

Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning
for **Credit Award.**

APEL.C POLICY HANDBOOK
Guidelines on the Application of APEL.C



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PART A: Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

A1. Introduction

Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) is part of the Malaysian Government's effort to recognise the importance of lifelong learning in the nation's human capital development. Lifelong learning has been noted as one of the important targets to be achieved in the Ninth Malaysia Plan (9MP) and the Tenth Malaysia Plan (10MP) for developing a knowledge society to achieve its goals of becoming a developed nation by the year 2020.

APEL provides an opportunity for an individual with working experience but who lack formal academic qualifications to pursue their studies in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). In general, knowledge obtained through informal education and working experience will be both assessed in APEL's assessment.

A2. Definition of APEL

Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) is a systematic process that involves the identification, documentation and assessment of prior experiential learning, i.e., knowledge, skills and attitudes, to determine the extent to which an individual has achieved the desired learning outcomes, for access to a programme of study and/or award of credits. APEL process generally involves the assessment of experiential learning, including those which have not previously been assessed or credit rated.

This learning may be acquired through formal, non-formal and informal means, including formal schooling, work and life experiences, training, independent study, voluntary work, hobbies and family experiences.

Formal learning refers to 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.

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

Informal learning refers to learning which takes place continuously through life and work experiences. It is often unintentional learning.

Examples of prior experiential learning include the relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes gained through:

- work experience: full-time, part-time or casual;
- voluntary ad community work;
- family duties;
- hobbies or leisure activities;
- coaching and mentoring others;
- attending and participating in seminars, conferences and workshops;
- attending short courses;
- fluency in other languages;
- private study and research; and
- any other life experiences.

(APEL – MQA, p.21-22)

A3. Purpose and Objectives

This document is developed to provide learners with a clear view of APEL.C and assist them in applying for APEL.C assessment based on the MQA Guideline to Good Practices: Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning for Credit Award (GGP: APEL.C). It outlines the policies on the implementation of APEL.C in Asia e University and describes the APEL.C application procedures for learners.

PART B: APEL for Credit Award – APEL.C

B1. Introduction

Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) is committed in recognising 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 the **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 among adult learners.

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.

B2. Definition of APEL.C

APEL.C is the award of credits for prior experiential learning towards a course in an accredited programme of the University. 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 that emphasise experiential learning 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 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.

B3. 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 instil confidence in all stakeholders in the outcomes of the APEL.C process. The core principles are as follows:

B3.1 Learner-centred 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 the University.

B3.2 Accessibility

APEL.C is an accessible and inclusive process available for registered learners of study programmes at all levels of the Malaysia Qualification Framework (MQF). AeU has established clear and comprehensive guidelines for the APEL.C process in accordance with the MQA Guideline to Good Practices: Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning for Credit Award (GGP: APEL.C).

B3.3 Flexibility

AeU has adopted a range of different approaches in the implementation of APEL.C 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.

B3.4 Reliability, transparency and consistency

APEL.C processes, procedures, practices and decisions are reliable, transparent and consistent in order to safeguard the credibility and integrity of the entire assessment system. This will provide confidence to all the relevant stakeholders in the decisions and outcomes of the APEL.C processes.

B3.5 Clarity of Roles 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 : 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 will be 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 assessors. The moderator can be an internal staff or an appointed external expert.

B3.6 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.

PART C: APEL.C Policies

C1 General Policies

- a) The APEL.C provision is only applicable to learners registered a programme with Asia e University (AeU) regardless of the mode of entry, whether through the conventional or APEL.A route.
- b) APEL.C encompasses the assessment of prior experiential learning for the credit award. The application will be considered regardless of learning acquired through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) or any other methods of self-learning.
- c) APEL.C is applicable to all areas and levels of qualifications in the Malaysian Qualification Framework (MQF). For the postgraduate level of study, the credit award is limited only to the coursework and mixed modes.
- d) APEL.C is applicable to programmes that have already obtained at least provisional accreditation from MQA.
- e) APEL.C applies to courses that form part of the programme structure under professional bodies but are subject to acceptance by relevant professional bodies. University shall be responsible for securing such approval.

