Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning for Access
[APEL A]

APEL (A) HANDBOOK

Guidelines on Application of APEL A

APEL Centre, AIMST University

GLOSSARY

Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

APEL is a systematic process that involves identifying, documenting and assessing 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.

APEL (A) provides an opportunity for those with work experience but lack qualifications or no academic qualifications to continue their studies at Higher Learning Institutions.

Formal Learning

An intentional learning or programme of study delivered in a planned and structured context (pre-school, primary school, secondary school, technical college, and university) that may lead to formal recognition / a recognized qualification.

Informal Learning

Learning occurs continuously through life and work experiences (sometimes called experiential learning). Learnings are usually gained unintentionally.

Non-formal Learning

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

Malaysian Qualifications Framework

An instrument that classifies qualifications based on a set of criteria that are certified nationally and benchmarked against the best international practices.

Abbreviations And Acronyms

APEL (A)   -   Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning for Access

MQA   -   Malaysian Qualifications Agency

MQF   -   Malaysian Qualifications Framework

HEPs   -   Higher Education Providers

IHL   -   Institutions of Higher Learning

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This handbook is provided to APEL (A) candidates that covers basic aspects of application requirements, evaluation processes, and fees for APEL (A) application.

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (MOHE) and the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) introduced the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) for the purpose of providing access to higher education, called APEL for Access APEL (A) in 2010.

APEL (A) provides opportunities for those who have work experience but lack qualifications or no academic qualifications to continue their studies at Higher Education Providers (HEPs). In general, APEL (A) assessment involves assessing the knowledge a candidate acquired through formal education or previous experience.

1.2 APEL ASSESSMENT CENTRE AIMST

In 2025, AIMST started accepting prospective students with APEL (A) certificate to enroll in Diploma's and Bachelor's level programs.

APEL ASSESSMENT CENTRE AIMST includes two (2) entry levels of assessments, which are:
1. Admission to Diploma programs (APEL T-4)
2. Admission to Bachelor's degree programs (APEL T-6)

PART-2: DEFINITION AND CONCEPT OF APEL.A

2.1 DEFINITION OF APEL.A

APEL for Access APEL (A) is the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning for the purpose of access to programmes of study offered at Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) to candidates through assessment and evaluation based on the candidate's previous learning experience.

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.

2.2 CANDIDATE COMPETENCIES

The required competencies for APEL (A) assessments are based on MQF's five clusters of learning outcomes to ensure that applicants will have the following minimum competencies to pursue higher education:

1. Knowledge and understanding.
2. Cognitive skills.
3. Functional work skills which focus on:
    i. practical skills.
    ii. interpersonal and communication skills.
    iii. digital and numeracy skills.
    iv. leadership, autonomy and responsibility.
4. Interpersonal and entrepreneurial skills.
5. Ethics and professionalism.

2.3 ENTRY REQUIREMENT

Candidate should comply with the level of study criteria set by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOE) as follows:

Admission to Diploma and Bachelor's Degree programs

No.	Entry Requirements	Documents
1.	Malaysian citizen / expatriate (and family members)	
2.	• **Diploma Level**: At least 20 years of age in the year of application • **Bachelor's Degree Level**: At least 21 years of age in the year of application	A certified copy of MyKad A certified copy of the passport
3.	Possess relevant work experience	

PART-3: APPLICATION PROCESS AND ASSESSMENT

3.1 APPLICATION THROUGH MQA

Candidates must apply through MQA's website: https://www2.mqa.gov.my/apel_a/. Appendix 1 provides a flowchart for the application and assessment process.

3.2 PRELIMINARY SCREENING

AIMST APEL Centre will receive a notification of APEL (A) candidate applications and conduct a preliminary screening to confirm APEL.A candidates are eligible to undergo the assessment process. Preliminary screening involves verification of the following:
i. Candidate citizenship
ii. Age of candidate according to the level of APEL (A) application

3.3 ASSESSMENT FEES FOR EACH LEVEL

APEL (A) assessments fee for eligible candidates for respective levels are as follows:

No.	Level	Fee (RM)	Payment method
1.	Diploma (APEL T-4)	RM 240.00	Payment should be made to AIMST Finance
2.	Bachelor's Degree (APEL T-6)	RM 370.00	
		USD500 (non-malaysian citizen)	

Note: All fees are not refundable

3.4 REPEAT FEES FOR EACH COMPONENT AND APPEAL

Appeal or Re-Sit:
Applicants who failed any of the assessment instruments may appeal for a review of the results or opt for a re-sit. The applicant will be charged the appeal or re-sit fee set by MQA for each attempt.

