner in a voluntary manner, it must be facilitated by the HEPs concerned.

b. Accessibility

APEL.Q should be an accessible and inclusive process available for registered learners undertaking fully accredited programmes at all levels of the MQF. HEPs must develop and implement clear and comprehensive guidelines for the APEL.Q process. There must also be adequate mechanisms and resources (human, infrastructure and infostructure resources) made available to manage and support learners throughout the process. Information on APEL.Q should be made readily available and communicated to all the stakeholders involved in the processes of APEL.Q.

c. Flexibility

A range of different approaches shall be adopted by HEPs in the implementation of APEL.Q in terms of both supporting services and the rigorous assessment process. This is to address the diversity of needs, goals and experiences of learners across the various disciplines of study.

d. Reliability, validity, transparency and consistency

The APEL.Q processes, procedures, practices and decisions should be reliable, valid, transparent and consistent to safeguard the credibility and integrity of the entire assessment system. This is necessary to ensure that all stakeholders are confident of the decisions and outcomes of the APEL.Q processes.

e. Clarity of role definition

The appointment of individuals involved in the APEL.Q assessment process must have well-defined roles and responsibilities. The individuals involved would include:

- **Advisor:** internal faculty staff (e.g. programme head/coordinator/ senior academic staff) who advises the learner throughout the entire APEL.Q process from the preparation, submission of the APEL.Q application, assessment and appeal stage.
- **Assessor:** an academic staff in the discipline of the programme who develops the assessment items to assess the prior experiential learning of the learner. The Assessor will also be involved in the Portfolio

assessment, Field and Validation Visit and Challenge Test evaluation. The role of an Assessor should be clearly differentiated and separated from that of an Advisor.

- **Moderator:** an academic staff in the discipline of the programme appointed to moderate the assessment instruments, as well as ensuring consistency, fairness and accuracy in the marking of the assessments by the assessor. The moderator can be an internal staff or an appointed external expert.

f. Quality

All APEL.Q processes shall adhere to the same standards, rigorous quality assurance and monitoring mechanism as in any other formal learning assessment. This quality assurance process shall be made available for scrutiny by relevant external quality assurance bodies or agencies at all times.

1.4 Purpose and Objective

i) The purpose of the GGP is to provide HEPs and relevant stakeholders with essential information on the principles, processes and procedures in the implementation of APEL.Q. This GGP acknowledges the different needs or requirements of the various disciplines of 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 leading to an award of academic qualifications.

ii) Specifically, this GGP is meant to fulfil the following objectives:

a. To outline the policies on the implementation of APEL.Q;
b. To describe the APEL.Q application procedures for learners and HEPs;
c. To highlight the various assessment instruments for awarding academic qualifications;
d. To explain the roles of MQA and all the relevant stakeholders of the HEPs in administering APEL.Q; and
e. To emphasise on the quality assurance aspects of APEL.Q.

1.5 Scope

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

   a. Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) and MQA Policies on Credit Transfer;
   b. Guidelines to Good Practices: Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (GGP: APEL);
   c. Guidelines to Good Practices: Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning for Credit Award [GGP: APEL.C];
   d. Guidelines on Credit Transfer for Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC); and
   e. Other relevant quality assurance documents developed by MQA and the MOHE from time to time.

ii) 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 in this GGP.

2.0 APEL.Q POLICIES

The following APEL.Q policies shall be the guiding principles for HEPs that intend to implement APEL.Q and must be adhered to:

2.1 General Policies

i. The APEL.Q provision applies **to adult learners with relevant prior experiential learning, who have formally registered as learners** (Malaysians and Non-Malaysians[1]) of the HEP and fulfil the minimum years of working experience..

i) To apply for APEL.Q, applicants must fulfil the minimum years of working experience at the appropriate level in the relevant field as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Minimum years of experience required at the various Malaysian Qualifications Level (MQF) levels

MQF Level	Academic Sector	Minimum years of working experience in the relevant field
3	Certificate	5 years
4	Diploma	10 years
5	Advanced Diploma	12 years
6	Bachelor's Degree	15 years
7	Master's Degree	20 years
8	Doctoral Degree	25 years

Note: Candidates, who do not meet the minimum years of working experience stated above but with exceptional prior experiential learning, can be considered on a case by case basis by the highest academic body of the HEP (e.g. Senate)

[1] Non-Malaysians must be advised to seek information on the recognition of qualifications obtained via APEL.Q in their home countries.

ii) APEL.Q encompasses the assessment of prior experiential learning (**formal/ informal/ non-formal**) for the purpose of an award of academic qualifications.

iii) APEL.Q shall be implemented for all **disciplines** of study and all levels of qualifications (undergraduate and post-graduate) under the MQF except 100% research-based programmes.

iv) APEL.Q shall be awarded through assessment of prior experiential learning and successful completion of the capstone course(s)*.

* *The capstone course amalgamates the key learning outcomes of a particular programme and demonstrates that the learners have mastered the core discipline of their studies. Generally, capstone course is designed to be offered in the final semester/ year of studies. The capstone course may be a suite of higher-level courses, the final year project or the thesis/ dissertation in a mixed mode postgraduate programme.*

2.2 Award of Academic Qualifications

i) For postgraduate level study (Level 7 & 8, MQF), the award of academic qualifications is confined to coursework and mixed mode programmes only:
   a. For a coursework programme, the learner has to complete the capstone course(s) as stipulated in the programme.
   b. For a mixed-mode programme, the learner has to complete the research component (thesis or dissertation) which is deemed as the capstone course.

ii) APEL.Q can only be applied to programmes that have obtained **full accreditation** from MQA.

iii) The award of academic qualifications through APEL.Q will be deemed as a form of **credit transfer** where the **total credits** for the entire programme will be awarded.

iv) **Assessment** for APEL.Q should be carried out separately for each programme where each application is specific for the award of one academic qualification.

v) The assessment shall consist of three major instruments which are in the following sequence:
   a. Portfolio submission
   b. Field and Validation Visit
   c. Challenge Test

vi) Programmes that are under the purview of **professional bodies** may be considered for APEL.Q, subject to acceptance by the relevant professional bodies. HEPs shall be responsible for securing such approval from the professional bodies.

2.3 Implementation Process

i) Candidates must submit APEL.Q application through MQA which serves as the focal point for all APEL.Q applications.

ii) Candidates may apply for APEL.Q at any time during the year.

iii) Candidates can only apply for APEL.Q to only one HEP that has been approved by MQA to conduct APEL.Q at any point in time. The APEL.Q approval granted to HEP is programme-based.

iv) Candidates can reapply for APEL.Q at the same or different approved APEL.Q HEP after a lapse period to be determined by MQA.

v) Assessments should be outcome-based, focusing on the body of knowledge and competencies of the programme.

vi) The awarding HEP will issue the scroll together with the academic transcript. This transcript will state the APEL.Q route and depict the CGPA obtained by the learners who have been awarded the academic qualifications via APEL.Q. The transcript shall be supplemented with the Malaysian Qualification Statement (MQS).

vii) All HEPs can implement APEL.Q at their respective institutions **ONLY** after obtaining approval from MQA.

viii) The maximum duration shall be capped for the completion of the APEL.Q application (at the approved HEP) under the following MQF levels of qualifications:

a. Level 3 (Certificate): 3 years
b. Level 4 (Diploma): 6 years
c. Level 5 (Advanced Diploma): 3 years
d. Level 6 (Bachelor's Degree): 8 years
e. Level 7 (Master's Degree): 4 years
f. Level 8 (Doctoral Degree): 8 years

ix) It is the responsibility of HEPs to ensure that the implementation process of APEL.Q is in accordance with the quality processes and procedures outlined in this GGP. Adhering to this GGP will ensure that the APEL.Q process is effective, transparent, consistent, equitable and evidence-based.

3.0 APPLICATION, ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

3.1 APPLICATION PROCESS FOR LEARNERS

i) The applicants for APEL.Q can be local or international learners residing in Malaysia or abroad.

ii) Before a learner decides to apply for APEL.Q, the learner must know and understand each stage of the APEL.Q process. This briefing and counselling session by the HEP is vital for the learner to make an informed decision and have realistic expectations of the possible outcomes of the application. All the general enquiries pertaining to APEL.Q shall be directed to the APEL Centre of the HEP.

iii) If the learner decides to proceed with the APEL.Q application, the learner will need to register through the APEL.Q portal in MQA. In this portal, the learner will choose the HEP identified and the programme he/she has selected for APEL.Q. The HEP that the learner has chosen and consulted shall render appropriate support through an appointed Advisor who will guide the learner throughout the whole APEL.Q journey.

iv) All APEL.Q applications of the learners will be centrally monitored by MQA as stated above.

v) The application process at the identified HEP will begin with a **Guided Self-Assessment** exercise. The Advisor will guide the learner in undertaking this self-assessment exercise evaluation using the template in **Appendix 2A**. 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.

vi) If the Advisor believes that the learner's application is likely to succeed, the learner will proceed to complete the application form (**Appendix 2B**) and submit the relevant fees, before proceeding to the various assessment stage.

