RCP

Regional
Cooperation
Platform

Practices on APEL for TVET Teacher Training Programs

- Admission and Advanced Standing Processes

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Research and Development

5

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Imprint

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List of Abbreviations

A.P.A	Accreditation of Prior Achievement
ABN	Australian Business Number
ACBS	Academic Credit Bank system (Korea)
ACR	Accredited Conservator-Restorer
ACTiVE	Advance Centre for Technical and Vocational Education
ACU	Australian Catholic University
APCL	Accreditation of Prior Certification Learning
APEL	Accreditation of Prior Learning
APL	Accreditation of Prior Learning
ARPL	Assessment and Recognition of Prior Learning
AU	Athabasca University
BC	British Columbia University
BCCAD	Bureau for Counselling, Career and Academic Development
C2T2	Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology
CAEL	Council for Adult and Experiential Learning
CAPLA	Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment
CLA	Centre for Learning Accreditation
CSD	Centre for Skills Development
DKM	Malaysian Skills Diploma
DLKM	Malaysian Skills Advance Diploma
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Agency
EUCEN	European University Continuing Education Network
EVC	Pearson Education Limited
EVK	Erkennen van elders of informeel Verworven Kwalificaties
FAQ	Frequently Asked Question

FAS	Irish National Training and Employment Authority
FE	Flexible Entry System
FETAC	Elders Verworwen Competencies, Netherlands
HE(SA)	Higher Education Institution in South Africa
HvA	Hogeschool van Amsterdam
MAE	Ministry of Advanced Education
MAQ	Mauritius Qualification Authority
MITD	Mauritius Institute of Training and Development
MLVK	National Vocational Training Council
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MQA	Malaysian Qualification Agency
MQF	Malaysian Qualifications Framework
NCVA	National Council for Vocational Awards
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NTCL	Normas Técnicas de Competencia Laboral (Mexico)
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
ORICC	Office for Research, Innovation, Commercialisation and Consultancy Management
OUM	Open University of Malaysia
PIA	Points of Information and Advice
PLA	Prior Learning Assessment
PLAR	Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
PRO	Public Relation Officer
RCP	Regional Cooperation Platform
RPA	Recognition of Prior Achievement
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South African Qualification Authority
SKM	Malaysian Skill Certification

TAFE	Training and Further Education
TSDL	Tutorial Services, Discussion Classes and Work-Integrated Learning
TT	Teacher Training
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UCAS	University and Colleges Admissions Service
UNISA	University of South Africa
UTHM	Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia
UW	University of Worcester
VAE	Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience
VPL	Valuation (and Validation) of Prior Learning
WOU	Wawasan Open University

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1   Introduction

1.0   Introduction

The concept of recognition of prior learning (RPL) is relatively new in Malaysia. It has only been implemented within a limited context of the Vocational Education and Training sector under the Department of Skills Development in conjunction with the launching of the Recognition of Prior Achievement (RPA) framework in 1996. Since then, the importance of RPL has gained greater attention with the increasing demand for certifications of existing skilled workforce and the need to accredit diverse academic qualifications of applicants for places in higher education. Currently, there are about 60, 000 uncertified workers in Malaysia whose competencies obtained from their previous achievements are yet to be assessed and recognised (Department of Skills Development, Ministry of Human Resource, 2009). The lack of certifications of skilled workforce has posed some economic consequences on Malaysia. These include increasing greater dependence on foreign workers as well as getting lesser favorable perception from foreign investors. Therefore, as part of the Malaysian government efforts to provide direction and support for a sustainable evolving system for the recognition of prior learning and prior experiential learning, the Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) has drafted a national policy proposal on RPL; known as the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APEL) in Malaysia – Policy Consideration. The policy is designed to give guidance to education providers, particularly the Malaysian tertiary and higher education and training institutions. This is to ensure the providers to have a proper mechanism for the implementation of APEL and carry out quality assurance measures. However, this draft has yet to be formalised and instituted due to calls for a more TVET-friendly framework.

1.1   Background of research

The Malaysian vocational education system is currently undergoing revamp. This is carried out through transformation of existing vocational schools into vocational colleges in order to produce competitive manpower (Ministry of Education, 2011). Consequently, this transformation has caused a greater demand for vocational education teachers equipped with high level of vocational skills. Nevertheless, formal skills training for vocational teachers requires an enormous amount of time and cost. Due to these constraints, depending on teacher training alone will not be able to quickly fulfill the urgent need of skilled teachers. Thus, there is a need to accredit the existing workforce who has the skills but not possessing sufficient academic qualification that would enable them to join the TVET teacher training programmes at universities. Though this idea sounds good, there is no action taken thus far to implement APEL in existing teacher training programme.

In the current scenario, the Malaysian Skills Certificates and Diploma in Technology awarded by the Department of Skills Development under the Ministry of Human Resource Malaysia are not currently being recognized as legitimate entry qualifications into most universities under the Ministry of Education. Thus, the people who already have the necessary skills needed for TVET teacher training are not permitted into the system. This is due to the lack of a formalised APEL framework. Outside TVET teacher training, limited implementation of APEL-RPL is taking place mostly under the Open

University system (under the open entry system). This involves some public and private training institutions under the Ministry of Human Resource. At public universities where APEL-RPL is being carried out, the implementation is limited to faculty that is not involved in TVET. Relevant research findings suggest that there is still a lack of awareness and clarity about the nature, value and purpose of RPL. Institutional bureaucracy, inexperience and absence of expertise in assessment of experiential learning remain as constraining factors for widespread implementation of APEL-RPL in Malaysia (Kaprawi, Razzaly, Raja (2010). While APEL-RPL implementation is in the process of gaining its maturity in Malaysia, an important question that needs to be dealt with urgently is whether the institutions currently offering APEL is also running a quality assured programme. With the limited implementation of APEL-RPL, quality assurance is an important issue to be dealt with. Furthermore, there is an urgency to assess the quality assurance of existing practices of APEL for TVET teacher training (TVET-TT) in participating countries. It is believed that while some participating RCP member countries could be going through a similar developmental stage as Malaysia, some may have advanced in implementing RPL with quality assurance. Thus, experience and expertise-sharing with participating RCP member countries is crucial in setting up a benchmark APEL for TVET-TT in Malaysia and the countries.

1.2 Purpose of research

The purpose of this research is to assess the quality assurance of existing practices on APEL for TVET teacher training (TVET-TT) among the participating RCP partner countries including Malaysia. The result of this research will be used in the implementation of a feasible APEL model in TVET-TT context in Malaysia and RCP member countries.

1.3 Research questions

In specific the research will provide relevant information to answer the following research questions:

1) What is the current status of APEL practices?
2) What are the similarities and differences of APEL practices?
3) What essential characteristics could be required within process and assessment in APEL practices for admission and advanced standing?
4) What is the extensive APEL Model for TVET-TT programs in regard to process and assessment?
5) How the extensive APEL Model for TVET-TT programs can be generically applicable to all the participating countries (Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam)?

1.4 Scope of research

The focus of the research is on places in Malaysia, Vietnam and Thailand where APEL is being practised with some similarities and differences. The research also focuses on the design of a new theoretical framework of APEL which is ideal and feasibly applicable in the three countries.

2　Literature Review

2.0　General overview of APEL

From historical perspective, APEL is developed based on the experiential education and learning approaches theory by Dewey (1998) and Kolb (1984) (Armsby, 2012). APEL can be defined as 'a process in which appropriate experiential and uncertified learning is given recognition and an academic value (Garnett et al. 2004). Malaysian Quality Agency defines APEL as a systematic process that involves identification, documentation and assessment of prior experiential learning. This means APEL revolves around the assessment of the experience that a person has gained from years of working or any other experience excluding formal class and lectures. MQA had also listed several examples of prior experiential learning which include:

1) Work experience; full-time, part-time or casual;
2) Voluntary and community work;
3) Family duties;
4) Hobbies or leisure activities;
5) Coaching and mentoring activities;
6) Attending and participating in seminars, conferences and workshops;
7) Attending short courses;
8) Fluency in other languages;
9) Private study and research; and
10) Any other life experiences.

Based on these examples, applicants could refer to a learning institution if they are interested to obtain further education but by taking into account the experience and knowledge they had acquired before. The experience that could be considered valid for accreditation is vary among institutions where the APEL system is implemented.

Other than APEL, another terminology that has always been used is Accreditation of Prior Certification Learning (APCL). APCL is a certificated learning based on qualifications or awards which are obtained through a formal programme of assessed learning. At higher learning institutions where certificated learning is carried out, their students are encouraged to check out Credit Transfer options prior to following APCL procedures (Staffordshire University, 2006). Table 2.1 shows the different terminologies for APEL used by different countries all around the world:

Table 1: **Different terminology for APEL all around the world**

	Countries	Abbreviation	Description
1.	Austria	-	Anerkennung von non-formalem und informellem Lernen (Recognition of non-formal and informal learning)
2.	Australia	RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
3.	Flemish Belgium	-	Link between recognition of non-formal and informal learning with previously acquired skills and competences.
4.	Canada	PLAR	Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
5.	Czech Republic	-	Ověřování a Uznávání Výsledků Dal□ího Vzdělávání (verification and recognition of further education results)
6.	Denmark	-	Realkompetence
7.	Greek	-	Αναγνώριση μη- τυπικής και άτυπης μάθησης (Recognition of non-formal and informal learning)
8.	Hungary	PLA	*Előzetes Tudás Értékelése* (Prior Learning Assessment)
9.	Ireland	RPL	Recognition Of Prior Learning
10.	Mexico	-	**Adult learning Sector:** *Acreditación y certificación de competencias y conocimientos previos* (accreditation and certification of previous competences and knowledge). *Upper Secondary Level: Acreditación y certificación de conocimientos correspondientes a niveles educativos o grados escolares adquiridos en forma autodidacta o a través de la experiencia laboral* (accreditation and certification of knowledge corresponding to an educational level or school grade acquired in a self-taught manner or by way of labour experience.) **Labour market:** *Certificación de la competencia laboral conforme a NTCL, independientemente de la forma en que se hayan adquirido los conocimientos, habilidades y destrezas implicados en dichas NTCL* (certification of labour competence according to NTCLs, regardless of the way knowledge, abilities and skills involved in those NTCLs have been acquired.)
11.	Netherland	EVC	*Erkennen van verworven competenties* (recognising acquired competencies)
12.	Norwegian	-	*Dokumentasjon og Verdsetting av Realkompetanse* (documentation and validation of formal, non-formal and informal competences)
13.	Slovenia	-	Assessment of non-formal (*Neformalno*) and informal (*Prilo.nostno*) learning (*Učenje*)
14.	South Africa	RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning

Accreditation on Prior Experience Learning (APEL) is one of the ways which skills and experience are to go for further study and get the certificate. APEL is an international programme and implemented in countries across the globe.officially recognised. Consequently, they could be used as added values that can help skilled people

2.1   Setting up RPL Process

In a project carried out by European University Continuing Education Network (EUCEN) (BeFlex, 2007), several tasks needed to set up RPL process in institution have been identified. Table 2.2 shows the tasks.

Table 2:   **Tasks needed to set up RPL (EUCEN, 2007)**

Setting Up RPL

Task	Immediate implications	Wider university implementation	Comment
1. Identify study programme that will accept RPL for entry or for credit or for part of a diploma	Where a programme of study has not previously accepted RPL for entry or exemption	Agreement about which programmes will accept RPL for credit may need to be negotiated with individual programme managers or may be cross school or faculty. Your institution may also have rules about how much credit or exemption can be achieved by RPL when using it towards a specific diploma	Your institution may have an overarching RPL policy or may be aiming to adhere to national or Europe guidelines. Limits may be placed on which programmes can accept RPL by professional body requirement.
2. Set up an advice and guidance process for individuals wishing to undertake RPL	To give effective advice and guidance staff will need to have a thorough understanding of what will need to be demonstrated to meet learning outcomes of the receiving programme. Staff will need to be confident to provide advice on the types of evidence that are appropriate especially when demonstrating learning through experience or informal routes.	Although where possible individuals seeking recognition for learning should dictate what evidence they choose to produce, in some cases institutions may set certain parameters.	Where evidence is being gathered from a particular occupational sector or employer it will be important for staff offering guidance to be familiar with the working context.
3. Design process for assessing evidence of prior learning produced by learners/ the process should also allow the volume of credit awarded for evidence produced to be judged.	Staff may need assessor training especially where they may need to develop new skill. Where RPL is managed by separate unit collaboration between that unit and the subject specialists from the programme(s) accepting RPL will need to take place. The assessment process will need to include verification of the results through some form of externality	The university may already have or wish to produce guidelines about assessment of RPL to ensure consistency of judgements made across different departments.	Since quality assurance of any assessment decisions made during RPL is essential the assessment process should be moderated to ensure equity across candidates or departments. This may involve some co-ordination across department/faculties.

Table 2: **(Cont.)**

Setting Up RPL

Task	Immediate implications	Wider university implementation	Comment
5. Ensure a robust quality assurance process for RPL. This needs to be aligned to quality assurance process for the programme(s) into which RPL is accepted.		The proposed assessment process may need to be considered alongside approval and assessment processes or the programme into which RPL is accepted to ensure transparency and parity between those gaining credit through RPL and those gaining it through a programme of learning.	

These lists of tasks can help institutions or company to build their own policy and process in implementing RPL based on their own needs and capabilities. Generally, every institution will have their own policy for the implementation. Each country in Europe for example has different APEL policy for its' local institutions and companies. It is important to have a good policy that can function well and beneficial to all participants.

2.2   Policies and guideline

A policy is a statement of principles that staff, students and other personnel must follow. Since APEL is implemented globally, the policies and guidelines of APEL differ for each country. It is up to the universities themselves that implement APEL. In fact, the name of the programme may vary as well. However, the purpose of the programme is similar wherever it is implemented which is to accredit non-formal and informal learning and experiences.

2.3   Policy key role

The City & Guilds Centre for Skills Development (CSD) has listed several key roles for policy drivers in pushing RPL towards greater prominence. These key roles have been practised by the drivers since the early implementation of RPL in early 1990s (Sims, 2010).

The first key role is creating equality. This especially concerns with education dropouts. It is believed that via RPL, this group of people can be brought back to the learning pathway and get better jobs. Consequently, this could boost the motivation and self-esteem of others. For countries with lack of equality and repression such as South Africa, this key role has been the main and explicit goal of their RPL policy.

The second key role is increasing focus on employer needs. Since RPL involve both the employers and employees, it helps both parties to understand each other in an effective and cost-saving ways in terms of skill levels in an organization and to demonstrate investment in staff.

The third key role is creating a dialogue of choice where RPL presents options to the customers to choose their training and education systems. The fourth key role concerns with practising efficiency. RPL identifies a person's skills and experience level which in turn serves as a basis for further training and development. This could save time and money and avoid duplication or repetition of learning the same thing.

The last key role is promoting a positive learning culture. Since RPL allows for certain forms of knowledge to be recognised as part of education, it encourages a culture in which learning is seen as a positive and encouraging goal for every individual.

These key roles have made RPL and APEL as good systems to be implemented in a field where academic levels of the workers are low. Their implementations could help to improve knowledge of the workers and at the same time provide them a formal qualification to recognise and appreciate their skills and experience.

2.3.1   Policy concept

Frick et al. (2006) in their writing stated a few concept in policy for APEL. The research was done in Stellenbosch University, South Africa where APEL is known as Assessment and Recognition of Prior Learning (ARPL). All these concepts of the policies can help in producing an effective implementation and practice of ARPL in higher education. These concepts have been extracted from the ARPL policy in the Stellenbosch University.

The first policy is conceptualisation of ARPL. The ARPL policy must be aligned with the university policy to ensure the benefit to all parties. ARPL policy forms part of an institutional vision to create a campus culture regarding diversity and contributing to societal development within a research-oriented scholar environment. The national requirement for South Africa for ARPL policy states that its adoption of ARPL is not merely based on external requirements but also with the belief that ARPL benefits individuals and institutions that have requested for it (Frick et al. 2006). Other than that, as for the faculties in implementing the ARPL, each faculty needs space for conceptualizing its ARPL policy within the framework and context of the institutional policy. Hence, by deriving faculty ARPL policies at the institution provide plenty of room for different interpretation and conceptualization of ARPL.

The next policy concept is purpose of ARPL. The main purpose of ARPL for Stellenbosch University and most of the higher educational institution in South Africa is to assess rather than to grant any credit or qualification. This means ARPL has functioned more as a pre-entrance mechanism, rather than as an active in-course progress mechanism. Armsby (2012) also stated that APEL is often used as part of the admission process to enable the candidates to enter a programme of study with "advanced standing".

There are also issues related to credit awarded from the faculties. There are faculty policies that allow credit to be awarded through ARPL. Despite this, there is no faculty policy related to ARPL that

allows inter-institutional agreements for awarding credit. Furthermore, despite the existence of the faculty policies, implementation plans to practise ARPL that abides by the policies where ARPL are also no explicitly stated. Hence, the purpose and principles of ARPL are not standardised for all learning environments within the institutions. Since ARPL is relatively new to the institutions, experience becomes an important element in policy and practice in the future. Frick et al. (2006) also stated that it is much easier to formulate policies based on experience stance but the policies will differ among the faculties as some will have more detailed explanations while others may just have surface information.

The third policy concept is shared processes. Since every programmes have its own assessments and pass requirements, it is easier to accommodate based on the case-by case basis by the unique academic environments. The differences between the postgraduate and undergraduate levels also need to be taken into consideration since ARPL is more common within the faculties at postgraduate level. The postgraduate level is much more complicated than its undergraduate counterpart as postgraduate studies do not only entail modular work but also research component. Therefore, faculty needs to specify the policy in order to address these differences for a better management.

Assessment strategies in ARPL policy is the fourth policy concept stated by Frick et al. (2006). In implementing ARPL, the assessment method is directly handled by the institution. The institution policy indicates that any ARPL assessment instruments that are functioning well will be continued and constantly refined qualitatively. As for the faculties, they will decide which forms of ARPL that will be given preferences according to contextual variables. The study of faculties in Stellenbosch Universities has given several indications of assessment instruments to be used in the ARPL process. The instruments are based on the faculties policy which includes:

1) Admission assessment instrument, for example admission and placement tests and challenge examinations that were assessed quantitatively.
2) Conditional admission, where an applicant is granted a special admission and then allowed to 'develop' his/her performance in a learning programme.
3) Supplementary work according to specified expectations assigned before final admission.
4) Supplementary work during the course of the learning programme.
5) Recognition of a formal learning obtained at other institutions such as diplomas or degrees.
6) Recognition of a formal learning not recognised as a qualification (or part thereof) by other higher education institutions such as short courses, workshops, in-service training courses and projects.
7) Recognition of a non-formal or an informal learning, for example in-service training undertaken at the initiative of the applicant that would give him some advantages when accepted into the prospective programme.
8) Service though involvement in regional/national associations/ forums/ working groups.
9) Evidence of specific skills acquired while holding leadership positions such as writing skills (articles), developing courses.
10) Participation in conferences, workshops, papers and posters presentations.

11) Special awards for exceptional achievement.
12) Personal interviews.
13) Learning portfolios, including an extensive set of documents and/or other evidence to illustrate prior learning that is qualitatively assessed by competent academic staff.

With all these instruments, it still depends on how well the assessors are trained and being competent in using these instruments effectively within their contexts.

The next policy concept is ARPL support. In order to develop and implement ARPL in an institution, support from the entire participant must be adequate and appropriate. This can be done by establishing relevant support systems. The support system must also be arranged so that both institutional and faculty policies would serve to prevent duplication, indicate possible gaps and promote the available services. By having these support systems, faculties must define their support system as clearly consisting of ARPL committees and ARPL facilitators. These individuals are appointed to assist the candidates in ARPL process and utilised existing structures such as programme committee. ARPL is not only limited to local candidates as foreign learners can also apply for it. Hence, the International Office plays an important role in the ARPL process when involving any foreign applicants. In this case, the policies also are very important because they are the only information available for these learners. Despite the availability of these support systems, it is important for the staff themselves to be well prepared. Otherwise, the operation or the ARPL process will not be smooth and efficient. Therefore, the policymakers must consider this factor to be included either in the institutional or faculty policy besides having a support system.

The sixth policy concept is monitoring and record keeping. The policy of the institution assigns the monitoring and record keeping tasks as the responsibilities of faculties and their programme committees or by committees appointed specifically for ARPL. It is important for the policy to cater to this concept. This is because ARPL services will only be credible if they adhere to the stringent quality assurance measures. Monitoring and record keeping can facilitate many ARPL processes including post-entry support of ARPL learners at the faculty. This concept also helps in standardising the system. In contrast, poor monitoring and record keeping will make it extremely difficult to trace the factors behind a successful or failed implementation of ARPL and its candidates within the overall system.

The last policy concept is ARPL cost recovery. The crucial element for this concept is fairness to all applicants. This is because in ARPL applications and processes, different assessment instruments may require different monetary and time input from the applicants. Therefore, variations in possible fees charged for ARPL services may be allowed. According to the policy, the institutional may have less information and detailed specification on the cost recovery. This is because the main responsibility for implementation is carried out by the faculties. Hence, the faculties will have better knowledge on how much the ARPL assessment instrument would cost. This cost can increase whenever the ARPL requires more resources.

It is important for policies to have all these concepts as they can help in giving better implementation and practice of ARPL. However, some of the existing policies in Stellenbosch University often fail to

give clear directions for a contextualised practice eventhough it is aligned with the national and/or institutional policy. Continuous monitoring, debates and revisions about the policy at the faculties will lead to a better policy in the future.

In the Hogeschool van Amsterdam (HvA), RPL started in 2002 with the goals to determine a flexible, tailor-made bachelor degree programme. Students only learn what they need to learn and with the possible of shortening the regular 4-year bachelor programme substantially. The HvA is the first university of applied sciences with an accredited RPL system.

The five phases of VPL in HvA is actually the general phases that exist in the general VPL policy. The five phases consists of commitment and awareness, recognition, the valuation or assessment of competencies, the development plan or actual valuation and structural implementation of VPL (EUCEN, 2007). Table 2.1 shows the five phases of the VPL policy.

Table 3:   **The Five Phases of the VPL Policy**

Five Phases	
Phase 1 Commitment and awareness	Commitment and awareness of the individual's competencies and the value associates with them both individually and as he interpreted by other in context. Being able to record competencies in a 'made to measure' way is vital for this understanding.
Phase 2 Recognition	Identifying or listing competencies is usually done with the help of a portfolio. Apart from a description of work experience and diplomas, the portfolio is filled with other evidence of competencies acquired. Statements from employers, references, papers or photos show the existence of certain competencies. The evidence can be aimed at the profession or position the VPL procedure is developed for. In other cases, it can be an open portfolio or a complete overview. Evidence can be aimed at valuation or personal profiling. Participant compiles the portfolio with or without help.
Phase 3 The Valuation or assessment of competencies	The content of the portfolio is then valued and assessed, where necessary followed by an extra assessment. The path followed by the person presenting the evidence is unimportant, only the result of the assessment counts. The second step of the process is a valuation. This may be a validation on an organizational, sector or national level in the form of certificates, diplomas or career moves, or a valuation in the form of advice on career opportunities.
Phase 4 The development plan or the actual valuation	This phase aim at the development if the individual by turning the validation and/or advice into an action plan. On the basis of the valued competencies and information about missing competencies or other strengths, a personal development is made. This plan is about learning activities what will be done in formal and non-formal learning environments, in work situations, during a change of position, by offering coaching or creating an environment in which informal learning is stimulated.
Phase 5 Structural implementation of VPL	The last phase of the VPL process focuses on the structural implementation of VPL in the training and personnel policy of an organization.

2.3.2 *South Africa (University of South Africa)*

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) at University of South Africa (UNISA) is based on the premise that people learn both inside and outside formal learning structures and that this learning can be worthy of recognition and credit. RPL assumes that competencies, skills and knowledge learned in one sphere are transferable. The RPL process, being stakeholder and needs-driven, is underpinned by the following principles:

1) Provide affordable access, quality flexible assessment, student support and feedback to UNISA's candidates;
2) Provide educational opportunities to life-long learners within the African context;
3) Follow a student-centered and client-centered approach;
4) Provide holistic and flexible assessment;
5) Subscribe to a developmental approach for the implementation of RPL;
6) Recognize the diversity of knowledge and learning style;
7) Provide a rigorous and transparent assessment and moderating process to protect the integrity of academic standards;
8) Be committed to community needs and development;
9) Address the achievement of equality and social redress and justice;
10) Empower potential students by:
11) Providing access to formal education and training; and
12) Correctly placing them in formal and non-formal training programmes at levels which will be to their maximum advantage.

2.3.3 *Australia (Australian Catholic University)*

Australian Catholic University (ACU) supports the approach which values all learning, however achieved, through an open and transparent approach to assessment. The principles for assessment of applications for RPL are:

1) Be evidence and outcome-based;
2) Be equitable, culturally inclusive, transparent and accountable;
3) Involve assessment processes of a comparable standard and integrity to those used to assess the relevant unit/course/qualification;
4) Be subject to quality assurance practices comparable to other assessment practices within the University.

The processes for RPL in ACU are designed to:

1) Identify what the applicants know and can do;
2) Match the applicant's skills, knowledge and experiences to specific professional requirements and unit/course/qualification and ;earning and competency outcomes;
3) Assess the applicant's attainment against those requirements and outcomes;
4) Where appropriate, credit the applicant for their skills, knowledge, understanding and experience;
5) Record the outcome; and
6) Provide advice of the outcome to the applicant and other relevant persons.

Credit awarded in ACU through RPL may take the form of specified credit, block credit or unspecified credit, in accordance with the Academic Regulations. Eligibility for credit does not guarantee a place in any course for which credit may be granted.

2.3.4   North America (Algonquin College, Canada)

The Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) applicants are adult learners who come with unique sets of goals, attributes, experiences and learning styles.

For eligibility, the applicants must be 19 years of age or a secondary school graduate. Students are required to take twenty-five percent (25%) of the course required in their program at the College. Therefore, the maximum percentage of learning in any program that can be earned through PLAR will be limited to seventy-five percent (75%) of the total program requirements.

PLAR candidates in the College Bachelor of Applied Studies Degree programs may be awarded no more than fifty percent (50%) of the total number of hours of the program of study based on prior learning assessment and recognition. For fees, the PLAR fee is established by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and published on the PLAR website. For transcription, learning recognized through prior learning will be given a "CR" credit designation or a letter grade on the transcript, indicating that the course learning requirements have been successfully achieved.

The assessor will determine if a letter grade or CR (credit) designation is appropriate for the course being assessed. Failed attempts at a PLAR challenge will not be recorded on the candidate's transcript. For quality assurance in assessing and recognizing prior learning, each academic and administrative has its own principles. For academic principles, there are five elements namely:

1) Credit should be awarded only for learning, and not for experience.
2) College credit should be awarded only for post-secondary learning.
3) Credit should be awarded only for learning that has a balance, appropriate subject, between theory and practical application.
4) The assessment must be made by experts in the appropriate subject matter.
5) Credit should be appropriate to the academic context in which it is earned.

For administrative principles:
1) Credit awards and their transcript entries should be monitored to avoid giving credit for the same learning.
2) Policies and procedures applied to assessment, including provision for appeal, should be fully disclosed and prominently available.
3) Fees charged for assessment should be based on the services performed in the process and not determined by the amount of credit awarded.
4) All personnel involved in the assessment of learning should receive adequate training for the function they perform, and there should be provision for their continued professional development.
5) Assessment programs should be regularly monitored, reviewed, evaluated and revised as needed to reflect changes in the needs being served and in the state of the assessment arts.

Other than that, there are also principles for Quality Assurance:

1) The type of test(s) should match the nature of the learning being assessed.
2) The tests should be carefully designed to elicit evidence of the essential learning necessary to receive credit in the course.
3) Questions/problems should represent sufficient sampling of situations and embedded knowledge and skills to allow for a generalized summative judgement.
4) Test questions, assignments or performance tasks should match learning requirements.
5) The passing score should be similar to the level of achievement expected of students enrolled in the course.
6) A combination of evaluation measures should be used in order to promote validity, reduce the negative effects of anxiety and cultural bias and accommodate different learning styles.
7) The construction, delivery, evaluation and storage of the results of tests should be secure.

2.3.5 North America (British Columbia Universities, Canada)

It is the policy of the University to grant credit or advanced standing, on the basis of prior learning acquired through formal studies or professional, work or life experience.

The university supports the 1999 PLA Implementation Guidelines, which were developed by the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology (C2T2) in collaboration with the BC public post-secondary and are endorsed by Ministry of Advanced Education (MAE). The central principles for BC are:

1) Credit is awarded only for learning and not for experience.
2) Credit will be awarded only for university-level learning.
3) The determination of competence levels and credit awards will be made by appropriate subject matter and academic experts.

For students who wish to investigate the possibility to have prior learning recognized by the University, the student should first consult with the Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Office. Advice will be on the procedures of submitting an application and the preparation of an application, including costs and deadlines.

The Central PLA office will contact specific content and subject experts for the assessment of an application and assist faculty with guidelines of how to assess a claim. The central office is also responsible for keeping records, collection of fees and of reporting outcomes to the Registrar's office.

2.3.6 Asia (Malaysian Qualification Agency)

APEL in Malaysia has been implemented in order to fulfill the National Plan for Life Long Learning among the citizen. Under the Enculturation of Lifelong Learning Plan 2011-2015, lifelong learning is defined as learning engaged by every one of age 15 and above except professional students. Professional students are those who are enrolled full-time in school, college or university with the aim of acquiring academic qualification or skills. The aim for this plan is to increase the number of lifelong learners in Malaysia up to 22.6 million in 2020 which equal to 65.9 % of the total population. Table 4 shows the number of lifelong learners in Malaysia from 2005 to 2020.

Table 4:   **Number of lifelong learners in Malaysia from 2005 to 2020**

	2005	**2010**	**2015**	**2020**
Total Population	26, 447, 300	28, 960, 000	31, 817, 444	34, 276, 423
15 Years Old And Above	18, 617, 200	21, 290, 000	23, 645, 259	26, 210, 000
Professional Students:				
Secondary (Fom 3-5)	1, 200, 972	1, 293, 741	1, 421, 393	1, 531, 244
Tertiary	1, 140, 040	1, 485, 600	1, 759, 200	2,087, 900
TotalProfessional Learners	2, 341, 012	2, 779, 341	3, 180, 593	3,619, 144
Potential Lifelong Learners	16, 276, 188	18, 510, 659	20, 464, 666	22, 590, 856
Percent Of Total Population (%)	61.5	63.9	64.3	65.9

In order to achieve the target for this plan, accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) was introduced. In Malaysia, APEL is monitored by the Malaysia Qualification Agency (MQA) in collaboration from various organizations including government and non-government. APEL can be requested by learners to support a transition between informal and formal learning.

As the national body for APEL in Malaysia, MQA had published the national policy and guideline for APEL. The purpose of this guideline is to:

1) Support the practices of APEL as part of lifelong learning agenda in Malaysia, besides promoting public awareness and understanding of APEL;
2) Support the implementation of provisions under Section 74-77, Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act 2007 and the proposed Malaysian Qualifications Agency (Prior Learning and Credit Transfer) Regulations 2009; and
3) Provide a set of core principles to ensure consistency in approaches to accrediting prior experiential learning (MQA, 2011)

The aim of the core principles of APEL is to ensure effective and quality-assured practice so that the users of the guideline will have confidence in the outcome of APEL. In Malaysia, APEL is bound by the core principles stated by the MQA namely:

1) Prior experiential learning should be recognized regardless of how and where it was acquired, provided that the learning is relevant to the learning or competency outcomes;
2) Assessment should be evidence based, equitable, unbiased, fair, flexible, valid and reliable;
3) Assessment should be undertaken by experts/practitioners in the subject content or skills area, policies and procedures;

4) Assessment methods should accommodate the literacy levels and experiences of students, hence providing ways for students to demonstrate the required outcomes;

5) Decision should be accountable, transparent and subject to appeal and review;

6) Information and support services should be actively promoted, easy to understand and recognize the diversity of learners; and

7) Quality assurance mechanisms should be clear and transparent to ensure confidence in the decisions.

The guideline also underlines the admission criteria for applicant to apply APEL. These criteria were set by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) as follows:

1) Programme at the Certificate Level
   The candidate should be more than 19 years old in the year of application and possess relevant work experience.

2) Programme at the Diploma level
   The candidate should be more than 20 years old in the year of application and possess relevant work experience.

3) Programme at the Master level
   The candidate should be more than 21 years old in the year of application and possess relevant work experience.

4) Programme at the Doctoral level
   The candidate should be more than 35 years old in the year of application and possess relevant work experience.

Based on these criteria, applicants can choose a suitable programme level they want to take and gain qualifications in order to be accepted. Beside this, all applicants still need to undergo assessments conducted by the MQA. After successfully applying for APEL, a student may then apply for enrollment in any institutions. However, this still depends on the entry requirement of the respective professional bodies in order to be admitted via APEL. This is because the suitability to apply APEL on the programme does not guarantee an automatic admission.

Applicant must take note that, in order to apply admission to higher education institution through APEL, they must successfully pass this assessment done by MQA first. APEL certification from MQA will qualify the applicant to apply for admission to any recognized Higher Education Provider (MQA, 2011).

2.3.7 Asia (Open University of Malaysia)

APEL is relevant at Open University of Malaysia (OUM) as an institution of lifelong learning as well as for learners who are mainly adults in the workforce. The APEL principles used at OUM incorporated Evan's (1988) guiding principle to APEL. Among them:

1) Learner is responsible for RPL claims

   Learning occurs throughout an individual's lifetime; consciously or subconsciously. Where relevant, learning that can be measured, can also be assessed for academic credentials regardless of its source and time. Through APEL, OUM has created an avenue for their learners; the working adults, to exchange experiential learning for academic credits. The prime responsibility now lies on the learners as they must adopt a proactive approach to obtain certification for their prior learning. They must be able to document what has been learnt, relate it to course learning outcomes and provide sufficient evidence to support their claims.

2) Credits are awarded for learning, not experience

   APEL awards credits based on learning and not on the experience itself. A common error in assessing prior learning occurs when learning is quantified by the amount of time spent having the experience rather than evaluating the learning that takes place. Not all experience is relevant to the learning outcomes for a course. APEL in particular only considers significant, relevant and evidenced learning. Experiential learning that contains academic value can be converted into course credits upon proper assessment and validation methods.

3) Separation of roles between advisor and assessor

   There should be a distinction between the roles of the APEL advisor and assessor. An APEL advisor provides training and professional advice for learners. The advisor takes on the role of a facilitator who assists learners in preparing and compiling claims and evidence for prior learning assessment. The assessor, on the other hand, is the subject matter/course expert from the faculty. The assessor evaluates the learner's claims by examining the evidence and using various validation methods, verifies and make judgement on the award of prior learning credits. The distinction between both roles is necessary to ensure objectivity and neutrality in assessment.

4) Quality assurance within the APEL process

   A quality assurance mechanism must be established in order to create confidence amongst APEL users and the general public. The mechanism should comprise of: the inclusion of APEL policies at institution level, the establishment of an APEL assessment center, clear guidelines and instructions on APEL procedures, and continuous improvement in APEL services to its stakeholders.

2.3.8 Europe

In Europe, there are varieties of name or term that is related to the accreditation or validation of this informal and non-formal learning. All these terms are not only different in the meaning of the names themselves. The differences exist in policies, learning cultures and systems. These differences are more to variations in the structure of the labor market, level and method of co-operation among the responsible parties, civil effect, socio-economic factors and all sorts of implicit elements that are called national, traditional learning culture (Duvekot et al. 2005).

The term used in Europe is Validation of Prior Learning (VPL) as for the network project between the countries. The procedure for VPL in general consists of five elements: commitment and awareness of the value of one's competence, identification of personal competences, valuation and/or validation of

these competences, (advice on the) development of one's competences and finally structurally embedded this competence-based development process into a personal or organization steered and owned policy (Devekot et al. 2005).

VPL can be divided into two main types which are summative and formative. The summative approach aims to get an overview of competences, recognition and valuation and certification. As for the formative approach, it happens when the validation goes one step further and includes practical learning and/or personal competence-development. The approach also aims at development by designing a personal learning career and development path (Duvekot et al. 2005).

In 2005, under the Leonardo-network project Valuation (and Validation) of Prior Learning (VPL), the European nations conducted several research identifying and understanding VPL implementation in the region. This three years project had gained several outcome related to VPL. In the period between 2002-2003 the network focused on creating an inventory of national learning cultures. In 2004 the network discussed the possibilities for designing a European model to cover the whole VPL-process. This network consists of wide range of disciplines namely research and knowledge, organisation, companies, ministries, vocational colleges, branch organisations, umbrella organisations, labour organisations, etc. In this network, VPL is seen as a tool/way to help people to utilise all the knowledge and skills that they have. To put this in an analogy, it is no more dealing with the a half-empty glass just like in the traditional way but it is more like in a dealing with a half-filled glass.

In this project, the Euro Commission had formulated a proposal on Common Principles for VPL 2. The principles consist of:

1) The overall aim of validation is to make visible and value the full range of qualifications and competence held by an individual, irrespective of where these have been acquired. The purpose of this validation may be supporting an outgoing learning process as well as aiming at certification.
2) Validation of non-formal and informal learning must serve the needs of individual citizens. This means that individual entitlements have to be clearly stated, particularly in relation to issues like privacy, ownership of results and tight to appeal,
3) Institutions and stakeholders (public organizations, private enterprises and voluntary organizations) face certain responsibilities when they initiate validation, for examples in terms of providing proper guidance and support. These obligations will differ according to the specific field of activity.
4) Confidence is a necessary pre-requisite for successful development and implementation of validation of non-formal and informal learning. This requires well-defined standards, clear information on how assessments are conducted and on which basis conclusions are drawn, clear information about the purpose of validation, for example time and cost involved as well as support/guidance provided.
5) Impartiality is a crucial feature of validation and relates to the roles and responsibilities of the assessors involved in the validation process. It is important to avoid undue mixing of roles as this will negatively affect overall confidence and credibility to validation results.

6) Credibility and legitimacy must be based on the inclusion of the relevant stake holder at all appropriate levels. The social and professional credibility of validation reflects the inclusion and commitment of relevant stakeholders.

In overall, the principles aim at encouraging the learning process or the personal development as in the lifelong learning system, instead of slowed it down. This makes the individual as the central in the successful implementation of lifelong learning.