Appeal:
The applicant who is not satisfied with the decision of the APEL assessment result can submit a written appeal to the AIMST APEL Centre by providing the grounds for the appeal. The appeal must be submitted within one (1) week from the date of the official announcement of the result. A different Assessor will be appointed to evaluate the merit of the appeal.

Re-sit:
The applicant who failed the aptitude test can only re-sit the aptitude test for a maximum of 2 attempts. If the applicant still fails at the second attempt, the applicant must wait for a minimum of three (3) months before re-sitting for the third time. Applicants who have failed the portfolio assessment may resubmit the portfolio for reassessment. However, this resubmission can only be made at least six (6) months after the notification date of the APEL (A).

The following table describes the fees that the candidate must pay in case of failing any of the assessment components. Candidates need to pay the assessment fee according to the level through AIMST APEL Centre.

No.	Level	Repeat Fee		
		Aptitude	**Portfolio**	**Interview**
1.	T-4	RM155	-	-
2.	T6	RM150	RM80	-

3.5 ASSESSMENT COMPONENT AND MARKS WEIGHTAGE

The assessment components include:
1. APEL T-4: Aptitude Test (must pass) and Portfolio Assessment (no marks weightage: for verification of previous experience only)
2. APEL T-6: Aptitude Test and Portfolio Assessment (must pass)

The total mark for all components is 100%. The table below shows the weightage marks for each assessment component for each level:

Assessment / Level	Diploma (APEL T-4)	Bachelor's Degree (APEL T-6)
Aptitude Test	100%	30%
Portfolio Assessment	-	70%
Total marks	100%	100%
Passing marks	**50%**	**50%**

To pass the assessment, candidates for all levels must:
- obtained a minimum score of 50% on the Aptitude Test
- obtained a minimum score of 50% on the Portfolio Assessment (APEL T-6)
- obtained a score of 50% of the total score

3.5.1 Aptitude Test

The Aptitude Test is a formal examination to assess the level of competence and readiness of candidates to study at a higher level. The test components are numerical literacy, language, and general knowledge/critical thinking. This test covers 30% for Bachelors (T-6) and 100% for Diplomas (T-4) for the total marks of APEL (A) assessment. The following section will explain the structure of the Aptitude Test.