3.2 ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

i) The assessment of prior experiential learning for the purpose of APEL.Q will encompass the comparability of the experiential learning acquired by learners to the body of knowledge/ competencies embedded in the specific programme. The assessment should strictly be made in correspondence to the level, type of the programme and the associated PLOs. Mapping of the course learning outcomes (CLOs) of all courses in the programme to the PLOs must be presented.

ii) **ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES**: The APEL.Q assessment processes and procedures will uphold the following principles to ensure integrity and credibility of the qualification awarded:

a. there must be a transparent assessment system adopted to evaluate the prior experiential learning against the body of knowledge/ core competencies of the programme. Recognition of the prior experiential learning is based on demonstrable learning achievement and not on the assumption of learning due to the undertaking of a particular job and/ or position secured for a set duration of time.

b. all forms of assessment adopted to evaluate the prior experiential learning must be of equal rigour as the learners in the conventional taught programmes. Equal rigour of assessment also means that the same process of internal moderation and external examiner scrutiny, which applies to the assessment of taught courses in the traditional pathway, must also be applied to the assessment of prior experiential learning under APEL.Q.

c. subject to age parameters, the qualification award is open to all applicants.

iii) **ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS:** Three main assessment instruments will be utilised in the following sequence to assess the prior experiential learning of the learners for the award of an academic qualification:

a. Portfolio
b. Field and Validation Visit (FVV)
c. Challenge Test

Learners have to pass each stage of the assessment in the sequential order stated above before proceeding to the next stage.

iv) **CAPSTONE COURSE(S)**: Upon the successful completion of all the three assessments stated above, the learners have to complete the **capstone course(s)** as stipulated in the programme.

a. The capstone course amalgamates the key learning outcomes of the programmes and demonstrates that the learners have mastered the core discipline of their studies. Generally, a capstone course is designed to be offered usually in the final semester/ year of studies. A comprehensive oral examination will be built into the evaluation of the capstone course(s). This oral examination aims to:

1. to test the learner's general and overall comprehension of the core discipline/ field of study; and

2. to establish that the overall prior experiential learning of the learner is of a sufficiently high standard to merit the award of academic qualification.

b. The overall procedure of APEL.Q assessment is depicted in **Appendix 3.**

v) **ASSESSMENT WEIGHTAGES:** The APEL.Q assessment instruments carry different weights that contribute to the overall assessment. The weightage of each assessment instrument is stated in the following table:

No.	Assessment instruments	Weightage (%)
1.	Portfolio	20
2.	Field and Validation Visit (FVV)	20
3.	Challenge Test	30
4.	Capstone course(s) (inclusive of comprehensive oral examination)	30

3.2.1 Portfolio

i) A portfolio is a formal document that contains a compilation of evidence documenting the prior experiential learning of a learner acquired over a period of time. This learning may be in the form of formal, informal or non-formal learning. The Portfolio is prepared by the learner to demonstrate that the learning acquired is relevant and specific to the body of knowledge/ competencies of the programme. Documentary evidence must be provided for all the formal, non-formal and informal learning experience stated in the Portfolio. The evidence must be organised and presented based on the identified programme learning outcomes (PLOs).

ii) In submitting the Portfolio for APEL.Q application, the learner must ensure that:
   a. the application form has been filled up correctly, i.e. the information and data provided are accurate, truthful and complete; and
   b. the documentary evidence has been submitted on time.

iii) The learners will provide the evidence based on a standard portfolio template. This template will contain information related to the programme applied for and mapping of individual learning (in the form of learning

statements and the origin of learning supported by documentary evidence) to the body of knowledge/ competencies of the programme. A sample of the portfolio submission form is provided in **Appendix 3A**.

iv) To evaluate the portfolio submitted by the learner, the HEPs must appoint assessors with the appropriate qualifications and experience with well-defined roles and responsibilities as indicated in **Appendix 3B.** The appointment process of the assessor is crucial to ensure the integrity and credibility of the portfolio assessment.

v) During the evaluation process, assessors must ensure that the contents and evidence of the portfolio submitted by the learner reflect the achievement of the body of knowledge/ competencies of the programme. Assessors may use one or several types of the mode of assessments outlined in **Appendix 3C** to verify the evidence and claims put forward by the learner. This ensures that the competency level of the learner being assessed are authentic and corresponds to the body of knowledge/ competencies of the programme.

vi) In addition, assessors must also develop an assessment rubric to ensure that a valid, credible and fair assessment is carried out. HEPs must appoint moderators to moderate the assessment rubric. The assessment rubric constructed and moderated will facilitate the determination of the level of achievement of the body of knowledge/ competencies of the programme based on the prior experiential learning of the learner. An example of an assessment rubric for a portfolio is illustrated in **Appendix 3D**.

vii) In determining whether the evidence presented in the Portfolio is satisfactory and appropriate, the following widely accepted assessment criteria can be adopted:

a. **Authenticity**: The evidence clearly reflects the learner's effort, experience and learning for which the qualification award is being claimed.

b. **Acceptability:** To ensure that there is a good **alignment/ matching** between PLOs and the evidence presented, the assessment instrument has to be **reliable** and **valid**.

c. **Sufficiency:** There are sufficient breadth and depth of evidence, including evidence of reflection which is able to demonstrate the achievement of PLOs or the competences claimed.

d. **Currency:** The learning is sufficiently recent to reflect the currency of competencies/ knowledge/ skills as required by the discipline of the qualification award.

e. **Specificity:** The prior experiential learning is specific to the PLOs where the award of academic qualification is sought.

3.2.2 Field and Validation Visit

i) The Field and Validation Visit (FVV) aims to assess and validate that the learner has the appropriate knowledge and competencies for the award of the academic qualification. This is usually conducted in the workplace of the learner or any environment/ location that is conducive and which permits appropriate and accurate assessment. The assessment can be conducted at the workplace, in a laboratory or under a simulation situation. The FVV assessment allows the learner to demonstrate that his/ her learning in a particular job corresponds to the PLOs. The number of visits under FVV will vary depending on the complexity of the field/ discipline and the level of study.

ii) HEP should have an FVV assessment policy in place so that the learners are aware of the related terms and conditions such as the appropriateness of the location, procedures and the risks involved.

3.2.2.1 Assessment in FVV

i) As a general practice, all programmes will address the 11 domains in the five clusters of learning outcomes (**Appendix 4**) appropriately as described under the MQF. The 11 domains describe the general and specific content of knowledge and skills in a related field, the level of cognitive skills, and where relevant, the specialised technical skills. The other generic skills are capabilities that all learners should develop in the course of study, whether by specialised courses or integrated in the teaching and learning strategies. In the FVV, certain domains of the learning outcomes may not be assessed under this assessment instrument. Hence, FVV may only assess specific PLOs.

ii) FVV will be guided by the following assessment principles:

a. Validity

Validity refers to the ability of the assessment to measure what it is supposed to measure. This is of critical importance as FVV is to ascertain the competencies of the learner. The assessment has to include all the essential competencies of the profession at the appropriate level of the PLO(s). Therefore, the assessment methods and instruments must be moderated and appropriate to measure the levels of the learning outcomes. More than one tasks and sources of evidence are needed as a basis of judgment of the competencies of the learner.

The competencies have to encompass all the 11 learning domains which are categorised in the five clusters of learning outcomes. The standard of the competencies measured or evaluated should be equivalent to that expected of students in the traditional learning pathway.

b. Reliability

Reliability refers to the degree of consistency and accuracy of the assessment outcomes. It reflects the extent to which the assessment will

provide similar outcomes for learners with equal competence at different times or places, regardless of the assessors conducting the assessment.

To increase the reliability, the assessment of the competencies in the 11 domains are obtained from a number of sources which include checking of the documents, observations and interviews with various categories of people in the workplace of the learners and are evaluated by at least two assessors.