2.3.9 United Kingdom (Staffordshire University)

Implementation of APEL in United Kingdom can be seen implemented in Staffordshire University. The university support and encourage the use of APL in all academic Faculties and Programmes. However, there is several University programmes that are accredited by professional bodies and may be denies students the opportunity to APL parts of these course (Staffordshire University, 2006). There are six principles for APL in Staffordshire University. The principles are:

1) The APLS (Accreditation of Prior Learning Scheme) will enable an individual to incorporate previous relevant theoretical and/or practical learning into a programme study.
2) Accreditation is a means of considering all relevant formal certificated learning and experiential learning for credit towards a named award.
3) Units of learning, theoretical or practical that are accepted for accreditation must be of compatible value to the programme content and academic level.
4) The process of accreditation will be rigorous to ensure the integrity of the awards.
5) Information on APL will be made available to students and an evaluation of the progress of the scheme will be included in annual review and monitoring reports.
6) Students who have APCL or APEL a module or modules will still have access to all module learning resources if desired.

2.3.10 United Kingdom (University of Worcester)

There University of Worcester (UW) recognises the value of learning wherever it occurs, either to meet programme entry requirements or to achieve credit towards specific awards. However, accreditation of prior learning will only be possible where learning, appropriate to the outcomes of the relevant entry requirements, module(s) or award level, can be assured to be academically valid. There are seven principles for RPL in UW:

1) Credit is given for learning and not for experience alone, and where the level, standard and content are relevant to the particular course. The award of credit is a matter of consistent application of academic judgement, and must result from a transparent and demonstrably rigorous and fair decision making process.
2) Credit will not normally be given for learning that has taken place more than six years previously, and will be allocated according to Table 5 below. Credit can only be given for whole modules and no more than one third of credit awarded should be experiential. Credit may not be counted twice for the same award level.

Table 5: **Credit required based on the award given**

Award	Credit required for award	Maximum credit allowed	NQF Level
Certificate Of Higher Education	120	60	4
Higher National Certificate	150	75	4/5
Diploma Of Higher Education	240	120	4/5
Higher National Diploma	240	120	4/5
Foundation Degree	240	120	4/5
Degree	300	240	4/5
Degree With Honors	360	240*	4/5/6
Postgraduate Certificate	60 (M)	30 (M)	7
Postgraduate Diploma	120 (M)	60 (M)	7
Master's Degree	180 (M)	120 (M)	7

* Students who have gained level 6 credits from professionally recognised, mandatory awards, or students who are required, as a professional requirement, to undertake level 6 study outside the UW, if UW does not run the required module of study, may be awarded additional credits up to a maximum of 40 credits in honours degree programmes identified above. More information on the National Qualification Levels can be found in the Undergraduate Regulatory Framework.

3) APL has been accredited by the University will be clearly identified on students' transcripts.

4) All credits awarded will be relevant to identified modules or awards. Accreditation for non-specific 'free' module is allowed, where equitable. Detailed assessment of credit whether based on certificated or experiential learning, can only be made by subject specialists. This is because the assessment can only by those with detailed subject knowledge. These specialists should ensure that the experience represents the achievement of learning outcomes comparable to those which would have been achieved had the course of study against which credit is claimed been taken. This may be assessed by any methods appropriate to what is being assessed and should be verified by another specialist.

5) It is the responsibility of the applicants to prepare an application and submit adequate documentation. They should identify in advance whether they wish to apply for an admission to a course or a credit. Guidance and counseling may be sought from the University if appropriate.

6) The role of the advisor, the member of staff who advises a student on the production and submission of an APEL claim, must be separated and differentiated from the role of an assessor, the member of staff who exercises academic judgement in assessing the claim. In order to maintain the objectivity and rigour of the APEL portfolio assessment, the assessor(s) should be subject specialists who are able to evaluate the evidence offered and establish the authenticity of the claim. All staff with the support, guidance and assessment of claims for the accreditation of prior learning will be expected to undertake appropriate training.

7) Student should be fully informed by the adviser of the range of evidence that would be considered appropriate in a submission. The portfolio of academic/professional evidence presented should be appropriate to the proposed programme, sufficient in length, depth and level, authentic and recent. Evidence should be included of underpinning knowledge. Where a submission of learning from experience has demonstrated learning equivalent to that of an existing course unit the credits and level allocated for the submission will be the same. Candidates may be offered the opportunity to complete an independent learning module based

on their past experience. This module may, where appropriate, be included in the credit requirement for award, and may be graded and counted towards the classification of the award.

8) Credit awarded through APCL will count towards the attainment of the award, but will not count towards the classification of the award.

9) Students may pass some modules without having to obtain all the learning outcomes associated with it. Students seeking APL should be awarded credit for modules on a comparable basis.

10) The Head of Registry Services will be responsible for coordinating the APL application process. Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that University staffs are equipped to provide appropriate information for students making enquiries about APL.

11) The University will charge an appropriate fee for the processing of APL claims. Applicants will be advised whether a fee will be charged. Fees for APL claims are reviewed annually, and current charges can be found on the University website.

2.3.11 *United Kingdom (University of Manchester)*

Principles:

1) Credits may be given for prior learning, where the level, standard, content and relevance of that learning are appropriate to a particular programme of study.

2) Decisions regarding the accreditation of prior learning area is a matter of academic judgment, with the main consideration being whether the prior learning is generally equivalent to the learning that otherwise would have been assessed during the course unit. With regards to PGT programme, it is advisable that AP(E)L should normally be accepted during the introductory stage of the programme only.

3) No AP(E)L award should be given if a course unit is partially completed. Credit can only be given after completion of the whole course units after considerations have been given to map the Intended Learning Outcomes of the units with the evidence on prior learning provided.

4) Prior learning or experience which has already been counted for another programme cannot be considered again for AP(E)L except under special circumstances permitted by professional bodies.

5) All applicants for AP(E)L must be treated equitably regardless of the sources of the prior learning that are being considered including age, gender, marital status, ethnicity, disability, religious belief or sexual orientation of the applicant.

6) AP (E)L credit will normally be accepted within a maximum of five years after it was awarded.

7) Normally a maximum of half of an undergraduate programme may be given as APL credits in any one year and one-third of a postgraduate programme. Table 6 shows the maximum volume to be applied.

Table 6: **Maximum volume of credits for a programme to be applied**

Award	Maximum credits which can be awarded under AP(E)L	Total UoW credits for award
Certificate of HE	60	120
Diploma of HE	120	240
Ordinary Degree of Bachelor	100 (Year 1 -50 credits Year 2 – 50 credits)	300
BA Honors (3 year programme)	Year 1 -60 credits Year 2 – 60 credits	360
Integrated degree of master (4 year programme)	Year 1 - 60 credits Year 2 – 60 credits Year 3 – 60 credits	480
Advanced standing * (3 years programme)	Entrance into Year 2 – 10 credits	240
Advanced standing * (4 years programme)	Entrance into Year 2 – 20 credits Entrance into Year 3 – 20 credits	360
Postgraduate certificate	Would not normally allow any AP(E)L credits	60
Postgraduate diploma	30 (not dissertation or equivalent)	120
Masters degree	60 (not dissertation or equivalent)	180
Master Degree (for longer programmes the total credit requirement will be increased pro rata to the length of the programme)	The amount of AP(E)L credits should be increased pro rata to the length of the programme.	e.g. full-time MBA - 360

*Advanced Standing – relates to students being admitted onto a programme to any year after the first. The volume of credit exempted for advanced standing will not exceed one sixth of the credits in any year. The award of the Degree of Bachelor or the Integrated Degree of Master for a student admitted to a programme with advanced standing requires completion of at least the final year of full-time study (or its part-time equivalent) at the University of Manchester.

8) Special consideration needs to be given to students who have been granted the full amount of AP(E)L in their entry programme but fail the minimum number of University if Manchester credits and have to exit with a lesser award. School would need to check that students have completed sufficient Manchester credit to exit with the lower award. If the student has not completed enough credits, they may only be eligible to receive a transcript of their results.

2.3.12 United Kingdom (Pearson Education Ltd.)

Pearson encourages the use of RPL where it is of values to the centres and learners in facilitating assessment. Centres which use RPL must follow these principles and keep appropriate records.

The use and application of RPL is of particular valueble to learners without formal qualifications, who are either in employment, preparing to enter, or returning to employment. It enables them gain all or part of a qualification without having to undertake a formal learning programme.

RPL can be used where a learner has not had their prior learning formally recognized. It focuses on assessment and awarding for prior learning which may count as evidence towards:

1) A unit accumulated towards a full Edexcel qualification.
2) Unit or units recognized by an Edexcel Certificate of Achievement
3) A full Edexcel qualification.

All evidence must be evaluated using the stipulated learning outcomes and assessment criteria from the relevant qualification specification. In assessing a unit using the RPL, an assessor must be convinced that the evidence produced by the learner meets the assessment standard established by the learning outcome and its related assessment criteria. Centres must have personnel with appropriate expertise and knowledge to facilitate the assessment.

It is acceptable to claim for entire qualification through RPL although this is not the formal practice because it would be unusual for a learner to be able to offer prior achievement that completely matches every aspect of requirements during a qualification assessment.

The prior achievement that would provide the evidence would be varied across the sectors depending on the extent of experience, technological changes and nature of the outcome claimed. If the currency of any evidence is in doubt, the assessor may use questions to check the learner's competence.

The RPL process is not concerned with allowing exceptional entry to or exemption from a programme of study. The process also does not allow recognition of any unit or qualification assessed by external assessment only. This is because such units are subject to specific evidence requirement.

2.3.13 United Kingdom (FETAC, Ireland)

FETAC is a single national body for furthering education and training in Ireland. It is now a responsible party for giving awards that was previously given by CERT (Failte Ireland), FAS, the National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA) and Teagasc.

The objective of FETAC's RPL policy is to facilitate access, transfer and progression of learners through the recognition of prior learning within the national framework of qualifications. FETAC promotes the recognition of prior learning through quality assured providers in relation to entry, credit, exemptions and access to awards.

FETAC will encourage providers, to facilitate in as much as possible, learners to gain recognition of prior learning for the purposes of getting entry to programmes, exemptions from programme requirements, credit towards an award and eligibility for a full award within the framework of qualifications.

Provider assessing the prior learning will be required to operate in a fair and consistent manner. As the Recognition of Prior Learning is essentially a mode of assessment, learners will be required to meet the assessment criteria specified for FETAC awards.

To ensure overall credibility and consistency of the processes for the recognition of prior learning, FETAC will monitor and evaluate providers in accordance with quality assurance and programme validation requirements.

Finally, it will be possible for learners who can demonstrate the acceptable standards for an award and independent of programmes to seek a FETAC award. FETAC will request the assistance of providers to confirm the achievement of the standards for the award.

FETAC's policy is underpinned by the principles of access, transparency, quality and rigour which are consistent with FETAC values and policies developed and reflect national and international best practices.

As for provider, they will offer recognition of prior learning to attain entry/access to a programme and to gain exemptions from programme requirements.

1) Entry/access
   A learner may seek entry to a programme where he/she does not meet the standard entry criteria on the basis of prior learning experiences. In this case a learner will demonstrate to the provider that he/she has the capacity to successfully participate on the programme.

2) Exemptions
   A provider may grant an exemption from a requirement of a programme to a learner on the basis of prior learning experience at the point of entry to a programme.

   Exemptions from programmes generally relate to exemption(s) from particular requirements of a programme and can include exemption from attendance or participation in parts of the programme requirements.

   The granting of an exemption is the responsibility of the provider offering the programme in which the prospective learner wishes to participate. The provider's procedure on granting of exemptions will be approved by FETAC at the stage of programme validation within the Quality Assurance Policy agreements.

3) Credit towards an award
   A provider may grant a credit to a learner on the basis of prior learning. FETAC aims to introduce a credit framework for new awards. Until that time providers will not be required to facilitate learners for credit. FETAC will advise providers of procedures and guidelines regarding credit at that time.

2.4   The model and process of APEL

There have been lots of debates around the APEL-RPL purpose, role, scope, outcomes and the terminology itself. These have led to the development of different models which will be discussed

below. These models represent different concept about what knowledge is and what kind of knowledge should be recognised or promoted (Kaprawi, 2010). The process also varies for every country in terms of the steps, assessment methods and how they look like. In general the process is carried out for the same purpose which is to assess and award the prior experiential learning gained by the candidates. This includes informal, formal and non formal learning. Like any evaluation process, processes for APEL generally consist of three main stages namely pre-assessment, assessment and post-assessment processes. The process of assessing and accrediting prior learning is a highly complex one since it requires a delicate balance between academic assessment and student support (UNISA, 2005). Every institution that apply APEL will have their own processes for students' enrolment via APEL. Some will also have their own processes in assessing the qualifications of the applicants.

2.4.1   South Africa

a)   ARPL model in South Africa

Based on several theories of learning, the three main models of Assessment and Recognition of Prior Learning (ARPL) ware developed. These models include the credit exchange model (also known as the recognition of prior accredited learning), the developmental model and the transformational model (Frick et. al, 2006). These models enable all the role players in RPL to negotiate its focus and their own roles within the RPL system. Again, these models represent different concept about what knowledge is and what kinds of knowledge should be recognized. The study by Motaung (2007) list down the three models which are:

1) A Credit-exchange Approach
   This is straight forward notion of matching the knowledge acquired informally or non-formally with a specified standard or requirement of a qualification or the outcomes represented by registered credits in a qualification framework. It can be defined as the ability of an individual to perform several job-tasks or roles as a pre-defined standard. Candidates simply provide evidence of knowledge achieved and skills gained. This approach will enable them to obtain credit for formal courses completed at a previous institution when applying for a place at offering institutions. The aim is clearly to get the achievement of certification credits and focus on the process to ensure the skills and knowledge measure matched with the content of the curriculum and defined standard. This is a practical approach towards recognising knowledge achieved for qualification processes.

2) A development Approach
   The approach emerges from 'Kolb's experiential learning' theories. The Kolb's learning cycles were used as the preferred approach to determine prior learning. The model links the critical reflection stage during experiential learning with the identification of the learning derived from the experience. APEL in this model is an integral part of assessment and accreditation process of institution. Its offers mentored skill identification, skills documentation and the preparation of evidence like portfolio. The candidates need to be guided and coached to formalise the knowledge or learning achieved through experience. The aim of this model is to support and promote the personal and intellectual development of the APEL candidates. Thus to recognise that there may be valuable learning's happened that are

not reflect in the formal curriculum. It is based on the idea of experiential learning that learning acquired through experience need to be thought about and applied to new situation. It is emphasis that the model is more on the individual experience of the learner and what they actually learned.

APEL can be used as a part of a developmental process, where the candidates engage in a process of self-actualisation, personal development, self-knowledge and understanding of the world and their place. APEL itself offers candidates an opportunity to learn the skills of reflection and self-evaluation. Assessment process in the developmental model involves interviews, journals and reflective essays writing, developmental and reflective portfolios as well as portfolio development courses. Candidates normally need support and mentoring because the skills of self-reflection are not easy to learn. Identifying and writing learning autobiography could facilitate them to reflect their experiences and articulate their learning from it. In this session, mentors' or instructors' role is important in giving support and guidance. The structure of the presentation of this learning should align and be able to relate with the academic learning outcome in the course for which recognition or credit is sought.

3) A Transformational Model
   The model is also known as 'radical' or 'emancipatory' APEL-RPL. The model links to social transformation and question ways in which knowledge is constructed, what is defined as valuable and the power relations in curriculum and institution. The aim is to allow experiential or marginalised learning to influence the mainstream curriculum.

A brief overview of these models is shown in Table 3.1 and the most efficient model for ARPL is accredit-exchange approach. The model is not only efficient but also has the least implications for institutional change. Hence, institution need to be familiar with models of teaching and learning that are adult-centred. This model also reflects an understanding that adult learners are mature, motivated and experienced and more competent to take responsibility for their own learning (Osman & Castle, 2004).

Table 7:   **A comparison between the three main models of RPL (Osman & Castle, 2004)**

Model of ARPL Distinguishing Feature	Credit exchange model	Developmental model	Transformational model
View of Learning	Centred on the individual learner. Learning is acquisition.	Centred on the individual learner. Learning is a developmental Process.	Centred on the learners. Learning is a collective process that is socially constructed. Learning has the potential for change.
View of Knowledge	Neutral Universal Uniform Uncontested	Subjective Personal Experiential	Embedded in a cultural and social context
View of Experience	Asocial Apolitical Commodity that can be traded and transferred. Only experience accredited by an authority or institution is Recognised.	Learning from experience is valued, but experience alone is not enough to award credit	Social values, collective experience and associated attributes (such as self-knowledge and autonomy) are valued
Philosophical Background Process	Technicist Knowledge and skills matched with learning outcomes expressed in unit standards or academic curriculam.	Humanist Required to extract and articulate learning from experience in format closely related to academic learning for which access and/or credit is sought.	Radical Reframes fundamental values and paradigms within institutions by recognising and celebrating indigenous and alternative knowledge.
Role of the Institution	Prescribes a format. Assesses presented evidence for adequacy.	Provides mentors to support Learners.	Teaching practices sensitive to indigenous and collective forms of knowledge though focus group discussions, collages, and various forms of expression such as music and dance.

Table 7:   **(Cont.)**

Model of ARPL Distinguishing Feature	Credit exchange model	Developmental model	Transformational model
Benefits	Simplicity to administer Relatively easy and swift way of gaining access and/or credit in specific programme when learner knows what he/she wants to study. Existing accreditation agreements between academic institutions in South Africa and agreements with national and international professional associations facilitate this process. Articulation of qualifications through the NQF and SAQA frameworks makes process easier.	Facilitates personal and professional development	Foregrounds politics of difference in terms of knowledge, power and equality. Recognises informal and experiential learning on their own terms Challenges the way curricula are organised in academy. Celebrates diversity and richness of individual and collective experience, which is usually lost in the previous models
Critique	Conservative Instrumental Candidate does not reflect on previous experience, or on significance of prior learning for individual, profession or institution Makes little contribution to equity and redress in SA, as possible candidates are already disadvantages by previous education	Deprives candidate from significant voice Experience treated as neutral, raw material that is excavated Portfolio development is time consuming and labour intensive Academics may find it difficult to recognise other ways of knowing	Does not have the capacity to challenge dominant discourses of academy probably does not have the power in SA context to lead to social transformation it envisions

b)   RPL process model in Higher Education Institution in South Africa

Study by Venter (1999) illustrate the RPL process model in Higher Education in South Africa consists of ten stages which are pre-entry, initial contact, learning identification, preparation for assessment, assessment, verification accreditation and certification, appeals, recording and post-RPL counselling. Table 8 shows the RPL process model that is synthesis after analysis of prior learning recognition

process models in different countries such as United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada and Australia.

Table 8:   **South African Higher Education RPL process model**

STAGES	STEPS	ACTION BY
Pre-entry	Plan marketing effort	Institution
	Conduct marketing and create awareness	
Initial Contact	Contact institution for information	Institution Candidate
	Interview with RPL advisor	
Leaning identification	Identify credit and units claimed	Institution
	Compile candidates profile	Candidate
Preparation for assessment	Identify methods of assessment	Institution
	Explain evidence gathering process	Candidate
	Build evidence portfolio	
	Provide evidence	
Assessment	Conduct assessment and make judgement	Institution
Verification	Verify authenticity of portfolio and evidence	Institution
Accreditation and certification	Awards credit and provide result	Institution
Appeals	Follow appeals procedure	Institution Candidate
Recording	Transcribe result into database	Institution
Post RPL counselling	Provide career and study counselling	Institution

1) Pre-entry stages

Most candidates are not aware of the availability of RPL. Thus, they should be informed on what RPL can do for them. The first thing is to plan for marketing effort where the institution must understand what the candidates can gain before it can be marketed through correct promotional strategy. Secondly is to conduct marketing and create awareness like promoting the RPL through advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and publicity.

2) Initial contact

Once they are aware of RPL, interest is created and the candidates will contact the institution for more information. RPL concept must be widely communicated throughout the institution before a marketing effort is carried out. The initial screening of potential candidates may take place in this step. Hence, interview with RPL advisor is conducted and the roles are established. Role clarification is important as a learner must understand what is expected and where the institution will provide support and assistance. Again, the concept of learning should be assessed and not experienced.

3) Learning identification

The credit and units claimed must be identified at this stage. At this point, the RPL advisor connects the learners' previous learning to the curriculum of the institution. Thus, a compiled candidates' profile is basically similar to a curriculum vitae as the profile includes a statement

of their learning achievement. This is used as a reference for the assessor. The learning achievements of the candidates must be clearly linked to the credit or units that are claimed.

4) Preparation for assessment

To carry out assessment, methods of assessment such as portfolio, test, interviews, assignment, demonstration and others must first be identified. In order to attain accreditation, explanation on ways of gathering evidence and types of evidence that may be included in a portfolio to prove competence must be provided. The next step is to build evidence of portfolio where candidates build a portfolio of evidence that include copies of previous qualifications and other pieces of evidence. The RPL advisor could assist the candidates to provide relevance evidence. Finally, the candidates and RPL advisor must decide when the portfolio is ready for submission to be forwarded to the assessor.

5) Assessment

The assessor should be a subject matter expert to ensure he conducts a good assessment and makes a fair judgement. The subject matter expert here can be appointed from an academic staff member. The assessor makes judgement on the criteria or standard for the unit of learning identified in the third stages of RPL process. The judgement could indicate if applicants deserve to be awarded credits they have applied for or they do not qualify to receive the award.

6) Verification

Verifying the authenticity of portfolio and evidence is the most important step especially when the judgement is based on a portfolio and evidence. The RPL advisor must conduct a verification process to ensure that the evidence submitted is an original work of the candidates and also to ensure that the evidence is relevant and the most recent.

7) Accreditation and certification

This step is to award credit or provide result to the candidates. Once the assessment and judgement have been made and the authenticity of the evidence has been proven, credits can be awarded. In contrast, when they do not meet the required criteria or standard, unfavourable result will be announced.

8) Appeals

Appeals procedure must be very clear whether access or level out has to state very clear.

9) Recording

Logged into the database for record keeping purpose. The institution must decide whether the record should reflect a special code indicating that the credits were award.

10) Post RPL counselling

Once the RPL process has taken place, the candidate would be counselled on possible future career option. Since the candidate did not obtain their credit through the traditional academic route, special attention should be given to study techniques and advice to enable the candidate to learn within the institution. The candidate also receives feedback on the outcome of the RPL process.

c) Generic RPL process by South African Qualification Authority

South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) introduces a generic recognition of prior learning process for the purpose of assessment. This is a generic assessment unit standard and candidates can be assessed on any field of learning in line with their subject matter expertise. RPL in South Africa has a very specific agenda which is to support transformation of the education and training system of the country. Figure 1.0 represents a generic RPL process recommended by SAQA.

The evaluation on this process is mainly on the completeness and appropriateness of the evidence. The assessment criteria include first the evaluations on the validity, authenticity, relevance and sufficiency of evidence. Second, evaluations on the readiness of the evidence to be presented to registered assessors and recommendations contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the assessment process. Thus, gaps in the evidence in relation to the requirements are identified and dealt with appropriately. Appropriate here means advice or coaching is only given in cases where the gaps do not reflect a candidates' lack of competence. In cases where a lack of competence is discerned, feedback is provided that would direct the candidates for further learning or practice and in accordance with organisational policies and procedures. Fourthly, feedback about the evidence is communicated to candidates in a culturally sensitive manner and in a way that promotes positive action by the candidate. The last one is key lessons from the facilitation process are recorded for integration into future interactions with candidates (SAQA, 2004).

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│  │              Application                    │             │
│  └────────────────────────────────────────────┘             │
│                        │                                      │
│  ┌────────────────────────────────────────────┐             │
│  │  RPL evidence facilitator meets candidate    │            │
│  │  to conduct pre-screening to ascertain       │────┐       │
│  │  viability of application                    │    │       │
│  └────────────────────────────────────────────┘    │       │
│                        │                             ▼       │
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Application

RPL evidence facilitator meets candidate to conduct pre-**screening to ascertain viability of application**

If not viable i.e. candidate will clearly not meet the minimum requirements in terms of language/ numeracy and/or other competencies, the candidate is referred for further advice on alternative pathways

If viable, then Pre-assessment stage: (3)
RPL evidence facilitator takes candidate(s) through preparation for assessment:

- Portfolio development and related workshops, and/or
- One-on-one advising
- Assessment approaches, tools and mechanisms
- Guidance on collecting evidence, which candidate undertakes

Assessor **(preferably with facilitator present) and candidate develop assessment plan: (4)**

- Review unit standard(s) and requirements
- Type and sources of evidence
- Assessment tools to be used in this assessment
- Dates and times of assessment

Assessment stage: (5)
- Candidate undergoes practical assessment, and/or
- Candidate sits knowledge test, and/or
- Candidate goes through pre- and post-interview

Judgement stage: Evidence judged by assessor (6)

Moderation stage (7)

Feedback stage (8)

Credit not awarded   **Credit awarded**

Appeal process may be initiated   **Post-assessment support (9)**

Figure 1: A generic RPL process (SAQA, 2004)

In addition, the assessors have a central role to play. The purpose of the assessment is to make judgement on achievements prior to awarding credits that will allow qualification. Assessors should ensure that candidates' skill, knowledge and values are identified. In terms of training, eventhough the assessor need to be a subject matter expert, he should also have contextual expertise that is needed for an understanding of the occupational context where the candidates may have gained the previous learning. It requires the assessor to assess holistically and without bias. A holistic approach refers to the ability to look for the intrinsic rather than extrinsic values of candidates' learning within a particular context and the ways in which some forms of knowledge are privileged. A holistic approach tries to prevent visible and invisible biases from influencing the ways in which an assessors conduct their assessment. The bias is associated with he issues of race, religion, gender and class in South Africa. The bias happens against experiential and non-formal forms of learning. For example may inhibit the assessor from finding alternatives forms of evidence for applied knowledge and skills, particularly if such evidence not presented in a traditional format (SAQA,2004).

The following table represents a number of assessment methods that can be used for RPL. Some of these methods could be used for authentication of evidence produced by the candidates.

Table 9:   **Example of assessment method for RPL**

Assessment methods	Purposes and example
Interviews	To clarify issues rose in documentary evidence presented and/ or to review scope and depth of learning. May be particularly useful in areas where judgement and values are important. (May be structured or unstructured)
Debate	To confirm capacity to sustain a considered argument demonstrating adequate knowledge of the subject.
Presentation	To check ability to present information in a way appropriate to subject and audience.
Performance testing	To test applications of theory in a structured context in correct manner.
Examination	To test concept and basic skill and applications using practical examples.
Oral Examination	To check deep understanding of complex issues and ability to explain in simples terms
Essay	To check the quality and standard of academic writing and use of references, ability to develop a coherent argument and to conform extent, understanding and transferability of knowledge and critical evaluation of the ideas.

Example of work	To check the quality of work, relevance to credit sought and authenticity of production.
Portfolio	To validate candidate learning by providing a collecting of materials that reflect the prior learning and achievement. Will include own work, reflection on own practice and indirect evidence from others that are qualified to comment. The portfolio will identify relevant connection between leaning and specified or unspecified credit sought.
	To ensure currency and analysis of appropriate literature is at satisfactory level.
Book review	To illustrate the range of reading done by the applicant and ensure appropriate literature review coverage to fulfil subject requirements.
Annotated	May be used to meet a variety of purpose – to add greater currency to acknowledge of skill, to extend scope of prior learning.
Special projects	To indicate level of knowledge and assess analytical and writing skills and issues involved in the current debate on the subject.
Report, critiques, articles	

d) RPL in Mauritius

Government's policy on lifelong learning introduces RPL in the Mauritian system and managed by an agency known as Mauritius Qualification Authority (MQA). One of the functions of MQA is to recognise and validate competencies for the purpose of certification obtained outside the formal education and training systems. This is achieved through the implementation of RPL, which acts as a mechanism for the inclusion by offering access to those people who were previously left outside the mainstream education system. Furthermoe, RPL in Mauritius acts as a key to underpin the process of maintaining and enhancing a competitive and skilled workforce for Mauritius. This will enable the workers to make informed choices and adapt to changing economic conditions and labour markets. RPL also directly tackles the issue of up-skilling or retraining its workforce whilst acknowledging their existing skills (Allgoo et al., 2012). The RPL process happens in three-stage process as shown in figure 2.2:
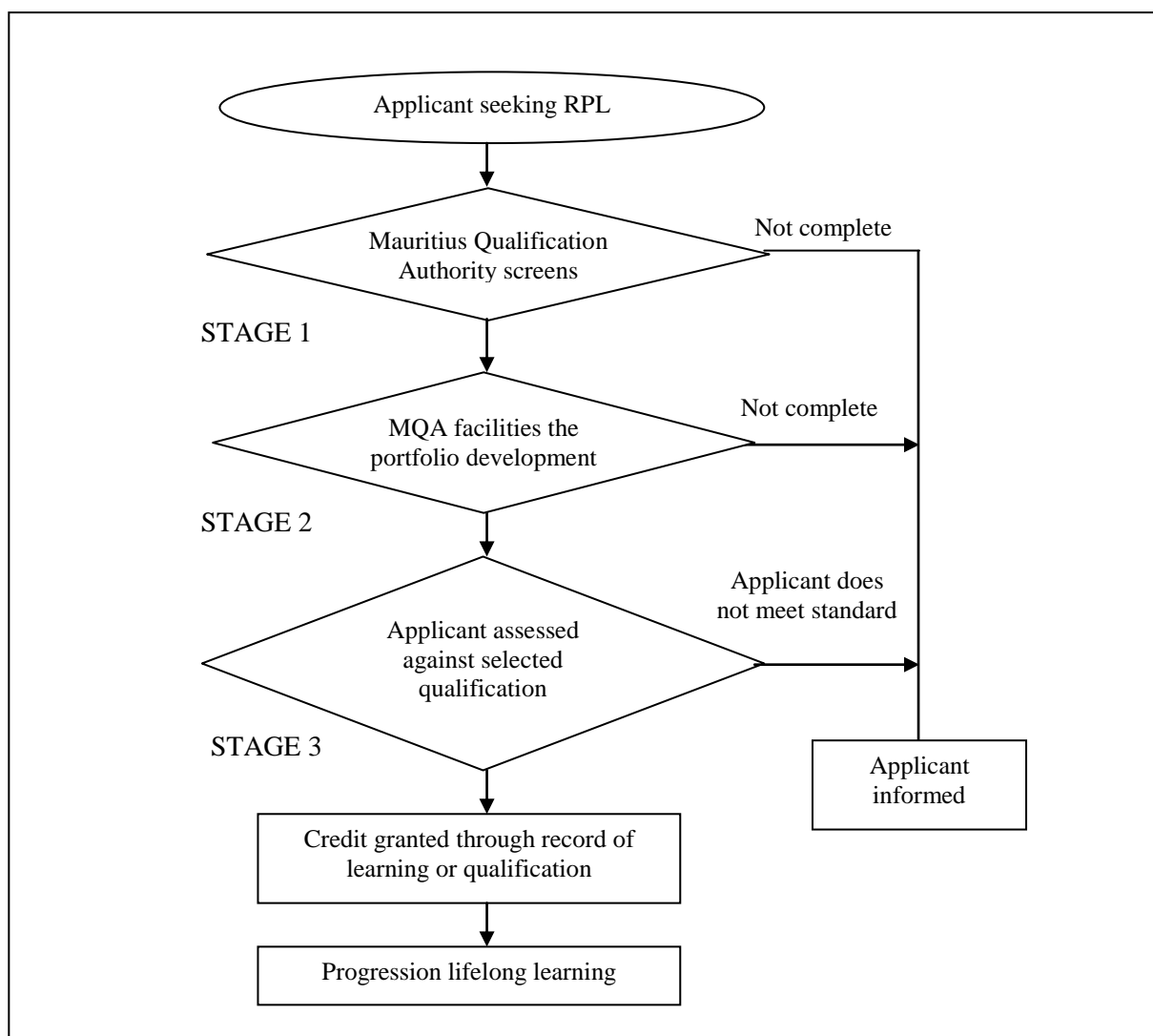
Figure 2:   RPL process by Mauritius Qualification Authority, MQA (Allgoo et al. 2012)

1) Pre- Screening Process

The pre-screening process will provide the applicant with all services and support in terms of advice and counselling. The latter will be fully informed of the application process, the stages within the RPL process and the portfolio development. The MQA will ensure that the potential applicant is eligible for claiming RPL and has selected the appropriate qualification.

2) Facilitation Process

It's includes two aspect which are the RPL facilitator and the qualities of a facilitator. The RPL facilitator contacts the candidate as an initial step. The facilitation process is carried out by MQA and the facilitator guides and supports the candidate in developing the portfolio of evidences. More precisely, the facilitator helps and advises the applicant on the necessary evidence that should be submitted or any missing information or documents that are related to the applicant's portfolio. In brief, the facilitator facilitates the transition between non-formal and formal learning contexts and identifies core skills gained informally which can be

transferred to formal learning contexts in various contexts. Hence, the MQA is subsequently responsible for the training as well as the registration of the RPL facilitators. Appointed by the MQA, the facilitator will communicate to the candidate the different options of building the portfolio by guiding the latter in the compilation of evidences in a rational and systematic manner and will spend a minimum of 10 hours with the candidate during the process. Once the candidate has met the requirements for recognition of the prior learning, the candidate is subsequently guided towards the RPL assessment.

Secondly are qualities of facilitator. The facilitators should have certain qualities such as have strong communication abilities, good in interview skills, able to make applicants reflect on experience to identify knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviour, real life situations and experience in non-formal and informal contexts. Lastly is able to do notional levelling or mapping in relation to Unit Standards and Qualifications.

3) Assessment Process

It is start by RPL assessor and the role of RPL assessor is to compare the candidates' evidence provided in the portfolio with the standard and to assess the competencies acquired. Some of assessor's responsibilities are to use appropriate assessment techniques, ensure that the evidence provided is sufficient in order to make impartial judgements, record assessment results, provide detailed feedback to the applicant, ensure that assessment procedures are recorded correctly and all parties are advised, maintain the integrity of the assessment system and comply with assessment instructions provided by the Assessment Centre. The registration of RPL assessors is a critical component for a successful implementation of the RPL procedure. The assessors need to be trained on practising prevailing norms as they have to show professional judgement in assessing the value of experience-based learning of the candidates. These include practising the rules of transparency, reliability, validity, consistency and coherence while guiding the candidates in developing their portfolio.

RPL assessments are also carried out at the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD formerly IVTB). Successful candidates are issued either a semi- qualification or full qualification at the end of the process. Qualification issued to RPL candidates do not differ from the one awarded to candidates who go through formal examination. In case the candidates fail to meet the required standards, they will also be informed of their failure. The process of RPL is basically about identifying what the candidates know and able to do. This is done by matching the skill, knowledge and experience of the candidates with the unit standard developed by MQA. The process also includes assessing the candidates, crediting the candidates for their skills, knowledge and experience acquired and finally issuing a record of learning qualification.

e)   RPL in University of South Africa

The implementation and management of RPL at the UNISA involves embracing the values and strategic objectives as stated in the institution's mission. RPL will form a channel for access, progression, portability, support and career guidance for adult learners at all levels. At UNISA, RPL is described as the identification, assessment and acknowledgement of an individual's skill and knowledge within the context of a specific qualification, irrespective of how and where they have been

acquired. The aim of RPL is to empower potential students by opening up access or providing advance standing with formal UNISA programmes, short learning programmes, learnership and work integrated learning. In RPL assessment and accreditation process, RPL is more than a mere certificate-based credit transfer procedure. During the process, RPL emphasises on outcomes of learning and not the sides of learning which may comprise of formal training, work and life experiences. This will reflect a shift in learning from a lecturer-centred approach to a learner-centred approach.

In order to achieve a successful RPL process, they are several elements that must be taken into consideration. These include the application process, an initial screening by the relevant academic employees, advisor services regarding evidence gathering by trained RPL mentors, assessment by a subject-matter expert and trained assessor similar to an academic expert and a representative of industry or professional body, a procedure to obtain verification and ratification of the recommendation of the assessment panel by key organisational decision maker, structured post-assessment feedback to the candidates which acknowledge their dignity and continuous student support. The assessment by subject-matter expert must value candidates' prior learning and cannot be done by a single assessor. In fact, it must be examined by an assessment panel. Hence, when the assessment has been carried out, the candidates will be declared competent and ready to enter the formal training at a certain level. Furthermore, prior learning must be assessed according to the requirements of formal training programmes which are in accordance with international and national criteria and standard. To ensure the process meets the requirements, student will be supported by several department within UNISA such as Bureau for Counselling, Career and Academic Development (BCCAD), UNISA Reading and Writing Centres, Tutorial Services, Discussion Classes and Work-Integrated Learning (TSDL).

Meanwhile, assessment can be defined as mandatory, optional and elective for portfolios, projects and test based on UNISA Assessment Procedure Manual (2005). Mandatory refers to the situation when the candidates fail to submit and consequently they will get 0%. Meanwhile, optional means there is no obligation for the candidates to submit. However, if they submit, marks will be calculated. Elective is when candidates are given the choice to submit 3 of 5 assignments. These 3 assignments will be selected and marked using different criteria which are BEST (the 3 best marks will be selected), SUBMITTED FIRST (the earliest 3 assignments submitted) and SUBMITTED LAST (the last 3 assignments submitted). Table 2.10 is a summary of RPL procedure for assessment and accreditation at UNISA:

Table 10: **Procedures for RPL assessment and accreditation at UNISA**

	Pre-assessment and application process	
Step	**Function**	**Responsibility party**
1	Pre-application counselling of applicant	BCCAD
2	RPL application process advise and mentoring in RPL procedures	RPL Centre
3	RPL application pre-screened for completeness	RPL Centre
4	Application screened and evaluated for viability	UNISA academic employees
5	Prepare candidate for assessment	RPL Centre
		UNISA academic employees
6	Candidate informed of recommendation assessment procedures, evidence requirement and costs	RPL Centre
7	Evidence submitted by candidate (eg: portfolio, challenge exam, answer script, work based project)	Candidate
8	Evidence assessed by panel of assessor	UNISA assessor panel
		(at least one relevant lecturer, one RPL assessor and where relevant representatives from industry or personal bodies)
9	Where relevant, panel interview with candidates and /or site visit, demonstration etc)	UNISA assessor panel as stipulated above
10	Recommended placement of candidates	UNISA assessor panel as stipulated above
	Recommended top-up training strategies	
11	Recommended placement of candidate submitted to organisational decision-maker for verification and ratification	College Tuition Committees
		Final approval and signing off by Executive Dean
12	Candidate notified of the outcome	RPL centre
13	Document and records updated	RPL centre
14	Candidate put in contact with learner support where recommended	RPL Centre, BCADD, TSDL
15	When required, appeals procedure activated and appeal referred to Tuition Committee	RPL centre
16	Feedback to candidate and records updated where relevant	RPL centre

As outlined by SAQA regulation, specified assessors must be trained and registered with the relevant Education and Training Quality Agency (ETQA). Furthermore SAQA also recommends the use of advisors and evidence facilitators as essential for the quality assurance of RPL process. The functions of evidence facilitation, advising and assessing within the RPL process should ideally be performed by a different person to avoid potential bias. In parallel with SAQA, UNISA will use its own staff as

assessors and moderators in a manner that fits into the quality management system of the University. Furhermore, beside providing relevant training and mentoring for assessors and moderators in- house or through external providers. UNISA will ensure RPL assessment does not reflect the opinion of a single assessor alone, but also depends on the findings and recommendation of a properly constructed RPL assessment panel. UNISA also may make appropriate use of workplace mentors and occupational-field monitors to conduct formative assessment of work-integrated learning. Hence, this will involve practitioners from the occupational-field or profession in panels for the purpose of summative assessment of work-integrated learning and as panel members in RPL assessment.