Aptitude Test for APEL T-4 and T-6

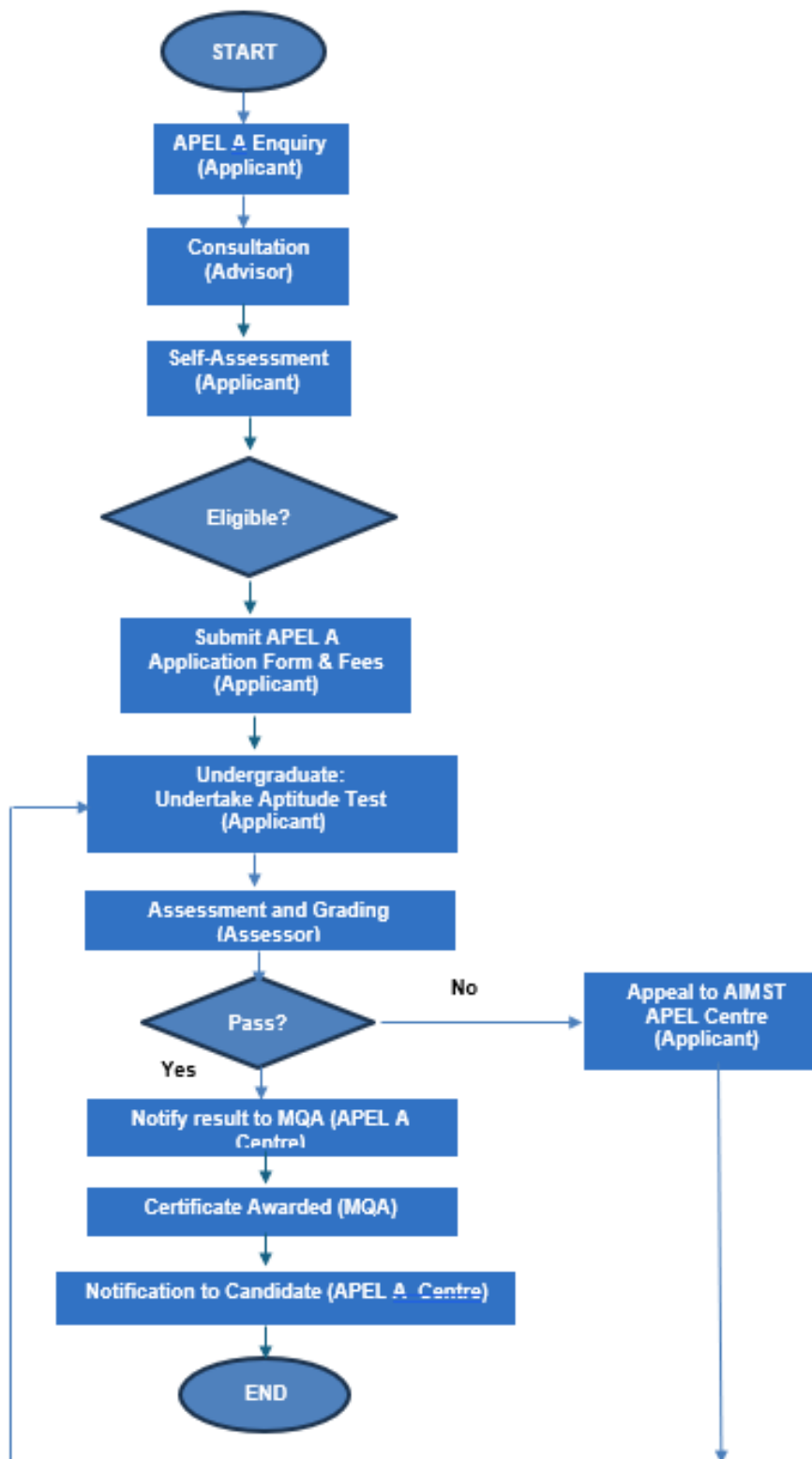| Component	Questions	Difficulty level	Duration
Malay Language • Reading & Comprehension • Grammar & prose • Spelling • Vocabulary • Correction of Errors	10 Objective questions	**APEL T-4** PMR (Grade/Year 9) or equivalent **APEL T-6** SPM (Grade/Year 11) or equivalent	2 hours
English Language • Reading & Comprehension • Grammar & prose • Spelling • Vocabulary • Correction of Errors	10 Objective questions		
Mathematics • Basic numeracy • Basic algebra • Problem-solving	10 Objective questions		
General knowledge / Critical thinking • Logical reasoning • Classification skills • Pattern recognition	10 Objective questions		
TOTAL	**40**		

*Candidates must obtain 50% in the Aptitude test to pass.

LIST OF REFERENCES

1) Panduan Penilaian Pengakreditan Pembelajaran Berasaskan Pengalaman Terdahulu Bagi Tujuan Akses (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning for Access), 2021. MQA.

2) Guidelines to Good Practices: Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (for Access APEL A)