3.2.2.2 On-site Assessment

i) The competencies of the learners can be assessed in any location, provided it allows the learners to demonstrate their competencies without any undue disturbance to or interference from the work environment. The assessment site can be suggested by the learner but it has to be approved by the HEP based on the risk identification and management procedures.

ii) If the learner is an international student residing abroad, the HEP can appoint external FVV assessor from their network of collaborative partners in the home-country of the learner. This external FVV assessor will be appointed based on the criteria stipulated and he/ she will undergo the appropriate training on the implementation and assessment embedded in APEL.Q. The HEP will demonstrate effective oversight of the APEL.Q assessment so that comparable quality is upheld for all learners.

3.2.2.3 Procedure for FVV Assessment

In assessing the suitability of the site for the FVV, the possible risks to the learners, assessors and assessment must be carefully examined. The flowchart below indicates the FVV assessment procedure.

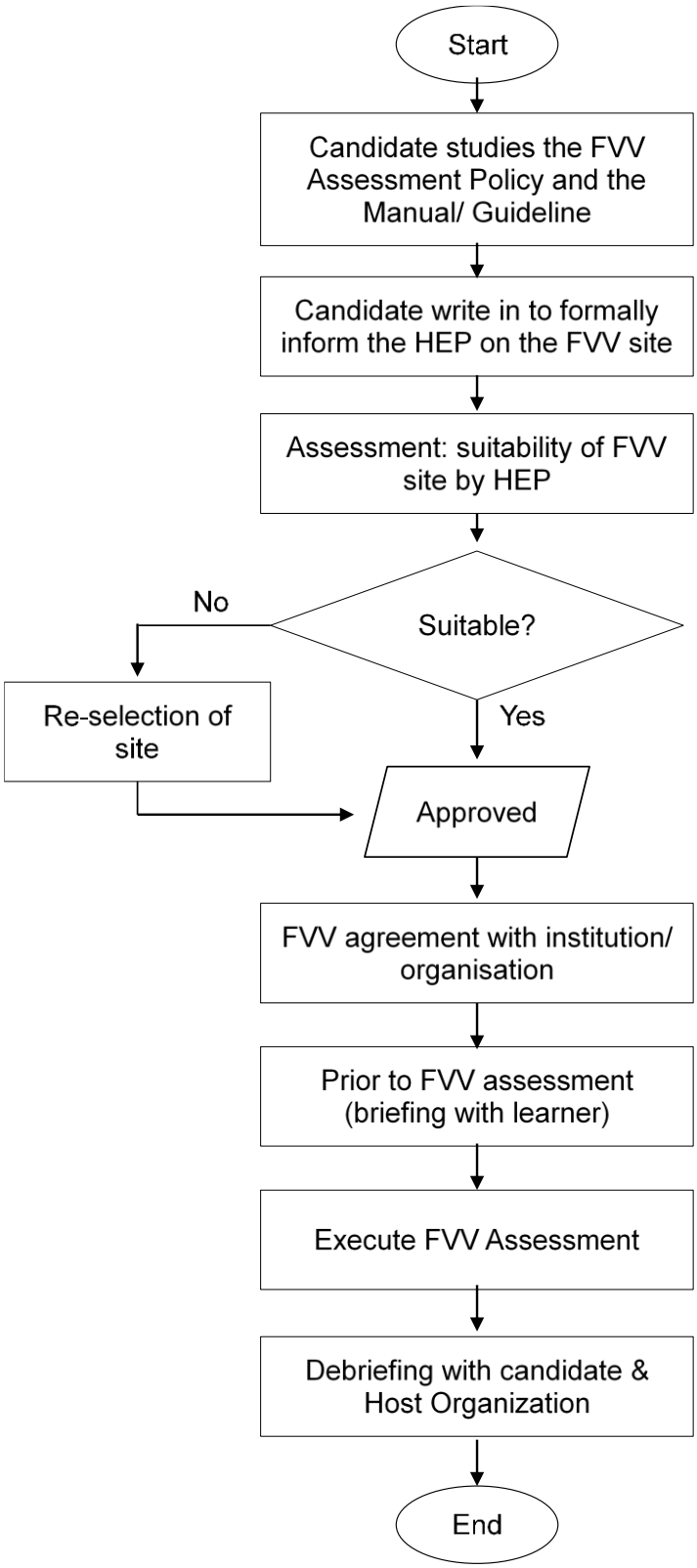


FIGURE 1: FVV ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

3.2.2.4 Policy on FVV and Risk Management

The policy on field and validation visit can include elements such as:

i. The purpose of the field and validation visit

The purpose of FVV is to assess and validate the knowledge and competencies of learners in their field of study. For the assessment to be valid and reliable, the assessment has to be conducted in an environment that is appropriate to their field of study, conducive and safe to provide opportunities to optimise their performance and to minimise risk.

ii. Risk identification and management

All FVVs involve risks to health and physical safety although they vary according to the field of study and context. The risk can be low, moderate or high. There is a need to identify, assess and manage the risk to minimise risk that affects the well-being of the learners and assessors as well as the safety of the institution or organisation in which the assessment is carried out. Therefore, a simple procedure to identify and manage the risk is as shown in **Appendix 6.**

iii. Persons responsible for assessment of the appropriateness and safety of the venue for assessment.

iv. Personal assurance during field & validation visit during travel and during the conduct of the assessment for:

a) Learners
b) assessors.

v. Professional indemnity insurance (*where applicable*).

vi. Legislative requirements such as occupational safety and health, criminal record screening (especially for those working with young children) etc.

vii. Agreement with the institution or organisation where the FVV will be conducted, especially in terms of the activities and insurance provisions. This should also include checking on the compliance of the institution or organisation with rules and regulations (such as registration for operation in the premise, occupational hazards etc.) especially of venues nominated by the learners.

3.2.3 Challenge Test

i) A Challenge Test is a proctored standardised test to assess if the learner has achieved the body of knowledge/ competencies of the programme. A Challenge Test can be in the form of a written test, oral examination, product and/ or performance assessment depending on the nature and discipline of the programme. For example, the Challenge Tests for disciplines such as performing arts, culinary and music, may utilise presentation or even skills demonstration as the assessment instrument. **Appendix 3C** provides a list of the various types of assessment that can be used by HEPs to measure prior experiential learning. HEPs are encouraged to adopt a combination of several types of assessment to ensure an appropriate measure of the body of knowledge/ competencies of the programme.

ii) The Challenge Test should evaluate the related PLOs where the CLOs of all core courses in the programme reside.

iii) 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 PLOs which encompasses the body of knowledge/ competencies of the programme. To ensure validity, the Challenge Test items, answer schemes/ rubric and TST must be moderated by the moderator appointed by the HEP.

iv) Learner must achieve a minimum 50% pass for each PLOs examined in the Challenge Test for him/ her to be deemed as achieving the pass status of

the Challenge Test. This is to ensure that a fair and comprehensive assessment is carried out for each of the PLOs.

3.2.4 Panel of Experts

i) The panel of experts and the distribution of their roles as Advisors, Assessors or Moderators is important in the APEL.Q assessment process. This panel comprise specialists in the respective field of studies that the learners will apply for the APEL.Q award. This panel of experts should be up-to-date with developments in their field of work to understand which competencies can be gained, at which job or in what situation, and to assess, if possible, in situations and ways described by learners.

ii) The experts must keep abreast of APEL.Q provisions and the developments in the promotion of life-long learning. To fulfil their responsibilities, it is vital that this panel of experts must understand the content-related principles and requirements for APEL.Q assessment and be well-versed in the various related documents used in the APEL.Q procedures. They must also complete the relevant training courses on APEL.Q policies, procedures and assessment before assuming their roles as Advisors, Assessors or Moderators.

iii) Generally, the panel of experts must have the professional and methodical competence as indicated below:

a. Professional competence
   - be able to identify whether the learner has acquired the competencies to the appropriate extent.

b. Methodical competence
   - to choose the most appropriate assessment methods for assessing different competencies.
   - to select and apply the valid assessment methods

- to provide understandable and constructive feedback in oral and written form.

iv) The basic criteria of appointment, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the experts include the following:

a. Criteria of appointment

- Must be an approved and trained Assessors by the relevant regulatory body or the institution;
- Possess vast experience in the relevant field;
- Possess sufficient knowledge of the content and structure of the programme;
- Possess an academic qualification at the level higher than the assessed programme or if at the equivalent level, must have a substantial number of years of relevant work experience, i.e. at least 5 years in related fields; and
- Have no conflict of interest with the HEP or the organisation/ company where the FVV will be conducted.