2.4.2 Australia

a)   The RPL Process in Australian Universities

Cohen et al. (1993) provided an approach consisting of six steps process model for RPL use at Australian universities. The purpose of the RPL process is for the candidates to decide whether to apply for entry to a course or for course credit. The process model is shown in Figure 3:
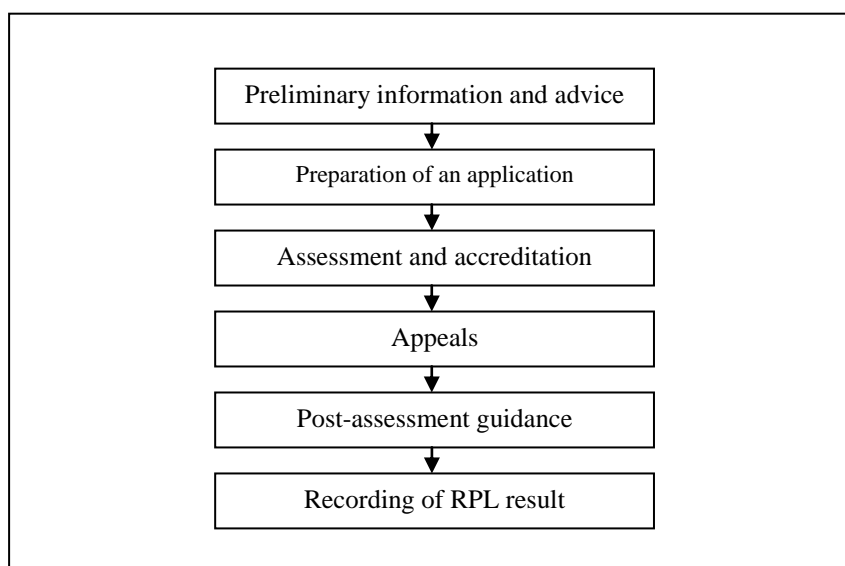
Figure 3:   Stages in RPL process model for credit application in Australian Universities

1) Preliminary information and advice
   A step-by-step guide is provided to the student explaining eligibility, principles, guidelines, procedure, costs and conditions. Advice is provided by either an academic staff or RPL counselor. Information with look upon to the level of university learning is provided together with access to a range of assessment examples. In some cases workshop and training session will be offered to the candidates.

2) Preparation of an application
   Five aspects are considered during the preparation of an application. First, a consideration given to the actual documenting of learning evidence. The candidates are encouraged to describe the experience in which learning occurred. While the purpose of documenting and

profiling prior learning is to prepare for a credit application, it also serves as an instrument to improve self-awareness and self-esteem.

Secondly, the candidates must find the difference between learning and experience to grasp. The difference is that experience is the input and learning is the outcome. In most cases, a portfolio is used to overcome the difficulty. Third, the outcomes or standard must be clearly explained. Next, academic staff must advise the students on how the prior learning may contribute to a particular qualification. The final aspect to consider is the organising and presentation of evidence collected. The RPL advisor provides examples of portfolios and explains procedures of verification of evidence.

3) Assessment and accreditation

Various assessment techniques may be used as indicated such as portfolio, test, oral questioning, challenge exam, case study, assignment, simulation, demonstration, work examples, book review and many more.

4) Appeals

The suggestion is made that the university's policy of RPL appeals should be the similar to the appeals policy for any other assessment.

5) Post-assessment guidance

Successful candidate will board on a course of study, however candidate should be counseled on how to adjust study plans and workload. The unsuccessful students are provided with career guidance.

6) Recording of RPL result

Results are recorded according to the university information system requirements. Recording in Australia takes place according to credit points or credit banks. Credit banks are system where students store credits for later use.

b)   RPL process in The Bremer Institute of Technical and Further Education

Knowledge and skills obtained through work, life experience, training or education nowadays will be completed as qualification through RPL at The Bremer Institute of TAFE. With RPL, candidates will be able to speed up the qualification process, reduce the cost of acquiring a formal qualification and save time to complete parts of a programme recognised by RPL. Thus, this enhances the current practical knowledge with professional education and training. The candidates will be accredited with a full or semi-qualification when they complete and success in the RPL process and avoid duplication training. RPL here can be used to identify what training candidates may need to complete a qualification (The Bremer Institute, 2012). For the entry requirements, RPL is assessed based on existing industry experience or qualification or from other life experiences that do not necessary include formal training. Any competencies that the candidates possess to be recognised, regardless of how they are obtained. Figure below shows the RPL process introduced by institute:
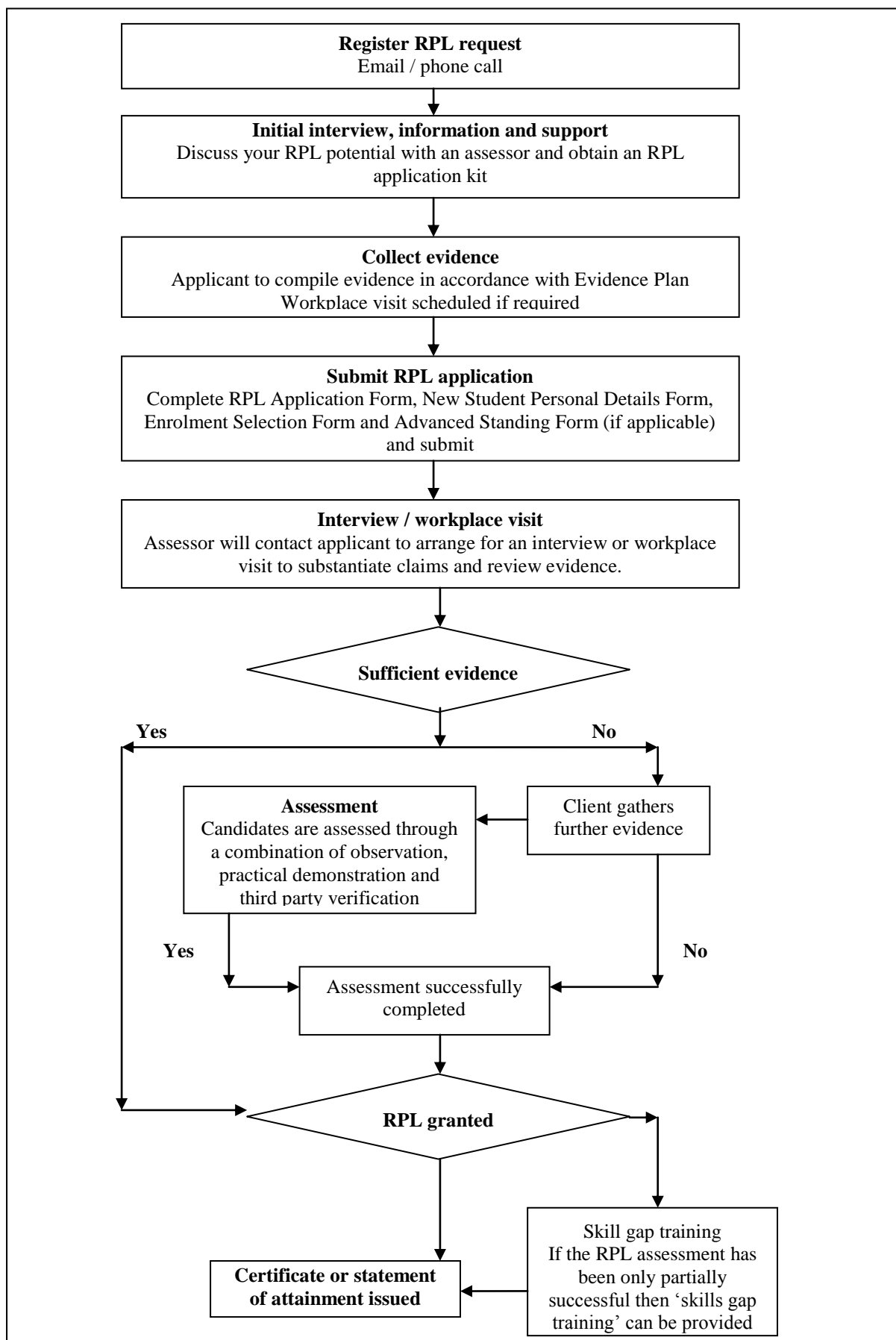
Figure 4:   RPL process flowchart in The Bremer Institute of TAFE

The first thing the candidates need to do is to contact the institution and registers the RPL request. RPL application and information kit thus posted to them. Then, one of the assessors will contact them to arrange convenient time to discuss the RPL process and assist them to develop an Assessment Plan based on their current skills and knowledge. An Assessment Plan identifies what units within the qualification that the candidates will attempt to gain via Recognition of Prior Learning and what unit they may elect to study. The assessor will also provide guidance as to the different types of evidence the candidates may begin to collect. Once they have enrolled, the RPL assessor will contact to arrange for the time to commence on the assessment process. Upon successful completion of all the required units within the qualification, the candidates will be awarded. The assessor will assist them with the initial interview and enrolment phase as well as develop an evidence and training plan. In this case, building the candidates' confidence is an important part of the RPL process. In term of assessment, the assessor will discuss to match their existing skills with a qualification. The assessor will also work with the candidates to identify the most appropriate evidence that they can provide to apply the RPL. If the entire requirement is not met upon completion of the assessment process, they may be required to undergo gap training.

At Bremer, providing evidence can be done in three ways which are collecting evidence, direct evidence and indirect evidence. Collecting evidence must be provided in a manner that enables an assessor to readily ascertain whether the required competencies have been demonstrated. Direct evidence is reflected on the candidates' own work, record keeping system, operation schedule, spreadsheet developed, correspondence with customer and contractor, job specification developed, procedure, monthly or annual report, business plan, internal correspondence that have been produced, video recordings of their work, completed pieces of work and photographic evidence. In short, it can be anything that they have either produced themselves or which you been primarily responsible. Indirect evidence is information gathered from others about the candidates like workplace supervisor report, magazines or newspaper articles about the them, awards, certificates or other forms of recommendations, witness testimony and self-appraisal. Direct evidence is usually more valid but there is nothing wrong if the assessor wants to see both types of evidence.

c)   RPL in Australian Catholic University

The University supports the approach which values all learning whether achieved through an open and transparent approach assessment. It acknowledges that learning may be achieved through either non-formal or informal pathways and that provision should exist for recognition of these. In ACU RPL policy for the terminology is as an assessment process for recognising relevant non-formal and informal learning by collecting evidence and making judgments on the extent to which an individual has achieved the required learning outcomes. The purpose of RPL is to provide opportunities for non-formal and informal learning to be recognised. The recognition can be used to enter a course or obtain a qualification and credit or credit to be granted for partial or full completion of requirements for a course towards an undergraduate or postgraduate qualification. Thus, the recognition serves as diverse and inclusive pathways to lifelong learning. The RPL is also used to assure the quality, integrity and maintain the qualifications to enter Australian Catholic University. The following is is the procedure implemented by the Australian Catholic University (ACU):

1) Application for RPL

Candidates can apply for an entry or admission by completing an Application for Credit or Recognition of Prior Learning (CR) form. CR form should be submitted as early as possible or normally in 4 weeks before the commencement of a semester. In any event, applications for RPL should also be submitted no later than the period given in the first semester of the students's enrollment in the course. All applications either for entry or credit purposes, must be supported by relevant documents including official certified copy of result or unit outlines describing previous study (credit point value, content and assessment).

2) Information to be provided in RPL Application (for entry or credit purpose)

Application for RPL includes a detailed description of the learning upon which the application is based and identifies the specific purpose for which RPL is sought. An application also should be accompanied by supporting documentation which includes material or evidence which clearly identifies the candidate learning, knowledge, skill and experience acquired. Source of evidence and supporting documentation could include a detail curriculum vitae, certified supporting statement from employers, a copy of the ABN registration and latter from an accountable certifying the nature if candidate has been self-employed, examples of the work drawn from workplace, social or community in which candidate applies their learning, skill or competency and reflective papers, journal, portfolio or a statement that relate with the candidate prior learning.

3) Assessment by RPL Advisor

The RPL Advisor will undertake an assessment of the application based on the current information provided to the specific professional requirements and learning and competency outcomes needed for entry or credit to be granted for the particular unit or qualification. The way is the RPL Advisor may invite the applicant for interview and seek further information from the candidate about any aspect of the application and supporting documentary evidence. Candidate may be required to undertake an examination or practical assessment to determine the achievement of the learning or competency outcomes.

4) Approval of RPL to be course specific

In any case in which eligibility for entry to or credit towards a course on the basis of RPL is approved, the approval will relate to that specific course only and will automatically be transferable to any other unit or course.

5) Notification of RPL decision on application for entry

Applicants will be advised of the outcome of an application for entry in agreement with standard admission processes and timelines.

6) Notification and recording of RPL decision on the granting of credit

When credit is granted, the RPL Advisor will advise Enrolments Section which advise the candidate in writing of the decision and record the decision in the student system. Decision on RPL will be maintained in school records and notified to the faculty as a credit granted for formal learning

7) Application for review of or appeal against a decision
   Candidates who wish to apply for a review or appeal on an RPL decision will do so in agreement with the Students Appeals Policy.

Several responsibilities of the RPL Advisor is carry out along the RPL process are to assist candidate to understand the RPL process, assist candidate to reflection and identify the learning or competency outcomes associated with their experience and identify areas where claims might be formulated, assist candidate to identify the relevant units or course or qualification most suited to their needs, following preliminary assessment and provide advice on the learning or competency outcomes against which candidate will be assessed, advise on gathering valid, current, sufficient and reliable evidence, the authentication required and the format of applications. The last one is provide information about the administrative procedures for receiving RPL applications, administering assessment, fees, recording RPL assessment outcomes and advising students regarding such decisions and appeal processes.

The RPL assessments of application also follow the principle outlines such as assessment will be evidence and outcome-based, equitable, culturally inclusive, transparent and accountable. It is also a subject to quality assurance practices comparable to other assessment practices within the university. The evaluation made for RPL process are designed to identify what the candidates know and can do, match their skills, knowledge and experiences to specific professional requirements and unit, course or qualification and learning and competency outcomes. It is also meant to assess the candidates' attainments in accordance to those requirements and outcomes. RPL in ACU also illustrate the appeal process for those candidates who are not meets the standard. Figure 5 shows the process for candidate or student appeals.
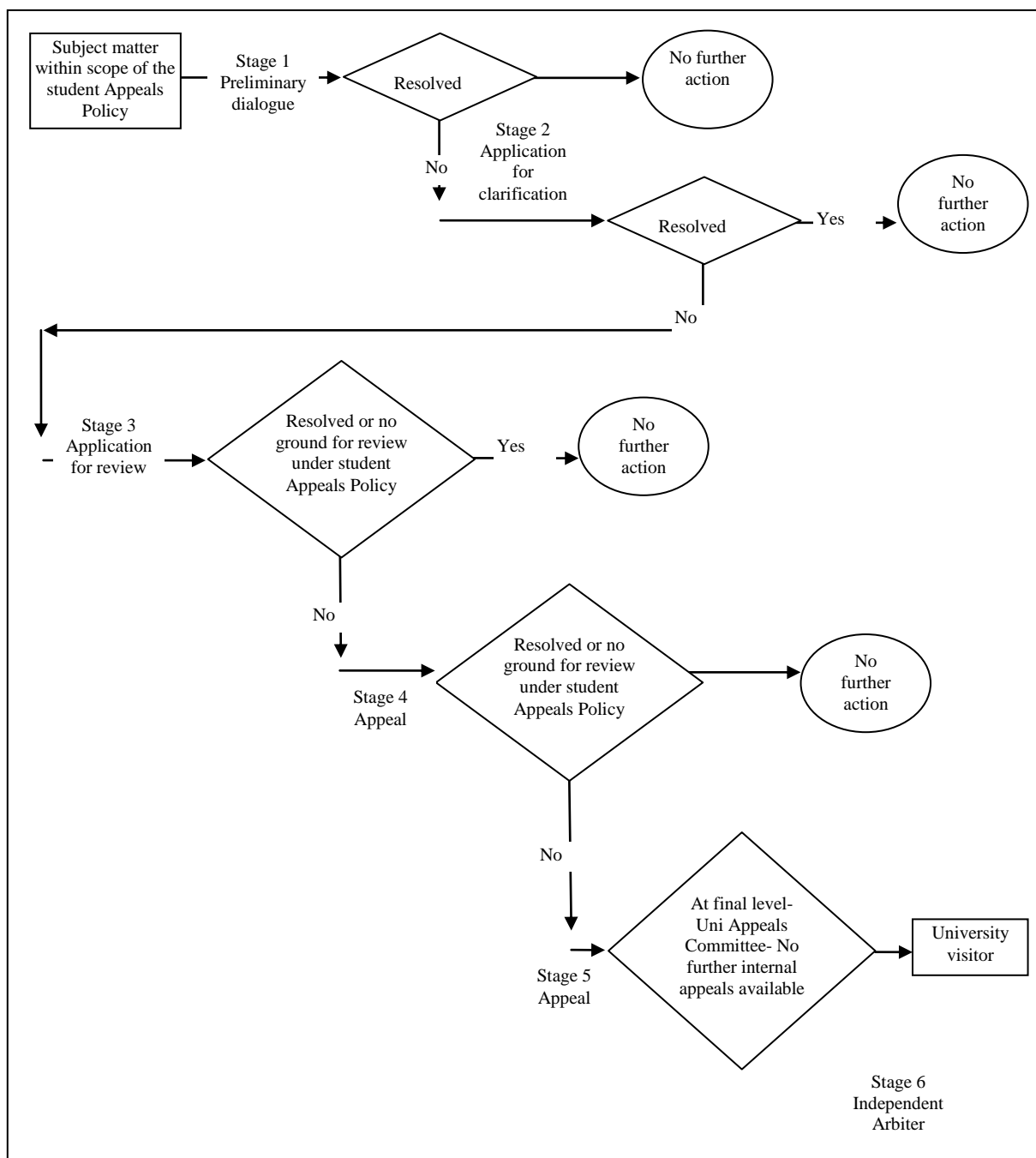
Figure 5: Appeal process in Australian Catholic University (ACU)

2.4.3 *America*

a)   APL in United States

One of the most experienced countries practising accreditation of prior learning (APL) is the United States. The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) defines prior learning assessment (PLA) as the process of defining, documenting, measuring, evaluating and granting credit for learning acquired through experience. Whitaker (1989) discusses two kinds of model that could help post-secondary educational institutions to assess experiential learning. He also distinguishes between

experiential learning that takes place under the guidance of an educational institution known as *sponsored experiential learning* and experiential learning that is an unplanned result of work or other life experiences as *non-sponsored learning*.

The advantage of the first type is learning activities that take place outside the educational institution and method for measuring and evaluating learning can be planned in advance. Hence, the individual has enrolled in a study programme and is planning an internship or other experiential learning activity as part of that programme. However, the procedure for the assessment of non-sponsored learning is different. In this procedure, students will try to obtain credit for prior learning that has occurred before they enrolled in a study programme.

Figure 6 shows a schematic overview of the models for the assessment on sponsored (enrol in a study program) and non-sponsored prior learning (obtain credit before enrol in a study program) (Whitaker, 1989).

	Sponsored learning		Non-sponsored learning

Sponsored learning

1. ARTICULATION:
Relate learning goals to academic, personal and professional goals

2. PLANNING:
Select appropriate learning objectives and activities

3. EVALUATION:
Determine the credit equivalency

4. DOCUMENTATION:
Collect evidence of learning

5. MEASUREMENT:
Determine the degree and level of competence achieved

6. TRANSCRIPTION:
Prepare a useful record of result

Non-sponsored learning

1. IDENTIFICATION:
Review experience to identify potential creditable learning

1. ARTICULATION:
Relate learning goals to academic, personal and professional goals

4. DOCUMENTATION:
Collect evidence of learning

5. MEASUREMENT:
Determine the degree and level of competence achieved

3. EVALUATION:
Determine the credit equivalency

6. TRANSCRIPTION:
Prepare a useful record of result

Figure 6:   Steps for the assessment of sponsored and non-sponsored prior learning (Whitaker, 1989)

1) Identification

   The first step is to discover and to describe the college-level learning that may have resulted from these prior experiences. Helpful techniques to identify and relate relevant learning experiences include a time-line, a resume, a work description and an autobiography. A portfolio is a useful instrument with which to ask for prior-learning assessment and to organize the evidence. It is important that candidate describe the learning in accordance with the institution's curriculum and assessment procedures. As one of the quality criteria indicates, credit should be given for learning and not for experience alone. At the same time, an institution must have a policy regarding how long ago the learning took place if it is to be considered for credit. This policy must be as consistent as possible with the institution's standard practices for evaluating the transcripts of students who are transferring in or resuming their enrolment.

2) Articulation

   The purpose of the second step, articulation is to determine how relevant the prior learning is to the chosen study programme. Determining that learning was at college level is not, by itself, a sufficient basis for granting college credit for it. Educational institutions must have developed principles and procedures to determine what type of learning or competence is creditable in the context of a specific degree programme. APL students should relate their prior learning to the programme objectives of the course in which they wish to enrol. They should reflect on what they have learned in practice, identify the gaps in their learning, and plan future learning on the basis of the outcome of the prior-learning assessment.

3) Documentation

   The third step is documentation. Students should provide the institution with evidence that the learning has indeed taken place. The documentation of prior learning comes in various forms (work samples, reports, certificates, diplomas, letters of reference, etc.). An educational institution should indicate what type of documentation is required for which type of learning. It is important to note that not all documentation provides evidence of learning, some simply describes experiences or a learning process. Assessors should take reasonable steps to ensure that the evidence submitted is accurate and authentic. It should be emphasized that the quality of the documentation is important and not the quantity. The candidate is responsible for this step, but the institution should help the candidate to gather and present the documentation, for example through a portfolio course.

4) Measurement

   The assessment can take place as the evidence is submitted. It should be determined how much has been learned and at which level of competence. The following requirements should be taken into account (Whitaker, 1989):

   a)   Fit assessment method to the learning activity
        The assessment method being used should fit the character of the prior learning. In most cases a holistic method of expert judgement is required to determine the nature and level of the individual learning outcome. These include product assessment, essays, interviews and oral examination.

b) Fit assessment method to the learner

The assessment technique should be appropriate to the background of the learner. The assessment result should not invalidated by a handicap such as shyness or a speech impediment.

c) Utilize assessment as learning

The assessment should form an integral part of the learning process as it is a useful learning experience for the student. It is important that the learner understand the nature and function of the assessment process.

d) Ensure reliability

Institution should strive to ensure that an assessment is reliable (consistent). To improve consistency, more than one sample of learning of learning should be examined and more than one assessor should be used. The assessor should be strived to avoid bias, discrimination or unconscious error in judging a candidate's performance work.

e) Ensure validity

Institution must make sure that the assessment is valid, that assessor measure what is intend. Validity will be improve if there are institutional guidelines as to what constitutes college-level- learning, what type of learning is crediTable and what the objectives of experiential learning programmes. It is easier to ensure validity if course outcomes have been defined in competency-based terms. Assessor should seek more than one form of evidence and use more than one of assessment to reach a valid judgement.

f) Plan the process and train the assessors

All assessment should be carefully planned and the assessor should receive proper training especially if assessment techniques such as role play, simulation and so on are used.

g) State results objectively

The outcomes of the assessment should be objectively stated to avoid misinterpretation. Even though the assessment process may stress a subjective, holistic approach, it should be made explicit with specific learning objectives identified, which competency level is reached and which standard is employed.

h) Encourage supervised self-assessment

Self-assessment is an important aspect of the APL process, but it is not sufficient basis for granting credit. It is important that the process of self-assessment be supervised and include appropriate steps to educate student about how to assume responsibility for their learning process and how to present evidence of their learning in such ways that it can be verified by faculty members before credit is awarded.

5) Evaluation

After determining what has been learnt and at which level, it should be decided how many credits should be be awarded. An educational institution should determine the criteria for

awarding credits. These may be based on existing competency statements, corresponding course content, degree requirements or other means of judging the quality and relevance of the learning that has taken place outside the institution. It should also be decided who interprets and applies these criteria. In practice, there are many different arrangements and parties that can play the role. They include faculty members, special assessors and departmental or campus-wide committees. It is important that the criteria are defined. Basically, they are similar to the criteria of the more traditional types of learning. It should not be difficult to obtain credits via prior-learning assessment. The institution should publish its policies and procedures for granting credits for experiential learning. At the same time there should be provisions for a routine review of the award of the credits ('a second opinion') and appeal if there appears to be any due cause. Students should receive feedback after the evaluation. Deviations from the petitioned number of credits should be explained. The educational institution should develop appropriate mechanisms for helping the students to integrate the results of the prior-learning assessments into their future education. Whenever possible, any plan for further sponsored learning should be based on these results.

6) Transcription

The last step is merely an administrative one transcription.

b)   PLAR in University of Manitoba, Canada

PLAR is a systematic process through which candidate identifies access, organize, describe and document the knowledge, skills and attitudes that have been develop. The idea behind PLAR is the learning takes place in different educational setting and through experience outside classroom. The concept of PLAR and golden rule is credit awarded to learning, not experience whereby credit is given when candidates demonstrate and validate learning from experience and not for the experiences themselves. In PLAR, its learning not experience that counts (Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA), 2012). Figure 7 and Figure 8 show the step of PLAR in Canada.

| Pre-entry |
| Learner investigates PLA at college/university. Institutions distribute information on PLA |

↓

| Advise Learner |
| Learner establishes goals. Learner meets with institutional advisor. Learner may/may not enrol in portfolio development course. |

↓

| Prepare, Gather Information |
| Learner prepares for assessment/interview by collecting and organizing documentation, preparing for assessment. Institution supports learner through the availability of print materials, workshops, etc. |

↓

| Assessment |
| Learner submits portfolio, writes challenge examination, demonstrates, practical skill, etc. |

↓

| Credit Acknowledgement |
| Credit posted to learner's record. |

↓

| Review Career and Education/Training Plan |
| Learner re-visits plan. May revise as necessary. |

Figure 7:   PLAR model adapted by Susan Simosko and Cathy Cook (1996)
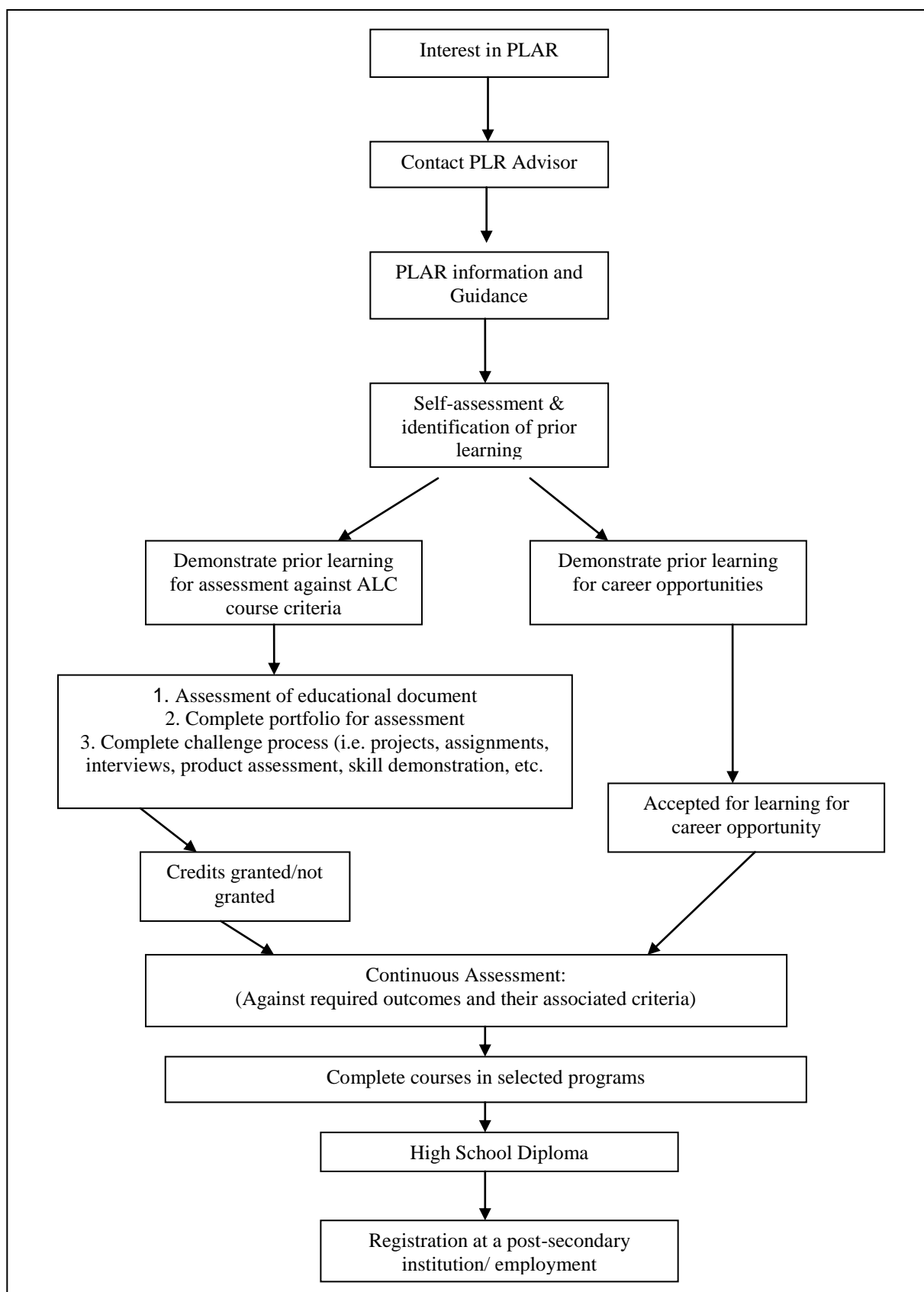
Figure 8:   PLAR procedures in University of Manitoba, Canada (2006)

PLAR is recognized that learning has been developed in a variety of situation and life experiences. These are several methods exist to allow for flexible and effective to assess the candidate learning (University of Manitoba, 2006).

1) Assessment of Educational Documents for Transfer Credits
This method is used to assess courses you may have taken at a recognized post- secondary institution to determine their equivalency to a program in another post-secondary institution. Transfer of credit decisions is made by teachers in the program area you are seeking credit. You would be required to submit documentation that teachers would use in the assessment process.

2) Portfolio Assessments
A portfolio is a detailed document in which you articulate and provide proof (documentation/verification) of your prior learning. Candidate develops portfolios on their own with the assistance of teacher or advisor. The portfolio submitted to the program for assessment by teachers who are knowledgeable of the learning outcomes of a particular course. Most often, this would be the faculty member who teaches the course. If the learning documented by candidate is equivalent to the learning outcomes of a particular course, candidate would be granted credit. It is important that candidate provide proof that *learning* has taken place. Credit is granted for the learning gained from experience and is not granted for experience alone. The process of portfolio development is a useful self-assessment tool that can assist you in making effective decisions and choices. It may also be used to seek employment, set goals, build on an existing career, and/or identify your personal strengths and interests.

3) Challenge Process
These are methods of assessment developed and evaluated by program faculty to measure a learner's prior learning as it relates to the learning outcomes of a specific course in a program. The methods include challenge examination and skill demonstrations.

   a) Challenge examination
   Some examples of a challenge examination are oral or written tests, projects, assignments and interviews. These are the tests or projects based on the learning outcomes of a specific course which have been designed by the faculty to assess learning. If the candidates have prior learning that is equivalent to a particular course, they will be provided with a course outline and access to appropriate texts and other learning materials to prepare for the challenge examination. The candidates are required to perform in the challenge examination that is equivalent to learning. If succeeded, they will be granted credit for the course.

   b) Skill demonstration
   While the challenge examination involves practical exam, skills demonstrations and simulations require the candidates to demonstrate that their prior learning is related to the learning outcomes of a course. In this situation, they will be provided with course materials such as course outline and performance checklists in addition to texts and other course resources. programme faculty assesses the specific learning outcomes

and performance standard. If they are successful in the challenge processes they will be granted with course credit, just like what happens if they are successful in the examination. Sometimes, the challenge process for a particular course may include a combination of challenge examinations and skill demonstrations methods. The teacher or advisor will determine, develop and administer the combination of challenge methods that will allow an individual to demonstrate prior learning in the best way possible.

In order to assess prior learning, learning outcomes provide guidance to the assessor in making judgments. On the other hand, the students must prove their knowledge, skills, and judgments. The assessor should also suit the assessment method with the candidates. He should use techniques that are appropriate to the background and characteristics of the the students. The most important thing to an assessment is it should always include feedback to the learners. Assessment in PLAR procedures at University of Manitoba includes 6 steps which are shown in table 11:

Table 11:   **PLAR Procedure in University of Manitoba**

STEP	Descriptions
STEP 1	Define Criteria: Assessor defined standards against which the evidence presented by the student is to be judged.
STEP 2	**Select Assessment Method:** Which type of assessment procedure is most appropriate.
STEP 3	**Structure the Assessment:** The structure of the assessment process will vary according to the situation. In most cases it is the assessor who decides which methods will be used in the assessment. (Review of material in a portfolio, an oral interview, a written exercise etc.)
STEP 4	**Adapt the Assessment:** Use of the fairest and most relevant techniques for the demonstration of a student's learning.
STEP 5	**Observe the Assessment:** Observation of a student's behaviour against established performance criteria.
STEP 6	**Judge the Learning:** The act of judging or quantifying the student's learning against the established criteria and recording the results.

There are 10 standards determined by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) for assessing prior learning. However the standards are grouped into 2 types namely Academic Standard and Administrative Standards. The Academic Standard is used for assessing prior learning. The standard stipulates that credit should be awarded only for learning not experience and college credit should be awarded only for college-level learning. In addition, credit should be awarded only for learning that has a balance between theory and practical applications, appropriate to the subject,. Furthermore, determining the competence levels and awarding of credit must be carried out

appropriately by subject matter and academic experts. Finally, credit warded should be appropriate to the academic context in which it is accepted.

Meanwhile according to the Administrative Standards credit awards and their transcript entries should be monitored to avoid giving credit twice for the same learning. Also, the policies and procedures applied during assessment, including provision for appeal, should be fully disclosed and prominently displayed. The fees charged for the assessment should be based on the service performed in the process and not determined by the amount of credit awarded. Moreover, the personnel involved in the assessment of learning should receive adequate training for the functions they need to perform and there should be provision for their continued professional development. Finally, assessment programmes should be regularly monitored, reviewed, evaluated and revised. They should also reflect changes in the needs being served and in the state of the assessment arts (Whitaker et al. 1989).

c) **PLAR in Algonquin College, Canada**

PLAR implementation in Algonquin is help adult learner to identify, articulate and demonstrate relevant learning through life and work experience and translate learning into college credit. Credit earned through PLAR help to reduce amount of in-class time required to earn a credential, reduce the cost of education and encourage placement in a certificate or diploma program at an appropriate level. PLAR candidate are adult learners who come with unique sets of goals, attributes, experiences and learning styles and candidate may enrolled in college programs. PLAR implementation at Algonquin College is based on three step process as shown in Table 12:

Table 12: **PLAR process in Algonquin College.**

STEP 1: Information	STEP 2: Demonstration	STEP 3: Evaluation
i. Eligibility ii. PLAR vs Transfer of Academic credit (Exemption) iii. What courses PLAR proceed iv. Application procedure v. Residence policy vi. Appeal vii. FAQ	i. Demonstrate prior learning ii. Portfolio Development /Challenge examinations	i. Prior learning awarded or recognized ii. Grading and Transcription

1) Information
   The information provided to candidates as below.

   i) Eligibility
      Is use to be eligible for a prior learning candidate. The candidate age must 19 years and above or have an Ontario Secondary School Diploma or equivalent. If English is candidate second language, candidate may be required to pass an English test first.
   ii) PLAR vs. Transfer of Academic credit (Exemption)

Candiates must clearly understand that the PLAR concept is different from Transfer of Academic credit (Exemption). PLAR evaluates learning that they have gained from life and work experience while Transfer of Academic Credits (Exemptions) provides recognition of previously acquired courses taken at the Algonquin College or at other educational institutions

iii)   What courses PLAR proceed

Hence, candidate should determine the courses like Prior learning in Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology is evaluated on a course-by-course basis. The assessment method (portfolio or challenge exam) will vary, depending on the nature of the course. The PLAR Administrator communicates with faculty to establish PLAR course eligibility. PLAR Administrator is available to assist candidate to identify appropriate courses for a prior learning assessment and will advise about specific course assessment procedures.

iv)   Application procedure

Candidate should meet the PLAR Administrator, Program Coordinator or faculty before apply the Prior Learning Assessment to discuss more on eligibility. The fee will be charged and candidate should complete the application form. After the application form has been processed candidate may submit portfolio to the PLAR Office or proceed with the scheduled challenge examination.