Appendix 1: Flowchart for Application and Certification Process

APEL A Application Process Flow for Learners (T4-Diploma)

```
                    ┌─────────┐
                    │  START  │
                    └─────────┘
                         │
                         ▼
              ┌──────────────────────┐
              │   APEL A Enquiry     │
              │     (Applicant)      │
              └──────────────────────┘
                         │
                         ▼
              ┌──────────────────────┐
              │    Consultation      │
              │     (Advisor)        │
              └──────────────────────┘
                         │
                         ▼
              ┌──────────────────────┐
              │   Self-Assessment    │
              │     (Applicant)      │
              └──────────────────────┘
                         │
                         ▼
                    ◇ Eligible? ◇
                         │
                         ▼
              ┌──────────────────────┐
              │   Submit APEL A      │
              │ Application Form &    │
              │   Fees (Applicant)   │
              └──────────────────────┘
                         │
                         ▼
              ┌──────────────────────┐
              │    Undergraduate:    │
              │ Undertake Aptitude   │
              │  Test (Applicant)    │
              └──────────────────────┘
                         │
                         ▼
              ┌──────────────────────┐
              │ Assessment and       │
              │ Grading (Assessor)   │
              └──────────────────────┘
                         │
                         ▼
                    ◇ Pass? ◇ ──No──▶ ┌──────────────────┐
                         │             │ Appeal to AIMST  │
                        Yes            │   APEL Centre    │
                         │             │   (Applicant)    │
                         ▼             └──────────────────┘
         ┌──────────────────────────┐
         │ Notify result to MQA     │
         │   (APEL A Centre)        │
         └──────────────────────────┘
                         │
                         ▼
         ┌──────────────────────────┐
         │ Certificate Awarded (MQA)│
         └──────────────────────────┘
                         │
                         ▼
         ┌──────────────────────────┐
         │ Notification to Candidate│
         │   (APEL A Centre)        │
         └──────────────────────────┘
                         │
                         ▼
                    ┌─────────┐
                    │   END   │
                    └─────────┘
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APEL A Application Process Flow for Learners (T4-Diploma)

APEL A Application Process Flow for Learners (T6- Bachelor)

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                          ┌──────────┐
                          │  START   │
                          └────┬─────┘
                               │
                    ┌──────────▼──────────┐
                    │   APEL A Enquiry    │
                    │    (Applicant)      │
                    └──────────┬──────────┘
                               │
                    ┌──────────▼──────────┐
                    │    Consultation     │
                    │     (Advisor)       │
                    └──────────┬──────────┘
                               │
                    ┌──────────▼──────────┐
                    │   Self-Assessment   │
                    │    (Applicant)      │
                    └──────────┬──────────┘
                               │
                          ◆ Eligible? ◆
                               │
                    ┌──────────▼──────────┐
                    │    Submit APEL A    │
                    │ Application Form &  │
                    │  Fees (Applicant)   │
                    └──────────┬──────────┘
                               │
                    ┌──────────▼──────────┐
                    │   Undergraduate:    │
                    │ Undertake Aptitude  │
                    │ Test & Submit       │
                    │ Portfolio (Applicant)│
                    └──────────┬──────────┘
                               │
                    ┌──────────▼──────────┐
                    │ Assessment and      │
                    │ Grading (Assessor)  │
                    └──────────┬──────────┘
                               │
                          ◆ Pass? ◆ ──No──► Appeal to AIMST
                               │             APEL Centre
                              Yes            (Applicant)
                               │                 │
                    ┌──────────▼──────────┐  Re-submit
                    │ Notify result to    │  Portfolio
                    │ MQA (APEL A Centre) │  (Applicant)
                    └──────────┬──────────┘
                               │
                    ┌──────────▼──────────┐
                    │ Certificate Awarded │
                    │       (MQA)         │
                    └──────────┬──────────┘
                               │
                    ┌──────────▼──────────┐
                    │ Notification to     │
                    │ Candidate (APEL A   │
                    │ Centre)             │
                    └──────────┬──────────┘
                               │
                          ┌────▼─────┐
                          │   END    │
                          └──────────┘
```

Appendix 2 : APEL Portfolio Evaluation Form

Recent photo	

PART 1: PERSONAL DETAILS

FULL NAME				
IC NUMBER				
INTENDED FIELD OF STUDY				
INTENDED PROGRAMME				
LEVEL OF STUDY		Diploma		Bachelor
REFERENCE NUMBER	(for MQA use only)			

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

a) FORMAL LEARNING

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

NO.	ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION	AWARDING BODY/ INSTITUTION	YEAR AWARDED	COMPETENCIES (Please tick ✓) (Please refer Appendix 4 for list of skills on what I have learnt)											EVIDENCE OF LEARNING * (Please refer Appendix 3 for examples of evidence)
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
1.															
2.															
3.															
4.															
5.															

*Note: All evidence must be properly labelled

b) INFORMAL LEARNING (Compulsory) (start with the most recent)

Learning takes place continuously through life and work experiences (sometimes known as experiential learning). It is often unintentional learning.