b. Roles and responsibilities

- Able to assess the skills and knowledge gained through prior experiential learning and/ or professional experience which corresponds to the PLOs for the award of academic qualifications;
- Possess the knowledge and be able to use different assessment means, methods and tools;
- Possess good interpersonal skills, able to cooperate with the assessment panel to reach a common assessment decision;
- Able to make decisions in the context of the entire programme;
- With respect to the FVV:
  - Able to assess that the environment and the assessment instruments are valid and reliable to assess any evidence being presented; and

- Communicate with learners and FVV coordinator in the workplace of the learner.
- Provide feedback, including recommending training and support for the learners after the assessment has been conducted.

v) In compliance with the principle of voluntariness of APEL, the learner is the initiator of the whole APEL.Q process.

vi) The appointed **Advisor** will perform the following roles and responsibilities:
   a. supervise and instruct learners on how to self-assess and compare or map their prior experiential learning to the PLOs.
   b. explain the applicable requirements and rules, to answer questions from learners and provide them with greater clarity when needed.
   c. depending on the assessment methods, the Advisor may review the applications submitted, for example the Portfolio compiled before it is submitted for evaluation. In a nutshell, the appointed Advisor will render the support to the learners throughout the entire duration of the APEL.Q journey. **Appendix 5** outlines the general duties of an Advisor.

vii) To avoid any conflict of interest, the Advisor appointed to a learner should not serve as the Assessor for any of the APEL.Q assessment instrument designed for the said learner.

viii) According to the established good practice, an application should be assessed by more than one **Assessors**. Hence, there must be at least two Assessors (one of whom must be an external Assessor appointed from another institution) appointed for the various APEL.Q assessment instruments, i.e. Portfolio, FVV and the Challenge Test. This is to ensure validity and reliability of the assessment carried out.

ix) Generally, the main duties of an Assessor are:

a. to perform an objective assessment, that is, based on the relevant assessment instruments, learning outcomes and the respective assessment criteria; and
b. to ensure and respect the provision of constructive feedback that is understandable to the learners.

x) Apart from professional and methodical competence, the attitudes and value judgments of the assessors may also influence the validity and reliability of the assessment. They are vital to ensure independent and impartial assessments are carried out. The **independence and impartiality of Assessors** would encompass one or all of the following:

a. the Assessor has no direct conflict of interest with respect to the learners, e.g. the Assessor is the employer of the learner, or the assessor is a direct competitor of the learner who may obstruct the accessibility to recognise the prior experiential learning of the learner;
b. if the Assessor has background information on the competencies/ skills of the learner but this information is not provided in the documentation submitted by the learner, then the Assessor will need to disregard such prior information in making the decision during the APEL.Q assessment; and/ or
c. the Assessor is not influenced by his/her personal attitude towards the learner or his/ her activities, e.g. if the learner is a representative of a different school of thoughts.

xi) Besides Advisors and Assessors, **Moderators** with appropriate competencies have to be appointed to ensure the reliability of the assessment instruments. The **suggested ratio of assessor to moderator** is 2:1 for programmes. The assessor or moderator can be an internal staff of the institution or appointed external experts. The roles of the Moderator must be clearly outlined too. This includes moderating all the assessment materials/ instruments developed, as well as the evaluated learner's assessments. This is to ensure that the assessment materials/ instruments are in line with the level of study and intended learning outcomes, as well

as to verify that the assessments have been evaluated fairly and consistently.

xii) Taking responsibility for self-improvement and periodic self-analysis should be a natural part of the work process of APEL.Q Advisors, Assessors and Moderators. This activity provides an opportunity for them to reflect on their roles and responsibilities. This self-assessment allows for clear and deliberated formulation of the problems that have occurred and/ or best practices that they have noticed. This information is crucial for the continuous improvement of the quality of APEL.Q processes and procedures.

3.2.4.1 Assessor's Competency Profile

The following competency profile clearly outlines the roles and capabilities of an Assessor.

No.	Competency	Descriptions
1.	Understands the principles, processes and procedures of APEL.Q, as well as being familiar with the relevant regulations	a) Able to list the main principles of APEL.Q b) Able to explain the importance of those principles c) Well-versed in the various main components of the APEL.Q process d) Able to describe the related APEL.Q regulations
2.	Is familiar with the relevant MQA programme/ professional standards and outcome-based education which focuses on learning outcomes at the course/ programme level	a) Able to describe the requirements of a study programme or a professional standard b) Understands the components of the programme based on MQA programme standards
3.	Knows and follows the principles of APEL.Q assessment	a) Is independent and impartial in the assessment work undertaken

No.	Competency	Descriptions
		b) Applies comprehensive assessment, including consideration of general competences c) Uses relevant instrument of assessment d) Provides constructive feedback to the learners e) In the assessment, is able to relate the programme learning outcomes/ body of knowledge/ competencies to the prior experiential learning of the learners through the evidence provided
4.	Is knowledgeable in the field assessed	Complies with the qualification requirements of the competent authority
5.	Cooperates and collaborates with different stakeholders of the APEL.Q process	a) Communicates with learners, Advisors and where necessary, with external parties, e.g. the employers of the learners during the FVV b) Cooperates with other Assessor(s) to reach a common assessment decision
6.	Expresses view and thoughts clearly and produce accurate documentation	a) Presents information in a way that is comprehensive to all parties b) Fills in documentation related to assessment according to the regulations of the competent authority
7.	Identifies and mitigates risks that might affect the quality of assessment	a) Able to identify the risks to the quality of the assessment b) Able to identify the risk in the assessment process c) Able to mitigate the risk wherever feasible.

3.2.5 Resit

i) The learner will be given three attempts to redeem the fail status in any of the assessment mode (i.e. Portfolio**, FVV, Challenge Test or the capstone course). The HEP will recommend enhancement courses for the learners as part of the learning support services to be undertaken at any stage of the assessment mode where the learner fails and has to resit. The enhancement courses are provided to the learners based on the specific PLO that does not achieve at least 50% in the assessment marks to be awarded a pass status.

ii) The best grade achieved in the resit process will be used in the computation of the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). Learners application will be terminated should he/ she exceed the three attempts.

*** If the learner fails the Portfolio assessment, he/ she needs to reapply for APEL.Q after a cooling period of at least three months. This will allow the learner to gather additional prior experiential learning evidences to be assessed.*

3.2.6 Criteria for Award

i) The academic qualifications that is awarded to candidates through APEL.Q must be based on **demonstrated and evidence-based learning** through portfolio, FVV, challenge test and capstone assessments. 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 PLOs.

ii) For the award of academic qualifications, candidates must:

a. pass every assessment instrument: Portfolio, FVV, Challenge Test and the capstone course by achieving at least 50% score on each PLO tested. Failure to achieve the 50% score in any of the PLOs examined

under the various assessment instruments, the learner will be awarded a fail status for the said assessment instrument.

b. achieve a minimum CGPA of 2.0 out of 4.0 for an undergraduate programme (Certificate, Diploma, Advanced Diploma and Bachelor's Degree), 3.0 out of 4.0 for a postgraduate programme (Master and Doctoral Degree by Coursework) and pass the research component (Master and Doctoral Degree by Mixed Mode).

4.0 APPROVAL TO IMPLEMENT APEL.Q: FOR HEPs

4.1 Application Process

i) In ensuring that an acceptable level of quality assurance is complied with and the approval to conduct APEL.Q is programme-based, the following requirements must be observed by the HEPs:

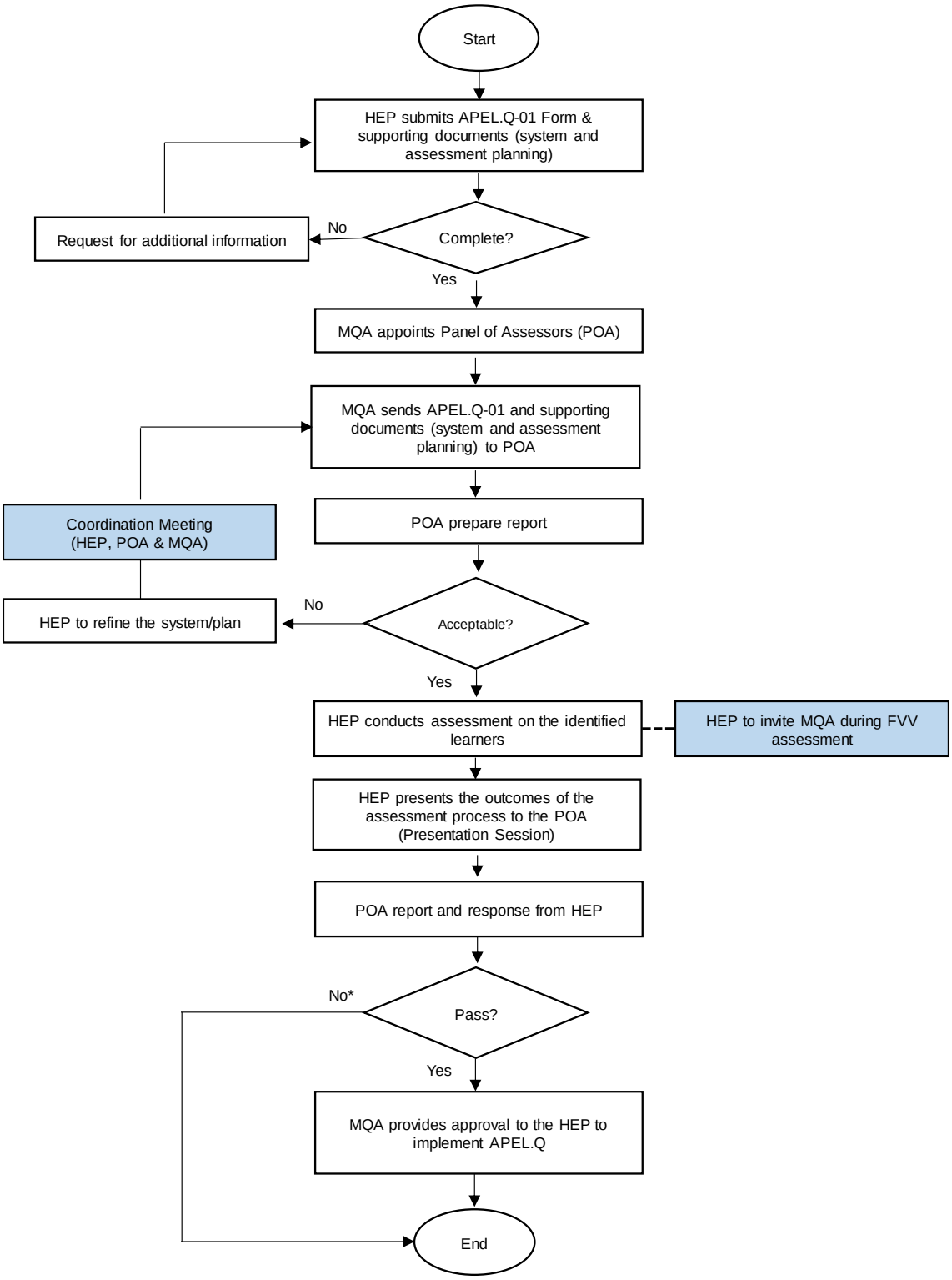
   a. APEL.Q application will only be considered for **fully accredited** programmes;
   b. The HEPs must be an approved institution to conduct APEL.C; and
   c. The HEPs have to undergo an APEL.Q workshop organised by MQA.

ii) The application process begins with the HEP submitting a formal application to MQA by completing the APEL.Q-01 Form (**Appendix 7**), together with an application fee* determined by MQA. In the APEL.Q-01 Form, the HEP will provide general information of the institution; its commitment in implementing APEL.Q, the processes of managing APEL.Q and a pilot study plan.

iii) The HEP is required to present one pilot case study outlining the processes, procedures and instruments adopted to assess the prior experiential learning of the learner for an award of academic qualifications. At the stage of APEL.Q-01 submission, the HEP only needs to identify a readily available APEL.Q learner to undertake this whole exercise.

iv) MQA then sends the complete application to a panel of assessors (POA) for evaluation. It is only upon approval by MQA based on the evaluation report by the POA that the HEP will then begin to initiate the pilot study plan. Upon completion of all the related assessments for the learner, HEP will then present to MQA the overall processes and outcome of the APEL.Q assessment. This presentation session is crucial to assess the actual implementation and assessment of APEL.Q by the HEP. It is an integral part of the APEL.Q approval process. **Figure 2** summarises the details of the application process for HEPs to implement APEL.Q.

* Refer MQA for information on the application fee.



* For unsuccessful APEL.Q application by the HEP, HEP can submit an appeal to MQA

FIGURE 2: THE APEL.Q APPLICATION PROCESS: FOR HEPS

4.2 Application Criteria

4.2.1 Establishment of APEL.Q Centre/ Unit

i) The HEP must have a dedicated centre or unit headed by an individual knowledgeable in the development and implementation of APEL.Q in Malaysia;

ii) The HEP must have APEL.Q policy in place as the guiding principles for the implementation of APEL.Q; and

iii) The APEL.Q Centre or Unit must have proper organisational structure with clear job descriptions for each of the appointed staff.

4.2.2 Resources

i) The HEP must have the right and adequate human resources in managing APEL.Q;

ii) The HEP must have appropriate information technology infostructure and applications to manage APEL.Q;

iii) As part of the capacity building, the HEP must provide continuous training to all staff involved in APEL.Q. It is reiterated that one of the requirements for the appointment of Advisor, Assessor and Moderator is that they have to undergo the APEL.Q training which will expose them to the APEL.Q processes and procedures of the HEP; and

iv) The HEP must develop a handbook for learners and the staff on the award of academic qualifications through APEL.Q and provide the appropriate support services. Information contained in the handbook must be consistent with the APEL.Q policy of the HEP and does not in any way contradict the provisions of the GGP: APEL.Q.

4.2.3 Implementation Processes

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

5.0 ROLES OF MQA AND HEPs

The following section outlines the roles of MQA and HEPs in the system of APEL.Q.

5.1 Roles of MQA

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

a. to approve or reject any application from HEPs to implement APEL.Q;
b. to retract the approval given to the HEP in the event of any malpractice found;
c. to monitor and audit the APEL.Q processes and procedures of the HEPs from time to time; and
d. to make amendments to this GGP as and when deemed necessary and it is the responsibility of the HEP to be well informed and stay up-to-date with the changes.

5.2 Roles of HEPs

HEPs that intend to implement APEL.Q must submit their applications and obtain a written approval by MQA prior to its implementation. The approved HEPs must adhere to this GGP, including the quality assurance aspects in managing APEL.Q. It is the responsibility of the HEP to familiarise itself with this GGP and all the related quality assurance documents and policies set by the MQA and other relevant agencies. HEPs must consult MQA for any provision that may not be covered in this GGP.

6.0 QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality assurance is an integral part of the APEL.Q process. HEPs that have been approved to implement APEL.Q are advised to employ the same standards and rigour through the assessment and process of awarding qualifications. This is aimed at safeguarding the credibility and integrity of the entire APEL.Q process.

6.1 Monitoring Process and Periodic Review of the APEL.Q Processes and Procedures

i) The processes and procedures of monitoring and reviewing the operations of APEL.Q should be clearly defined and integrated within the existing quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms of the HEP. HEPs must appoint **external assessor** for the purpose of reviewing its APEL.Q processes and procedures and prepare the terms of reference accordingly.

ii) Mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing the APEL.Q processes and procedures may take into account the following:
   a. the number of learners undertaking APEL.Q;
   b. the success rate of APEL.Q applications;
   c. an evaluation of the learner experience, including the time taken by learners to undertake and complete the APEL.Q process;
   d. an evaluation of the staff's experience, including the time spent by staff to support and manage the APEL.Q process;
   e. tracking and monitoring of the progression of learners who are pursuing their programme of studies through APEL.Q. This is necessary so that information is built on the suitability of particular qualifications or patterns of experience for the qualification award;
   f. an evaluation of the effectiveness of any collaborative arrangements with other HEPs/ professional bodies; and
   g. reports from external assessors or verifiers, where appropriate.

6.2 Integration of APEL.Q Provision within the HEP's Quality Assurance Framework and Systems

APEL.Q processes need to be fully integrated within the quality assurance systems of the HEPs to ensure transparency, consistency, reliability and accountability. The APEL.Q process and procedures of the HEP should be made available for scrutiny by appropriate external quality assurance body or agencies.