C2 Award of Credits

- a) The award of credits through APEL.C is in the form of credit transfer, which 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.
- b) 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 shown in Table 1.
- c) 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.
- d) The credits awarded must be equivalent to the credit value of the course applied for APEL.C. No partial credits will be awarded
- e) 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.
- f) Assessment for credit award should be carried out separately for each course . Credit award cannot be granted on a block basis.

- g) APEL.C is applicable for all courses except for final-year project-based courses and dissertations.
- h) 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.

Award based on the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF)	Minimum graduating credits	30% from the minimum credits of the coursework components
Level 8: Doctoral Degree (coursework/ mixed mode programme)	80	24
Level 7: Master's Degree (coursework/ mixed mode programme)	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

PART D: Application and Assessment

D1 Application

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. Learners are not allowed to apply for APEL.C for courses which they have already registered and undertaken during the period of study.

Figure 1 outlines the key processes and procedures of APEL.C application for learners.

D2 APEL.C Assessment and Results

The assessment 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.

a) Challenge Test

- A Challenge Test is a proctored standard test to assess if the learner has achieved the course learning outcomes (CLOs).
- 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 a detailed list of the various types of assessment can be referred to MQA document GGP: APEL.C Appendix V.

b) 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.
- A portfolio 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.
- Learners are advised to follow the template attached, Portfolio Submission Form for Learners (Appendix Iv) in documenting their prior experiential learning.