NO.	NAME OF EMPLOYER/ SELF-EMPLOYED	CONTACT ADDRESS	DURATION (MONTH/YEAR)		POSITION HELD	WHAT I HAVE LEARNT/ACQUIRED (Please tick √) (Please refer Appendix 4 for list of skills on what I have learnt)											EVIDENCE OF LEARNING* (Please refer Appendix 3 for examples of evidence)
			FROM	TO		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
1.																	
2.																	
3.																	
4.																	
5.																	
6.																	

*Note: All evidence must be properly labelled

OTHER LEARNING 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/ACQUIRED (Please tick ✓) (Please refer Appendix 4 for list of skills on what I have learnt)											EVIDENCE OF LEARNING* (if any) (Please refer Appendix 3 for examples of evidence)
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
1													
2													
3													
4													

*Note: All evidence must be properly labelled

c) NON-FORMAL LEARNING (start with the most recent)

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

NO	NAME/ TITLE OF TRAINING OR COURSE	ORGANISER / LOCATION	DATE	LENGTH (Hours/ Days/ Month)	WHAT I HAVE LEARNT/ACQUIRED (Please tick √) (Please refer Appendix 4 for list of skills on what I have learnt)											EVIDENCE OF LEARNING * (if any) (Please refer Appendix 3 for examples of evidence)
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
1.																
2.																
3.																
4.																
5.																
6.																
7.																

*Note: All evidence must be properly labelled

d)   LANGUAGE COMPETENCY

LANGUAGE	LEVEL OF COMPETENCE (Please tick ✓) 1: POOR; 2: AVERAGE; 3: GOOD; 4: EXCELLENT															
	LISTENING				READING				SPEAKING				WRITING			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1.																
2.																
3.																

e)   SELF ASSESSMENT/REFLECTION (Compulsory)

Describe how your prior learning experiences prepare you for the intended level of study (at least 500 words):

Note: not more than 250 words (for APEL T-4 only)

1. Why do you want to pursue this intended programme of study?

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

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

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

REFEREES (Family members and relatives cannot serve as referees)

NAME	
POSITION	20
ORGANISATION	
PHONE NUMBER	OFFICE: (Compulsory)	MOBILE:
EMAIL ADDRESS	
RELATIONSHIP	

NAME		
POSITION		
ORGANISATION		
PHONE NUMBER	OFFICE: (Compulsory)	MOBILE:
EMAIL ADDRESS		
RELATIONSHIP		

PART 4: SELF DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all of the information/documents provided to support this application are authentic, true and accurate. I fully understand the Terms and Conditions of the application and agree that my application will be rejected if I have falsified any information in any way.

Signature:

Name:

Date:

This application is subject to Terms and Conditions stated below
a. Documents that are not in English or Bahasa Malaysia must be accompanied by a certified full translation.
b. The Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) is authorised by the applicant, to make references to and use the information or data in this application as may be deemed necessary.
c. The certification applied for is designed to meet requirements set by the MQA. Admission to the Academic Programme applied for, using this APEL Certificate is subject to the Academic Regulations approved by the University/ College.
d. Non-refundable application fee of **RM …..** is submitted. **<mark>Do not send cash.</mark>**

CHECKLIST	Yes	No	For Office Use
Photocopy IC			Acknowledgement
Application Fee (Banker's Cheque/Draft No……………. 1 recent			
passport size photographs			
Certified Certificates/Documents 1 copy of			
the application			Date

Appendix 3 : List of Evidence

Direct Evidence	Indirect Evidence
Certificates You can provide copies of your qualification • 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	**Email** You can provide copies of email communications which verify • Customer feedback • Work ctivities • Written skills
Records of workplace activities You can provide documents that verify your work activities • Notes • Emails • Completed worksheets • Workplace agreeement • Contracts	**Supporting letters** You can provide letters to verify your claim from • Employers • Community group • People you have work with (paid and unpaid work)
Documents You can provide evidence that shows what you have done in your life • Media articles • Meritoriuos Awards	

Appendix 4 : List of Skills

List of skills on what learners have learnt based on the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) Learning Outcomes. There are five clusters of learning outcomes:

a)   Knowledge and understanding.
b)   Cognitive skills
     Functional work skills with focuses on:
     i.   practical skills.
     ii.   interpersonal and communication skills.
     iii. digital and numeracy skills.
     iv.   leadership, autonomy and responsibility.

c)   Personal and entrepreneurial skills.
d)   Ethics and professionalism.