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APPENDIX 1: LIST OF PANEL MEMBERS

NO.	PANEL MEMBERS	ORGANISATION
1.	Assoc. Prof. Dr Andy Liew Teik Kooi (Chairman)	HELP University
2.	Prof. Datuk Dr Rokiah Hj. Omar	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)
3.	Prof. Dr Widad Othman	Open University Malaysia (OUM)
4.	Assoc. Prof. Dr Ahmad Haji Mohamad	Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) (Deceased: 21 December 2019)
5.	Datuk Dr Chiam Heng Keng	Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Council
6.	Dr Chong Siong Choy	Finance Accreditation Agency (FAA)
7.	Dr Hamidah Mohd Ismail	Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM)
8.	Dr Hazman Shah Abdullah	Quality Assurance Expert
9.	Mr. Samsuri bin Arif	Malaysian Occupational Skills Qualification (MOSQ) Division, Department of Skills Development (JPK)

Further information and enquiry on APEL.Q can be directed to MQA through Mr. Kamarul Bakri Abd Aziz at kbakri@mqa.gov.my.

APPENDIX 2A: APEL.Q SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM FOR LEARNERS

Instruction for completing the APEL.Q self-assessment form

1. *Provide your personal particulars in Part A.*
2. *For Part B substantiate with all the relevant documentary evidence.*
3. *For Part C submit a brief account of your prior experiential learning which supports the learning outcomes of the programme you intend to apply for APEL.Q*

PART A: PERSONAL PARTICULARS

Name	
Identity Card No.	
Name of Programme	
Total Credits of the Programme	

PART B: SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) *On completion of this programme, the learner should be able to…*	I have acquired this through my former studies or working career and can provide paper evidence/ documents/ certificates *(label the evidence submitted appropriately)*	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 acquired this
1. PLO1			
2. PLO2			
3. PLO3			
4. PLO4			
5. PLO5			

Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) *On completion of this programme, the learner should be able to…*	I have acquired this through my former studies or working career and can provide paper evidence/ documents/ certificates *(label the evidence submitted appropriately)*	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 acquired this
6. PLO6			
7. PLO7			
8. PLO8			
9. PLO9			
10. PLO10			
11. PLO11			

PART C: REPORT SUBMISSION

Write and submit **a minimum of 1000-word report** based on your prior experiential learning which supports the programme learning outcomes *(you may attach a separate sheet for this report).*

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 :	
For office use only:	
Received by: Date :	Recommendation by the Advisor:

APPENDIX 2B: APEL.Q APPLICATION FORM

Name of applicant	
Identification card/ Passport no.	
Name of programme	
Programme level (MQF Level) *e.g. Certificate, Diploma, Bachelor, Master of Doctorate*	
Total credits of the programme	
Confirmation of APEL.Q Advisor	**I hereby confirm that the above applicant has undertaken the Self-Assessment exercise and deemed eligible to apply for APEL.Q assessment.** (Signature) Name of Advisor: Date:

I hereby:

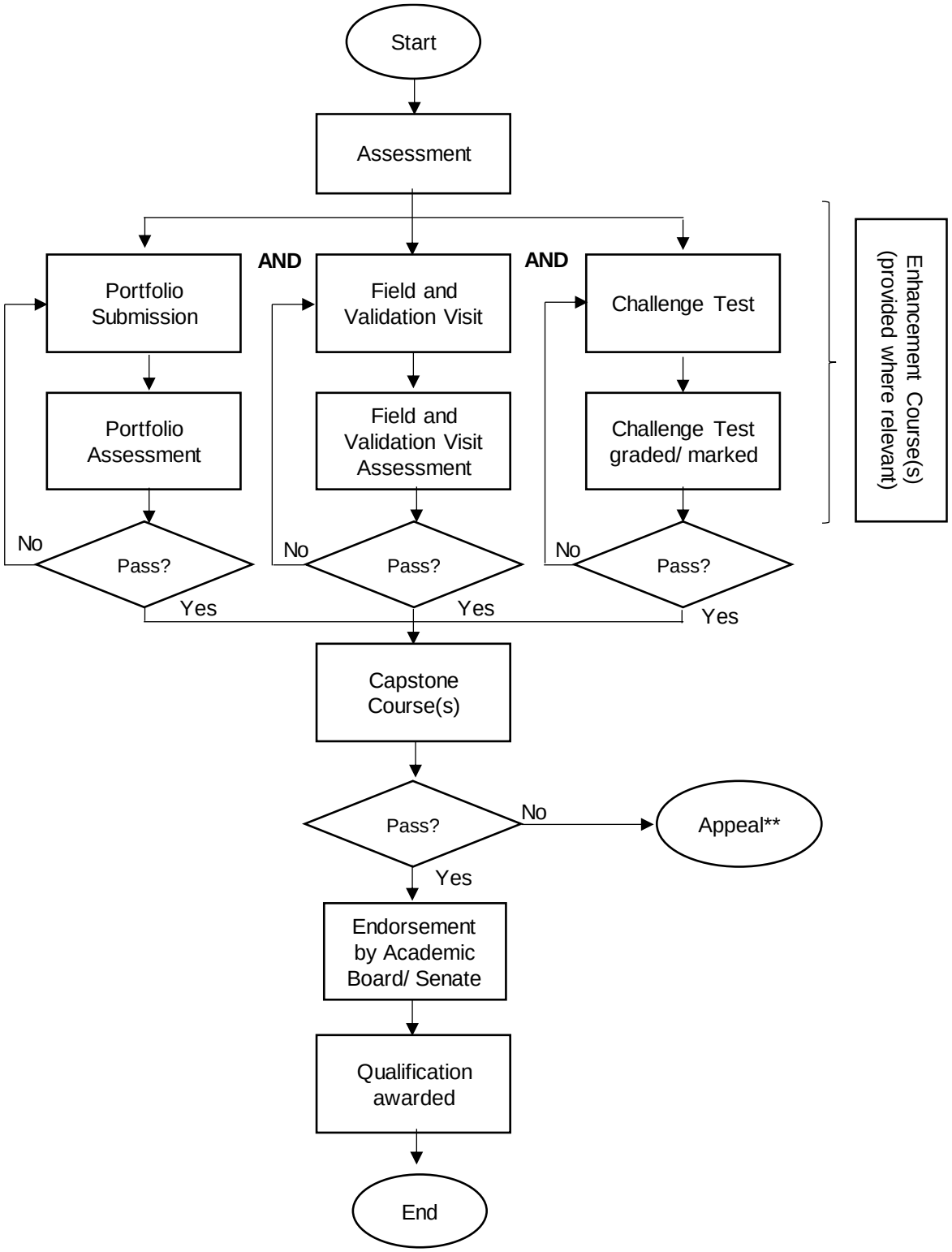
a. declare that I have read, understood and accepted all the terms and conditions stipulated under the provision of APEL.Q of my institution* and
b. declare that all the information/ documents provided to support this application are authentic, true and accurate.

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

Signature	:	
Name	:	
Date	:	

**Note: The HEP should replace the terms with the approved name of its institution, i.e. XXX University or YYY College.*

APPENDIX 3: APEL.Q ASSESSMENT FLOWCHART



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

Assessment must be taken in the following **sequence** and the learner has to pass each stage before he/ she is allowed to progress to the next stage of assessment:

1. Portfolio
2. Field and Validation Visit
3. Challenge Test
4. Capstone course(s)

APPENDIX 3A: PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION FORM FOR APEL.Q

PART 1: PERSONAL PARTICULARS

Full name				
Identify card (IC)/ Passport number				
Intended programme of study				
MQF Level		Certificate (L3)		Diploma (L4)
		Advanced Diploma (L5)		Bachelor's Degree (L6)
		Master's Degree (L7)		Doctoral Degree (L8)
Total graduating credits of the programme				

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 A (STPM certificate)
1.					
2.					
3.					

(B) INFORMAL LEARNING

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.					

Other learning activities (eg. hobby etc)

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) NON-FORMAL LEARNING

Training/seminar/workshop/conferences etc

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
BM				✔				✔				✔
2.												
3.												
4.												

