



CTEF - IPPTN Special Series on SDG4: Planning for Flexible Learning Pathways in Higher Education: Part 03

**Policies and Instruments for Flexible Learning Pathways in Malaysia:
From National to Institutional**

National Policy on lifelong learning and flexible learning pathways

Malaysia has no specific regulatory or legislative framework pertaining to FLPs. However, there is an overarching national policy on lifelong learning supporting FLPs that focuses on the outcomes, which include to widen participation in higher education, better responsiveness to diverse student needs, reduce dropout rates/increased completion of studies, strengthen equity in progression of studies, facilitate labour market (re-) entry and career progression, and improve general education level of education/qualification in Malaysian society.

Lifelong learning agendas and instruments, such as APEL, ODL, MOOC, and micro-credentials are targeted at non-traditional learners, the relevant regulations to guarantee flexible admission and progression in the Malaysian higher education system for equity groups continue to be further developed.

Malaysian Qualifications Framework

MQF is a national unified system of post-secondary qualifications offered in Malaysia by public and private HEIs overseen by MQA and MoHE. The framework presented the opportunities for non-traditional or alternative admission pathways in Malaysian higher education system.

MQF LEVEL	GRADUATING CREDIT	SECTOR		Lifelong Learning
		ACADEMIC	TVET *	
8	No credit rating	PhD by Research		Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)
	80	Doctoral Degree by Mixed Mode & Coursework		
7	No credit rating	Master's by Research		
	40	Master's by Mixed Mode & Coursework		
	30	Postgraduate Diploma		
6	20	Postgraduate Certificate		
	120	Bachelor's degree		
	66 **	Graduate Diploma		
5	36 **	Graduate Certificate		
	40	Advanced Diploma	Advanced Diploma	
4	90	Diploma	Diploma	
3	60	Certificate	Certificate	
2	30	Certificate	Certificate	
1	15	Certificate	Certificate	

* Technical and Vocational Education and Training ** Inclusive of 6 credits for U1 courses from general studies

Instruments for FLPs

The Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025 policy on lifelong learning, MQF framework, and MQA's guidelines on instruments have promoted the development and flexibility on initiative related to ODL, APEL, MOOCs and micro-credentials in the HEIs.

Open and Distance Learning (ODL)

A programme of study is deemed as an ODL programme if more than 60% of the courses offered in the curriculum are conducted via open and distance learning.

Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

APEL has been established as a pathway to access various levels of qualifications set under the MQF that provides an opportunity to the non-conventional learners and equity groups to pursue their studies.

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC)

MOOC is a modern e-learning technology to be recognised as part of credit awarded programme, and eligible for credit transfer that was initiated under the Malaysian Higher Education Blueprint 2015-2025.

Micro-credentials

It comprises of various forms of certifications, focusing on much smaller modules of learning programmes that currently centre on professional development programmes.

Malaysia Niche on FLPs: Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning

The research on the SDG4: Planning for flexible learning pathways in higher education in the eight countries have shown interesting findings related to the strength of each country. For example, Finland in Open Study, India in ODL, Jamaica in TVET, and United Kingdom excels in its institution innovations. Malaysia's strength lies in its initiatives on the APEL which is considered unique and advance under the flexible learning pathways in higher education at the global level.

Bibliography

Morshidi, S. et. al.. (2021). *Flexible Learning Pathways in Malaysian Higher Education: Balancing Human Resource Development and Equity Groups*. Report for the International Institute for Educational Planning – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Research on SDG4: Planning for Higher Education. Commonwealth Tertiary Education Facility (CTEF). <https://www.ctef.com.my/our-work/publications>

APEL (A)	APEL (C)
For access to a programme	For the course accredit award in an academic programme
HEIs are not required to apply for MQA approval	HEIs must apply for MQA approval for five years
Application for APEL (A) certification to MQA or APEL Centre	Application for assessment to HEIs
Standardised and administered nationwide	Varied between HEIs depending on the nature of the course and students/HEIs preference
Only for Malaysian citizens (must pass the Aptitude Test & Portfolio) with minimum requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate: age 19 • Diploma: age 20 • Bachelor's Degree: age 21 • Master's Degree: age 30 • Doctoral Degree: age 35 	Open to everyone that passes the assessment. No age requirements

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