Below is a sample of the level of descriptors. Applicable to the appropriate level of Bachelor.

1. **Knowledge and understanding**
    - Knowledge and understanding refer to a systematic understanding of facts, ideas, information, principles, concepts, theories, technical knowledge, regulations, numeracy, practical skills, tools to use, processes and systems.

2. **Cognitive skills**
    - This relates to the thinking or intellectual capabilities and the ability to apply knowledge and skills. The capacity to develop levels of intellectual skills progressively begins from understanding, critical/creative thinking, assessment, applying, analysing, problem-solving and synthesizing to create new ideas, solutions, strategies or new practices. Such intellectual skills enable the learner to search for and comprehend new information from different fields of knowledge and practices.

Functional work skills

3. **Practical work skills**
    - These are generally work skills and operational skills applicable to a common employment environment, such as planning, organisational skills and selection of tools, material, technology methods and procedures. In the study context, it may include study skills and preparations, undertaking procedures, scientific skills, designs, research and so forth. It also includes specialised skills set by specific subject, discipline, technical or occupation-related work skills and professional practices which enhance professional competence. It should include safe and sustainable practices.

4. Interpersonal skills refer to a range of skills which, amongst others, include interactive communications, relationships and collaborative skills in managing relationships in teams and within the organisations, networking with people of different cultures, as well as social skills/etiquettes.

5. Communication skills refer generally to the ability to communicate/convey information/ideas/reports cogently and professionally in appropriate languages. The communication must be effective and in appropriate forms, in various mediums, and to a range of audiences and different situations. The ability to communicate in more than one language is encouraged.

6. Digital skills generally refer to the ability to use information/digital technologies to support work and studies. The skills include sourcing and storing information, processing data, using applications for problem-solving and communication, as well as ethics in applying digital skills.

7. Numeracy skills - the quantitative skills that require learners to acquire increasingly higher levels of numerical abilities. It is acknowledged as an important living skill relevant to study, work and daily life. Within the Malaysian Qualifications Framework levels, this learning outcome may not be specifically mentioned for every level, but it is expected that the requirement of numerical skills as an outcome ought to be indicated for every specific programme. It may include an understanding of basic mathematics, symbols relating to statistical techniques, etc.

8. Leadership, autonomy and responsibility

    This cluster of skills refers to the ability of an individual to build relationships and work with teams made up of peers, as well as the capability of the individual in managerial capacities with varying degrees of autonomy to make decisions or set goals at organisational/unit/team levels. The individual is also expected to take responsibility and provide accountability, to be confident, knowledgeable, articulate, honest, professional, concerned and resilient, to be a risk taker and to possess other intrapersonal skills including working in and leading teams.

9. Personal skills are life skills that learners are expected to use daily. They are normally portrayed through enthusiasm for independent learning, intellectual and self- development, or by demonstrating confidence, self-control, social skills, proper etiquette and commitment to professionalism in the workplace. It also includes the capability to plan for career development or further education. Aspects of character, such as honesty, punctuality, time management, and keeping to and maintaining important deadlines in a work environment, are also important personal skills.

10. Entrepreneurial skills require relevant knowledge, skills and expertise in key areas of an enterprise. Important personal qualities will include creativity, grit/determination and drive. The learning outcomes describe incremental development of these skills. The drive to be an entrepreneur is set as personal skills but also requires the requisite of relevant knowledge,

cognitive and functional skills.

11. Ethics and professionalism

Ethics and values are important in personal, organisational, societal/community and global settings as they guide personal actions and interactions at work and within the community at large. Awareness/understanding and respect of ethical, social and cultural differences and issues are important in the exercise of professional skills and responsibilities comprising integrity, professional conduct (professionalism) and standards of conduct (e.g., upholding regulations, laws and codes of good practices or code of professional conduct). A sensitive approach in dealings with other cultures adds value to this learning domain.

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