2) Demonstration

Candidate should demonstrate their prior learning through through challenge exams or the portfolio process. Challenge exams are set by the programs for designated courses and may encompass a paper and pencil test, an interview and a demonstration or performance test. The exam is depending on the nature of the learning requirement. There are eleven steps in preparing challenge exam listed in Table 13:

Table 13:   **Eleven Steps in preparing challenge exam in Algonquin College**

STEP	Descriptions
STEP 1	Review the course and the course learning requirement to determine the essential learning to be measured.
STEP 2	Select the type of exam to be used, it may vary for the candidate.
STEP 3	Determine how the test will be structured.
STEP 4	Create a Table of specifications or test blueprint
STEP 5	Develop the exam question.
STEP 6	Remember to create the exam items that do not require knowledge of specific texts or in-class experience.
STEP 7	Check exam item to be sure they match with course learning requirements.
STEP 8	Create answer sheet or guidelines
STEP 9	Determine method of delivery (closed/ open book, Paper and pencil, computer assisted, time, supervised, central or decentralized)
STEP 10	Field test when possible (learners already in program)
STEP 11	Arrange for maintenance of test instrument and result.

Hence, the portfolio developed describes the candidates' relevant experience, identifies and analyses learning achievements and provides validquin of that learning through a collection of documents. Also, it engages the candidates in a process of self-review before beginning a study programme study at the college. In order to substantiate the claim to a PLAR credit in a required course, the portfolio must be adequately prepared. Candidates will identify or describe the relevant learning accomplishments such as knowledge, skills, competencies and abilities. They will match the learning achievements with the requirements of the course and verify these learning accomplishments with supportive documents. The portfolio enables articulation of learning from the candidates' perspective as they experience and internalise the learning. Secondly, the portfolio is the most comprehensive tool available for the assessment.

Portfolio documentation usually falls into two categories which are indirect and direct documentation. Direct documentation refers to products the candidate created, performance given, reports written and marketing plan produced. Direct documentation serves as strongest evidence that candidates really do know what the skill they claim to have. While indirect documentation is usually information about the candidate and his accomplishments such as letters written on behalf of the candidate employee, commendation received like award, medals and official recommendation, official personnel evaluations by supervisor, trades industry or newspaper and program notes from performance given or exhibits in which work was shown.

3) Evaluation

The next process is evaluation where it will be made by program or course experts in the college who had recent experience in teaching the courses being challenged. Candidate is expected to demonstrate learning that is equivalent to the basic learning outcomes required to pass the course. In order to assess the portfolio, six steps will be carried out. The steps are shown in the Table 14 below:

Table 14:   **Six steps in assessing the portfolio in Algonquin College**

STEP	Descriptions
STEP 1	Read through the portfolio to understand the candidate unique experience and achievement, experts try to obtaining an overall view in an initial reading.
STEP 2	Identify and analyze the documented learning achievements and compare them to the course learning requirements.
STEP 3	Validate the documentation for appropriateness, authenticity and credibility.
STEP 4	Make a tentative judgement based on experts understanding of course learning requirements.
STEP 5	If necessary, interview the candidate to verify the judgement and to seek further information.
STEP 6	Assign the grade and transcribe using the established process.

When the assessment done, it means PLAR credit has been achieved by the candidate, the faculty will record credits into candidate official transcript and PLAR credit will be recorded as a grade. But when a candidate failed at a prior learning assessment, it will not be recorded at transcript. The credit should be appropriate to the academic context in which it is earned. In Academic principles credit should be awarded only for learning and not for experience.

d)   PLA in British Columbia Universities, Canada

There are two types of assessment under the PLA procedures for British Columbia Universities which is challenge exams and portfolio Assessment (Schinnerl, 2001). In challenge exams, the currently enrolled students who, through formal study or informal learning, feel they have thorough knowledge of the facts, ideas and concepts of a university course may request the opportunity to challenge that course. If they pass a faculty developed examination, they can earn credit for that course. For the challenge exams, students may challenge an exam only once and not for a course that has been failed or previously registered in. they also must be registered with the university to enjoy the services. Credit granted is only at the undergraduate level. Figure 9 shows the PLA procedures for challenge exams.
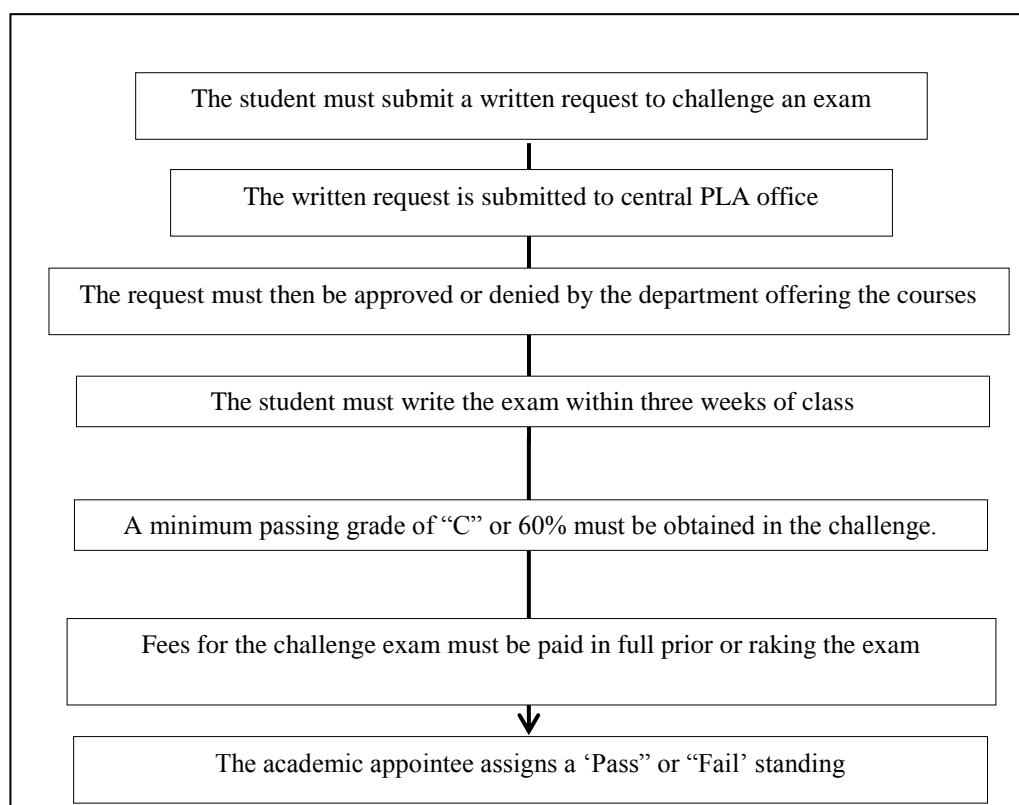
Figure 9:   PLA procedures for challenge exams (Schinnerl, 2001)

For portfolio assessment, it is at the discretion of each faculty and department to award credit on the basis of portfolio assessment for specific courses. Each department can allow an undergraduate student who interested in receiving credit for university-level learning obtained in non-traditional settings to

develop a portfolio that reflects knowledge mastered, request assessment of the portfolio and be awarded credit.

The credit sought by portfolio assessment cannot duplicate coursework and the total number of credits allocated for one portfolio is six credits like challenge exams, student must be registered with the university first to enjoy the services. The responsibility lies with the student to prepare an acceptable portfolio. Figure 10 shows the PLA procedures for portfolio assessment.

```
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│  ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐  │
│  │  The student uses a credit-by-portfolio registration       │  │
│  │  form to request a portfolio assessment                    │  │
│  └───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘  │
│                                                                   │
│  ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐  │
│  │  The credit-by-portfolio registration is submitted to the  │  │
│  │  central PLA office.                                        │  │
│  └───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘  │
│                                                                   │
│  ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐  │
│  │  After discussion with the PLA coordinator and with the    │  │
│  │  department and content experts, the student is advised if  │  │
│  │  the department offering the course(s) will accept a        │  │
│  │  request for assessment by portfolio for the courses(s) in  │  │
│  │  question.                                                  │  │
│  └───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘  │
│                                                                   │
│  ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐  │
│  │  The department designates a faculty member or committee   │  │
│  │  with appropriate expertise to conduct the portfolio        │  │
│  │  assessment.                                                │  │
│  └───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘  │
│                                                                   │
│  ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐  │
│  │  The student compiles the portfolio within the guidelines  │  │
│  │  established by the department and submits the portfolio to │  │
│  │  the faculty member or committee for assessment.           │  │
│  └───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘  │
│                                                                   │
│  ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐  │
│  │  The faculty member or committee may recommend minor        │  │
│  │  adjustments to the portfolio, in content or structure.     │  │
│  │  The student would then be asked to resubmit it with        │  │
│  │  changes and the portfolio would be reassessed. If the      │  │
│  │  student chooses to make changes no additional fee for       │  │
│  │  assessment would be charged.                               │  │
│  └───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘  │
│                                                                   │
│  ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐  │
│  │  Academic standards in assessing the amount and quality of  │  │
│  │  learning demonstrated by portfolio are to be equivalent to │  │
│  │  the learning expected in the                               │  │
│  └───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘  │
│                                                                   │
│  ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐  │
│  │  The faculty assessment is completed within a reasonable    │  │
│  │  time frame.                                                │  │
│  └───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘  │
│                                                                   │
│  ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐  │
│  │  Fees must be paid in full at time of registration.         │  │
│  └───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘  │
│                              ↓                                    │
│  ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐  │
│  │  The faculty member or committee assigns a "Pass" or "Fail" │  │
│  │  standing.                                                  │  │
│  └───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 10:   PLA procedures for portfolio assessment (Schinerl. 2001)

2.4.4   Asia

APEL implementation in Malaysia is, by law, handled by the Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA). In MQA, APEL is used for admission into higher education all around Malaysia and abide by the 5%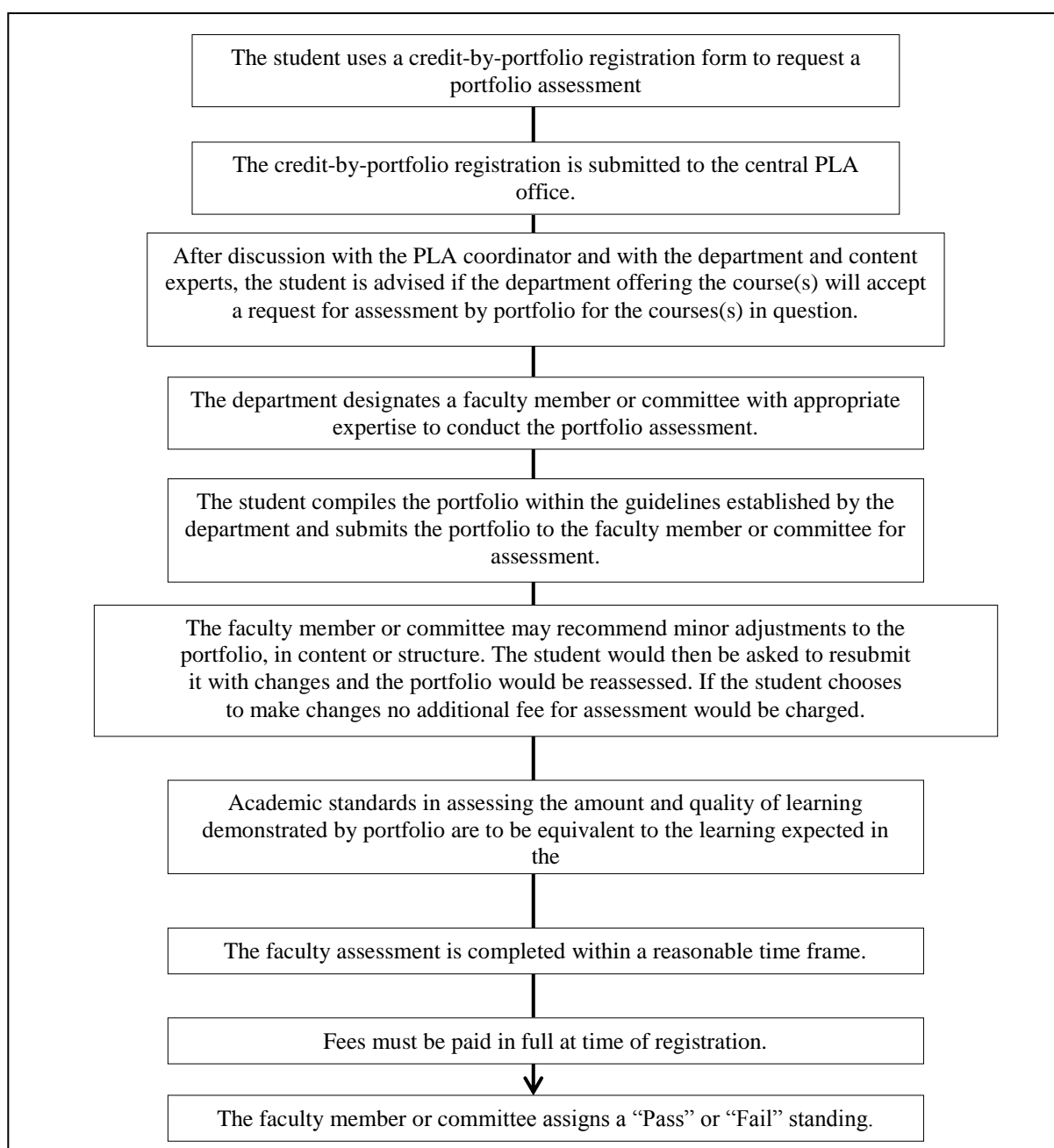 quota for each institution. Applicant has to apply for APEL from MQA in order to recognize their informal and non-formal learning to allow it to be used as admission qualification. There are also universities that have their own implementation of APEL such as Open University of Malaysia (OUM). However, OUM use the APEL as credit transfer which is different compare to MQA. It still valid since APEL can be used in many different ways in order to recognize the informal and non-formal learning. As Malaysia's pioneer higher institution in implementing APEL, Open University Malaysia had established their APEL system. Within this system, OUM had comes out with their own process in applying for APEL.

a)   APEL in Malaysian Qualification Agency

Applicants must take note that, in order to apply admission to higher education institution through APEL, they must successfully pass this assessment done by Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) first. APEL certification from MQA will qualify the applicant to apply for admission to any recognized Higher Education Provider (APEL Handbook for Learners, 2011). The processes to apply for APEL qualification are:

1) Deciding whether or not to continue with the application for APEL
Applicant must consider the fact that this is a very individual process which will require the use of skills such as self-motivation, reflection and time management.

2) Review and Reflect the learning
Applicants have to review their own experiences and certificated learning. This will create the framework will match the learning. It is important to show that the requirements have been achieved. They must make sure that there is a match between the prior experience and competencies. The applicants can contact the relevant MQA staff for any help and enquiry. Once the related form has been filled up, the applicants will be given a reference number as a confirmation on the registration fees. The number will be the applicants' identification in all matters related to APEL. The MQA staff will help them in preparing the assessment plan which will include:
   a) Review of course(s) and requirements
   b) Type and sources of evidence
   c) Assessment tools to be used; and
   d) Dates and times of assessment.

3) Decide on how the presentation of the claim will be
The claim may comprise of formal, non-formal or informal learning. Thus, the claim may include certificated learning and experiential learning. The copies of certificates and courses documentations are required as evidence for certificated learning. As for experiential learning, applicant must make sure that the experience they have is match to the MQF competencies that have been stated. The supporting evidence must be relevant and link to the description given. This may include documentary evidence, statement from

employers/customers/colleagues. The documental evidence must be wisely selected and directly related to the applicant's learning.

4) Portfolio submission and Aptitude test
Portfolio submission will help assessors to visualize and evaluate competences acquired by the learners either in informal or non-formal leaning. The applicant's portfolio will be forwarded to APEL committee for approval. The portfolio will be assessed within 20 days of working day. If the committee is uncertain about the evidence, other form of assessment will be carried out for clarification. This could be interview, presentation, demonstration or so forth.

In aptitude test, it will cater certain aspect of the applicant. It will cater the numerical literacy, language and general knowledge/critical thinking of the candidate. The structure of the aptitude test is shown in the Table 15:

Table 15: **Structure of the Aptitude Test (derived from APEL Handbook for Learners, 2011)**

	Test Content
Numerical Literacy	1) Basic Numerical
	2) Basic Algebra
	3) Problem Solving
English Literacy	• Reading & Comprehension
	• Grammar & Tenses
	• Spelling
	• Vocabulary
	• Error Correction
Bahasa literacy	• Reading & Comprehension
	• Grammar & Tenses
	• Spelling
	• Vocabulary
	• Error Correction
General Knowledge / Critical Thinking	• Logic Reasoning
	• Classification Skills
	• Pattern Recognition

5) Endorsement of the Result
MQA will issue a written notification regarding the assessment outcome to the applicants once it is endorsed.

6) Appeal
If the application is not successful, applicants can submit an appeal to MQA or given appropriate post-assessment support.

Based on this processes, applicants can made a proper preparation before applying for APEL at MQA and plan for further steps after getting the APEL certification or apply for appeal if necessary. Figure 11 shows the flow chart for a generic APEL assessment process by MQA.
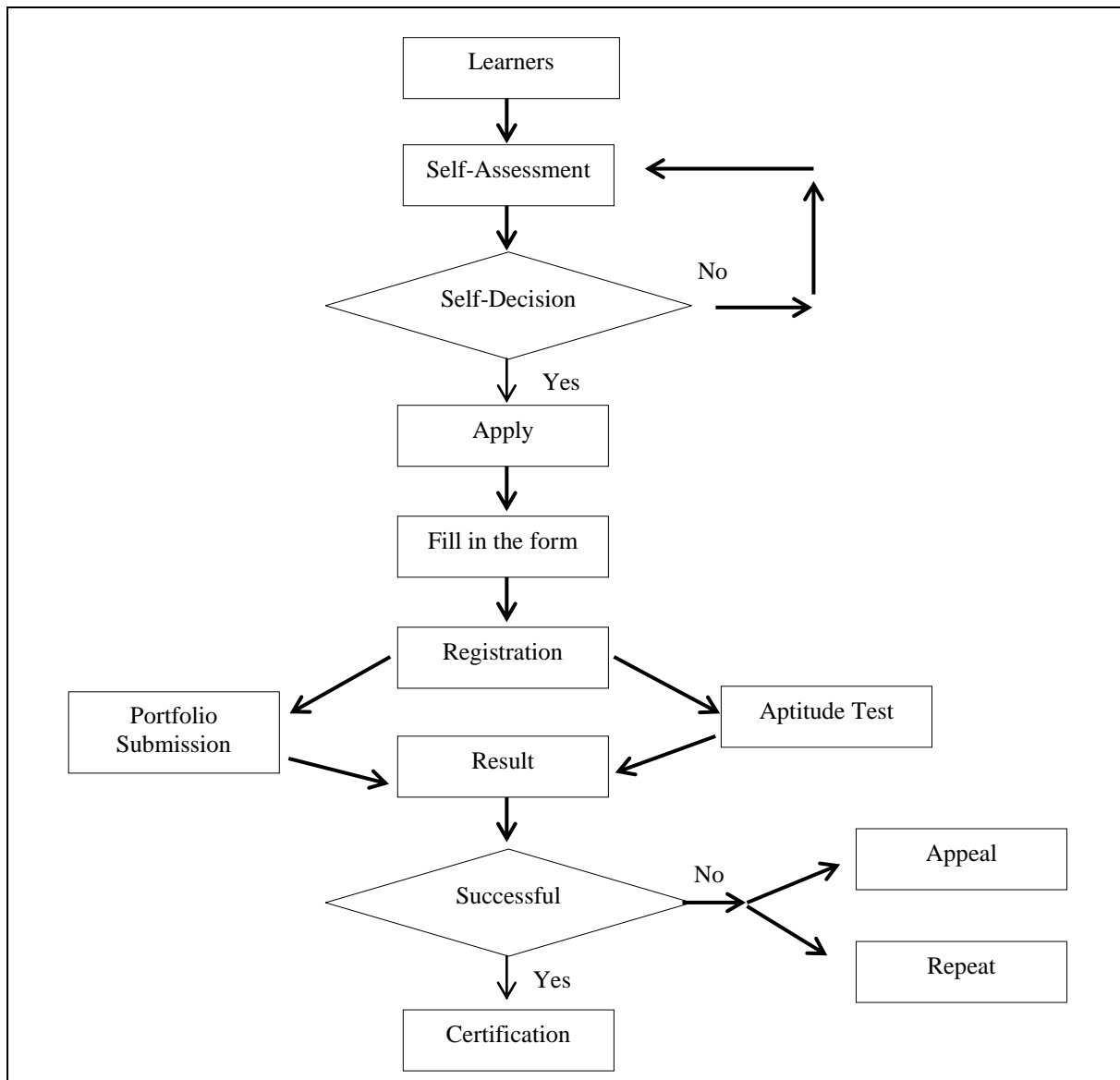
Figure 11:   Flowchart For A Generic APEL Assessment Process by MQA.

b)   myAPEL in Open University Malaysia

APEL in Open University Malaysia (OUM) is more focus towards the accreditation of the experience to be converted into academic credit. It also consists of three main stages. The process starts with pre-assessment stage. At this stage, applicants have to submit the details about prior learning and experiences that are relevant to the course they wish to apply through myAPEL system. For this stage, applicants have to fill in the Knowledge Resume template available in the eServices menu at the myLMS learner management system. The applications will then be assessed by subject matter/course experts from the corresponding faculties. If the applicants are found to be competent, they can proceed to the next stage of the process.

The next stage is APEL Assessment stage. This stage begins when the review of the Knowledge Resume by the Reviewing Committee is successful. Then the applicants have to undergo a test prepared by the committee. The test for assessment stage may take form of a Challenge Test or a

portfolio. Both assessment are develop based on specific course learning outcomes and are assessed by subject matter/course experts. At this point, if the applicants pass the assessment, they may proceed to the next stage. However, if they fail, they still can appeal upon the subject. The last stage which is post-assessment stage is where applicant will be awarded with course credits. They are also exempted from undertaking the course. As for those who failed at second stage, they have to undergo the usual method for enrolment. Figure 12 shows the APEL process at OUM.
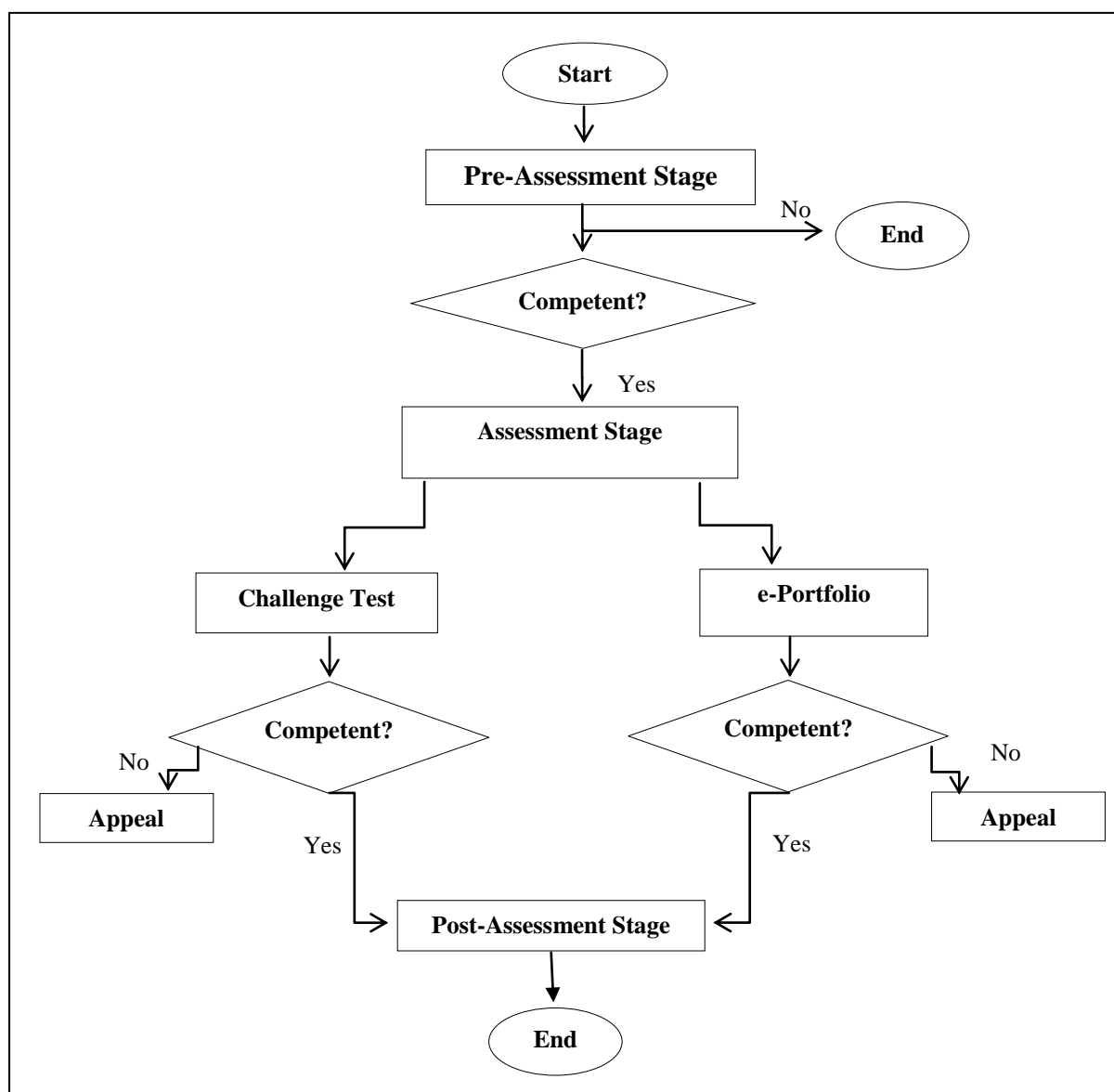

Figure 12:   myAPEL Process at OUM (Yick et al. 2012)

2.4.5 *Europe*

In a European Guidelines for Validating Non-Formal and Informal Learning Conference, the delegates of the conference have agreed on several points regarding the validation process for non-formal and informal learning (CEDEFOP, 2009). The points are:

a) Individuals (learners) are central to the validation process (and therefore should be involves in dialogue about the process, together with self-assessment, reflection, self-realization and they should receive guidance as necessary;

b) It is necessary to create systems in which the results of validation are transferable to the formal qualifications system if desired by learners;

c) The shift to learning outcomes-based approaches within curricula and qualifications systems is facilitating introduction of validation and use of common standards with the formal recognition system;

d) There is a clear link between validation procedures and introduction of outcomes-based qualification frameworks;

e) Validation can be used for both formative and summative purposes;

f) Since validation touches upon personal attitudes certain ethical principles should be respected and data should be protected;

g) Successful assessment methodologies usually combine several techniques but use of portfolio often has a central role;

h) Quality assurance of validation procedures is key for creation of common trust and credibility;

i) There is a need for better data on financial implications of validation procedures and especially cost-benefit analysis;

j) Some countries have difficulty in developing a sustainable large-scale system of validation of non-formal and informal learning which builds on and goes beyond project-based practice;

k) Guidance and training for those who manage and carry out the validation process are essential for the professionalization of practitioners, communities of practice and transparency of the validation processes.

In terms of payment for the validation, many countries in Europe see charging individuals as unaccepTable (CEDEFOP, 2009). However, there are still countries that do charge fees to the candidates with three possible options:

a) Fees based on the time spent completing validation;

b) A common basic fee, irrespective of time spent or the number of certifications awarded;

c) A fee based on the volume and level of certifications applied for and awarded.

Validation process

There are three main processes involved in validation which is orientation, assessment and external audit (CEDEFOP, 2009). For these processes to be effective there are several general qualities that must be supported to the process namely:

a) **Reliability:** would the outcome be the same if the process were repeated under the same condition?

b) **Validity:** is the learning that is being validated the learning that is intended to be validated?

c) **Safety, security and confidentiality:** is the candidate protected from abuse during the process?

d) **Standards/referential:** are the benchmarks of content and level of learning well defined?

e) **Sustainability:** will the process operate over time within the resources of the money and time required?

f) **Visibility/transparency:** is the process of validation generally understood and does it lead to wider recognition of the candidate's learning?

g) **Fitness for purpose:** does the process reflect the circumstances and intentions of the learner?

h) **Cost-efficiency:** can the process be modified so that the benefits (personal and financial) are in proportion to the cost?

These general qualities help in ensuring that the validation process is achieving its target and benefits to all participants. As for the process itself, the validation process in general is a complex process since it involves many participants and several stages. As mention above, for European countries, this process can be simplified into three stages. Figure 13 shows the three main stages in validation process of the non-formal and informal learning.
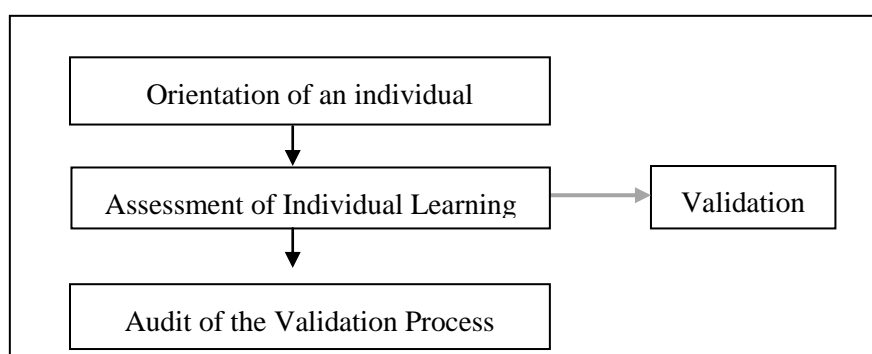
Figure 13:   Validation process for non-formal and informal learning

In the first stage, the orientation of an individual, all the aspect related will be covered including producing and distributing information, interaction of learners with advisers, counselors, and other significant actors such as employers. This orientation will reach a significant point when the activity begins to focus on assessing the individual's actual learning. This is a crucial stage because at this stage, the potential candidates will be motivated and then will be given an individualized advice and guidance on the whole process from identification of learning through to certification. By giving the right advices needed by the candidates, it will help in making the process more efficient and effective for all partners. It also can make the next stage become more clear and easier.

At the next stage which is the assessment of individual learning, it will cover a large area including the whole process of assessment from understanding requirements and standards, identification of learning, searching for evidence, organizing it for assessment and following agreed assessment and validation procedures. The end for this stage will be the validation process and monitoring the effects of validation on learners will be an important follow-up activity. Candidates in this stage must understand the requirements and standards expected as well as the outcome of the validation procedures.

The last stage is audit of the validation process. It is a post assessment process that involves an external, independent review of orientation and assessment. At this stage, the whole process of orientation and assessment will be under independent review of scrutiny.

Assessment methods

Assessment methods in validation of non-formal and informal learning are essentially the same in terms of tools used. Tools used for assessment can be adopted, combined and applied in a way which reflects the individual specificity and non-standardized character of non-formal and informal learning (CEDEFOP, 2009). It also benefits to set the validation of non-formal and informal learning against the process for the formal system. It is because it can emphasize the existence of the validation process for informal and non-formal learning. It also can help to show that the validation of informal and non-formal learning can establish its legitimacy through use of the same standards or benchmarks in the formals process. Figure 14 shows the broad terms how formal an informal systems can align with each other.

The upper part of the diagram shows the formal system and the bottom part show the informal system. In this system, learners will move to the right hand side to obtain the certification of their learning and shown by the black arrow. From the diagram, it can be seen that generally, the informal systems contain more choices for validation than the formal system. The option/choice is presented in the grey boxes at the bottom of the diagram. Hence, it can be said that the formal system has a simpler learning and validation environment than the informal system. As for the informal system, the validation process is more sensitive to the circumstances of an individual learner. Therefore, the summative element of the validation is made to be based on the same standard as the formal system. The red arrows in the diagram indicate the use of common standards by different validation processes. This can provide consistency and comparability of outcomes (CEDEFOP, 2009).
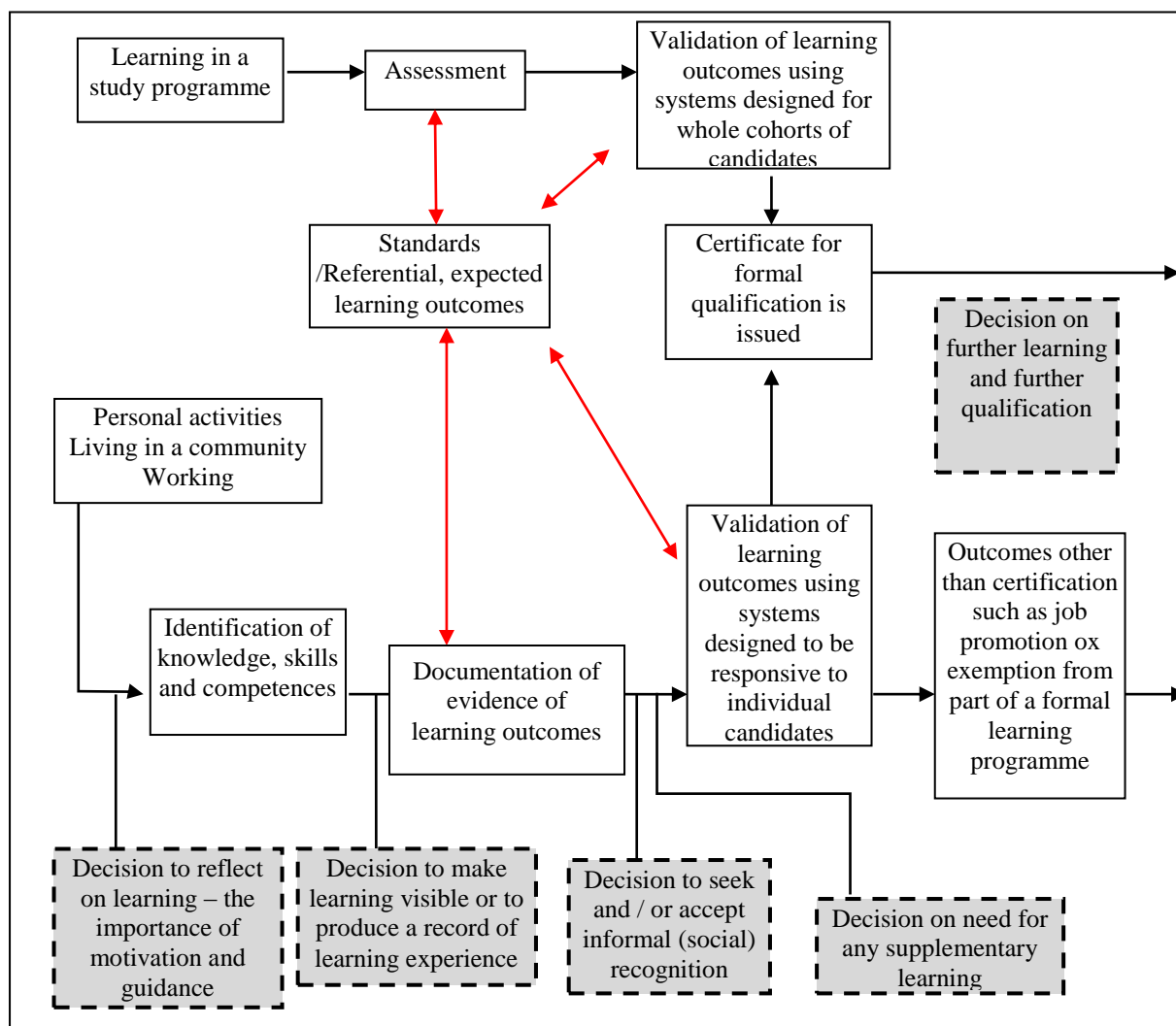
Figure 14:   Routes from learning to certification (derived from CEDEFOP 2009)

Assessment Tools

Tools for assessment learning can be in variety of form regardless whether it is formal learning, informal learning or non-formal learning. These tools used to assess different aspects of the outcomes in question. For informal and non-formal learning, the tools used must be able to reflect the practical skills or theoretical reflections in varying degrees. Before deciding which tools to assess what outcomes, the tools must fit several criteria in order to be potential useful assessment tool:

   a) **Validity:** the tool must measure what it is intended to measure;
   b) **Reliability:** the extent to which identical results would be achieved every time a candidate is assessed under the same conditions;
   c) **Fairness:** the extent to which an assessment decision is free from bias (context dependency, culture and assessor bias);
   d) **Cognitive range:** does the tool enable assessors to judge the breadth and depth of the candidate's learning;
   e) **Fitness for purpose of the assessment:** ensuring the purpose of the assessment tool matches the use for which it is intended.

The European Guidelines for Validating Non-Formal and Informal Learning had classified the assessment tools into eight classes. Figure 15 shows the classification of the assessment tools for non-formal and informal learning.
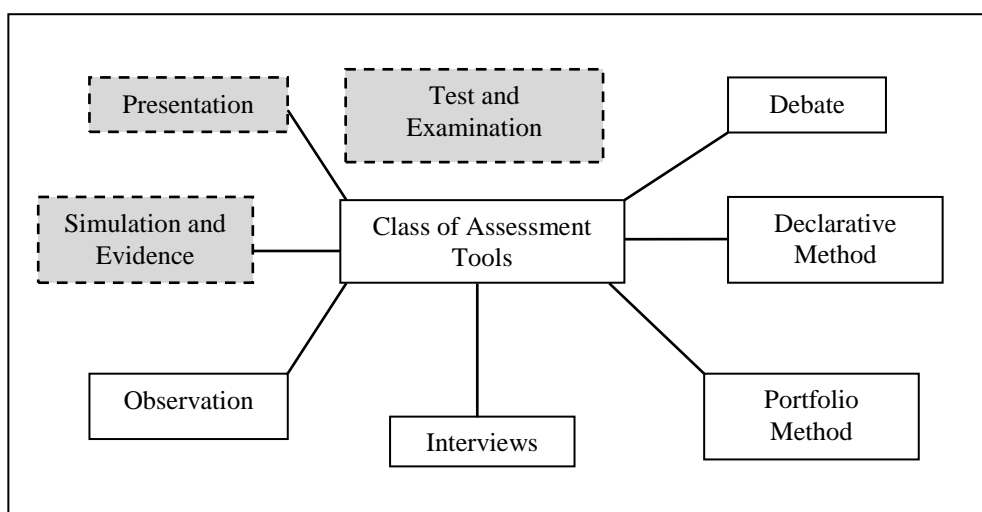
Figure 15:   The classification of Assessment Tools for Non-Formal and Informal Learning (derived from CEDEFOP 2009)

Based on the Figure 15, the assessment tools that can be used in order to assess the non-formal and informal learning are debate, declarative method, portfolio method, interviews, observation, simulation and evidence, presentation and test and examination. The three classes in the grey box are the three common tools used but cannot be classified into the other five categories.

i.   Debate

By taking part in debate, the candidates can show their capacity to sustain a considered argument and demonstrate depth of adequate knowledge of a subject. Other than that, the candidate also had the opportunity to demonstrate their communication and social skills.

ii.   Declarative methods

Here a candidate makes an evidence-based statement about their learning by responding in writing to preset criteria designed to help them be evaluative. This method is best to be used in conjunction with other methods that have more independent evaluation built in.

iii.   Interview

This method can be particularly useful in areas where judgement and values are important. It can be used with other tools for a more complete assessment of a candidate and therefore allow for commentary and clarification.

iv.   Observation

A candidate will be assessed by the third party in a particular setting: there is an opportunity to observe real practice. The criteria that will be assessed are set in advance.

However, this method may be complicated to set up and time consuming as well as costly. It also does not proscribe collaboration with colleagues or fellow learners.

v. Portfolio Method

A portfolio is an organized collection of materials that presents and verifies and knowledge acquired through experience. It allows the individual candidate to contribute actively to the collection of evidence and also offers a mix of approaches strengthening the overall validity of the process.

APL can be divided into two main roads which is a summative and formative one. The summative approach aims at an overview of competences, recognition and valuation and aim for certification. As for formative approach, it is when the validation goes one step further and includes practical learning and/or personal competence-development. For this approach, it is aim at development by designing a personal learning career and development path (Duvekot et. al. 2005).

a) APEL in France

In France, APEL is known as Validation of Prior Learning (*Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience*). It is basically not a new system in the country. Different VPL systems already existed before the current regulatory framework (Chakroun, 2006). In 1934, the first procedure called "Ingénieur DPE" allows for awarding the national degree of engineer to individuals able to prove that they had accumulated the relevant knowledge and skills at work. Then, in 1985, the second procedure known as Validation of Professional Learning (Validation des AcquisProfesionnels) was implemented. In this system, it authorizes "dispensary access" to all levels of further education on the basis of work experience (Chakroun, 2006).

As for VPL procedures in higher education, according to the law of 2002, the candidates have to presents a portfolio (Dossier VAE) supporting his request and that a jury, after interview the candidates, award full, partial or no accreditation (Chakroun, 2006). The portfolio for this assessment will consist of two main parts:

a) **Part 1:** candidates give basic information about them, state their motivation and list the relevant learning and work force.
b) **Part 2:** candidates are asked to fill out a form providing detailed description of tasks activities and related learning. They also have to develop one or several significant work-situations that they have carried out and identify learning related to knowledge, skills and competencies required for the degree sought.

Differ from any other European country, in France, mentoring is optional and covers a large number of actions and steps (Chakroun, 2006). Mentors are mainly play a part to enable the candidate to be the main player in the VPL process. Mentor does not judging the candidate because the functions are separate since mentor does not have any direct role in assessment. This allows the mentor to be any generalist in the subject and does not need to be a specialist instead. It is simply because they do not have to assess the candidates' knowledge in the subjects. There are seven steps in the VAE process. Figure 16 shows the process of VAE in France.
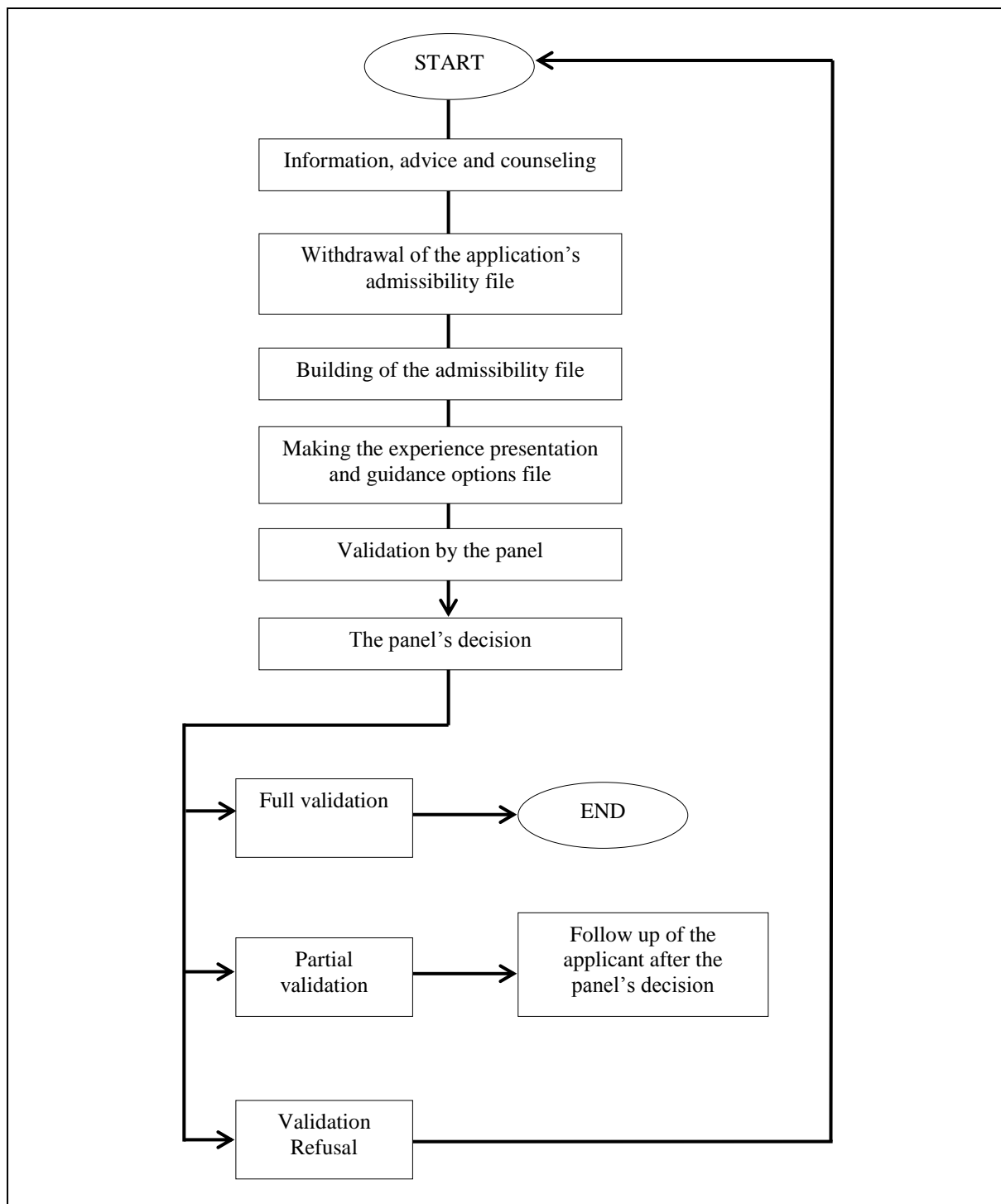
Figure 16: VAE process in France.

1) Information, advice and guidance
   The organization in charge in handling the information on VAE is Centres Points of Information and Advice (PIA) under the regional Councils' authority. PIA helps candidate in:

   a) Analyze the relevance of candidate's VAE plan: if necessary, they redirect candidate to other procedures (job search, skill assessment, etc.)
   b) Find candidate's way among the certification offers (national and regional)
   c) Direct the candidate towards the appropriate certifying body
   d) Find the financial aid options.

   Other than that, centres and points of information and advice, accredited by regional Councils, can be found in already existing organizations such as the 'Agences locales porl'Empoi' (Employment Local Egencies), the 'Missions Locales', the 'Centresd'Inforamation et d'Orientation' (Information and Guidance Centres) or the "Centres de Bilan de Compétences') Skill Assessment Centres).

2) Withdrawal of the application's admissibility file
   The file submitted can be withdrawn by the candidates at the validation centres. For all certifying and validating bodies, the addresses can be found at the PIA.

3) Building the admissibility file
   Candidates have to give proof of at least three years of salaried, non-salaried or voluntary activities in direct relation to the intended certification. The activities that are taken into account are activities practiced in a continuous or discontinuous way, full or part time, in France or abroad. The activities that are not taken into account are initial or continuous training periods, whatever the person's status was. Also not taken into account are internship and training in a professional environment period when they were carried out for the preparation of a diploma or a vocational education, certificate.

   All these activities must be proven. For salaried activities, a pay slip or an employer attestation can be the proof of the activities. For non-salaried activities, it can be proven by a tax-return, an URSAFF declaration of existence, an extract of K bis (an official document delivered by the Clerk's Office of the Commercial Court. This document justifies that a commercial company is regularly registered in the trade and firms register) or an extract of the D1 (the proof of your personal company or firm registration by the Trade Index). As for unpaid voluntary activities, the attestations signed by two associations of union members holding the power or delegation sign can be the proof of the activities.

   Practised activities must be related to the activities defined in the corresponding certification system of reference and/or activities system of reference. All systems of reference are available upon request by the certifying or validating body.

   The completed file must be handed in to the certifying or validating body which conducts its' examination and declares on the applicants' admissibility. This is done within two months starting from the date when the application is handed in. If there is no reply, it means the application is rejected. The admissibility decision prejudges by no means on the extent of the validation, which can only be pronounced by the validation panel. Once the admissibility

decision is made, the candidates can proceed to VAE procedure. They can start building the experience presentation file.

4) Making the experience presentation and guidance options file.
Candidates will be offered guidance, which is highly recommended, to help in making the experience presentation file and increase the chances of success in the procedure. The guidance can be offered by the certifying or validating bodies, public or private capacitated service providers. The guidance will consist of:

   a) Provides methodological aid for making the experience presentation file.
   b) Helps candidate in preparing for the Professional Practical Examination and/or the interview with the panel, if these validation modalities in use for the intended certification.

The guidance begins when the applicant is declared admissible. It comes to an end once the experience presentation file is complete or at the panel's call for an interview or a professional practical examination. Some certifying or validating bodies offer guidance after the panel's decision when it has refused the validation or granted only a part validation.

5) Validation by the jury
The experience presentation file will be submitted to the validation panel. At least a quarter of the members of the panel must be skilled personnel representing the intended profession. Then, among these representatives, parity must exist between the employer representatives and the salaried employees' representatives; and the balance regarding the presentation of men and women on the entire panel must be a concern.
The panel controls and assesses professional skills acquired by the applicant comparing them with the system of reference of the certification/activities. There are two assessment modalities used by the panel. First is the file validation. The assessment is based on the examination of the experience presentation file and may be complemented by an interview, when necessary. This interview can be requested by the panel or the candidate. Second is the validation by a practical examination in a real or re-enacted professional situation. It can be organized by the certifying or validating body. It may also be complemented by an interview.

6) The panel's decision
The panel can make three types of decision regarding the assessment of the evidence. It can be a full validation of the certification. The certification obtained through VAE is the same as the one obtained by other ways through continuing training, initial training or apprenticeship). The panel also can award a partial validation where the panel specifies the skills, knowledge and aptitudes need to be required and recommends acquisition ways. Candidate may also be offered guidance. Lastly, it can be a validation refusal. Some certifying or validating bodies give advice to guide the candidates on the new procedures they may start. In some cases, certifying and validating bodies can offer they an individualised follow up if he/she has obtained a partial validation (invitation to meet the service, proposal of individual support, etc.).

b)   APL in United Kingdom

In United Kingdom the concept of accreditation was introduced to widen access to education including higher education. The term accreditation of prior learning (APL) is used for the award of credit on the basis of demonstrated learning acquired previously. The model in Figure 17 shows the overview of the formal procedures generally uses to implement the APL process in higher education institutions.