PART 3: COMPETENCY WORKSHEET FOR PROGRAMME-BASED LEARNING PORTFOLIOS

Programme Learning Outcomes (PLO)	Body of Knowledge (BOK)/ Core Competencies of the Programme	Learning Statements	Origin of Learning	Supporting Documentations
This (PLO & BOK) will be provided by the HEP		***Advisory note:*** *Gather as much information as possible about the curriculum structure of the programme.* *Examine the programme learning outcomes (PLOs) (knowledge, skills or competencies that you should achieve upon completion of the programme). The PLOs of the various programmes of study are usually available at the HEP website.*		
		Learning statements form the core of the portfolio. *The language you use and details you provide here will show the Assessors what you have acquired or gained from your formal/informal/non-formal learning which are relevant to the programme.*	*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.*

PART 4: REFEREES *(Family members and relatives cannot serve as referees)*

Name	
Position	
Organisation	
Phone number	
Email address	

Name	
Position	
Organisation	
Phone number	
Email address	

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 : _____

Name :

Date :

**Note: The HEP should be replaced with the approved name of the institution accordingly i.e. XXX University or YYY College.*

APPENDIX A

LIST OF EVIDENCE

Evidence that can be provided by the candidate:

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		

APPENDIX 3B: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF APEL.Q ASSESSORS

The following outlines the criteria of appointing the Assessors, their responsibilities and the general strategies that can be adopted throughout the assessment process:

Criteria of appointment:

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

a) Is knowledgeable about adult learning principles and APEL.Q;
b) Has sufficient knowledge in the programme that is being assessed;
c) Demonstrates an open mind towards alternatives to traditional, behaviour-based assessment; and
d) Ensures that there is no personal interest in the assessment outcome and/ or any conflict of interest.

Roles and responsibilities:

i) Prior to an assessment
    a) Base the assessment and learning recognition 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 experience and expertise of the HEP or colleagues 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 the application of knowledge and critical thinking;
    g) Review previously administered assessment for ideas;
    h) Design tools that assess the 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.

ii) Working with learners

a) Employ adult learning concepts;
b) State clearly the purpose of assessment, whether it is for admission, academic credit, placement or award of academic qualifications, ;
c) Give clear, consistent, written guidelines for providing evidence to learners;
d) Liaise with APEL.Q 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.

iii) 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 3C: VARIOUS FORMS OF CHALLENGE TEST/ VALIDATION INSTRUMENTS

Types of Challenge Test /Validation Instruments	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 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.	Difficult to score. Tends to emphasise

Types of Challenge Test /Validation Instruments	Description	Advantages	Constraints
		Relatively easy to construct. Guessing is minimised. Allows wide sampling of content. Tests the ability of learners to organise, compose and write rather than merely recognise or recall.	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. Eliminates guessing.	Testing is limited to a narrow sampling or content. May encourage 'padding'. 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	Able to measure complex, cognitive learning.	Time-consuming and difficult to construct.

Types of Challenge Test /Validation Instruments	Description	Advantages	Constraints
	presented in a real-life context.	Learners use their own words. Relate learning to real world situations. May test several competencies at once.	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 the responses of learners.	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 assessors	Moderate subjectivity.	Costly to construct. Group process must be planned.

Types of Challenge Test /Validation Instruments	Description	Advantages	Constraints
III. PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS			
Simulation (e. 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 the demonstration.	Depends on the confidence of learners.
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 the skills being assessed.
Observation	Observer assesses the behaviour of learners in a natural setting. Assessment criteria are set in advance.	Opportunity to observe the real practice context. Often more comfortable for	Complicated to set up. Can be time consuming and costly.

Types of Challenge Test /Validation Instruments	Description	Advantages	Constraints
		learners rather than simulation. Allow for collaboration with other peers/ employees.	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-centred. 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.
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.

Types of Challenge Test /Validation Instruments	Description	Advantages	Constraints
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 as the only assessment method. May favour learners with strong writing skills.
Review of external training programmes	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 3D: SAMPLE OF ASSESSMENT RUBRIC (PORTFOLIO)

Name of programme: Bachelor of Software Engineering (Hons)						
Sample of Programme Learning Outcome (PLO)	**Likert Scale**					
	0 None	**1 Poor**	**2 Fair**	**3 Average**	**4 Good**	**5 Excellent**
PLO1: Technically competent in computing with recognised expertise in software engineering	No technical competencies are shown	Demonstrates awareness of some available technology in computing	Demonstrates awareness of all available technology for computing	Demonstrates awareness of the use of available technology in computing and software engineering	Demonstrates the ability to show examples of technology usage in computing particularly in software engineering	Very technically competent and demonstrates the ability to compare and propose the best set of technology to be used in computing and software engineering
PLO1: (Score)				√		
PLO2:						
PLO2: (Score)				√		
PLOXX:						
PLOXX: (Score)				√		

APPENDIX 4: COMPETENCIES IN 11 DOMAINS OF THE FIVE CLUSTERS OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

No.	Domains in the five cluster of learning outcomes	Competencies
1.	Knowledge and Understanding	• Knowledge of the concepts, principles and theories of the profession • Awareness of current policies, trends and issues
2.	Cognitive skills	• Application of conceptual principles, theories and information to practice • Communication of the knowledge effectively, verbally and in writing • Analysis skills such as analytical ability - analysis of problems, problem-solving, critical thinking and follow through with implementation plan • Utilisation of new ideas, current trends (especially digital trends) and new information from related fields
3.	Practical skills	• Organisation – organisation of work (systematic/ organised in his/ her work), organisational skills and abilities, plan and work efficiently • Time management – punctual, completion of work, tasks and projects within the allotted time frame, performs assigned work/ project independently without much supervision • Instructions – able to follow instructions, willingness to take direction, willingness to ask for guidance and follow it, willingness to serve and help others • Persistence, especially to complete difficult or unpleasant tasks • Adaptability and ability to accommodate, especially to changes
4	Interpersonal skills	• Works well with others – colleagues/ peers, superiors, supporting staff, subordinates, communities etc. • Is cooperative, willingness to share, to learn from others irrespective of their background, ethnicity, religion and socio-economic status • Is a team player – can be a leader and a follower
5.	Communication skills	• Communicates appropriately to individuals and groups through conversation, verbal and written instructions, group discussions and presentations

No.	Domains in the five cluster of learning outcomes	Competencies
		• Expresses oneself clearly and confidently
6.	Digital skills	• Is capable of selecting the best potential resources to meet information needs and to verify the information which includes the purchase of materials and equipment • Develops, maintains, analyses and evaluates data and digital information • Uses technologies in an ethical manner
7.	Numeracy skills	• Acquires quantitative skills with higher levels of numerical abilities • Is able to understand basic mathematics, symbols relating to statistical techniques etc.
8.	Leadership, autonomy and responsibility	• Is willing to assume responsibilities • Is reliable/ dependable • Has soundness of judgment • Acts decisively • Copes in stressful situations • Has problem-solving skills, suggests a viable solution, creates and communicates possible solutions to problems
9.	Personal skills	• Diligent and disciplined • Dedicated and enthusiastic • Responsible • Courteous to all irrespective of age, seniority, socio-economic status • Caring and considerate • Respectful of others
10.	Entrepreneurial skills	• Resourceful, creative and innovative • Is a self-director and self-starter • Flexible in handling new situations • Builds collaborative relationships
11.	Ethics and professionalism	• Respects privacy and maintains confidentiality • Practises professional ethics • Maintains a professional demeanour in verbal interactions with staff, clients and others • Pursues continual professional development • Participates in professional activities

APPENDIX 5: GUIDELINES FOR APEL.Q ADVISOR

The APEL.Q Advisors are individuals who provide advice to learners on the expectations and all the assessment instruments that are used to evaluate the prior experiential learning. Advisors are appointed to guide the learner in the APEL.Q application but are NOT allowed to play the role of an assessor at the same time.

The following strategies can be adopted by APEL.Q Advisors to execute their roles effectively and efficiently:

ii) General strategies

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

Learners must be made to realise that APEL.Q 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.Q processes, he/ she should be able to judge whether it would be advisable to follow the programme through the usual process rather than seek for the conferment of the academic qualification via APEL.Q.