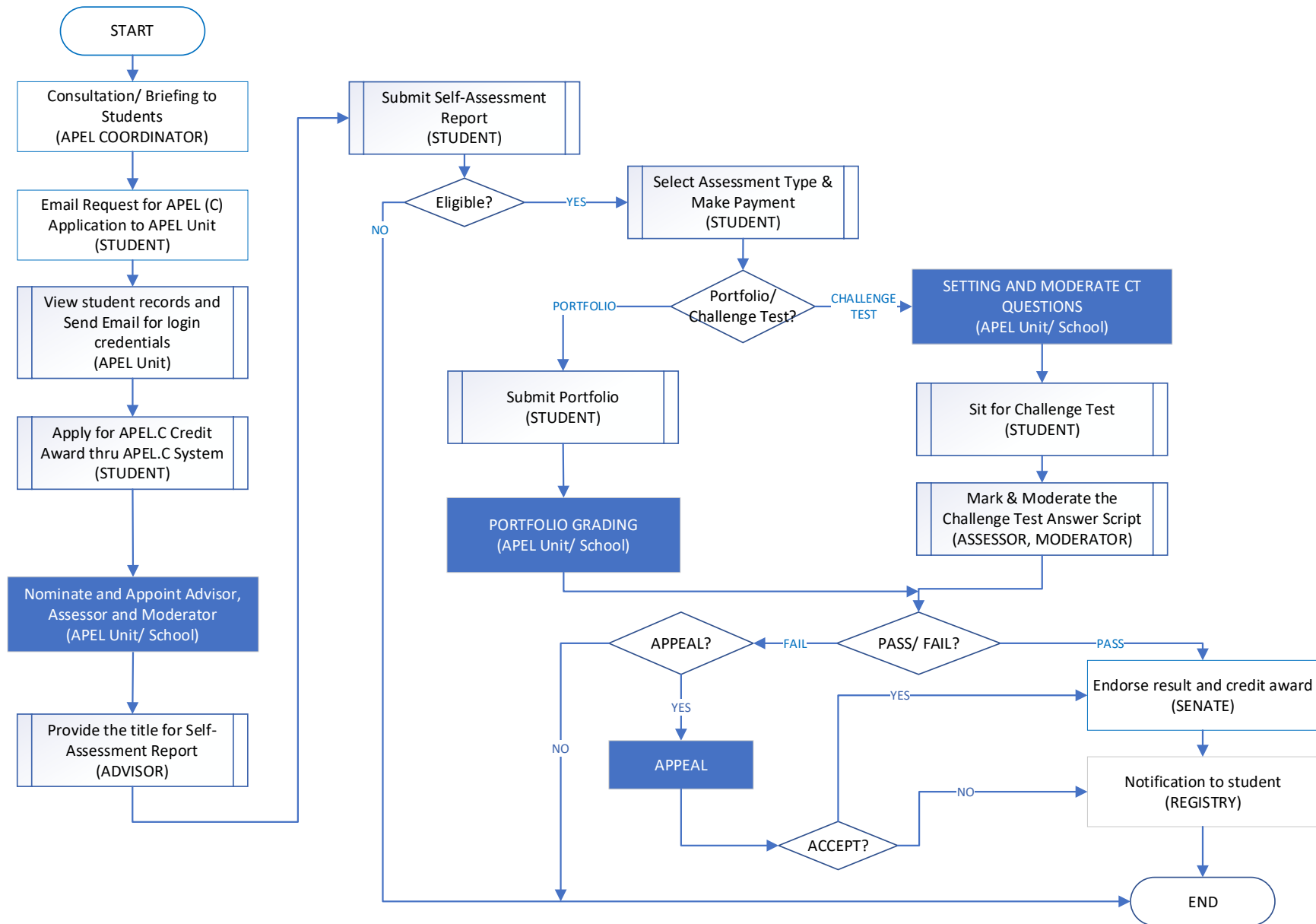


Figure 1: The APEL.C Application Process

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 University.

Course credits will be awarded and reflected in the academic transcript under the section of 'APEL.C Credit Awards'. 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.

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. Re-attempt 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.

D3 Criteria of 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. The course that has been awarded credit through APEL.C will appear in the transcript of the learner in the 'APEL.C Credit Awards' section. 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.

For both the Challenge Test and/or Portfolio assessment, learners must achieve at least 50% of each Course Learning Outcome. Learners who are not successful in the APEL.C assessment will have to complete the course through the usual process in their respective programmes of studies.

D4 Appeal

A learner who is not satisfied with APEL.C result can submit a written appeal providing the grounds of appeal to the University Senate for consideration on condition that such an appeal is submitted within 14 days from the date of result(s) announcement.

No new/ additional evidence is allowed to be submitted during the appeal process. A different set of assessors will be appointed to evaluate the merit of the appeal. A processing fee will be charged for each appealed subject. The decision of the Senate shall be final. The Registry shall inform the learner the outcome of the appeal.

APPENDIX A: 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 (PLOs) <i>On completion of this course, the learner should be able to...</i>	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 paperevidence	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				
6. PLO11				

PART C: REPORT SUBMISSION

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

Report Title:

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 work.

Submitted by:

.....
Name:
Date :

For office use only:

(APEL UNIT)
Received by :

.....
Name:
Date:

Recommendation by the Advisor:

.....
Name:
Date:



APPENDIX B: APEL.C APPLICATION FORM FOR LEARNERS

PART A: PERSONAL PARTICULARS

Name of applicant	
Identification card/ Passport no.	
Name of programme	
Programme level (MQF Level)	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate (Level 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree (Level 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Diploma (Level 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Master's Degree (Level 7) <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Diploma (Level 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral Degree (Level 8)
Total credit of the programme	
Confirmation of APEL.C Advisor	<p>I hereby confirm that the above applicant has undertaken the Self-Assessment Exercise and deemed eligible to apply for APEL.Q assessment.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Date:</p>

I hereby:

- declare that I have read, understood and accepted all the terms and conditions stipulated under the provision of APEL.C of AeU as stated in the APEL.C Policy Handbook.
- declare that all the information/documents provided to support this application are authentic, true and accurate.
- Will make payment for the APEL.C application once approved according to the quantum of payment.

I fully understand that AeU reserves the right to reject my application if proven otherwise. I also agree to the mode of assessment recommended by the APEL.C Advisor.

.....

Name :

Date :