```
Pre-entry publicity          Applicant enquiry          Post-entry programme
    materials                                               literature

                       Initial advice /guidance
                         from designated staff

                          APL information pack
                             distributed

Advice / guidance on APCL from            Advice / guidance on APEL from
      subject expert                            subject expert.
                                          Negotiation of learning agreement if
                                                   necessary

Submission of APEL                        Submission of APEL application with
application with evidence.                          evidence.
Registration of learner.                    Registration of learner.

Assessment by subject specialist          Assessment by subject specialist

                    Assessment outcome
                communicated to appropriate body

                 Assessment decision confirmed by
                           Exam Board

                Outcome recorded on student record
```

Figure 17: Overview of the main steps in the APL process (UCAS: The University and Colleges Admissions Service)

1) Identify a potential study programme or award.

The process starts with the identification of a study programme. The chosen study programme will offer a frame of reference for analysing prior experiences and the learning that has occurred as a result.

2) Develop a portfolio.

A portfolio is a collection of materials compiled by an individual to show which learning has been derived from prior experiences. The following activities need to be carried out:

a) Compile a comprehensive list of learning experiences.
b) Identify the learning gained from these experiences.

    c) Express the learning in learning statements which precisely indicate the nature and level of learning.

    d) Collect evidence of the learning.

3) Assessment of portfolio by subject specialists.

Once a portfolio has been completed it is submitted to an assessment team, normally the portfolio is reviewed by more than one assessor. The assessors examine the evidence and using a holistic approach, judge the number of credits that can be awarded. Normally an assessment interview is held and if necessary, an assessor might ask a student to undertake an assessment exercise such as an examination, a written assignment or a demonstration. The assessment criteria most commonly used are related to:

    a) Authenticity (Did the applicant do what he/she claims?)

    b) Quality (Has the learning reached an acceptable level?)

    c) Currency (Is the knowledge still up-to-date?)

    d) Sufficiency (Is there sufficient evidence to prove the learning?)

4) Final decision

Assign credit points to the prior learning, subject to the approval of the Board of Examiners. Once this approval has been given, the applicant receives a certificate of credit indicating the number of general credits that have been earned.

There is also APL model by Nyatanga, Forman and Fox (1998). This model is the most commonly used in the U.K (Venter, 1999). This model consists of six stages which is pre-entry, profiling, providing of evidence, assessment, accreditation and post APL counselling and shown in Table 16 below:

Table 16: **APL process model commonly used in U.K (Nyatanga et al. 1998)**

STAGE	Descriptions
Stage 1: Pre-entry	Marketing of APL availability – Fliers, brochures, open days, press
Stage 2: Candidate profiling	Establish candidate's goals, past experience (initial screening)
Stage 3: Providing evidence	Candidate gathers tangible evidence to support claim. Evidence normally presented as a portfolio
Stage 4: Assessment	Assessors review claim, check and verify claim. Assessors make recommendations for credit recognition.
Stage 5: Accreditation	Final verification by institution or professional body.
Stage 6: Post APL counselling	Review of total experience.

1) Pre-entry

   During this stage, preparation for APL awareness and the conducting of marketing activities are carried out. Learners do not necessarily know that APL is available and which institutions provide the service. Awareness is created by using fliers, brochures, open days and advertising in the press.

2) Candidate profiling

   Once candidates are aware that APL is available, they apply for APL at the institution. Although the candidates have applied for APL the counselor must determine what the goals of the candidate are and whether it can be met through APL.

3) Providing evidence

   This stage involves the candidate gathering the necessary evidence required supporting the claim. Evidence can take many forms such as portfolio, certificates and various assessment methods.

4) Assessment

   Here the assessors review the evidence that the candidate presents. All claims have to be checked and verified by subject matter experts. Assessors make a judgement and recommendations for or against credit recognition.

5) Accreditation

   Although the assessors have made a recommendation in stage 4, the final accreditation of the candidate's claim lies with the verifier. The verifier endorses or rejects the recommendation of the assessor and either awards or does not award the credits to the candidate.

6) Post APL counseling

   Whether the candidate proved successful or not, the APL experience is reviewed and career counseling is conducted.

For model for the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) is made by McKelvey and Peter (1993). This process model consists of seven stages. Figure 18 shows the NVQ APL process by McKelvey and Peters (1993).
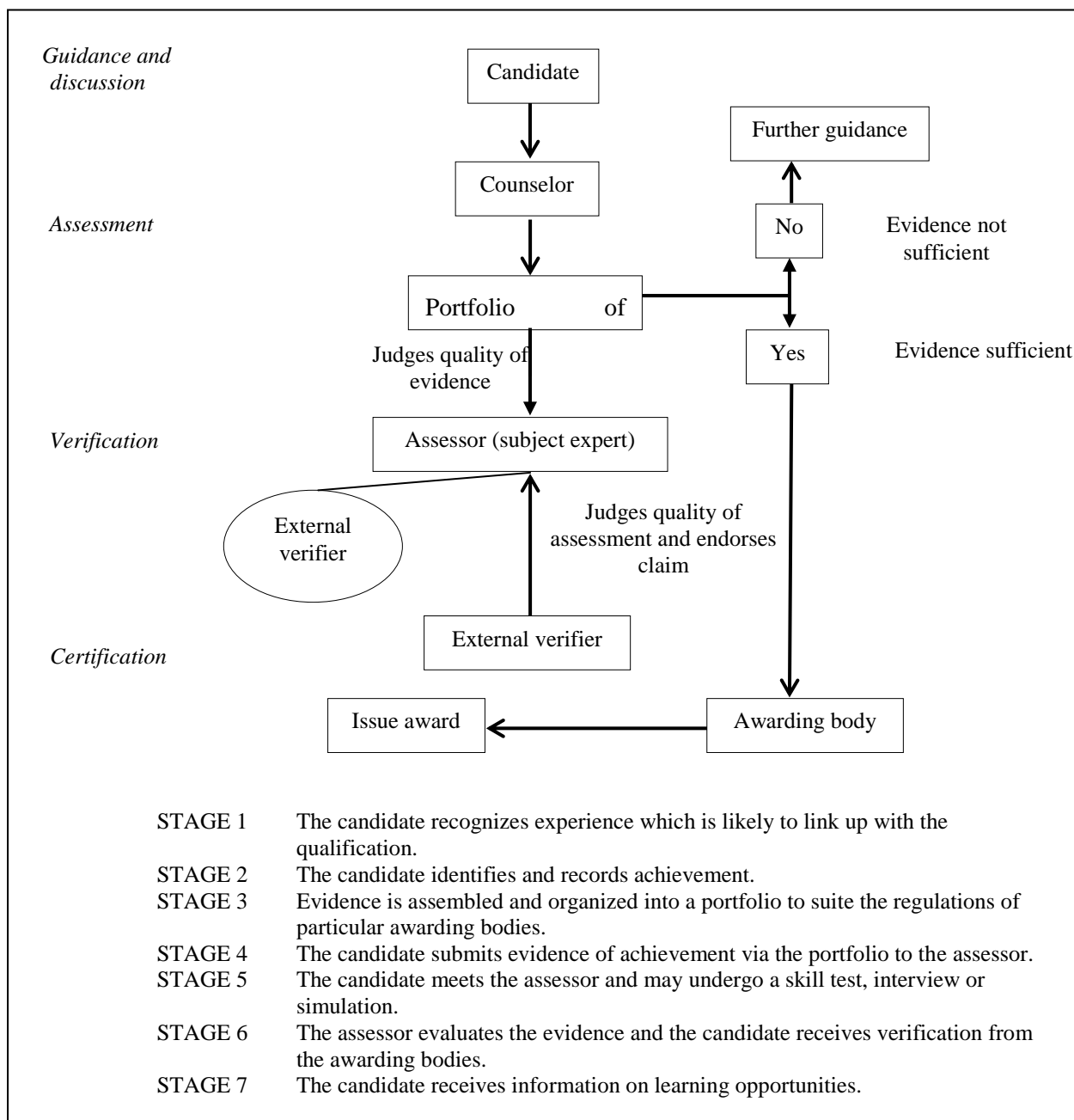
Figure 18:   The NVQ APL Process (McKlevey and Peters 1993)

The diagram contains the following labels:

Guidance and discussion

Candidate

Counselor

Further guidance

Assessment

No   Evidence not sufficient

Portfolio   of

Yes   Evidence sufficient

Judges quality of evidence

Verification

Assessor (subject expert)

External verifier

Judges quality of assessment and endorses claim

Certification

External verifier

Issue award   Awarding body

STAGE 1   The candidate recognizes experience which is likely to link up with the qualification.

STAGE 2   The candidate identifies and records achievement.

STAGE 3   Evidence is assembled and organized into a portfolio to suite the regulations of particular awarding bodies.

STAGE 4   The candidate submits evidence of achievement via the portfolio to the assessor.

STAGE 5   The candidate meets the assessor and may undergo a skill test, interview or simulation.

STAGE 6   The assessor evaluates the evidence and the candidate receives verification from the awarding bodies.

STAGE 7   The candidate receives information on learning opportunities.

c) **Process of APL in University of Worcester, UK**

The process for APL in University of Worchester can be plot in several stages (University of Worcester, 2013). Figure 19 shows the APL process.
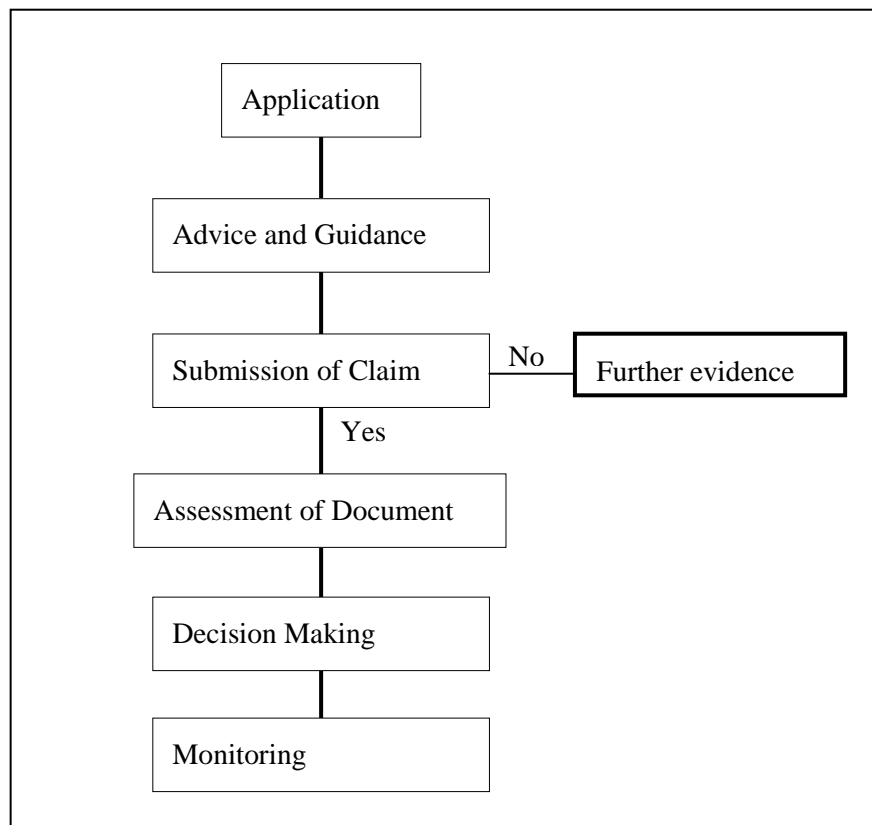
Figure 19:   Process of APL in University of Worchester

1) Application

Application for credit should be routed through the Admission Office in registry Services. Applicants can get the forms on the University website and download them directly.

2) Advice and Guidance

On initial enquiry, the applicant will be provided with an explanatory leaflet, which will include advice on the cost of applying for APL and any advice required on procedure. Applicants will be required to complete a claim form detailing the prior learning they wish to accredit, and to provide appropriate evidence. The Admissions Office will handle queries at this stage. If more subject detail or advice on evidence is required, the Admissions Office will consult the relevant Admission Tutor, who will appoint an adviser if appropriate. The adviser will:

Advise students on strategies open to them in preparing an APL claim.

A) Assist students to identify appropriate ways forward

B) Begin to help students identify their prior learning

C) Assist students in completing the appropriate claim form.

The adviser will be separated from the individuals who finally from the individuals who finally assess that student's claim (the assessor). Each subject area will identify a named individual or individuals who will provide advice/guidance on APEL portfolio construction. Following the submission of a completed claim form, the Admission Tutor (s) and relevant Head of Department(s) will designate an adviser to provide support to an individual student in respect of advice and guidance concerning claim for APEL Portfolio construction.

3) Submission Of Claim

Following the submission of the completed APL claim form, the Admissions Office will advise the prospective student if further evidence and/or the appropriate fees are required. If certification has already been supplied, assessment of the claim will take place at once. If any certificate, transcript and reference are required, the student will be advised and, if necessary, will be given advice on the submission of further evidence. If additional information is required, applicants may be required to provide it to the Admission Office. All applications must normally be submitted at least four weeks before the student commences the programme of study from which credit is sought. Claims submitted late will not be considered unless the Assistant Registrar (Recruitment & Admissions) is satisfied with the reason for the late submission.

The Admission Office will distribute copies of the application and supporting documentation to the appropriate Admissions Tutor together with the general guidance on appropriate credit ratings where it's available. The Admission Tutors will normally be responsible for initial assessment of APL claims.

Admission Tutors will determine specific academic credit that would, in their view, be appropriate with regard to their respective course and subjects. They may request the student to submit additional documental evidence. It is the individual's student's responsibility to make claim in respect of the number and the level of credits being sought within the claim for APL.

Admission Tutors' decisions will be coordinated and recorded by the Admission Office, who will advise the applicant formally in writing on the decisions reached.

4) Assessment of Documentation

Applicant may be asked to submit for assessment any or a mixture of copies of transcript, syllabi, references; a portfolio of evidence; attendance at an interview; simulation or practical exercise; a diagnostic test(s) and / or a piece of work or special assignment. The assessors should be the subject specialist in order to maintain the objectivity and rigor of the APEL portfolio assessment. Hence they will be able to evaluate the evidence offered and to establish the authenticity of the claim.

In assessing the document, the Admissions Tutors should take into account the level, standard, content, relevance and recency of the prior learning. Where appropriate, a second assessment of the credit awarded may be undertaken by a suitably qualified assessor. This will always be considered appropriate where APEL is claimed, or where claims are based on non-standard APCL. Claims will be received in six weeks from the date the application is lodged.

5) Decision-Making

Student may be required to attend the interview session for decision making. The Admission Tutors are the best people to involve in this session. The criteria to be used in judging a claim for the accreditation of prior learning should be made explicit to applicants, academic staff, stakeholders and assessors and examiners. The checklist for assessors in assessing the document should contain the validity where the assessment identifies the knowledge and skills to be assessed and reliability where the assessment can be repeated with the same outcome. The checklist should also include sufficiency where the evidence provided is appropriate in terms of quality and quantity, authenticity where it is the applicant's own experience and subsequent learning for which accreditation is being sought and also relevancy where the learning to be accredited represents up to date knowledge and skills.

6) Monitoring

The assessment on learning derived from experience should be open to internal and external scrutinies and monitoring within institutional quality assurance procedures for moderation of assessment. All APEL claims should be internally moderated and contain a sample presented for external examination. The monitoring of the student admitted via APL is important. This will enable information to be built upon on the suitability of particular qualifications or patterns of experience for the granting of advanced standing or credit exemption. There will be an annual report presented in the annual meeting which includes the number of APL claims submitted and accepted by any course, and any issues relating to the principles, process or procedure.

d) The RPL Process by Pearson Education Limited

This is the common RPL steps and action outline by the Pearson. There are 5 stages namely awareness, pre-assessment, assessment, claiming and appeal (Pearson Education limited, 2012). Figure 20 shows the RPL process made by Pearson Education Limited.
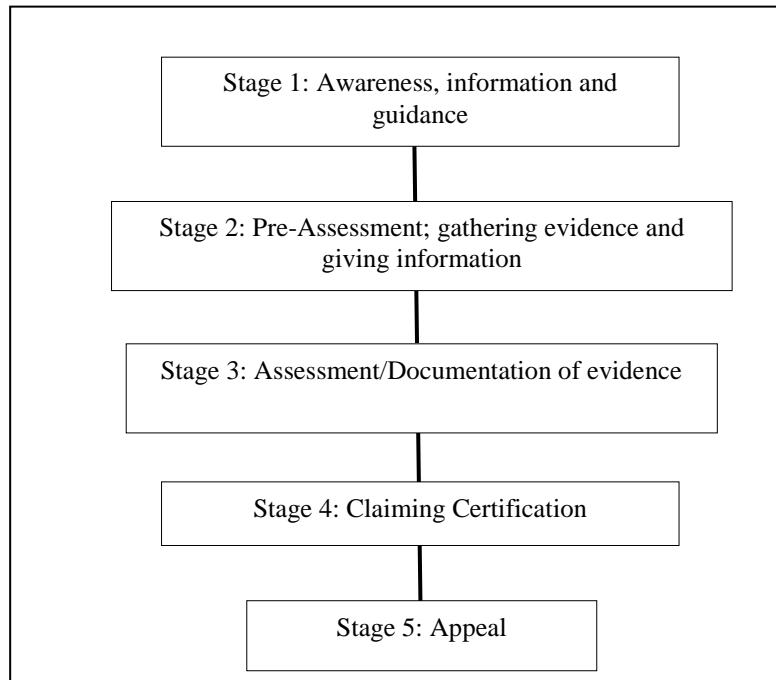
Figure 20:   RPL Process by Pearson Education Limited

1) Awareness, information and guidance

   As for the potential learning who intended to claim credit for some of their previous learning should be raised with them and they have to know about several elements which is the process of claiming achievement by using RPL, sources of support and guidance available to them and timelines, appeals processes and any feels involved

2) Pre-assessment; gathering evidence and giving information

   At this stage, the candidates will carry out the process of collecting evidence against the requirements of the relevant unit(s). The evidence must meet the standards of the unit, or part of unit(s). The evidence must meet the standards of the unit, or part of unit.

3) Assessment/documentation of evidence

   This is the stage for gathering and reviewing evidence and making judgments about learners' prior learning and experience in relation to unit standard. The evidence could be work experience records, validated by managers. They could also be previous portfolios of evidence put together by the learner or essays and reports validated as being the learner's own unaided work. Assessment must be valid and reliable to ensure the integrity of the award of credit and the evidence gathered need to meet the standard of the unit or part of unit. The assessment process will be subject to the usual quality assurance procedures of the centre.

4) Claiming Certification

   This certification claims can be made by the centre once the internal and external quality assurance procedures have been successfully completed. The assessment and internal verification records together with any additional RPL records completed should be retained for a three years period.

5) Appeal

Candidates have to follow the standard center and the Pearson Enquires and Appeals procedures if they wish to appeal against the decision made about their assessment.

e)   EVC in Netherlands

Accreditation of prior learning in Dutch terms is *Erkennen van elders of informeelVerworvenKwalificaties (EVK)* refer to the means 'the recognition of qualifications gained somewhere else or in an informal setting'. Gradually, the term *kwalificaties*[qualifications] isbeing replaced by the term *competenties*or known as competencies and thus the abbreviation EVC is used to refer to the assessment and accreditation of prior learning and competencies (Scholten and Teuwsen, 2001). The model with three basic steep is shown in Figure 21:

1. Development and assessment of the portfolio	a. Make inventory of experiences
	b. Choose which experiences are relevant
2. Assessment Task	Criterion-referenced interview: planning	c. Define personal competencies
	Observation of processandproduct	d. Compare competencies with standard
	Criterion-referenced Interview: reflection / transfer	e. Gather evidence
	f. Develop a personal development plan
3. Final evaluation decision	

Figure 21:   A basic EVC model (Klarus and Blokhuis, 1997)

The three steps will be explained in details below:

1) Development and assessment of a portfolio

A portfolio is a file containing an overview of a person's educational and professional career, as well as candidates' leisure activities. The competencies acquired through these learning situations are compared with the requirements for a qualification, which may have been laid down in the national qualification structure.

2) Assessment tasks

All the candidates are required to perform a task for the purpose of testing. This is an authentic task based on an analysis of the occupation. If possible, the task is performed at the workplace. Candidates receive the assignments a few days before the test which gives them the opportunity to prepare at home. Since *EVC* is meant to determine whether a person is capable of performing certain tasks, it is not wrong that they are able to practise before the test. The specific questions that will be asked are not given in advance, however. The candidates' ability to plan and to reflect on their performance is assessed with the help of a

structured criterion-referenced interview, while the execution of the task is observed by the assessors.

1) *Structured criterion-referenced interview*

    The assessors interview the candidates on the basis of a *list of standardised criteria* in order to assess how they have planned and prepared for the task. The interview serves two purposes. First, it provides information about the professional skills of the candidates. Second, the assessor knows what to look for as the assignment is being completed (e.g. is the chosen procedure safe). At the end of the assignment, the candidates are interviewed again. The purpose of the second interview is to assess whether they can reflect accurately on the task that they have just performed. It is also to assess and whether they are able to transfer the method of working to other situations in the same domain.

2) *Observation*

    The observation is carried out with help of an *observation checklist*, which is also based on the criteria for the national qualification. These criteria focus on three aspect and the observation checklist lists all the activities that can be observed.

    a) the preparation (all the necessary materials)
    b) the process (the correct sequence and use the right procedure)
    c) the completion (perform the necessary follow-up procedures)

3) Total evaluation

    The last step in the procedure is the evaluation of the assignment as a whole. Guidelines for weighing the various components have been developed and should be used by the assessors. If the result is a 'pass', the certificate for the full or partial qualification is awarded to the candidate or he/she is exempted from parts of the module in question.

f)   Recognition of Prior Learning in FETAC, Ireland.

There are a numbers of processes prepared by FETAC (2009) for providers to offer recognition of prior learning. The process can be divided into two processes as follows:

1) Recognition of prior learning within Programmes – entry / access to programmes and exemptions which can be facilitated as part of education and training programme provision.

2) Recognition of prior learning offered to a learner seeking an award independent of programmes.

The processes are illustrated in Figure 22. FETAC will facilitate learners who apply for a full award in partnership with providers. A learner who applies directly to FETAC will be required to make an initial application to determine eligibility. If eligible he/she will be referred to an approved provider and will be required by that provider to prepare a Portfolio/Collection of Evidence to submit for assessment in accordance with the providers and award requirements. This evidence is gathered to prove the knowledge, skills and competences claimed by the learner meets the learning outcomes of the award. The evidence will be collated into a Portfolio. The portfolio or collection of evidence can include curriculum vitae, certificate, job description(s), references/testimonials, products/samples,

evidence from courses attended, work place assessment, test results, interviews and others. The portfolio or collection of evidence should contain the following:

1) Personal details and contact information
2) Table of contents listing the various sections in the portfolio
3) Full curriculum vitae expanded to included detailed work history (European CV recommended)
4) Reference information on award identified
5) List of learning outcomes/standards for the award and details of analysis recorded as achieved/not achieved with identified evidence reference
6) Referenced/indexed listing of evidence – referenced to learning outcomes
7) Copies of correspondence/applications form etc.
8) Details of meetings with mentor

A range of supporting evidence including the following:

1) Direct evidence
   a) Project or work based assignments
   b) Evidence of work based assessment – on the job assessment for work skills
   c) Job specification(s)
   d) Company organization charts
   e) Personnel records of in house training and development
   f) Accounts of personal experiences
   g) Employer endorsement and/testimonials
   h) Prior qualifications, Certificates of Education and Training – FETAC, in house etc.
   i) Training, assessment and test results
   j) Curricula/course description/outcomes
   k) Staff training records/personal records
   l) Products of work, samples of documentation/work undertaken, photographs
2) Indirect evidence
   a) Membership of related organizations and societies
   b) General references
   c) Newspaper cuttings

The provider will offer this services in line with own costs and services to learners and will process the award in the standard way may facilitate learners directly for an award through recognition of prior learning. This recognition process will require a mentor to support to support and advise the learner.

The recognition process will include a comparison between the standards of a FETAC award and the verified prior learning experience of the individual learner. The learner will be required to prepare a Portfolio of Evidence for assessment against the standards for a specific award. The evidence in the portfolio must be assessed in terms of Sufficiency, Validity, Authenticity, Reliability and Currency. The learner may be required to undertake further assessments and an interview(s) as appropriate to demonstrate for the award. The assessment and verification of the individuals' knowledge, skills and competences is conducted against the award standards. The quality of the evidence will be monitored.

The direct evidence will provide direct proof of knowledge, skills and competence of the learner and will relate specifically to the identified learning outcome/standard of the award. It will fully support a claim. On the other hand, indirect evidence can be used to support the application but may not clearly demonstrate competence. It may support an application but will need to be linked to the standards as clearly as possible. It is likely that this indirect evidence alone will not be sufficient to prove full achievement of the standards for the award.

In a case of awarding the candidates, a recommendation for an award is made based on the evidence presented. The grading of award will be made in accordance with the assessment criteria for the award in the question. At present the grading will be made in accordance with the existing criteria of the awards as constituted by the former awarding bodies. The recommendation is made as follows:

a) A learner must meet the required standards for the award
b) The candidate almost meets the required standards but needs to provide additional evidence
c) The candidate has not provided adequate evidence to prove he/she meets the standards for the award.

FETAC will be responsible for the monitoring of the recognition of prior learning procedures as part of external monitoring of the effectiveness of the quality assurance of the providers. Monitoring of providers with specific reference to RPL will be the focus of the FETAC monitoring process to ensure consistency of FETAC awards. The provider must retain for monitoring by FETAC all relevant evidence relating to the RPL procedures implemented to demonstrate the effectiveness of their quality system in relation to RPL. The provider should also appropriately induce the RPL activity within self-evaluation for internal monitoring procedures to demonstrate effective internal review of quality. Figure 22 shows the flow chart of the process of RPL from FETAC.
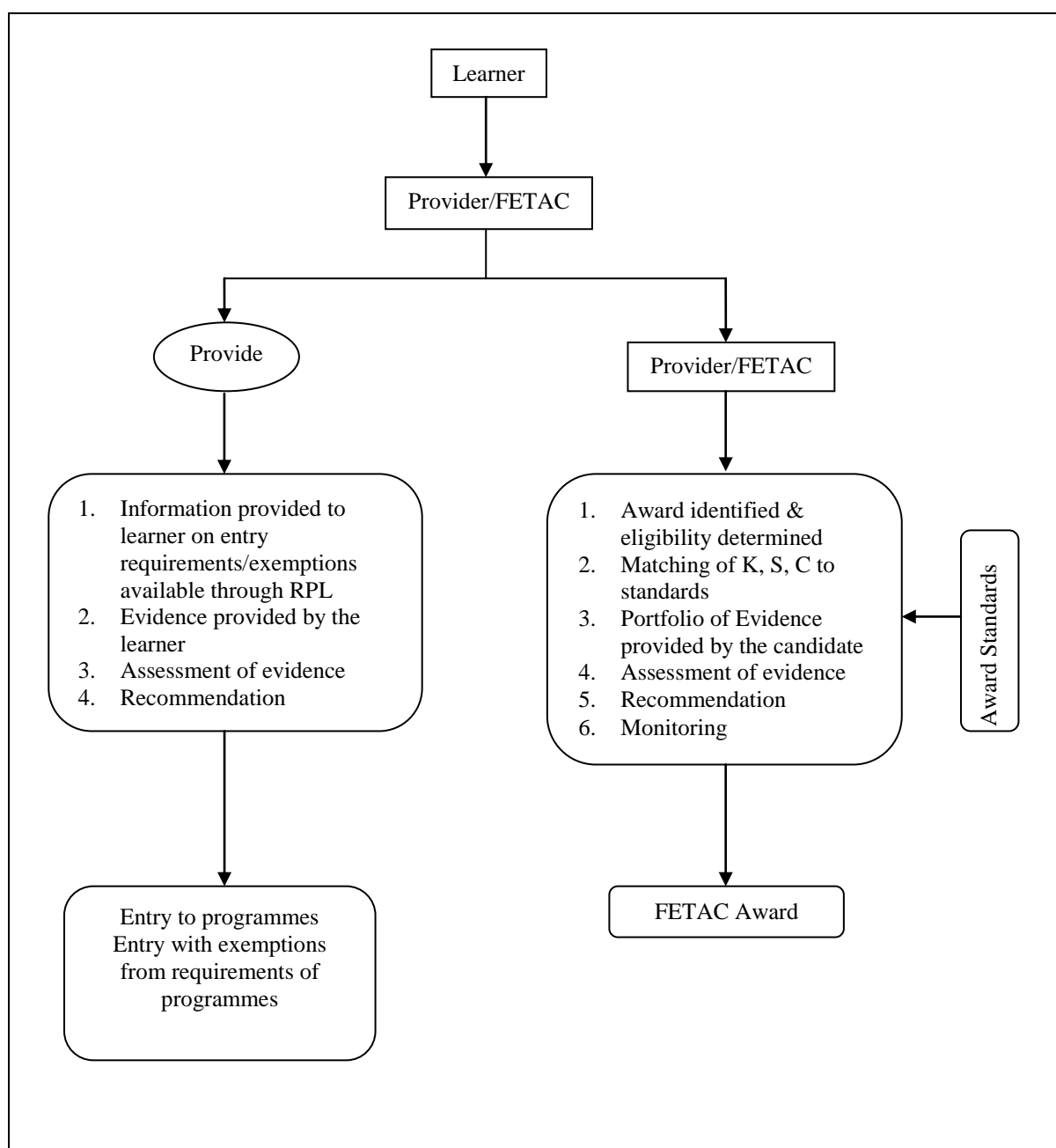
Figure 22:   Flow chart of the processes for RPL from FETAC.

The role for assessor in these processes are to assess i.e. judge the learner's evidence against the national standards as outlined in the award standards and make recommendations for either an award, or entry to a programme, or an exemption to the learner, the provider and to FETAC as appropriate. The assessor is central to the implementation of RPL for the purpose of the learner achieving an award. Provider, as part of their quality assurance procedures will require assessors to accurately assess the evidence of candidates against the standards of FETAC awards. RPL is a mode of assessment and like all assessment modes needs to be fairly and consistently applied.

In order to facilitate RPL assessors will need to be trained and experienced in their specific field and in assessment requirement for the award. Providers are referred to the FETAC Quality assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers for detailed guidance on all aspects of assessment process.

In the case of learners applying to FETAC directly for recognition of prior learning FETAC will refer the learner to approved providers as appropriate. In these cases learners will be assessed in the standard way. Other than assessor, the external authenticator needs to assess the evidence as well to ensure the consistency and compliance with national standards. Assessment of prior experiential learning is a mode of assessment. External authentication will make sure the standard for the award is met and the overall credibility of FETAC awards is maintained.

For the entry/ access to programmes, it is the responsibility of the programme provider to provide the process. The process then will be approved by FETAC at the point of programme validation within the context of the agreed provider's quality assurance policy and FETAC's award arrangements. The guideline prepared by FETAC is as follow:

1) Advise and support learners of the value of prior learning and of the steps in the process involved for making an application

2) Provide appropriate information to learners on the entry criteria/requirements to successfully participate in a programme. RPL information leaflets and RPL application procedures should be made available to learners.

3) Specify the entry criteria which form the basis for successful participation for each programme to be validated by FETAC. These criteria will refer to the standards and level of the award and rake into account the knowledge, skill and competence to be acquired by the learner. This will be required when validation of programmes commences

4) Include RPL information in all programme materials i.e. programme prospectus or course profile prepared in advance of the programme. This information should be readily available to prospective learners in an appropriate medium.

5) Establish an application procedure to assist the learners to apply on the basis of prior learning experiences and to attach supporting evidence of prior learning experiences. The application procedure should be simple and allow the individual to document the relevant prior learning experiences. The standard application procedure with an additional section for RPL applicants is recommended.

6) The application procedure should gather information on the learner's prior experience such as: personal information, previous employments, leisure and voluntary activities, education and training undertaken, and references as well as reasons for applying for the programme. The applicant should be given an opportunity to highlight the relevant prior learning in relation to the entry criteria.

7) Criteria for the evaluation of the learner should include minimum accepTable criteria for successful participant such as: a minimum 5 years of relevant life experience, a clear demonstration of the capacity to succeed – standard of overall application, individual commitment of the learner and other specific requirements which may specific to the programme.

8) The assessment of the prior experiential learning in the application should be carried out by persons with appropriate expertise in the relevant field. If required the provider may seek more information and evidence from the prospective learners.

9) Ensure that their arrangements for selecting and assessing learners for entry are transparent and fair. Prospective learners can be interviewed to discuss the above to assist in the decision making process.

10) On completion of the assessment of the application a recommendation will be made regarding entry to the programme.

11) An appeals mechanism should be in place as for all prospective applicants in the event of a learner making an appeal.

12) Monitor and record the application and its outcome to meet requirements if quality assurance elements for recognition of prior learning for entry.

2.5 Current practices of APEL

2.5.1 South Africa

Recognition of Prior Learning has the potential to be a powerful tool in the development of South Africa and in the implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme. It can empower individuals, provide a skill focus for employers and can assist in economic and social development (Moore & Rooyen, 2002). Hence, education and training should be available to all and the process of lifelong learning should be encouraged. People should continually involve in acquiring new skills and also gain reward for existing skills, experience and learning previously unrecognised. Parallel with this, RPL in South Africa can thus be seen as a mechanism to accelerate the right of past education, training and employment opportunities which receive unfair discrimination.

APEL is often used by a wide range of adult learners, particularly those who have little or no formal education. APEL is often used by the following groups of learners to help them to regain entry to formal learning. Once APEL have reflected on life, provide evidence of learning is the next step. There are six main ways in which APEL claim can be made as evidence which are assessment on demand, an interview, direct observation, a structured project, a portfolio and a personal development plan (Heeks, 2003).

South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) underline the three purposes of RPL that can be practices in Higher education in South African which are RPL for access, RPL for credit and RPL for advancement. RPL for access used when learners seek access to institution in higher education, when they do not meet all the formal entrance criteria set by institution they wish to enter. In many cases, prospective learners may go through a process of mediation and preparation (sometimes refer as portfolio development) towards assessment of their readiness to enter these courses of study. While RPL for credit where workers including community workers and those currently unemployed could for instance have acquired skill in the workplace or are self-taught and may have few or no formal qualification and thus could consequently be barred from certain career pathways. Some of these individual may go through the RPL process for the purpose of 'just knowing what they are worth'. In some cases, it is possible for individual to undergo a process of preparation for testing and then

assessment, at the end of which their experience is recognised with an appropriate certificate or credit. The last purpose of RPL implement in South Africa is RPL for advancement. This applies to people already doing certain jobs and holding positions for which they have qualification other than those currently recognised for the position. To comply with new national and internationally comparable laws and criteria, these individuals may be required legally to acquire new certification in order to continue the practice. There may be RPL preparation and assessment processes towards the certification (South African Qualification Authority, 2012).

Implementation of RPL also will be achieved by initiating a comprehensive quality-assured and resource-driven approach to optimise the delivery of RPL services and programme including RPL assessment. It can also be achieved by ensuring quality assurance and benchmarking of RPL-designated authorities and agencies by acknowledging the roles of SAQA and other council. Also, recognising barriers in implementation can also ensure succesful RPL implementation. The barriers include limited incentives, lack of resources such as trained RPL personnel, inadequate support system such as administrative system that are unable to grant credit for part-qualification and admission system without robust alternative access routes. The successful implementation can also be achieved by recognising different kinds of RPL purposes in relation to different contexts and classification of knowledge, skills competencies, qualification and part-qualification in the national learning system. Finally, Lastly, providing support for a national coordinating mechanism to assist the Quality Council, institution of learning and RPL practitioners to deal with barriers, accessing government funding, building capacity and expanding RPL provision in a comprehensive RPL system can also help in successful implemenetation of RPL.

2.5.2   Australia

A more recent development at many universities in Australia has been the growth at all levels based on what is known as negotiated work-based learning. The principle behind this approach is that individual learners are able to negotiate fully customised awards based on their work activity, the focus being provided by the learner's and where relevant the employer's context and aims rather than by university nations of subject discipline (UNCLEAR). The main requirement for the approval of an award is that the proposed outcomes of learning happens at the relevant level. In addition, the amount of learning is sufficient for the proposed of award and the overall package adds up to a coherent whole in accordance with a rationale negotiated by learners. In addition, to contribute to an accredited university programme, Lester (2010) in the study suggested that projects were used that have been completed pre-registration into the programme through the process known as accrediting prior experiential learning (APEL). Material submitted for APEL normally attracts an amount of credit. At universities, programme that are based on a structured syllabus or series prescribed modules the specific credit principles means that the credit can only be given where the workplace learning matches sufficiently well with the course requirement, up to the point it can be tough of as a means of gaining exemption from course modules.

Projects can be naturally-occurring, workplace projects in professional practice assessment and investigation. The naturally-occurring project defined as activity with reasonable clear beginning and end that would have taken place regardless of whether or not the person concerned was enrolled on a

qualification program. Using this kind of project as evidence towards qualification can be attractive to work-based learners both because it focuses learning on matters directly relevant to the workplace. An alternative approach to using naturally-occurring projects is to focus on work that has already been completed or at least which is under way at the time of registration. This suggest a conception that builds on and moves beyond the principles of APEL, for whereas in the APEL process there is generally assumption that one credit has been awarded the relevant learning has been concluded, in practice there can be scope for reflecting on and drawing new learning out of activities that have already taken place. While workplace projects in professional practice assessment is the assessment process for Accredited conservator-Restorer (ACR) status involves practitioners submitting a detailed application that includes a career history, description of the candidates' current role, a professional development review and summaries of six or more projects or work activities that demonstrates that the candidate meets the profession's standard. One of the activities must be a description of how the candidate manages his or her work and interfaces with professional colleagues and other stakeholder (Lester, 2010).

Hence is investigation, the investigation was carried out by the author who as an accreditation consultant guided the conservation profession in the development of its qualification and was also involve in setting up the Ufi Learning through Work System. Align with the APEL concept, the use of learning contracts in work-based higher education provides a vehicles that can support this kind of program with very little change to current procedures. The advantage is that it potentially makes better use of work experience as a vehicle for learning, it enables existing work to be used in situations where conflict of the time or interest may arise from introducing dual-agenda projects to the workplaces, and perhaps more significantly it allows experienced practitioners to gain awards based around existing portfolios of work. The fact that the existing work is used does not mean that there is no new learning, drawing together, conceptualizing and reflecting on workplace activity is often the aspect of work-based learning that provides the most significant development. Existing approaches to APEL would remain in use where appropriate and learners would have the option when negotiating their learning contracts to use all, some or none of any eligible work they may have towards their program.

2.5.3 North America

A study by Conrad (2009) in Athabasca University (AU) is AU support PLAR as a vehicle through which to recognize and accredit learner's prior and experiential learning is firmly rooted in the university mission statement which captures its vision as an open and distance institution. As Open University, it is generous in its allocation of credit for formal transferred learning. The recognition of informal and non-formal learning however is addresses by AU PLAR policy with its focus on the assessment of learning. AU implementation of PLAR through two channels, challenge-for-credit and portfolio assessment. It will reflect the field's general understanding of the two practices for PLAR implementation, challenge and equivalency.

The practices PLAR is first created criteria program-based learning outcomes for all AU programs. During the process, each program determined the maximum number of PLAR-awarded credits that was judge to be appropriate given the configuration of the program, its purpose and the nature of its

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studentship. While some 120-credit degree program offer a maximum of 30 credit for the potential PLAR candidates, other 90-credit degree program may offer only a maximum of six credit to the potential PLAR candidate. The implementation PLAR encompasses both portfolio assessment and challenge-for-credit processes. At AU the Centre for Learning Accreditation (CLA) office is responsible for the university wide implementation, management and marketing PLAR-by-portfolio assessment. While challenge-for-credit- processes are currently handled collaborative by personnel in the Office of the Registrar and faculty responsible for the course about to be challenged.