iii) Advising strategies

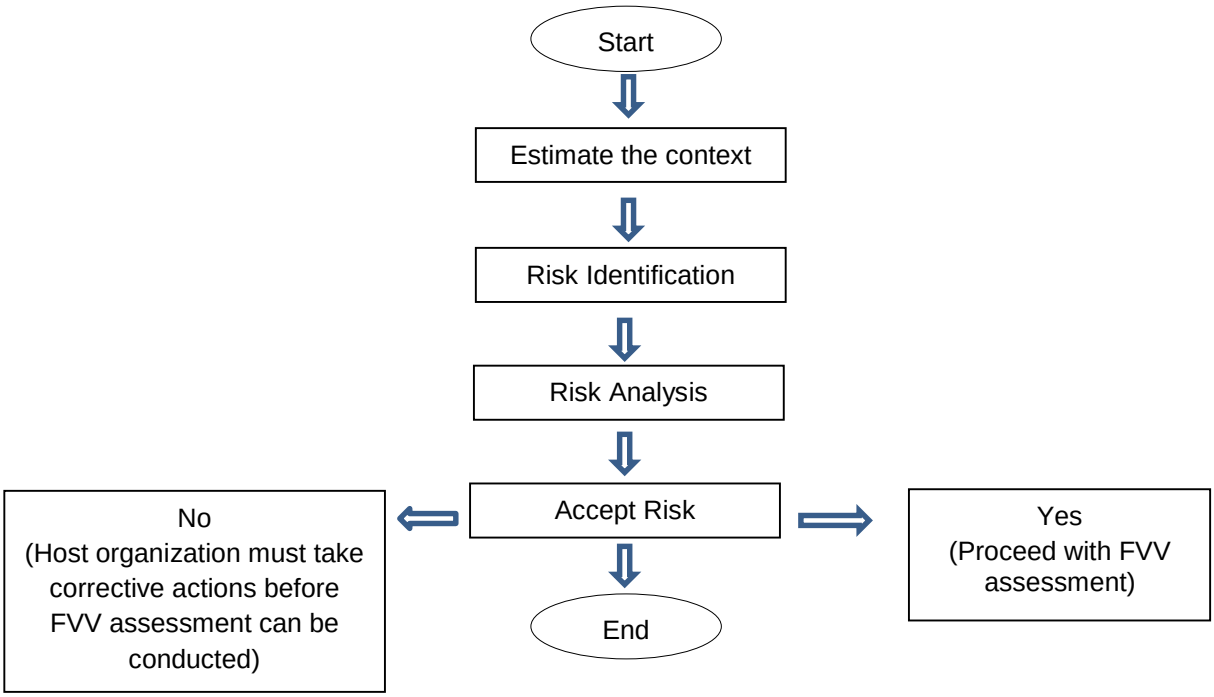
a) provide learners with clear, consistent, accurate and written guidelines on APEL.Q application and assessment procedures;
b) communicate APEL.Q expectations clearly and provide a supportive environment;
c) assist learners applying for APEL.Q to identify their educational and career goals;
d) assist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

Each clearly defined stage of the APEL.Q processes must be supported appropriately by the Advisor. The support provided will not only include the APEL.Q processes but also support in the programme/ course/ module/ subject/ vocational or professional area in which the APEL.Q application 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 or other technology mediated communication.

APPENDIX 6: RISK IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT

For the safety of the individuals, workplace and organisation, there must be procedure and practices in place to identify, assess and manage risk in the workplace. To assess whether the place has adequate safety measures to minimise risk and optimise the reliability and validity of the assessment of the candidate's knowledge and competencies, the following process is recommended:



One way of identifying, assessing and managing risk in the workplace is to consider and document the following (not exhaustive):

a) Have hazards been identified in the assessment area prior to assessment?
b) Is the learner informed of the hazards?
c) Will the assessment place the learner at risk?
d) Does the assessment require the setting up of unsafe conditions?
e) Is all safety equipment available for assessment?
f) Any contingency plans considered for the assessment?

APPENDIX 7: APEL.Q-01 FORM FOR HEP

APEL.Q-01 FORM
APPLICATION TO IMPLEMENT APEL.Q

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 the Institution:
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: PROGRAMME INFORMATION

1. Name of programme:
2. MQA full accreditation code:
3. The year the full accreditation was awarded:
4. Programme learning outcomes:
5. Course information:
    - category of courses
    - course code, course name and credit value
    - course learning outcomes
    - capstone course(s) *[this must be identified and stated by the HEP]*
6. Total credits of the programme:
7. Requirements for graduation:

PART C: HEP'S COMMITMENT IN IMPLEMENTING APEL.Q

1. Provision of an institutional policy on APEL.Q
    - Approval from HEP's Highest Academic Board/ Senate

2. Provision of resources (infrastructure, infostructure and human resources)
    2.1 Establishment centralized university wide APEL Centre/Unit* in managing APEL.Q
        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.Q

2.2 Infostructure to manage data relevant to APEL.Q
2.2.1 Data related to the candidate's application, assessment, results and appeal
2.2.2 Data related to the panel of advisors, assessors and moderators

**This centre/ unit can be collectively responsible for APEL.A and APEL.C matters*

PART D: MANAGEMENT OF APEL.Q APPLICATION

1. Application process
   1.1. Confirmation of application from MQA
   1.2. Selection criteria and appointment of Advisors
   1.3. Advisory and counselling provided to learners

2. Registration process
   2.1. Completion of the registration form for APEL.Q at the institutional level

3. Assessment
   3.1. Selection criteria and appointment of Assessors
   3.2. Development of the assessment instruments (Portfolio, Field and Validation Visit and Challenge Test)
      3.2.1. Structure of the assessment instruments and its associated marking guide/ rubric
      3.2.2. Moderation process for assessment instruments
   3.3. Role of panel of assessors and moderators
   3.4. Assessment instruments
      3.4.1. Portfolio
      3.4.2. Field and Validation Visit
      3.4.3. Challenge Test
      3.4.4. Capstone course(s)
   3.5. Academic Committee/ Examination Committee/ Senate for deliberating and approving assessment results
   3.6. Appeal process

4. Monitoring and review of APEL.Q: stakeholders and the processes involved.

5. Integration of APEL.Q processes and procedures in the existing quality assurance framework of the HEP.

PART E: PILOT STUDY

The HEP is required to identify at least ONE (1) candidate for the APEL.Q process and specify the intended programme of study.

Documents for submission (APEL.Q Application)

Following are the required documents for the purpose of submission of application:

a. APEL.Q-01 Form for HEP

b. Assessment instruments:
   i. Portfolio:
      - Portfolio Submission Form
      - Assessment Rubric for Portfolio

   ii. Field and Validation Visit (FVV)
      - Evidence on the formal communication with the organisation where the FVV will be conducted
      - Checklist and rubrics of items to the assessed/ verified

   iii. Challenge Test:
      - Process of construction of test questions
      - Test questions
      - Test Specification Table (TST)
      - Rubric/ Answer scheme
      - Evidence of moderation process for test questions

   iv. Capstone course(s):
      - Course description/ synopsis
      - Course learning outcomes
      - Constructive alignment (Table 4 of MQA-02 documents)
      - Assessment questions, TST/ rubrics

c. A sample of Malaysian Qualification Statement (MQS)

PART F: 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 the 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 to Good Practices: APEL for Award of Academic Qualifications [APEL.Q]'.

Signature :
Name :
Designation :
Date :
Official Stamp :

Note:
Please include hyperlinks to appendices where applicable

GLOSSARY

1.	Accreditation	Provisional and full accreditation granted by MQA.
2.	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, the award of credit or for the award of academic qualifications.
3.	APEL.A	APEL for access (admission into a programme of studies in higher education institutions).
4.	APEL.C	APEL for credit award. The use of prior experiential learning for credit transfer of a particular course.
5.	Assessment	Refers to the process of evaluating, measuring and documenting the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition or educational needs of learners.
6.	Challenge Test	An evaluation to assess prior experiential learning against the learning outcomes of a programme. 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.
7.	Competency	A competency is an underlying characteristic of a person or performer regarding his or her knowledge, skills and abilities which enables him/ her to successfully and meaningfully complete a given task or role.
8.	Credit	A quantitative measurement that represents the learning volume or the academic load to achieve the respective learning outcomes.
9.	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 programme or student pursuing a diploma programme and transfer to another diploma programme.

ii. Credit Transfer without Grade

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, the diploma to bachelor's degree, diploma to diploma and bachelor's degree to bachelor's degree.

10.	External Examiner	An acknowledged expert in the relevant field of study external to the Higher Education Providers, tasked to evaluate the programme's assessment system and the candidates.
11.	Field and Validation Visit	Assessment and validation of the candidate's knowledge, competencies and skills at the candidate's workplace or any location that permits valid and reliable assessment and validation to be conducted.
12.	Formal learning	Learning or 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.
13.	Full Accreditation	An accreditation exercise to ascertain that the teaching, learning and all other related activities of a provisionally accredited programme meet the quality standards.
14.	Informal learning	Learning which takes place continuously through life and work experiences. It is often unintentional learning.

15.	Malaysian Qualification Statement (MQS)	A document describing the qualification received in a standard format to provide information on the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed by the graduate.
16.	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.
17.	Portfolio	A formal document that contains a compilation of evidence documenting the prior experiential learning of an individual and his or her articulation of learning acquired over a period of time, prepared to demonstrate the achievement of the intended course learning outcomes.
18.	Qualification	An affirmation of achievement which is awarded by a Higher Education Provider or any party that is authorised to confer it.