The portfolio-based PLAR is when applicants use of guidelines, templates and examples. Applicant assemble portfolio in which they document their learning histories and displays the knowledge they claim to have in text form, supported by well-referenced documentation. There are many parts of the portfolio including learning narrative, a resume and a statement of educational goals. While the challenge-for-credit is demonstrates the knowledge through selection, reflection, connection and projection of learning artifacts to target a specific course for which they feel they already possess the required knowledge or skill. Working with the course professor, they engaged in a contractual relationship to meet the challenge condition that have been pre-established for the course. However portfolio as option that accepts most fully the scope and latitude of learner's prior knowledge. While the challenge-for-credit option that is also available to ask learners to bring forth their knowledge in defined package that closely resemble the shape of university courses.

2.5.4   Asia

The open education system that recognises diverse learning experiences gained not only through formal learning, but also through non-formal and informal which mean as a way to provide a better opportunity for the people to enhance their individual capabilities. APEL will serve every individual who aspire to continue learning to obtain recognition in terms of all the knowledge and skills acquired (Latif, 2010). One of the mechanisms that can create a lifelong learning pathway is by Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) where is an increasingly significant avenue for formal recognition and for a more meaningful lifelong learning experience. However the RPL practices in Malaysia are limited and only several institutions take part. OUM as example is the pioneer in Malaysia to implement RPL through a system known as Flexible Entry System (FE). FE allows for entry into OUM academic programmes through less strict requirements by taking into consideration every applicant's prior learning and work experiences for admission. FE also is a gateway for individuals to pursue higher education using lower academic entry qualifications.

The study by Yick et al. (2012) look at the practices of APEL at OUM. APEL is another mechanism to create a clear pathway for lifelong learning. APEL will be applicable to all undergraduate learners, allowing them to obtain credits for certain courses where they are able to provide proof of adequate and relevant experiential learning. APEL in OUM is to assess and grant learners with academic credits based on their experiential learning and MQF recognizes an individual's potential to progress higher education through the transfer of credit and recognition or prior learning. Hence, learners can claim course credit for non-formal and informal learning apart from their formal learning. APEL recognizes the valuable knowledge, skills and competencies acquired by working adults and assesses the extent to

which these match the specific learning. Thus the credit is awarded to deserving learners if they are able to provide sufficient supporting evidence of prior learning.

Current practices APEL at OUM is based on online system namely myAPEL. It creates, manages and maintains information with regards to the learners' application for prior learning credits. APEL practiced in OUM is outlines by three major stages for learners which are Pre-Assessment, Assessment and Post Assessment stage. At the Pre-Assessment stage, learners indicate their intention to apply APEL for courses which they claim to have prior knowledge. Learners complete an online Knowledge Resume by providing personal details and after the submission, their applications will be reviewed by subject matter or course experts from the corresponding faculties. Only learners with relevant experiential learning and those who show potential of being successful will be allowed to proceed to the following stage of Assessment. Then on Assessment stage, learners are assessed either through Challenge Tests like using various forms of assessment or required to build a portfolio of evidence to support their prior learning claims. The last stage is the Post-Assessment where includes processes resulting from the APEL assessment. Learners, who are successful in the APEL assessment, are awarded with course credits.

The first stage of screening for APEL implementation is to ensure the candidates have the necessary knowledge, skill and aptitude for the specific course and programme. Applications are also required to show proof of prior knowledge or experience related to the programme they are applying for. The assessment method for prior knowledge or experience conducted through evidence, challenge test and credit transfer. Application must also provide supporting details and documentation to preparing a portfolio. The portfolio must have the knowledge and experience gained by applications through their life experience including at the work place and the evidence. Thus, OUM will evaluate the application portfolio and help to change prior experience to apply for prior learning credits (Kaprawi et al., 2010)

Another practice of RPL in Malaysia is carry out by The National Vocational Training Council (MLVK) under the Department of Skill Development, Ministry of Human Resource. This started by accredit the MLVK Programmes in Malaysia knowing as Accreditation of Prior Achievement (A.P.A). The method used for this accreditation varies between courses offered. This method has given opportunity to skilled worker to get accreditation of the skill they have. The experienced skills workers without any certification can apply to get the Malaysian Skill Certification (SKM) or Malaysian Skills Diploma (DKM) or Malaysian Skills Advance Diploma (DLKM) without going for training or sitting for an exam. Candidates only need to provide proofs of skill they have to be evaluated and certified. However the duration of working experience is differ to gain accreditation. For SKM level 2 candidates must have 3 years working experience, SKM level 3 is 5 years and above and for DKM or DLKM is 7 years' experience and above (Kaprawi et al., 2010).

2.5.5 *Europe*

Research by Paju & Gross (2008) highlighted how APEL is practised at Tallinn University, Estonia for vocational teacher training. In general, vocational teachers acquire their professional qualification from a vocational learning institution or from higher learning institution. After completing their studies, they may acquire higher learning in the field of vocational pedagogy or participate in short

term teacher training programme. General requirements for general and vocational teacher training are set by the Teacher Training Framework.

This framework describes requirements for initial year of novice teacher and for teacher's in- service training. According to Teacher Training Framework VET teachers have to apply after each three year in service training to update their pedagogical and professional qualification. The changes and reform have take place in education policy in Estonian. After the reform and according the Bologna Declaration in 2001, the universities in Estonia recognized the need for accreditation of prior learning. A term *VÕTA* is widely used in Estonia to refer to accreditation of prior experiential learning. Process of implementing APEL started 2003 and up 50% of higher education programmes obtain through APEL. Starting September 2007 higher education institutions cannot award whole diploma or certificate on the basis of prior learning (Paju & Gross, 2008).

In the Tallin University, APEL is guaranteed by competency-based curriculum which is based on an adopted Professional Standard for VET teacher. This standard highlights the vocational teacher competence requirement on three levels. These levels require a good knowledge in professional and pedagogical fields. The III level requires at least vocational post-secondary education while IV level requires higher education or education in equivalent level and teacher training which is based on the professional standard for VET teachers. Meanwhile, the V level requires a master degree or education in equivalent level and teacher training which is also based on the professional standard for VET teachers. For VET teachers who apply for IV level, they are able to deal with the development of vocational education in general. As for teachers, who are in V level, they are able to be mentor and guide others colleagues who are VET teachers in level III and IV. They can also be active in developing the   image of vocational education.

In order to apply for prior learning and work-experience, a board of commissioners is consulted for an assessment task. This board will assess the equality of studies and work experience using the Professional Standard for VET Teachers. There are three different ways to apply prior learning in curriculum based on Paju & Gross (2008) which are:

1) Applying prior learning at higher education level as part of elective studies. For this, students have to write an application with the amount and name of studies are described. The total amount of elective studies are 45 ECTS. Applied will those study's, which are related to teacher's pedagogical of professional competency. It means that studies have to be connected with those tasks, which are stipulated in the Professional Standard for VET Teacher. Applying prior learning at the higher education level is also possible when the content of the previous learning is similar to the content of the curricula. Then, students have to agree with the professor who is teaching similar subject. This way is only possible when the subjects are part of the curricula of the vocational pedagogy. For this, an application with all information about prior studies is needed.

2) Applying studies in level of post-secondary education is possible when student is choosing subject Professional Placement. For applying prior studies student have to fill application and add copies of diploma(s). Application is assessed by board of experts, who consider link between prior studies and Professional Standard for VET Teacher.

Research by Scholten & Teuwsen (2001) stressed on the implementation of EVC in Netherlands. EVC refers to the assessment and accreditation of prior learning and competencies in Netherlands. It is also an instrument for maintaining an employable workforce. Young people who leave schools without basic diplomas have the opportunity to return to obtain these qualifications at a later stage. EVC is seen as a good way to increase employability by creating a link between education and the labour market because demand replaces. In addition, EVC is mentioned as one of the instruments for dealing with higher education because it will make the education more accessible and attractive by granting recognition of prior learning.

It also highlighted that in the teaching profession, the education ministry plans to solve the problem of teacher shortage by practising the EVC. In order to make both teacher-training programmes and teaching profession more accessible, the flexible educational pathways is offered. The project is called *Educatief Partnerschap (EPS)* or 'Educational Partnership'. There two initiatives in this partnership. The first on is 'Assessment and the use of a portfolio in the study programme'. This initiative is a project is to develop instruments for recording the competencies of people without a higher education diploma who wish to enter the teaching profession. It should be possible to translate the recommendations that have resulted from the assessment procedure into a description of the individual's learning pathway that the people can follow in order to qualify for the profession. The second initiative is 'Urgency programmes'. The purpose of this initiative is to ensure that the institutions use a consistent method for translating the results of the assessment procedure into an individual learning pathway. A person should be able to complete the pathway in two to four years. The education ministry intends to make it easier for people who have experience outside the education system to become teachers. The initiative also makes the teaching profession more attractive to people because the candidates have different but relevant educational background and work experience.

2.6   Issues and challenges in APEL

2.6.1   *Issues and challenges on implementation*

RPL is not always the best option for some individuals especially when the candidates are not familiar with the whole process of skills recognition. Consequently, some decide not go forward with it even when they are granted with a significant amount of RPL. These candidates probably have been provided with details about the evidence that they need. As such, they take considerable time and care to collect their evidence. They then present the portfolio and the institution then conduct the assessments. But when the time comes, the candidates decide that it would be good to learn with the group. The candidates like the idea of the social interaction and feel that they can still learn a lot. They say that things have probably changed, particularly in relation to legislation. Eventhough the assessor puts in a lot of time and effort to give the candidates a positive RPL outcome, the latter see other benefits and choose to go through all the learning again. It can be disappointing for assessor in the end (Mawer & Jackson, 2005). In addition, the assessor may find that the candidates lack awareness and understanding of RPL. This will be effect the effectiveness of RPL implementation. They do not take up the RPL because they do not know about it. Also, they have limited interaction with formal education where it is assessing an individual learning that has occurred mostly outside formal

education and training but it requires high levels of knowledge of these formal education and training contacts and the structure of qualification and language used in education to prepare a successful RPL application.

In theory, RPL has particular attractions for developing countries because these countries face particular challenges to the successful introduction of RPL. However, the most obvious challenge is that RPL presupposes a sophisticated and comprehensive educational system, a clearly defined qualifications framework linked to occupational standards and a sufficient resource capacity to administer the system and ensure quality. It is notable that three African countries which are Mauritius, South Africa and Namibia are among the richest of the Africa continent with relatively developed educational infrastructures. The need to lay substantial groundwork before introducing RPL may be seen as an opportunity to maximise its' potential impact rather than a barrier. Another issues arises in developing countries is how to make RPL work for that part of the population to whom the RPL in principle has the most to offer. This part of population include the marginalised and poor who may not have been able to access formal education. In most developing countries, majority of this group work in the informal economy. The immense challenges involved in identifying where the skills exist, communicating to the potential candidates about the concept and value of RPL and administering the process. The situation is further complicated by the fact that in many countries, assessment procedures would have to take extra account of the low levels of literacy and numeracy among the potential candidates (South African Qualification Authority, 2012)

EUCEN (2007) on the other hand highlighted two challenges of RPL. The first is to ensure the RPL is a developmental experience. The process of RPL could be simple for students who only have to collect evidence of what they already do. However, if the process is handled in an enlightened ways and students are well advised and supported, the process should be developmental and formative. This is especially where they are encouraged to reflect on non-formal and informal learning and experience. The quality of the students' experience is likely to depend on the advice and guidance received at the early stages of RPL. This is when students are selecting and analysing their current experience and learning to see how it matches what is required to enable them to gain recognition. In this case, the advisor's role is important to give the clear advice. The second challenge is how the 'made to measure' aspiration of RPL could fit with university's policy and process that are designed to manage large cohort of students studying and learning in similar ways. One of the attractions of RPL is that it allows people to gain credit for experience that is individualised depending on the way they have gained it. One person may construct a written portfolio to demonstrate knowledge whereas others may require an observation of what they do at work. In contrast, most university's policies and procedure work on the principle of dealing with large groups of students in similar way. This has implications on the infrastructure especially in relation to finance and human resource. Therefore, in an effort to offer an individualised pathway, the complexity of it can make it difficult to manage and understand everyone involved. The study conducted at the University of Pierre and Marine Curie noted that the taking up of RPL is still very modest because many candidates find the academic nature of the criteria they are expected to demonstrate as difficult to understand. The procedure of RPL can be seen onerous and time consuming to learners. The language in which RPL process is expressed is not always easily understood.

Although the recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a tool that can lead to the transformation of a society for South Africa because working experience can equal a qualification and having a qualification will improve career prospect and gaining better opportunities but a recent PhD thesis shows that the main reason for RPL rejection is that RPL models available do not cater for the working adult in a working environment. This is because the reality is not as simple as the theory (Deller, 2007). There also have several difficulties with RPL when it comes into reality and difficult to implement practically.

1) The language that is used in the workplace is often different to the language used in academic line. Challenge to assessors to ensure the candidates' language, habits, discourses and vocabularies they practices in workplace that is not wrong. Assessors who do not know what the workplace terminology is or who are too rigid in their own understanding will have problem.

2) The content and context of the qualifications do not match what the employees are doing in their day-to-day lives and they are instead expected to repeat theory. When they cannot do so they are demotivated and led to believe that they know little.

3) Qualifications that are constructed with unit standards are more suited to training in RPL. Unit standards provide learners and facilitators with minute details that can be trained and assessed. However, they are overly-contextual and virtually impossible for RPL candidates' assessment. Thus, one of the limiting factors is the training of assessors and moderators who believe that every candidate must achieve each assessment criterion from each specific outcome from every unit standard for the whole qualification in order to be found competent. This is a time consuming and labour intensive task that can be soul destroying for a working adult with responsibilities outside the workplace.

4) Traditional classroom learning values mental learning, individualistic and solitary process whereas workplace learning is socially constructed by multiple individuals operating in groups that interact with the context to create situated learning. It is, therefore quite difficult for some people to clearly articulate their own role in the production of knowledge and group assessments are not often not seen as valid an authentic.

5) RPL literature relates to the administrative processes, particularly the paperwork where the level of documentation required to be kept and the focus of audits is on the components rather than the task. Thus, it is a disincentive to providers to engage in RPL particularly as many applications are best assessed by professional judgements which cannot be easily described in the written form. The time consuming is nature of RPL cause is not only in assessing, but also in providing advice and guidance.

6) Thus, people who have been working for a long time often have difficulty validating much of their experience in writing and transferring their knowledge. This is a difficulty faced by the RPL candidates who are trying to transfer and convert their workplace experience into academic learning.

However, Deller (2007) highlighted that in order to ensure RPL to be successful, there needs to be an appreciation of experiential in workplace knowledge without trying to force it into the mould of

academic knowledge. Experiential knowledge must not be seen as inferior but it is just different because it was acquired in a different context of classroom and workplace. Khanyile (2005) agreed that RPL may challenge for educational institutions on how to ensure that RPL systems once implemented did not compromise academic standards.

Choi (2007) identified limitations in connections between recognition and the field of Higher Education where the recognition of non-formal and informal learning is not perceived as a significant threat to colleges or employers. Higher education institutions in Korea are not yet used for recognizing various academic credits obtained from other institutions, or non-formal and informal learning, or other examinations. Rather, colleges and universities persist in following the traditional way of accepting regular students and granting diplomas from their own institutions. In general, many higher education institutions are unaware of non-formal and informal learning itself, and thus there is little resistance to recognize it, however, it is expected that regional colleges and universities may perceive it as a threat with the increase of learners who use the ACBS, which recognises non-formal and informal learning. They may also be dissatisfied with the expansion of non-formal and informal learners. Primarily, due to the decrease of traditional learners, it is getting harder for less-competitive regional colleges and universities to find customers and there is a tendency of dissatisfaction associated with reduction of financial support for regional colleges and universities. But the dissatisfaction of local colleges and universities is basically related to the decrease of learners. Thus, it is hard to say that the dissatisfaction is focused on the connection between non-formal and informal learning and the qualification system.

Several issues exist during introducing RPL recognized by The City & Guilds Centre for Skills Development (2010) included lack of demand from learners. In practice, learners have often been found to prefer training courses even when they are eligible for RPL, because they value the learning process and the social interactions that accompany it. In the case of the care sector highlighted above, members of the workforce have also been found to prefer training courses over RPL as they wish to learn the theory behind their practice. Lack of awareness and low esteem also become issues where without a strong marketing effort, learners and practitioners often lack awareness of the option to pursue RPL. Where awareness exists, RPL has frequently struggled with an image problem whereby it is seen as an 'easy option' and not valued by stakeholders. RPL again is the complex process where RPL implementation has a tendency to be beset by heavy bureaucracy. In some cases, this has meant that pursuing RPL requires precisely those communication skills usually gained through academic education. The most critical issue was confusing language. As a process that makes use of qualification frameworks and standardised units, RPL can be filled with alienating jargon. In some sectors this may be exacerbated by language difficulties. Hence it may cause an inadequate support for evidence gathering. The need for quality assurance has sometimes led to onerous requirements for collecting evidence in support of an application for RPL. Without adequate support many candidates may struggle and become discouraged.

2.6.2 Issues and Challenges on assessment

Complexity also has been identified as a factor influencing RPL in practice (Knight, 2010). The RPL assessment depends heavily on supporting supplied by the candidates, employer or by other people who have first-hand knowledge of the candidates' competence and performance in a relevance context. The situation is made complicated by the fact that the requirement for most units of competence are specified in terms of elements of competence, each of which must be addressed either specifically or as part of a holistic approach to RPL assessment. Hence, the successful RPL assessment can lead to non-viable class sizes and create difficulties because not all learners in group are at the same stage in their course. The comparability of RPL with the outcomes from other learning pathways is also a concern either for real or merely imagined by some teachers and employers. Related to this, some industry and professional bodies place caps on the amount RPL which can be counted as credit to enable qualification.

Assessment also can be risky when an assessor must refer to a sample of evidence whether that person is competent or not. With RPL, assessors are required to evaluate evidence generally gained through a mix of training, work and life experience over a period of years and in various contexts. Because of this, the assessment can involve a greater degree of risks than those made as part of formal training, whereby the trainer/assessor can gain 'knowledge' of the student as they go. The impact of making an invalid judgement can be quite high, particularly where there are workplace health and safety issues. The perceived 'risks' in these cases may cause that registered training organisations from discouraging the practice of RPL. In addition, inconsistencies in assessment have led to extremes of both evidence overload and lack of rigour in RPL assessment. Hence, the ability of RPL assessors is also critical where the assessment in general requires experienced professionals confidence about making necessary judgements. The maintenance of industry standards, the credibility of qualifications and the reputation of training organisations are very much dependent on assessors having the skills and knowledge to identify and manage the risks associated with assessment (National Centre for Vocational Education Research)

Deller, (2007) underlined difficulties in RPL assessment when it comes to reality where RPL is an assessment system that challenges the context within which learning takes place. Traditionalists believe true learning can only take place in a context-free environment such as the classroom where general theories are taught and learnt according to universal principles and learning does take place in the workplace which RPL acknowledges this. While, the workplace learning is context- bound. Each workplace has its own vocabulary, processes and systems, hierarchy of jobs and division of labour. Rarely that two workplaces are identical and this is one of the key difficulties with RPL because the standards and qualifications are almost invariably written for traditional training. Thus it will make it difficult to assess RPL candidates. Secondly, the methods that will be used to assess the learning will pose challenges. This happens when the traditional assessment methods of the portfolio of evidence, challenge examinations, assignments and projects are all individualistic assessment methods developed within the academic context. They are not generally suitable to assess purely experiential and contextual learning. Thus, is will often lead to poor RPL assessment results as the knowledge presented for assessment by workplace candidates rarely matches the expectation of the assessor. This

mismatch exists because the prior learning comes from a different site of learning with different context and different language and practices.

South African Qualification Authority (2012) stresses that RPL is not simply an assessment process. It involves mediation to ensure that candidates are able to make the transition from using knowledge and skill acquired in one type of context to a different type of context. To use the same knowledge and skills in the different context, meditation is needed when knowledge and skills are recognised for particular qualification, part-qualification or other specific types of credit. Effective RPL process whether for access, credit or recognition in the workplace usually involves making sure that RPL candidates have access to the mediation tool required for successful transition. In addition, eventhough RPL have existed in South Africa over the 15 years, the implementation of its policies has not always been easy or straight forward.

In contrast, Heeks (2003) stressed that the providing evidence of learning for an APL claim is usually not difficult because formal and assessed learning has already taken place which can be presented to the institution to support the claim. Assessed learning may take the form of examinations, essays, reports, skill tests and etc. Providing sufficient evidence for an APEL claim is a little trickier but by no means impossible. He also states there are six main ways in which APEL claim can be made which are assessment on demand, interview, direct observation, structured project, portfolio and personal development plan. Even though providing evidence is not difficult , assessing the evidence may challenge the assessor's on how to assess APEL claim and how to be fair to both APEL and non-APEL candidates. For some, especially younger candidates, they may feel that others are given unfair preferential treatment simply for claiming life experience. However it can be avoided by making the claim crystal clear. A successful claim depends on the particular requirements of the institutions. They are required to have clear set of guidelines, specific to the institution, explaining which qualifications count towards certain programmes and to what extent and which do not count. Heeks (2003) also listed down several problems for assessors during the implementation of the APEL:

1) APEL is too expensive to implement in many institution whereby to implement and maintain a successful and cost effective APEL system, the institution will need to review and analyse all relevant cost factors in order to develop a strategy for setting fees. The cost may involve staff development, professional advice, technical expertise, advertising, equipment and accommodation. Not only had this but costs also involved with the delivery of the service such as staff, advisors, assessors, a co-ordinator and support staff. Accommodation also like the rooms that are set aside for APEL work, equipment, consumables, advertising and so on.

2) APEL is too bureaucratic because assessors need to spend time to reviewing and analysing costs in order to determine whether or not APEL is practical for institution and staff will primarily spend longer with APEL students.

3) In addition implementing and maintaining APEL assessment is more trouble than it's worth. As with any new system, APEL requires time and effort, however is spent in the initial stages of implementing APEL such as in determining whether or not the scheme is financially viable, creating a clear framework for assessment and training staff. Once APEL is in place and both applicants and staff are familiar and comforTable with the practice, on the opposite, it will see

that APEL is worth its while, because it allows your institution to attract good candidates who would otherwise have been dissuaded from applying. If you are an employer using APEL to allow applicants to bypass certain modules of your institution's training scheme, you will find that skilled people can take up their positions more quickly and that your institution no longer needs to waste resources on giving them unnecessary training.

4) Awarding applicants entry or credit for an APEL claim will cause bad feeling among conventional (non-APEL) applicants. This is cause by lack of understanding of APEL and what it actually involves. Together with common misconception that APEL gives applicant credit simply for their life experience, may potentially cause bad feeling among non-APEL applicants. In order to overcome this problem, the important is not only to advertise openly the availability of APEL assessment, but also to offer anyone who is interested of APEL a clear explanation of both the theory and the practice of APEL.

In addition, the challenge not only for the assessors while implement the APEL but it's happen also for applicants or candidates. Candidates may have no idea where to start if they don't have better understanding what actually involved in APEL claim. In addition, making a claim will involve too much time and money. This is because candidates need to prepare them self for assessment where they required to pay the institution for assessment in recognition of the extra resources required to support and to assess the candidates claim.

In the UK, the portfolio is the predominant assessment tool for APEL. The APEL candidates collates evidence of prior learning mapped to predetermined learning outcomes and supplies a written narrative relating their aims in compiling the claim (Merrifield et. al., 2000). However the study conduct by Pokorny (2012) stated the student produced a portfolio with a difference range of pages where student P1 applied for one postgraduate module and produce a nine-pages narrative and eight appendices of document derived from the workplace, while student P2 applied for two years credit for undergraduate degree, she produced two portfolios with 14-pages narrative accompanied by 3000 word easy which the title was negotiated with APEL assessor and the second portfolio contained evidence from her practiced. Student N1 applied for credit for one postgraduate module and she produce portfolio with 20-pages narrative matched to module learning outcomes and 14 appendices. Student N2 applied for credit for a postgraduate module and her assessment was largely in the form or a narrative of 4000 words, supplemented by a section that listed the module learning outcomes plus a paragraph for each outcome giving examples from her experiences. These brief descriptions of the portfolios demonstrate different interpretation of the assessment requirements. In each case, the final product was the result of student-tutor interaction and the broader contextual influences on these interactions. Each student had a different APEL tutor who acted as a guide through all subject specialists. Each had develop their own understanding of APEL either through having undertaken the process themselves as a student, through discussion with more experience APEL tutors and/or through their interpretation of the APEL guidance materials.

CEDEFOP or European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (2009) point out the most important risks in the preparation of portfolios is when candidate prepares these alone or with little mediation from one tutor. One practice that counters such possible limitations is gathering groups of

claimants together specifically to share experience and learning from one another, thus enabling all participants to proceed with greater assurance to preparing their own portfolio for validation. In this case, technology helps in developing portfolio but digital portfolios also carry potential risks, for example the technological novelty of the product can overshadow the purpose of the portfolio and learning to use the technology itself could subsume the learning opportunities of portfolio construction. Developing a digital portfolio will risks including unnecessary information and material that is not totally derived from the candidates' own efforts.

In the portfolio process, learners undertake difficult and complex journey as they mine the breadth and dept of their learning histories in bringing forward evidence of appropriate university-level learning (Conrad, 2009). On the other end of process, teams of content experts assume responsibilities for assessing that knowledge and for determining its relevance to a learner's current program of study at the university. Assessor also asked to respond narrative as fully as responsible to the learner's portfolio presentation on question like what is missing? what strengths are display? how can the learner best complete his or her program in order to utilize past learning while at the same time remedying any perceived gaps in required knowledge.

Hence, Conrad (2009) also mentioned that the assessors have a number of tools at their disposal to assist should there be any difficulty during the assessment process. The relative ease of difficulty levels of their task hinges on how well learners have put forward their cases in the portfolios. Although a well-executed portfolio can develop to a formidable length, PLAR applicants are expected to have observed the guidelines that caution them against needless repetition, irrelevance document or sloppy organisation. It is up to the applicants to present a well-organised portolio that has an appropriate structure and helps the assessors to read through the document. Portfolios are usually bounded and presented using a three-inch binder with many colorful dividers and tabs to create direction and clarity.

The RPL process of assessing and accrediting prior learning is a highly complex practice at the University of South Africa (2013). This is caused by several factors such as the requirement to have a delicate balance between academic assessment and students support. In addition, prior learning must be assessed in accordance with the requirements of formal training programmes which are based on international and national criteria and standard. The RPL assessment process must bear witness to academic rigour and therefore can only be carried out by academic specialists in the relevant fields together with trained RPL assessor. In order to be fair to the candidates who have amassed their learning, the relevance and value of their prior learning cannot be assessed by a single assessor. Instead, it must be examined by an assessment panel. Hence, when assessment has been carried out, the candidates are declared competent and ready to enter the formal training at a certain level. The students support opportunities must be made to enable the candidates to bridge the gap between non-formal and formal learning and thus become successful in their chosen lifelong learning paths.

The issues do not only concern with barriers and challenges but also on how to overcome them. A study conducted by Skinner *et. al.* (2011) identified a design of a shell framework that incorporate modules outlines and a toolkit of support material for various stakeholder groups. The higher

education institutions may overcome many of the implementation problems when they are associated with higher education' accreditation of informal higher learning.

2.7   Benefits of APEL

APEL has the potential to contribute significantly towards higher education by offering a flexible approach to learning, opening up institutions to new groups of learners and developing partnerships with outside organisations. It also has a role to play in the social inclusion agenda as well as being a tool for responding rapidly to changing economic needs (Merrill & Hill, 2004). Venter (1999) highlights four parties involved in RPL process in general which are learner or student applying for credit, institution where the learners applies for credit, community as learners that obtain credit for learning and employers who provide job opportunities to the learners. Similar to the ones listed down by the Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) (2013) the four stakeholders will benefit from APEL including learners, institution, employers and the nation (Guideline to Practices: Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning, 2012).

2.7.1   Benefits for learner

As described by according Venter (1999)

1) Gain access to course and programmes more quickly. This will ensures that time is not wasted and can be spent furthering studies.
2) Their immediate and actual learning needs are addressed as they do not repeat unnecessary part of the qualification but focus on what is still outstanding.
3) Increase in self-esteem of the learners as any negative attitudes towards formal study is eliminated and achievement is recognised.
4) Learning becomes more flexible and challenging.

As described by the MQA

1) Increase self-confidence and enhance the motivation to continue learning.
2) Get access and recognition to higher qualifications.
3) Document knowledge, skills and experience better through the preparation of portfolio of evidence.
4) Plan for further learning and personal career development.
5) Map prior learning onto the MQF to identify a national level.
6) Develop analytical and learning skills through the process of undertaking APEL itself.
7) Increase mobility and employability.
8) Reduce time and cost.

As described by the Open University Malaysia (OUM)

1) Reduces the duplication of learning on what has already been learnt
2) Bridges the gap between formal education and work/life experience
3) Accelerates the completion of formal education
4) Potential reduction in the cost of studying

5) Obtains academic recognition for informal and non-formal learning from work/life experiences

6) Serves as an alternative assessment method to evaluate learners' competencies.

2.7.2 Benefits for academic institution

As described by Venter (1999)

1) RPL stimulates thought and discussion across faculties and programmes with regard to course content and exactly what has to be measured.
2) Educators have to think about their quality of their education and how it matches up to other institution.
3) Assessors have to be trained and therefore academic staff has to develop.
4) Policies and procedure have to be re-evaluated and adapted. This ensures the policy remains relevant and recent.
5) Ad-hoc articulation agreements can be managed and controlled more effectively.
6) The institution still has control over the assessment process and the standard that will accept.
7) Opens up opportunities for articulation agreements and partnership with the wider academic community and the private sector.

As described by the MQA

1) Increase access and widen participation for non-conventional learners
2) Support the development of curriculum
3) Enrich the teaching-learning experience with the presence of non-conventional learners

As described by the OUM

1) Gains recognition for training and staff development activities as well as workplace learning.
2) Reduces the amount of time required by employees to complete a qualification, thus less time away from the workplace.
3) Promotes closer collaboration between institution and industry in the development of education/training programmes that integrate the goals of the learners, employers, and institutions.

2.7.3 Benefit for employer

As described by Venter (1999), APEL acknowledges workplace learning for the benefit of both the employers and employees. It supports training and staff development strategies. Employers encourage APEL because it helps the organization to:

1) Reduces the cost of education and time away from work.
2) Promotes portability of competencies
3) Accelerates the response to development and learning needs
4) Potential for building partnership with higher education institutions.
5) Employees with improved self-esteem perform better at work.

As described by the MQA

1) Increase motivation and interest in workplace practice on the part of the employees
2) Reduce the amount of time needed to complete a qualification and therefore, requiring less time away from the workplace
3) Generate new ideas and development in the workplace as a result of process of reflection on practice by employees
4) Improve employee retention, and reduce recruitment and training cost.

2.7.4 Benefit for community/ nations

As described by Venter (1999)

1) Once learners have been awarded credit, their involvement in communities is highly valued.
2) Faster response to the communities need through learners addressing their own learning needs.
3) Combination of formal and informal learning accommodates the financial, transport and social resource needs of a learner in a community.
4) Provides an equal footing between communities no matter how different their resource bases are.

As described by the MQA

1) Promoting lifelong learning culture as a means of upgrading its workforce in response to global k-economy (knowledge economy) trend
2) Enhancing productivity through the acquisition of skills and knowledge among its workforce
3) Boosting the nation's competitiveness at the regional and global levels

3   Methodology

3.0   Introduction

Methodology discusses the sampling, instrumentation and research procedures for this research. The types of instruments as well as the respondent for this research were discussed in details in this chapter.

3.1   Methodology

The discussion on methodology is divided into three parts, namely, sampling, instrumentation, and research procedure.

3.1.1   Sampling

The sample for this research was selected using purposive sampling method. The research subjects were the experts in the related field. The selected experts have vast experiences in dealing with APEL process in their respective institutions. Specifically, the experts from Wawasan Open University, Open University Malaysia (OUM) and Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) were invited to participate in this project.

The OUM is one of the higher education institutions in Malaysia that have been given the permission to implement an open entry system by the government for the purpose of lifelong learning. Under this system, OUM is allowed to practise a more flexible entry requirements for their students intake. As such, APEL is fittingly used as a student entry requirement at this university. Besides OUM, the WOU is another local university where APEL is practised for students enrollment.

Meanwhile, the MQA is the main government body that manages APEL implementation in the country. This agency is responsible for standardising the APEL process. It also acts as a reference centre for higher learning institutions in Malaysia. Due to this, any applicant with low academic achievement but intending to use his APEL as a qualification to apply to any local higher learning institution must obtain a certification of their APEL from the agency.

3.1.2   Instrumentation

The instruments used in this study were:

1) Interview
   A semi structured interview was conducted with two experts from the OUM and MQA. These two experts were chosen as APEL is implemented in their institutions. The essence of the interview concerned with the status of APEL implementation in the country and the challenges in implementing the process in their institutions.
2) Document analysis
   Documents Analysis was conducted to identify the gaps in APEL practice among the participating countries as well as countries across the globe. . Journal articles, conference papers, and research reports were used as main materials for document analysis.

3) Focus group discussion

   Focus group research can often produce data that are seldom obtained through individual interviews and observations. Therefore, focus group discussion is a powerful tool to extract informative knowledge and insights (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011). In this research, three focus group discussions were conducted. Two of them, which involved members from participating countries, were carried out to draft and finalise the APEL framework. On the other hand,, the other discussion was executed to validate the Malaysian APEL framework by the experts from several local universities

3.1.3   Research Procedure

The aim for this research is to assess the quality assurance of existing practices on APEL for TVET teacher training (TVET-TT) among the participating RCP partner countries including Malaysia1. In general, a qualitative approach, which has an open ended nature, was used in this research. Qualitative method may leads the research project to a perpetual resistance against attempts to impose a single, umbrella-like paradigm over the entire project (Lincoln & Denzin, 2011).

For thematic analysis, the data were obtained through an interview with two respondents from Open University Malaysia and Malaysia Qualification Agency. The interview took place in two different days with the same thematic questions. The data were then transcribed and analyzed.

Meanwhile, document analysis was conducted to determine the gaps based on the similarities and differences in the APEL practices among the participating countries. The journal articles, conference papers, research report, and other relevant reading materials were thoroughly analyzed and interpreted. The findings from both thematic analysis and document analysis were utilised to create a theoretical APEL framework draft. The framework draft was then distributed to participating countries and they were requested to provide feedbacks on the framework.

After that, the first round of focus group discussion was conducted in UTHM to discuss the APEL framework. The experts from local learning institutions and members of the participating countries such as Vietnam, Laos, Indonesia, and Cambodia were invited to join the group discussion. During the discussion, several components were added to while some were removed from the framework. The participating countries were required to refine the APEL framework according to their needs and educational policy.

The second round of focus group discussion was carried out to validate the APEL framework within the Malaysian context. Several experts from local universities were invited to take part in the group discussion. After the discussion, a validated Malaysian APEL framework was produced.

The final round of focus group discussion were conducted in Kuala Terengganu. This session was participated by the participating countries to finalise the APEL framework. Several frameworks (e.g., Malaysia APEL framework and Vietnam APEL framework) were compared and integrated prior to producing a final APEL framework. Figure 3.1 shows the flow of the research process.
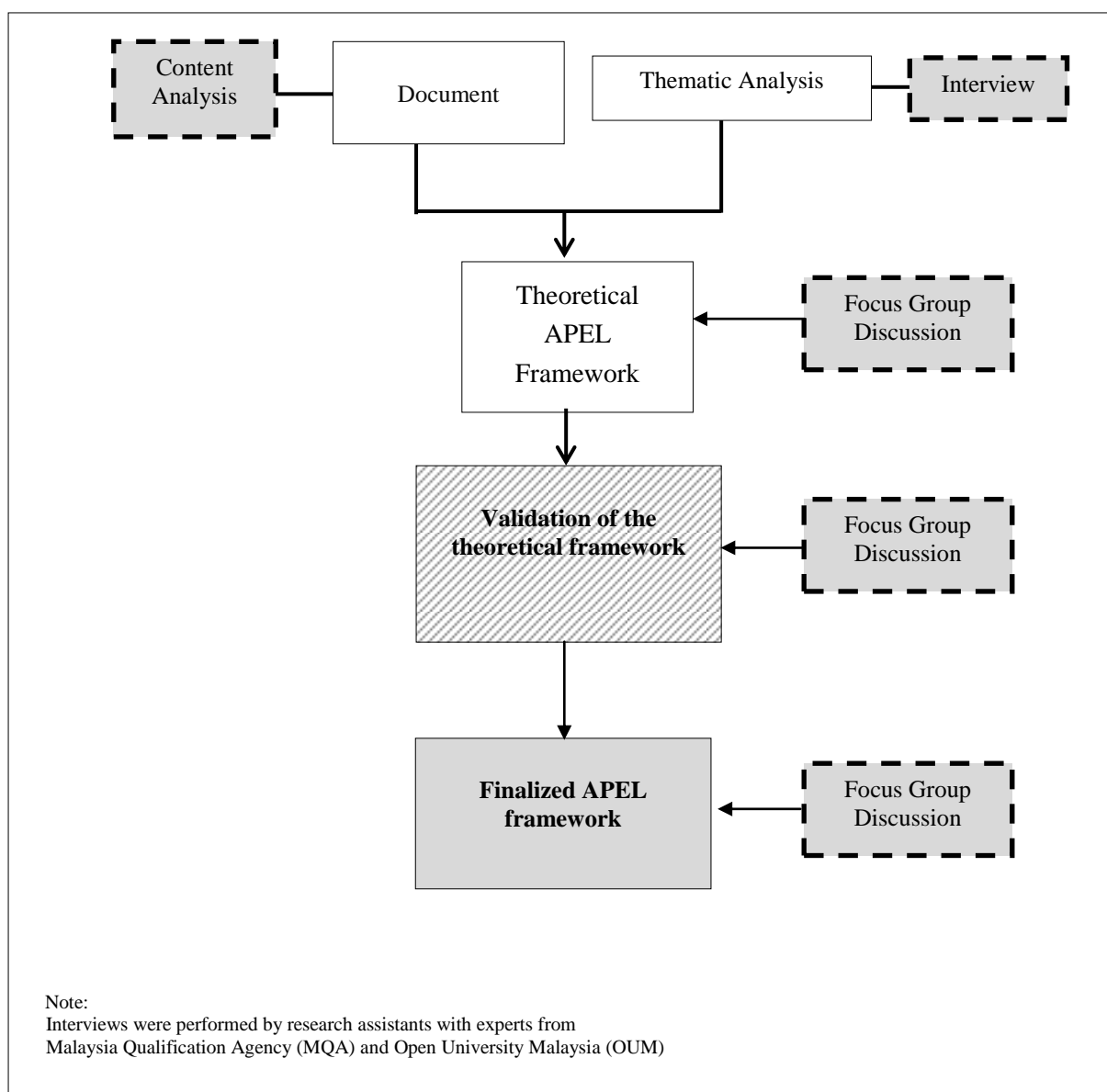
Figure 23:   Flow of the Research Process

4   Findings and discussions

4.0   Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis and result from literature review (gap analysis), interviews (thematic analysis) and focus group discussion. The findings are analysed and explained in order to answer the research questions and draw conclusion of the research. The findings are also discussed together with other similar research findings.

4.1   The similarities and differences in APEL practices

The similarities and differences in APEL practices based on document analysis are presented in Table 17. There are various international terminologies for APEL such as Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). In Malaysia, the term APEL is used which involves a systematic process involving identification, documentation and assessment of prior experiential learning to determine the extent to which an individual has achieved the desired learning outcomes to gain access to a study programme and/or obtain awards of credit (MQA, 2009). Table 17 below shows the document analysis of RPL, PLA and APEL process model analyzed from literature review.

Table 17: **Document Analysis Of RPL, PLA And APEL Process Model analyzed from literature review.**

STAGE	CHARACTERISTIC	AFRICA				AUSTRALIA			SOUTH AMERICA			
		HE (SA)	SAQA	MQA	UNISA	AUS. U	TAFE	ACU	US	MANITOBA	ALGONQUIN	BC
Pre-assessment	Pre-entry	/								/	/	
	Initial contact	/		/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	Pre-screening		/	/	/					/		
	Pre-application counseling				/					/		
	Learning identification	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	
	Application		/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Assessment	Preparation for assessment	/	/	/	/		/	/	/	/	/	
	Assessment	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	Judgement	/	/	/			/	/	/	/	/	
	Verification	/			/		/	/	/		/	
	Appeal	/	/	/	/	/		/			/	
	Moderation	/	/									
	Feedback		/	/	/							
Award	Accreditation and certification	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	
Post-assessment	Recording	/	/	/	/	/		/	/	/	/	/
	Post RPL counseling / Guidance	/	/		/	/						
	Training						/					

Table 17:   **(Cont.)**

STAGE	CHARACTERISTIC	ASIA		EUROPE									Frequency
		MQA	OUM	UCAS	STAFF	NYATANGA	NQV	WORCESTER	PEARSON	EVC	FETAC	FRANCE	
Pre-assessment	Pre-entry	/	/			/		/	/		/	/	10
	Initial contact	/	/	/	/		/	/	/	/	/	/	20
	Pre-screening	/	/		/	/						/	9
	Pre-application counseling	/	/		/						/	/	7
	Learning identification	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/		/	/	20
	Application	/	/					/			/	/	15
Assessment	Preparation for assessment	/	/		/			/		/	/	/	16
	Assessment	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	22
	Judgment	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/				16
	Verification	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/		/		15
	Appeal	/	/		/		/		/		/		13
	Moderation												2
	Feedback	/	/				/				/		7
Award	Accreditation and certification	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	21
Post-assessment	Recording	/	/	/	/			/	/				16
	Post RPL counseling / Guidance				/	/	/						7
	Training												1

HE (SA)	: Higher Education Institution in South Africa	MQA	: Malaysian Qualification Agency
SAQA	: South African Qualification Authority	OUM	: Open University Malaysia
MQA	: Mauritius Qualification Authority	UCAS	: The University and Colleges Admissions Service
UNISA	: University of South Africa	STAFFORDSHIRE	: Staffordshire University
AUS. U	: Australian Universities	NYATANGA	: Nyatanga research (1998)
TAFE	: The Bremer Institution of TAFE	NQV	: Command process model in UK
ACU	: Australian Catholic University	WORCESTER	: National Vocational Qualification
US	: United States	PEARSON	: University of Worchester, UK
MANITOBA	: University of Manitoba, Canada	EVC	: Pearson Education Limited
ALGONQUIN	: Algonquin College, Canada	FETAC	: Elders Verworwen Competencies, Netherlands
BC	: British Columbia University	FRANCE	: FETAC, Ireland
			: France

There are three main stages in the APEL process. The stages are pre-assessment, assessment and post assessment. Awarding an APEL result can be considered as part of the post-assessment process. Based on the literature review, a total of 22 institutions from all around the world were chosen. These institutions have been implementing APEL in their systems. The selected institutions represented the five continents namely Africa, Australia, South America, Asia and Europe.

The three stages are made up of seventeen characteristics. Each characteristic represented the sequence in the APEL process at the representing institutions. These characteristics were then used to construct the theoretical framework in this research. Most of the activities at the pre-assessment stage involve; i) making initial contact with candidates such as by creating awareness through marketing on APEL practice in the institution ii) advising and mentoring potential candidates on APEL procedure and iii) conducting pre-screening of candidates' viability and identifying credits and units that could be awarded. From this study, there were seven characteristics identified at this stage. The characteristics represented the sequence of the activities within the stage. The characteristics were; i) pre-entry, ii) initial contact, iii) pre-screening, iv) pre-application counseling, v) learning identification and vi) application.

From these seven characteristics, the most implemented characteristics are 'initial contact' and 'learning identification'. It was found that 20 out of 22 institution have these characteristics in their APEL process. The 'application' characteristic has the second highest frequency with 17 out of 22 institutions apply it in their practice. This is followed by 'pre entry' (10/22) and 'pre-screening' (9/22). The least practised characteristic is 'pre-application counseling' (7/22). This indicates that 'pre-application counseling' is the least necessary characteristic to be part of the pre-assesment stage of the APEL process. It is important to have such input for a successful APEL implementation since a clear and jargon-free information is one of the requirements for a successful APEL (Sims, 2010). Therefore, the 'initial contact' and 'learning identification' characteristics must be monitored and handled carefully. At this stage, faculties must avoid giving wrong information to the potential candidates. Khanyile (2005) outlined getting the right information as one of the rights of RPL candidates. This right includes getting adequate information about fees, duration, form of assessments available and other relevant information.

During the assessment stage, the activities include i) mentoring and advising candidates by an advisor to build evidence using specific methods ii) conducting assessment of evidence by course matter expert, iii) verifying the authenticity of evidence, iv) carrying out appeal process and providing feedback on assessment and finally v) awarding the credit or certificate to successful candidates based on policy determined by institutions. Among these characteristics, the most implemented characteristic is 'assessment' which is implemented by all the institutions. This means, 'assessment' step is a must in the APEL process. It can be done either directly in contact with the candidates or indirectly by the professionals entrusted with the implementation of assessment procedures (Bednarz & Salini, 2010). This step is then followed by 'preparation for assessment and judgement' which is implemented by 16 out of the total 22 institutions. The next highest characteristic is 'verification' (15/22) and followed by 'appeal' (13/22). Finally, the least implemented characteristic is 'moderation' with only 2 out of 22 institutions implemented this characteristic at the assessment stage.

The characteristic of the awarding stage is 'accreditation and certification'. Since APEL can be used for several purposes, it can give award in several forms as well. From this study, it was found that 21/22 institutions have this stage in their APEL process. The process continues with the post-assessment stage which includes recording of data, post APEL counseling and training. The highest frequency among these characteristics was the recording of data (16/22), followed by post APEL counseling (7/22) and finally training (1/22). Only one institution provides training for candidates upon awarding stage. This shows that training is not necessary and can be offered as an option for institutions whether to implement it or not. Frick et al. (2006) in their research stated that lack of record keeping at institutional level has made it nearly impossible for higher authorities to justify the implementation of Assessment & Recognition of Prior Learning (ARPL). This is why majority of the institutions in this research have recording of data as part of their APEL system. However, Frick et al. (2006) also stated that the lack of a standardised or even the existence of any systematic record keeping system within faculties, would make it extremely difficult to account for the success (or failure) of ARPL and its candidates within the total system (UNCLEAR). Hence, faculty should make sure that apart from having recording of data in the system, the practice should be standardised and systemised so that it will serve its purpose. As system providers, faculty should be given the freedom to develop their own system based on target group, needs and resources in order to have a successful APEL (Sims, 2010). Based on gap analysis, a new theoretical framework for APEL process model was designed. In addition, a more specific theoretical framework on assessment was designed as well. Both theoretical frameworks were initial drafts for the project which later led to the production of a final framework as the final outcome.

4.2 Essential characteristics for APEL process model and assessment for admission and advanced standing

The characteristics of the framework were fully based on the gap analysis. Since this was a preliminary draft, several necessary adjustments were carried out to cater for the current needs of the country. Table 18 and 19 show the framework for APEL process model and framework for APEL process model focusing on assessment respectively. These frameworks were then used in the next step of the methodology which was the focus group discussion. The purpose was to get the consensus from the local participating members on the best items for APEL implementation in Malaysia.

Table 18:   **APEL process model**

STAGE	CHARACTERISTIC	DESCRIPTION
Pre-assessment	Pre-entry	• Advertising through website and join Higher Education Carnival • Using social media (facebook, tweeter, geek etc.) and mass media (TV, newspaper, magazine, etc.) • Organize outreach program, road shows etc. • Distribute newsletters and testimonies to potential participants
	Initial contact	• Handbook and Guidelines provided • one-to-one explanation to candidate • APEL, student handbook (brief outline and contact details), Code of conduct, Informed of APL route and Exemptions
	Pre-screening	• Faculty decide the potential candidate • Basic requirement (eg: APEL Certification) • Use candidate's CV and personal statement verified by official bodies
	Learning identification	• Self-assessment by student based on menu of suitable courses from the faculty • Candidate refers to curriculum checklist and qualification rubric which need to be compared/matched with candidate's Certified Learning and Experiential Learning
	Pre-application counselling	• Candidate interview by staff • One-to-one explanation and advise
	Application	• Faculty prescribed potential candidates for APEL assessment
Assessment	Preparation for assessment	• Advisor help in building evidence • Candidate will be provided with rubric assessment, checklists and samples of assessment
	Assessment	• Portfolio and challenge test • Portfolio and challenge test should meet the criteria of validity, sufficiency, currency and authencity
	Judgement	• Match between prior experience and the learning outcome • Prior experience (job competencies and documentary evidence), learning outcome, and module descriptors
	Verification	• Verification of evidence, and 2 names of referees • Verification of job competencies and working documents. • Verification on portfolio and challenge test results • (report to APEL Board)
	Feedback	• Through the system and letter • Email, facebook and tweeter
Award	Appeal	• Submission of new portfolio after at least six month from appeal date
	Accreditation and certification	• For entry: APEL Certification • Credit Transfer: Academic transcript as 'APEL credit
Post-assessment	Recording	• Keep track in the system
	Post RPL counselling / Guidance	• Learner support when required

Table 19:   **APEL process model specific on assessment**

CHARACTERISTIC	DESCRIPTION
1) **Advisor**	• Advise student in preparing the evidence • Advisor is APEL staff • Assist candidate to identify the learning outcomes associated with the experience and identify areas where claim might be formulated
2) **Assessor**	• Subject matter expert/ Academician • One assessor : one portfolio • Program or course expert in college who had recent experience in teaching the courses being challenged.
3) **Assessment method** a) **Portfolio**	• Subject matter expert checked the portfolio • Assessed once only Recorded as Pass or Fail on the transcript. Restriction • Credit sought by portfolio cannot duplicate other coursework • Total number of credit allocated for one portfolio is six credits • Students must be registered with the University to apply or receives services • The onus lies with the students to prepare an acceptable portfolio
b) **Interview**	• Structured criterion-referenced interview • Second interview to assess whether the candidate can reflex accurately on the task that has just been perform and whether s/he is able to transfer the method of working to other situations in the same domain.
c) **Challenge Test**	• Questions or task prepare by subject matter expert • Scheduled challenge test with candidate Recorded as Pass or Fail on the transcript. Restriction • A student may challenge an exam only once and not for a course that has been failed or previously registered in • A student must be registered with the University to apply or receives services • Credit is granted at the undergraduate level. **1. Test and Examination** The exam is depending on the nature of the learning requirement. Undertake an examination or practical assessment to determine the achievement of the learning or competency outcomes. **2. Demonstration** Candidates are required to perform a task for the purpose of testing. Candidates will receive the assignment a few days before the test. **3. Site Visit** To validate claims and review evidence
4. **Assessment criteria**	• It is compulsory to pass both assessment methods • Rubric for assessment • The certification must be verified • 2 persons of referee Rules of transparency, reliability, validity, consistency and coherence practiced while guiding candidate portfolio

CHARACTERISTIC	DESCRIPTION
	Assessors take into account the level, standard, content, relevance and recency of the prior learning 1) Fit assessment method to the learning activity 2) Fit assessment method to the learner. 3) Utilize assessment as learning. 4) Ensure Reliability 5) Ensure validity 6) Plan the process and train assessor. 7) States result objectively 8) Encourage supervised self-assessment. Authenticity, Quality, Currency, Sufficiency
5. Assessment step	**PORTFOLIO** 1) Read through the portfolio to understand the candidate unique experience and achievement. 2) Identify and analyze the documented learning achievements and compare them to the course learning requirements. 3) Validate the documentation for appropriateness, authenticity and credibility. 4) Make a tentative judgement based on experts understanding of course learning requirements. 5) Interview the candidate to verify the judgement and to seek further information. 6) Assign the grade and transcribe using the established process.
6. Evaluation	Evaluation of the completeness and appropriate evidence (SAQA, Africa)
7. Accreditation and certification	• For entry : Offer Letter • Credit Transfer: Academic transcript as 'APEL credit'

8. Appeal	• After at least six month from appeal date Submission of new portfolio after at least six month from appeal date
	  • Appeals can be made in term of review of the assessment.
	  • Applicant must write to the Dean of Students and Academic Registrar.
	  • The result of the application will be final
	
	6 stages of appeal:
	1. Preliminary dialogue
	2. Application for clarification
	3. Application for review
	4. Appeal
	5. Appeal
	6. Independent Arbiter (judge)

4.3   Extensive APEL Model for TVET-TT Programs on process and assessment

APEL was designed based on focus-group discussion. The two theoretical frameworks developed were APEL Process Model for TVET-TT Program and APEL Process Model on Assessment for TVET-TT Program. In this research, a focus group discussion workshop was held at Office for Research, Innovation, Commercialisation and Consultancy Management (ORICC), UTHM. This workshop was organized by the Advance Centre for Technical and Vocational Education (ACTiVE) as the party that coordinated this research. The three-days workshop was purposely held to develop and design the extensive APEL model.

Participants came from participating countries and members countries like Indonesia, Loas and Cambodia. They were given a draft of APEL model designed by UTHM research members and asked to share some experience and knowledge on APEL practices in their country. During the discussion they point out some ideas on the APEL model draft. Hence, the consensus on description has been made. Table 20 shows the outcome for The Extensive APEL Process Model for TVET-TT Program and Figure 24 shows the Flowchart for The Extensive APEL Process Model for TVET-TT Program (Admission) and Figure 25 shows the Flowchart for The Extensive APEL Process Model for TVET-TT Program (Advance standing).

Each participant from participating countries and members countries like Indonesia, Laos and Cambodia was given a draft of APEL process model designed by UTHM research members. They were asked to share some experience and knowledge on APEL implementation in their country. During the discussion they presented their views on the APEL process model draft. Table 20 shows the outcome for The Extensive APEL Process Model for TVET-TT Program. Figure 24 shows the Flowchart for The Extensive APEL Process Model for TVET-TT Program (Admission). Figure 25 shows the Flowchart for The Extensive APEL Process Model for TVET-TT Program (Advance standing).

Table 20:   **The Extensive APEL Process Model for TVET-TT Program**

STAGE	PROCESSES	DESCRIPTIONS
Pre-assessment	**Pre-entry**	• Advertising through website and join Higher Education Carnival • Using social media (facebook, tweeter, geek etc.) and mass media (TV, newspaper, magazine, etc.) • Organize outreach program, road shows etc. • Distribute newsletters and testimonies to potential participants • Career counsellor/ Public Relation Officer (PRO)
	Initial contact	• Handbook and Guidelines provided • APEL, student handbook (brief outline and contact details), Code of conduct, Informed of APEL route and Exemptions • Registration form • Initial advice provided if necessary
	Pre-screening	• Faculty decides the potential candidate • For admission: Basic requirement (eg: APEL Certification) • Use candidate's CV and personal statement verified by official bodies • Application fees (based on the institution)
	Learning identification	• Self-assessment by student based on menu of suitable courses from the faculty * for TVET teacher training • Candidate refers to curriculum checklist and qualification rubric which need to be compared/matched with candidate's Certified and Experiential Learning • Counselling and advice from course expert
	Application process	• Faculty prescribed potential candidates for APEL assessment • Administrative approval for APEL assessment
	Preparation for assessment	• Advisor help in building evidence • Candidate will be provided with rubric assessment, checklists and samples of assessment
Assessment	**Assessment**	• Portfolio/e-portfolio, challenge test (inclusive of the interview) and standardised examination • Portfolio/e-portfolio and challenge test should meet the criteria of validity, sufficiency, currency and authenticity • Assessed by course matter expert
	Judgement	• Match between prior experiential learning and the course learning outcome • Prior experiential learning (job competencies and documentary evidence), course learning outcome, and module descriptors • Rubric for Course Learning Outcome (based on the individual country) • Greater than 70% content match (based on the individual country) • Maximum 30% of credit awarded (based on the individual country)
	Verification	• 2 names of referees • Verification of job competencies and other relevant documentary evidences • Verification on portfolio and challenge test results • (report to APEL Board within the faculty) • Formal prior learning qualification approved/accredited by authorised agency
	Feedback	• Letter, Email, and social media • Result announce for every 4 months (depends on the institution)
	Appeal	• Appeal can be submitted at any time • For those who failed portfolio / challenge test, they can re-compile/re-sit the test at a reasonable prescribed time frame.

Table 20:   **(Cont.)**

STAGE	PROCESSES	DESCRIPTIONS
Award	**Accreditation and certification**	• For entry requirement: APEL Certification • Credit Transfer: Academic transcript as 'APEL credit
Post-assessment	**Recording** **Post RPL counselling / Guidance**	• Proper recording system. • Learner support when required • Provide guidance for appeal process

* Rubric to match experience to standard (course learning outcome)
(Online or paper based)
Mode: self-assessment
Tool: rubric
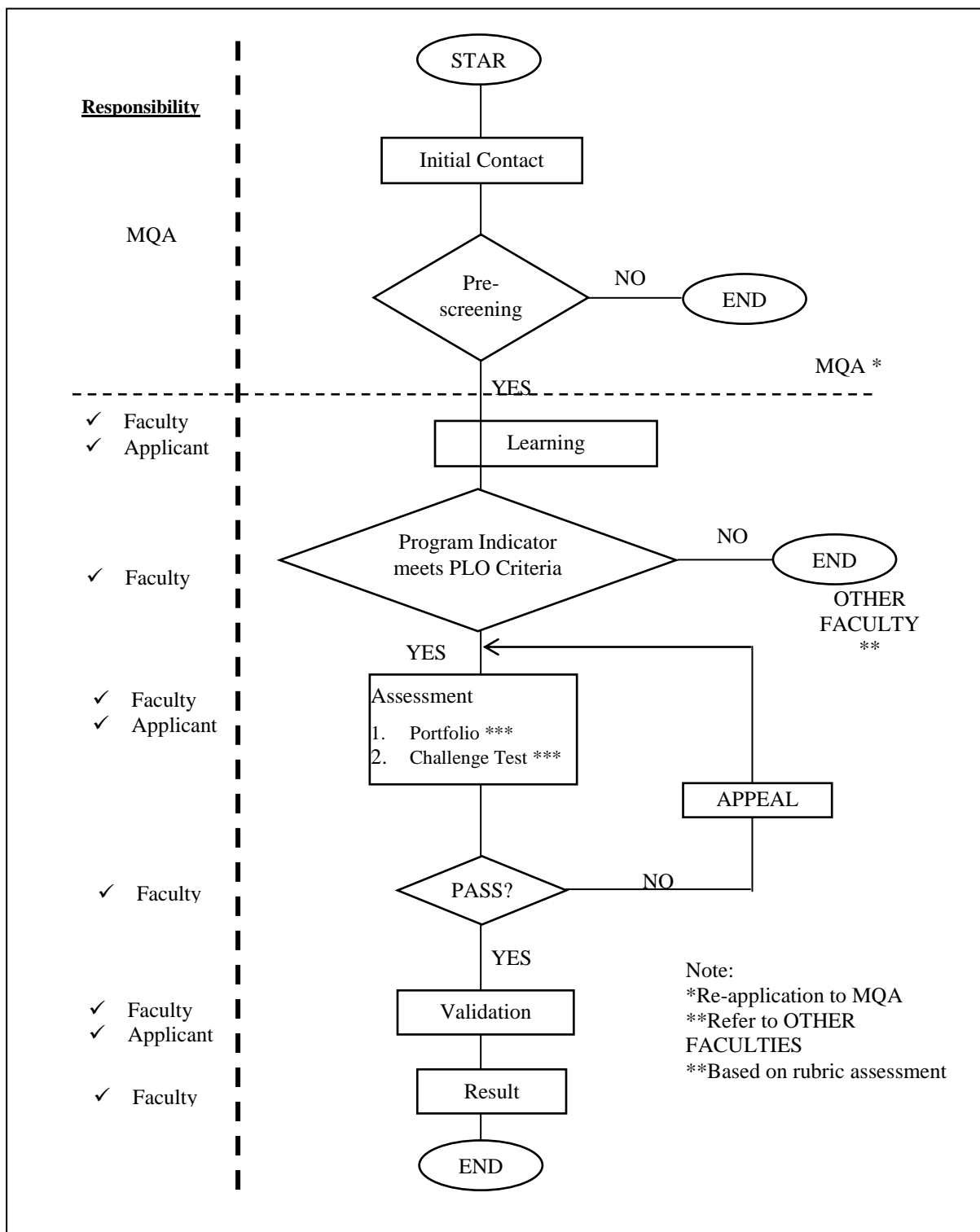
Figure 24:   Flowchart for The Extensive APEL Process Model for TVET-TT Program. (Admission)

Responsibility

- Applicant

- Faculty
- Applicant

- Faculty
- Applicant

- Applicant

- Faculty

- Faculty

STAR

Application for Advance standing

Meet CLO Criteria

NO

YES

Assessment

1. Portfolio *
2. Challenge Test *

APPEAL

PASS?

NO

YES

Credit

Note:
*Based on rubric assessment

END
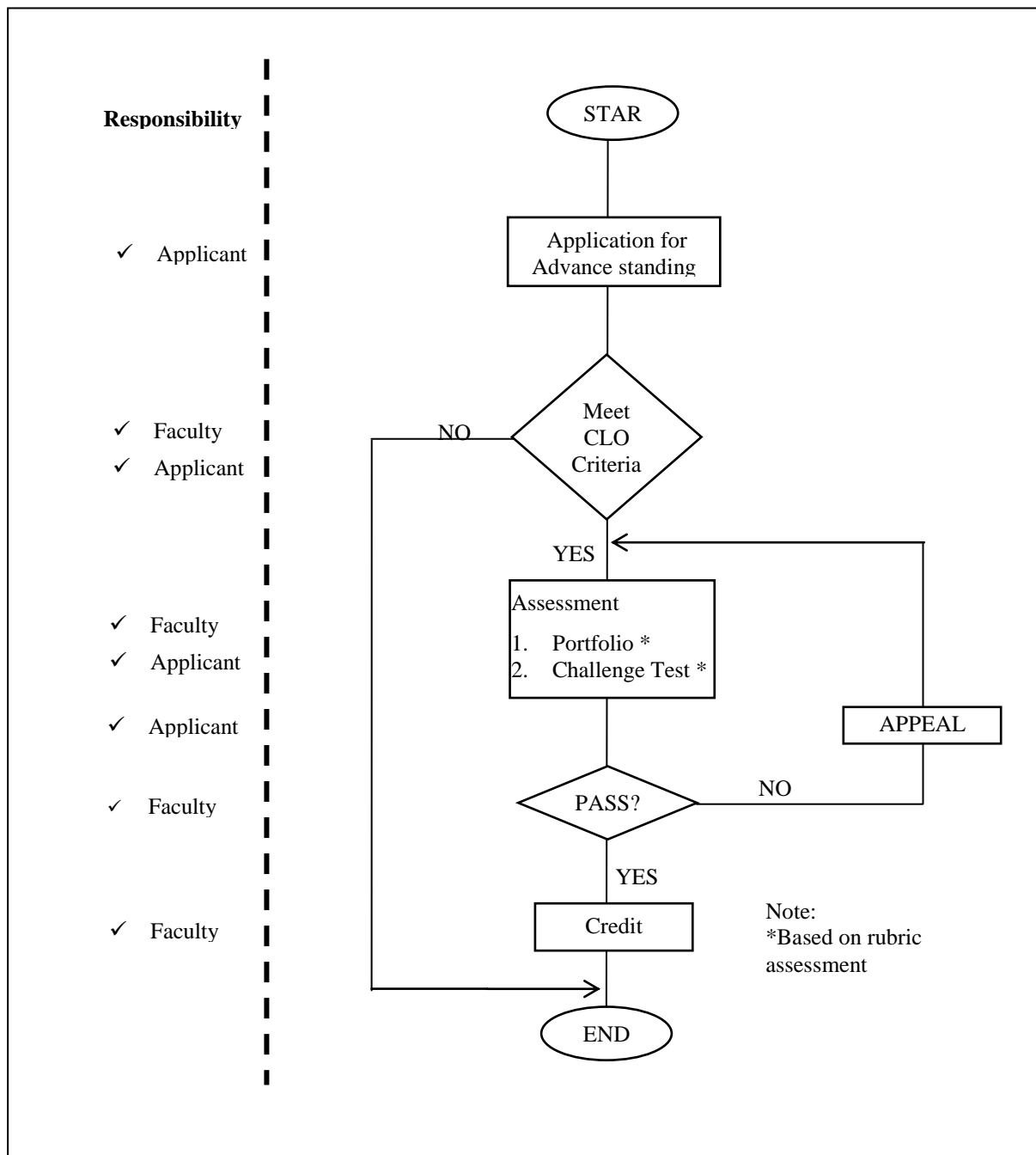
Figure 25:   Flowchart for The Extensive APEL Process Model for TVET-TT Program.
(Advance standing)

Table 20 presents the processes of the four stages of Extensive APEL Process Model for TVET-TT Program. The stages are pre-assessment, assessment and post assessment. The pre-assessment stage focuses on pre entry, initial contact, learning identification, pre-screening and application. Meanwhile, the assessment stage focuses on preparation for assessment, assessment method, judgement, verification, feedback and appeal process. Post assessment on other hand, only focuses on two steps which are recording and post APEL counseling or guidance.

Several changes were made on the previous draft. During the discussion, all the participating members agreed that there should be no pre-application counseling. The explanation and advice can be done during the initial contact when the candidates can be provided with advice if necessary together with a handbook and guidelines. During the pre-screening step, faculty also can decide on the potential candidates rather than having to set up an interview session during pre-application counseling.

Issue on payable fees was discussed in details during the discussion as every members had different opinion on it. However, it was finally agreed that each institution had the right to decide on the fees. The Bremer Institute of TAFE (2013) agreed that fees are vary in each course. The MQA's registration fee is RM250 for degree admission and RM155 for diploma admission (2013). The OUM (2013) charges RM200 per course. Frick *et. al.* (2006 p 133) highlighted that non-standardised of fees charged for ARPL service may be allowed as different assessment instrument may require different duration and financial charges by those involved in carrying out the assessment.

The discussion also focused on assessment characteristic where participant decides to use portfolio and challenge test. These two assessment methods are favorite assessment methods to evaluate the candidates' prior experiential learning. A challenge test can be done either by conducting an interview, test, examination, demonstration, site visit or presentation. A research by a higher learning institution in South Africa (2004) used portfolio, interview, examination and demonstration as assessment methods. Meanwhile, the Australian Catholic University (2013), University of Manitoba, Canada (2006) used portfolio, interview and test as their methods of assessment. In Malaysia, the MQA and OUM used portfolio, test and examination. The OUM agreed that during an assessment, learners are assessed either through challenge test or required to build a portfolio of evidence to support the prior learning claims. Both assessment methods are developed based on specific course learning outcomes and are assessed by subject matter/ course experts (Yick et al., 2011 p5).

A research by Kaprawi et al. (2010) discovered that the highest mean for the assessment methods for APEL is portfolio. This is followed by interviews, challenge test, work place assessment, artifacts assessment, assignment, demonstration and finally work experience test. The dominant method is portfolio development which provides evidence to all the skills, knowledge and candidates' previous experience. However, the research also mentioned the method used for the accreditation varies across the courses. This is because the method has provided opportunities to skilled worker to get accreditation for the skills they have.

The feedback given to candidates whether they have passed or failed to obtain an APEL admission or advance standing will be announced in every four months. However, during the discussion, it was also agreed that such announcement depends on the policy of each institution.

Post assessment characteristics include recording and post APEL counseling. The recording based on research by Higher Institution in South Africa (2004) recording will transcribe the result into database where the institution must decide whether the record should reflect a special code indicating that the credits were award (UNCLEAR). Hence, it in important to have post APEL counseling since the candidates did not obtain their credit through the traditional academic route. This is especially important for advance standing where special attention should be given to.

For outcomes of the discussion on assessment are shown in Table 21: The Extensive APEL Process Model on Assessment for TVET-TT Program.

Table 21: **The Extensive APEL Process Model on assessment for TVET-TT Program**

CHARACTERISTICS	DESCRIPTIONS

1) **Advisor**	• Advise student in preparing the evidence
	• Assist candidate to identify the learning outcomes associated with the experience and identify areas where claim might be formulated
	• Advisor requirement
	    ○ Course matter expert
	    ○ APEL expert

2) **Assessor**	• Course matter expert/ Academician • Three assessors : one portfolio • Require a certified assessor from government agency (based on individual country)
3) **Assessment method** a) Portfolio	• Course matter expert checked the portfolio • Assessed once only (either for entry requirement or credit transfer) • Curriculum structure and content (guideline to develop the portfolio) • Rubric to match experience to standard (university program) Recorded as Pass or Fail on the transcript. Restriction • Credit sought by portfolio cannot duplicate other coursework • Total number of credit allocated for one portfolio is maximum six credits (based on individual country) • Students must be registered with the University to apply or receives services • The onus lies with the students to prepare an acceptable portfolio • Structured interview to assess whether the candidate can reflex accurately on the task that has just been perform and whether s/he is able to transfer the method of working to other situations in the same domain.

Table 21: **(Cont.)**

CHARACTERISTICS	DESCRIPTIONS

b) Challenge Test + interview (the selection of test is based on
i. Assessors judgement
ii. The purpose of application
	• Questions or task prepare by three subject matter expert
	• Scheduled challenge test with candidate
	
	Recorded as Pass or Fail on the transcript. Restriction
	• A student may challenge an exam only once and not for a course that has been failed or previously registered in
	• A student must be registered with the University to apply or receives services
	1) Test
	    The content-based test is depending on the nature of the learning requirement.
	    Undertake an examination to determine the achievement of the learning or competency outcomes.
	2) Demonstration
	Candidates are required to perform a task for the purpose of testing. Candidates will receive the assignment a few days before the test.
	3) Site Visit
	To validate claims and review evidence

4) Assessment step	**PORTFOLIO** 1) Read through the portfolio to understand the candidate unique experience and achievement. 2) Identify and analyze the documented learning achievements and compare them to the course learning requirements. 3) Evaluate the documentation for appropriateness, authenticity and credibility. 4) Make a tentative judgement based on experts understanding of course learning requirements. 5) Inform the status of application. 6) Approved by APEL committee of faculty.
5) Coordination	The process of APEL application is monitored by coordinator.
6) Accreditation and Certification	• For entry: Offer Letter of enrolment. • Credit Transfer: Academic transcript as 'APEL credit' • Certified by the APEL committee of faculty.

7) Appeal	• Submission of new portfolio can be done at any time (only for credit transfer)
	• For those who failed the challenge test, they can re-sit the test at any time (according to the availability of the assessor).
	• Appeals can be made in term of review of the assessment.
	    • Applicant must write to Dean of Students and Academic Registrar (for entry), write to dean of faculty (for credit transfer).
	    • The result of the application from the assessor will be final
	    • Applicant only repeats the assessment component that he/she failed.
	    • The new assessor should be appointed for the assessment.

Table 21 above presents the descriptions of the entire characteristics involved in The Extensive APEL assessment for TVET-TT program. Those are characteristics of advisor, assessor, assessment method, assessment criteria, assessment step, accreditation, certification and appeal are discussed in details.

A research by the Mauritius Qualification Authority (Allgoo et al., 2006) highlighted that advisor and assessor in APEL process must be of different people. An advisor guides and supports the candidates in developing the portfolio and evidence. On the other hand, while an assessor's role is to compare the candidates' evidence provided in the portfolio with the standard and assess the competencies acquired. These tasks cannot be done by the same person in order to create fairness. In addition, the participants

of the discussion also agreed to use the term "course matter experts" as a requirement for an individual to be appointed as be an advisor and assessor. It was also decided during the discussion that three assessors are needed for one portfolio instead of one.

One of the advisor's responsibilities is to assist the candidates to identify the learning outcomes associated with the experience and also identify areas where claim might be formulated. However, to give effective advice and guidance, the advisor must have better understanding of what need to be demonstrated to meet the learning outcomes of the programme. Hence, he needs to be confident in order to provide advice on the appropriate types of evidence. (EUCEN, 2007).

The assessment criteria discussed in the workshop such as rules of transparency, reliability, validity, consistency and coherence will be practised by the assessors while guiding candidates building their portfolio. Research by Yick et al. (2011) highlighted that the criteria used by assessors to evaluate the portfolio are also made known to the learners. The assessors rate the evidence such as the portfolio based on four criteria in the assessment rubric namely relevancy, authenticity, sufficiency and currency. Hence, the evaluation is based on the extent to which the learners' prior experiential learning claims and evidence match the learning outcomes. Kaprawi et al. (2010) highlighted that portfolio assessment involves the assessment of learning documents in the portfolio. The documents demonstrate prior learning that is equivalent to course content and expectation. In addition, in any institution, the portfolio is assessed for course credit by the faculty offering the programme.

Portfolio assessment is done simultaneously with a structured interview based on a final discussion. The purpose of the interview is to assess whether the candidates can reflect accurately on the tasks that they have just performed. It is also to assess whether candidates are able to transfer the method of working in other situation within the same domain. At the Australian Catholic University (2013), the advisor would invite the candidates for the interview and seek further information from the candidates on any aspect in the supporting documents.

There is a few portfolio assessment steps that resulted from the discussion. The first step is to read the portfolio and to look for any unique experience and achievement in it. The second step is to identify and analyse the documents and compare them with course learning requirement. The third one is to evaluate the documents in terms of their appropriateness, authenticity and credibility. Thus, tentative judgement by the course matter experts understanding will be made, followed by an announcement on the success of failure of the candidates. Algonquin College (2013) pointed out two distinctive advantages of portfolio assessment. The first is it enables articulation of learning from the learners' perspective who experienced and internalised the learning. The second is the portfolio is the most comprehensive tool available for the assessment of prior learning.

4.4   Generically APEL Model for TVET-TT Programs on process and assessment

The 2nd International Workshop was held as a continuity to the first workshop in Kuala Terengganu. The purpose of the 2nd International Workshop was to develop the generically APEL Model for TVET-TT Programme that is applicable to all the participating countries which were Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam. The Workshop was held at the Permai Hotel, Kuala Terengganu for 3 days.

Again, the focus group discussion was conducted there and all the participants from several countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia and Cambodia were involved. Despite given a short period, the discussion was a success in since all the participants knew what needed to be discussed. This was because they had a clear picture of the scenario after attending the previous APEL workshop. Participants gave clear comments in order to develop the generically applicable APEL model. Table 22 illustrates The Generically APEL Process Model for TVET-TT Programme.

Table 22:   **The Generically APEL Process Model for TVET-TT Program**

	PROCESSES	DESCRIPTION
	Pre-entry (Publicity and promotional activities)	• Advertise through website e.g. Ministry of Higher Education or Malaysian Qualifications Agency and join Higher Education Carnival/ Fair • Use social media (facebook, tweeter, geek etc.) , mass media (TV, newspaper, magazine, etc.) and all the relevant stakeholders e.g. alumni • Form advisory board / Organize outreach program, road shows etc. to approach potential candidates. • Distribute newsletters and testimonies to potential participants • Work with regulatory bodies (such as Education Ministry, Human Resource Department/Ministry, Technology Promotion Association (Thailand-Japan)-www.tpa.or.th- or www.e-3L.com) • Organise forum for Career counsellors (in educational institutions) Marketing / Communications Officer in corporate / government companies, organisations.
Pre-assessment	**Initial contact (Application materials & related forms)**	• APEL handbook and guidelines • Application form • FAQ • General briefing/advice to be provided if required by applicant
	Learning identification through self-assessment & application submission	• Self-assessment (online or hardcopies) by student based on menu of suitable courses from the faculty for *TVET teacher training* • Candidate refers to curriculum checklist and qualification rubric** (prepared by the institution) which need to be compared/matched with candidate's Formal Learning (Certificated learning eg. Diploma etc), Non-formal learning (eg. Seminars, workshops etc) and Informal Learning (available on website) ** Rubric to match experiential learning to standard (course learning outcome) • Counselling and advice provided by course expert • Submission of application form and the related fees (based on the institution)
	Pre-screening	• To be administered at the respective Faculty level • Criteria: - Candidates must first fulfil the entry requirements of a particular programme (eg. APEL Certification for admission) - candidate's CV and personal statement verified by official bodies - payment of application fees
	Application verification	• Faculty verify the documentary evidence presented by candidates for a faculty approval process (entry) or • APEL assessment for advanced standing will be initiated (credit transfer)

Table 22:   **(Cont.)**

	PROCESSES	DESCRIPTION
Assessment	**Preparation for assessment**	• Advisor helps students in gathering and compiling of evidence • Candidate will be provided with rubric assessment, checklists and samples of assessment questions/tools
	Assessment	• Portfolio/e-portfolio followed by interview, challenge test (inclusive of an interview session) and/or standardised examination (for teachers training) • Assessment tools used must meet the criteria of validity, sufficiency, currency and authenticity • Assessor appointed must be a course matter expert.

	Judgement	• Match between prior experiential learning (job competencies and documentary evidence) and the course learning outcomes as well as the module descriptors using Rubric for Course Learning Outcome (based on the individual country)
		• Content match must be more than 70% (based on the regulatory bodies prescribed by the individual country)
		   o Malaysia – practice 80% match (MOHE & MQA)
		   o Thailand – 75%
		   o Vietnam – at least 75%
		• credit transfer to be awarded based on regulatory bodies prescribed by the individual country

	Verification and endorsement of evidence	• Verified by referees • Verification of job competencies and other relevant documentary evidences • Formal prior learning qualification presented must be approved by authorised agency/regulatory bodies (e.g. Thailand-regulated by faculties) • Verification of portfolio and challenge test results after the moderation process • Results presented to APEL Examination Board within the faculty
	Feedback	• Results are disseminated through post, mail or/and social media • Result to be announced at least once a year (depends on the institutional policy)
	Appeal	• Appeal can be submitted at any prescribed time • For those who failed portfolio / tests, they can substantiate and re-compile their portfolio/re-sit the test at a stipulated time frame determined by the institution.
Award	**Accreditation and certification**	• For admission: by regulatory bodies and faculty in the respective country e.g. in Malaysia the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) will issue the : APEL Certification award • For Credit Transfer (advanced standing): issued by the relevant faculty in the respective institutions e.g. an APEL Credit Transfer result statement/slips/certificate
Post-assessment	**Recording**	• A robust infrastructure and recording system • Up-to-date records are maintained at all time • Record keeping for 7 years / according to the law • Validity of the result depends on discipline
	Post APEL counselling / Guidance	• Provide guidance for appeal process • Learner support to be provided when required

The table above shows the outcome of the discussion on how to develop The Generically APEL Process Model for TVET-TT Programme. The model is to ensure it is applicable to all the participating countries. The description for the pre-entry was changed in order to it feasible to the countries. However the functions of the pre-entry are still to market APEL and create awareness to candidates. Institutions will conduct the marketing and collaborate with professional bodies to encourage candidates to apply for admission advance transfer through APEL process.

During the initial contact, the participants agreed to have Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) rather than APEL handbook and guidelines. The reason was to ensure candidates get the crystal clear information from the institutions or faculty. Hence, during the application process, the consensus made by participant was that faculty must verify the documental evidence presented by candidates for getting the approval for admission or advance standing.

Again, according to the participants, challenge test and portfolio are appropriate assessment methods in APEL assessment. Challenge test can be prescribed in many forms such as test, demonstration and site visits. The two assessment instruments discussed have also been used by OUM. At the OUM, candidates are assessed either by using a challenge test or portfolio (Yick, 2012). According to Algonquin (2007), a challenge test is a method of assessment administrated by faculty to measure an individual's learning achievement whether it fulfills the course learning requirements. It measures demonstrated learning through written and non- written evaluations. On the other hand, a portfolio is a formally presented document which describes learning achievement from prior experience. It links prior learning to specific college course learning requirements and shows validation or proof through third party documentation and other forms of evidence. Participants also agreed to have portfolio as an assessment method and followed by an interview and a challenge test.

In conjunction with the chosen assessment methods, the portfolio enables articulation of learning from the learners' perspective as they experienced it. It is also the most comprehensive tool available for the assessment of prior learning. Hence, portfolio development engages the applicants in a process of self-review before beginning a programme of study. The programme would enable self-discovery, self-esteem through affirmation of personal competence, development of academic skill and as theoretical and practical understanding of the learning process

Table 23 The Generically APEL Process Model on Assessment for TVET-TT Program shows the outcomes of the discussion on assessment. Participants came up with a consensus to ensure the model is applicable in their countries.

Table 23: **The Generically APEL Process Model on Assessment for TVET-TT Program**

CHARACTERISTICS	DESCRIPTIONS

1) Advisor	• Advise student in preparing the evidence
	• Assist candidate to identify the learning outcomes associated with their experiential learning and identify areas where claim might be formulated
	• Advisor's appointed must be a
	    o Course matter expert
	    o Knowledgeable in APEL system and law and regulations.

2) Assessor	• Course matter expert/ Academician • at least three assessors : one portfolio • Require a certified assessor from government agency (based on individual country) • advisor can be an assessor for the same applicant
3) Coordination	• The process of APEL application is monitored by a designated coordinator.
4) Assessment method (A and/or B and/or C) **a) Portfolio**	• Course matter expert assesses the portfolio by using the guidelines • Portfolio assessed can only be used for a single purpose (either for entry requirement or credit transfer - incorporating information on curriculum structure and course content) • Use Rubric to match the experience to the course learning outcome
b) Interview	• Assessors will be provided with a framework of questions to be used a guide. This can be modified based on circumstances • Structured interview to assess whether the candidate can accurately reflect on the task/responsibilities undertaken and whether s/he is able to transfer the knowledge/skills acquired to other situations in the same domain.

c) Challenge Test	**1) Written Test**
	    The content-based test would depend on the nature of the learning outcome/requirement of a course/programme.
	    Undertake an examination to determine the achievement of the learning or competency outcomes.
	
	2) Demonstration of skills set
	Candidates are required to perform a task for the purpose of testing. Candidates will receive the assignment a few days before the demonstration test.
	
	3) Site Visit/ Assessment
	To validate claims and review evidence
	To assess the competency of the applicants

5) Assessment criteria	• It is compulsory to pass both assessment components (portfolio & challenge test/interview) • Rubric for assessment (matching of content and level of study) • The certificated qualification must be verified • Evidence / statement presented must be verified by referees. • Assessment tools used must meet the criteria of validity, sufficiency, currency and authenticity

Table 23: **(Cont.)**

CHARACTERISTICS	DESCRIPTIONS
	• Assessors will take into account the level, standard, content, relevance and currency of the prior learning. The following must be observed: 1) Appropriate assessment method according to the learning activity 2) Appropriate assessment method according to the level of qualification sought 3) Ensure reliability 4) Ensure validity 5) Plan the process of assessment. 6) State results objectively

6) Result	Authenticity, Quality, Currency, Sufficiency
	PORTFOLIO
	• Results to be recorded as **Accept / Reject** on the transcript (**for entry**).
	• Results to be recorded as **APEL Credit** on the transcript **(for Credit Transfer/Advanced Standing)**
	• Conditions:
	  - Credit sought by portfolio cannot duplicate other coursework
	  - Total number of credits allocated for one portfolio is maximum six credits (based on individual country)
	  - Students must first register with the University to apply or receive such services
	  (only those applying APEL for credit transfer)
	  - The onus lies with the students to prepare an acceptable portfolio based on the prescribed guidelines
	
	CHALLENGE TEST
	• Results to be recorded as Accept/Reject on the transcript.
	• Conditions:
	  - A student can only take the challenge exam/test only once and cannot repeat for a course that s/he has failed or registered previously
	Students must first register with the University to apply or receives such services

7) Accreditation and Certification	• For admission: by regulatory bodies in the respective country e.g. In Malaysia the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) will issue the APEL Certification award • For Advanced Standing / Credit Transfer: issued by the relevant faculty in the respective institutions e.g. an APEL Credit Transfer result statement/slips/certificate Certified by the APEL committeeof the faculty.

8) Appeal	1) Applicant only repeat the assessment component that he/she failed
	2) The new assessor should be appointed for the assessment.
	  - Candidates can appeal for review of their assessment results
	  - For appeal related to admission, candidates must submit their appeal to the Dean of Students and Academic Registrar while appeal for credit transfer has to be directed to Dean of the relevant Faculty.
	  - The decision of the board on the results of the appeal will be final and no further appeal shall be allowed.
	  - Candidates can appeal for review of their assessment results
	  - For appeal related to admission, candidates must submit their appeal to the Dean of Students and Academic Registrar while appeal for credit transfer has to be directed to Dean of the relevant Faculty.
	  - The decision of the board on the results of the appeal will be final and no further appeal shall be allowed.

The specific criteria were also mentioned based on the participants' consensus to ensure that the assessment made by course matter expert is valid. Assessment tools used by the assessor must meet the criteria of validity, sufficiency, currency and authenticity. A research by Nyatanga et al. (1998) mentioned that the portfolio is submitted to an assessment team and normally reviewed by more than one assessor. Hence the assessors will examine using a holistic approach and if necessary an interview, examination, written assignment or demonstration will be held together. The assessment criteria used in UCAS are authenticity, quality, currency and sufficiency.

5 Conclusions and recommendations

5.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the overall conclusion of the research and recommendations for future research. It also discusses limitations that has arisen during this research.

5.1 Conclusion and recommendation

The findings of this research provide an overview of the process in developing a valid framework to be used in real situation. The APEL framework created from this research is an outcome of one of the research questions in the first chapter. Based on the findings, the implementation of APEL in education is still at its novelty. Therefore, having an appropriate framework of APEL may help any other institution to implement APEL in a systematic and efficient way. Undeniably, there is still much work to be done. Nevertheless, this research is valuable as it is a pioneer research in the development of APEL system in the Malaysian higher education system. The outcomes from this research could serve as a guidance for future research. Moreover, this research may also help in finding the alternative ways in developing TVET and thus increase the quality of TVET products in general.

Based on the implications of this study, there is a number of recommendations for future research. For instance, prior to starting a research on APEL, steps should be taken to ensure that the concept is well understood by the research members. Research leader may choose suitable and related members and give thorough explanations on APEL to them before the research begins. This may help in overcoming time wasting and confusion among the members and generate more fruitful outcomes from the discussion.

Limitations of this research could also provide opportunities for future research. Firstly, the research used wamainly qualitative in nature and with a small number of respondents. This has prevented the researcher from making statements of generalisations. Furthermore, tmannerthe researchers did notget data. If quantitative data collection such as questionnaires had been used, the researchers would have obtained results for other issue.Problems related to difficulties and challenges in APEL implementationcould have been obtained through. This would help in providing insights on the seriousness of certain issues regarding APEL implementation. It would also provide a stronger support for the researchers to make suggestions on the APEL framework. Hence, as a suggestion for future research, a mixed method approach onAPEL implementation should be applied to get a bigger picture of the implementation. Therefore, different groups of samples may be assigned to provide data for the research.

Secondly, this research only focused on the APEL framework which is only a small part of the thebigger APEL process. This scope of this research did not other critical stages of the process such as assessment and appal. Because of this limitation, the findings from this study only presented a glimpse of the whole scenario. Hence, a study on the critical stages offers an opportunity for future research on experiential learning. (HOW ABOUT REPLACING THIS SENCTENCE WITH THIS- 'Hence, future research on these critical stages will provide some insights on experiental learning'). Researchers may focus on specific stages such as the pre-assessment, assessment or post-assessment stages. Alternatively, future researchers may also focus on the policies of APEL implementation

instead of its process. Investigation on this issue can be fruitful and help reveal a bigger scenario of APEL.

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7 Appendixes

7.0 Appendix A

Structure interview to MQA/QUM

Brief explanation of APEL from your point of view.

1) APEL implementation in MALAYSIA.
    a) How long has been implemented in Malaysia and MQA/ OUM?
    b) Is there any other institution runs APEL for validation like MQA? Develop aptitude test? - if yes: How do you monitor and review the process and evaluation of APEL implementation among the institution.
    c) Who involved (Institution, assessors, any organization; public or private)
    d) Is there any link between the Higher Education and MQA regarding APEL
2) APEL in MQA/ OUM
    a) Based on what and who operational procedures did you refer to build the policy (principles, process, assessment)
    b) Do all the staffs in the department have enough knowledge on APEL?
    c) Are the responsibilities of staff and students made clear?
    d) How does you advertise APEL to the public?
    e) Do you have any counselling session for candidates
3) Explain more on the process of APEL by MQA/OUM
    a) Registration
        i. Who is target candidate of APEL
        ii. How should a student apply for APEL (online or manual)
        iii. When should a student apply for APEL?
        iv. Are there any deadlines to apply or is it open all the time? At any time during studies or graduate 1st?
        v. Where and who can the potential candidate get advice on APEL?
        vi. Is there any APEL module?
        vii. Is there any fee charged? How much?
        viii. Explain more on relevant work experience needed for certain education level (Ms, Phd, B
    b) Assessment
        i. What is the method used to assess the candidate?-portfolio/aptitude test.
        ii. Do you used both or either one? why?
        iii. If only one pass, how?need to appeal?
        iv. PORTFOLIO
            1. Is there any guidelines to develop the portfolio?
            2. Is there any guideline/rubrics in marking the portfolio? If Yes-can u share?

    3. How do you verify authenticity of portfolios and evidence?

    4. Who check the portfolio? The criteria / quality for the assessors?

    5. Is there any 2nd marking? External assessors-who?

    6. What is the timescale for making decision?

    7. How did u inform the candidate about the result? (emel/ phone/ letter)

  v. APTITUDE TEST

    1. What kind of aptitude test? Example please?

    2. Is there any guideline/rubrics in marking the aptitude? If Yes-can u share?

    3. Are the assessors the same person?

    4. When did this test take place? (after or before the validation of the portfolio?or simultaneously)

    5. Where is the place to sit the aptitude test

    6. What is the timescale for have aptitude test

  vi. Appeal

    1. How to make appeal? Is there any payment?

    2. Who assessed the appeal process?

    3. What are the criteria to accept the appeal?

    4. How long will it takes to get the result?

    5. How many times can a candidates appeal?

  vii. Accreditation

    1. How did the cert given to the candidates?

    2. After getting the cert, can the candidate apply straight away to higher education institution or have to wait for any other procedure or just apply at OUM?

    3. What course be accepted after do APEL

4) Issues and challenges

  a) What is hallenges as overal?

  b) Challenges in terms of assessment process (assessors/ guideline)

  c) How is the participation of the public towards APEL?

  d) What is your expectation on APEL in future?

  e) Upgrading the whole process is required?

7.1   Appendix B

Gap analysis for RPL/PLA/APEL process model

Content

Table 1:   **Summary of gap analysis for RPL/PLA/APEL Process Model**

STAGE	CHARACTERISTIC	AFRICA				AUSTRALIA				AMERICA		
		HE (SA)	SAQA	MQA	UNISA	AUS. U	TAFE	ACU	US	MANITOBA	ALGONQUIN	BC
Pre-assessment	Pre-entry	/							/		/	
	Initial contact	/		/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	Pre-screening		/	/	/					/		
	Pre-application counseling				/					/		
	Learning identification	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	
	Application		/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Assessment	Preparation for assessment	/	/	/	/		/	/	/	/	/	
	Assessment	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	Judgement	/	/	/	/		/	/	/	/	/	
	Verification	/			/		/	/	/	/	/	
	Appeal	/	/	/	/	/		/			/	
	Moderation	/	/									
	Feedback		/	/	/							
Award	Accreditation and certification	/	/	/	/	/		/	/	/	/	
Post-assessment	Recording	/	/	/	/	/		/	/	/	/	/
	Post RPL counseling / Guidance	/	/		/	/						
	Training						/					

Pre-entry	Marketing and crate awareness
Initial contact	Contact institution and candidate interview
	Advise and mentoring RPL/ PLA/ APEL procedure
Pre-screening	Pre-screening viability of candidate
	Self-assessment
Pre-application counseling	Counseling session
Learning identification	Identify credit and units claimed
Application	Candidate apply
Preparation for assessment	Mentor/ advisor help to build evidence
	Identify methods, explain evidence gathering, provide evidence
Assessment	Conduct assessment
Judgement	Make evidence judgement
Verification	Verify authenticity of evidence
Appeal	-
Moderation	-
Feedback	Feedback to candidate/ candidate notified of the outcome
Accreditation and certification	Awards credit and provide result
Recording	Transcribe result into database
Post RPL counseling	Provide career and counseling

Table 1:   **(Cont.)**

STAGE	CHARACTERISTIC	ASIA			EUROPE							
		MQA	OUM	UCAS	STAFFORDSHIRE	NYATANGA	NQV	WORCESTER	PEARSON	EVC	FETAC	FRANCE
Pre-assessment	Pre-entry	/	/			/		/	/		/	/
	Initial contact	/	/	/	/		/	/	/	/	/	/
	Pre-screening	/	/		/	/						/
	Pre-application counseling	/	/		/						/	/
	Learning identification	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/		/	/
	Application	/	/					/			/	/
Assessment	Preparation for assessment	/	/		/			/		/	/	/
	Assessment	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	Judgement	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/			
	Verification	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/		/	
	Appeal	/	/		/			/	/			/
	Moderation											
	Feedback	/	/					/			/	
Award	Accreditation and certification	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Post-assessment	Recording	/	/	/	/		/		/			
	Post RPL counseling / Guidance				/	/	/					
	Training											

Pre-entry	Marketing and crate awareness
Initial contact	Contact institution and candidate interview
	Advise and mentoring RPL/ PLA/ APEL procedure
Pre-screening	Pre-screening viability of candidate
	Self-assessment
Pre-application counseling	Counseling session
Learning identification	Identify credit and units claimed
Application	Candidate apply
Preparation for assessment	Mentor/ advisor help to build evidence
	Identify methods, explain evidence gathering, provide evidence
Assessment	Conduct assessment
Judgement	Make evidence judgement
Verification	Verify authenticity of evidence
Appeal	-
Moderation	-
Feedback	Feedback to candidate/ candidate notified of the outcome
Accreditation and certification	Awards credit and provide result
Recording	Transcribe result into database
Post RPL counseling	Provide career and counseling

Table 2:   **Gap analysis of RPL/ PLA/ APEL on policies**

	CHARACTERISTIC	AFRICA			
		HE INSTITUTION IN SOUTH AFRICA	SAQA	MAURITIUS QUALIFICATION AUTHORITY (MQA)	UNISA
1.	Purpose	Access to HE	Access to HE / credit award	Access to HE / credit award	Access to HE/ Credit Award
2.	Fee	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
3.	Eligibility (age)	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
4.	Academic requirement	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
5.	Maximum Credit Award	NIL	50% credits granted and 50% must complete the learning program.	NIL	60 %
6.	Types of Credits	Specific / General	Specific / General	Specific / General	Specific / General
7.	Level of award	NIL	NIL	NIL	Undergraduate Postgraduate

Specific credits   -   Specific credit is accreditation for a specific module or modules in an Award.
General credits   -   award of credit points at a particular level in a Degree, which does not substitute for a specified module or modules.

Assessment method
    A.   Portfolio
    B.   Interview
    C.   Text and examination
    D.   Presentation
    E.   Demonstration
    F.   DVD
    G.   Site visit

Table 2:   **(Cont.)**

CHARACTERISTIC	AUSTRALIA		
	AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES	**THE BREMER INSTITUTE OF TAFE**	**AUSTRALIANCATHOLICUNIVERSITY (ACU)**
1. **Purpose**	Access to HE / credit award	Access to HE	Access to HE / credit award
2. **Fee**	NIL	Vary to each course	NIL
3. **Eligibility (age)**	NIL	No age limit	NIL
4. **Academic requirement**	NIL	NIL	NIL
5. **Maximum Credit Award**	NIL	Possible to gain whole qualification.	NIL
6. **Types of Credits**	Specific / General	Specific / General	Specific / Blok/ Unspecified
7. **Level of award**	NIL	Undergraduate	Undergraduate Postgraduate

Table 2:   **(Cont.)**

CHARACTERISTIC	AMERICA			
	UNITED STATES	**UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA, CANADA**	**ALGONQUIN COLLEGE, CANADA**	**BRITISH COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**
1. **Purpose**	Access to HE / credit award	Access to HE / credit award	Credit award	Credit transfer
2. **Fee**	NIL	NIL	NIL	Collected by central office
3. **Eligibility (age)**	18 years and above	NIL	19 years and above	Applicant must register as a student first to enjoy the services.
4. **Academic requirement**	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
5. **Maximum Credit Award**	NIL	NIL	Vary based on program, up to 75%	NIL
6. **Types of Credits**	Specific / General	Specific / General	specific	Specific/general
7. **Level of award**	Undergraduate	NIL	Undergraduate	NIL

Table 2:   (Cont.)

| CHARACTERISTICS | ASIA | | UNITED KINGDOM (UCAS) | EUROPE |
	MALAYSIAN QUALIFICATION AGENCY	OPEN UNIVERSITY OF MALAYSIA		STAFFORDSHIRE UNIVERSITY
1. Purpose	Admission into higher education all around Malaysia	For credit transfer / advance standing	Credit awards	Access to higher education
2. Fee	Registration fees RM250/ degree RM155/ diploma	RM 200/course	NIL	Fee may be incorporated into the course fee.
3. Eligibility (age)	Programme at Bachelor level i.The applicant shall be 21 years of age as of 1st January in the year of application and possess relevant work experience. ii. Programme at Diploma level The applicant shall be 20 years of age as of 1st January in the year of application and possess relevant work experience. iii. Programme at Certificate level The applicant shall be 19 years of age as of 1st January in the year of application and possess relevant work experience.	Available to all OUM undergraduate students with relevant prior learning experience.	NIL	-
4. Academic requirement	As low as certificate from primary school.	Unlimited to all OUMs' students	NIL	-
5. Maximum Credit Award	APEL certificate allows applicant to register in the higher education	30% of total course	NIL	75% percent of credits for any award may be set against accredited prior learning/experience
6. Types of Credits	General	Specific	General	Specific / General
7. Level of award	Diploma/degree	Degree	NIL	Certificate, Intermediate, Honours, Masters and Doctoral

Table 2: **(Cont.)**

| CHARACTERISTICS | EUROPE | | | | | | |
	NYATANGA	NVQ	UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER	PEARSON EDUCATION LIMITED	EVC IN NETHERLANDS	FETAC, IRELAND	FRANCE
1. **Purpose**	For admission	For Admission	-Admission to a course -Credit award	Advanced Standing/certification	-Qualification awarded -Module exemption	-entry and exemptions -credit towards an award	Award full or partial certification/diploma
2. **Fee**	NIL	NIL	Fee for processing APL claim	NIL	-	NIL	Varies
3. **Eligibility (age)**	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	-	Major award: 6-8 years of experience Minor award: 2-3 years of experience	Open to any individual who can attest at least three years of salaries, non-salaried or voluntary experiences
4. **Academic requirement**	NIL	NIL	NIL	-	-	-	-
5. **Maximum Credit Award**	NIL		NIL	Acceptable to claim for an entire qualification	-	Awards only valid within 5 years	-
6. **Types of Credits**	General	General	General/Specific	General/Specific	-	-	-
7. **Level of award**	NIL	NIL	Certificate Diploma Degree Masters	NIL	-	Postgraduate Diploma	Diploma Certificate

Table 3:   **Gap analysis of RPL/ PLA/ APEL process model**

| STAGE | CHARACTERISTICS | AFRICA | | | |
		HE INSTITUTION IN SOUTH AFRICA	SAQA	MAURITIUS QUALIFICATION AUTHORITY (MQA)	UNISA
Pre-assessment	1. **Pre-entry**	Institution plan marketing effort, conduct marketing and create awareness.	-	-	-
	2. **Initial contact**	Candidate contact institution for information. Screening potential candidate, RPL advisor interview candidate.	Facilitator meets candidate to conduct pre-screening to ascertain viability of application.	Candidate contact the MQA for guidance. RPL facilitator contact s the candidate.	RPL Centre pre-screened candidate. Pre-application counseling like advised and mentoring the candidate. Candidate informed for recommendation and assessment procedure, evidence required and cost.
	3. **Learning Identification**	Identify credit and units claimed based on curriculum.	Review unit standard and requirement.	Candidate identify their skill against the standard of the selected qualification.	Candidate screen and evaluate capability.
	4. **Applications**	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
	5. **Methods**	Method (A),(B), (C) and (E) are used. Explaining evidence gathering and types of evidence to prove competence.	Method(A),(B) and (C)	Method (A)	Method (A), (B), (C), (E) and (G) Conduct formative assessment of work-integrated learning.
	6. **Advisor**	Assist candidate to provide relevance evidence.	Advise or coaching is only given in certain cases. Guidance on collecting evidence.	Facilitator help and advise the candidate on the necessary evidence in portfolio.	Advise services regarding evidence gathering by trained RPL mentors. Assessor recommended placement of candidate and top-up training strategies.
Assessment	7. **Assessors**	Subject matter expert, can be academic staff.	Subject matter expert, contextual expertise for an understanding of the occupational context.	Subject matter expert. Specific qualities required. Need to be train to prevailing norms	2 persons : Subject of specialist and trained assessor (Academic specialist, industry representative/ professional bodies)
	8. **Judgement**	Judgement against the criteria or standard for the unit learning. Judgement indicates the credit should awarded for the unit applied for.	Ensuring the true reflection of a candidate's skill, knowledge and values.	Impartial judgement on assessing the value of experience learning.	-
	9. **Verification**	RPL advisor conduct a verification process. Candidate also ensure the evidence is relevance and recent.	-	-	Candidate submitted to organisational decision-maker for verification and ratification (college tuition Committee and final approval).
	10. **Processing Time**	Unlimited (candidate and advisor decide when the portfolio is ready for submission)	NIL	NIL	NIL
	11. **Appeal**	Follow appeals procedure.	NIL	15 days after the result notified.	Appeal referred to Tuition Committee.
Award	12. **Accreditation and certification**	Credit awarded or negative result will be announce if candidate not meet the require criteria or standard.	Credit towards unit standard / qualification	Credit issue either part qualification or full qualification (similar with qualification issue through formal exam)	NIL
Post assessment	13. **Recording**	Transcribe result into database.	Process record for integration into future interaction with candidate	Record assessment results, provide detailed feedback to candidate and all parties are advised.	RPL credit on candidates' academic record.
	14. **Guidance**	Provide career and study counseling. Special attention on study technique and advice to enable candidate to learn within institution.	NIL	-	Learner support when required by RPL centre, BCCAD and TSDL.
	15. **Training**	-	-	-	-
	16. **Ex. Audit**	-	-	-	-

Table 3:   **(Cont.)**

| STAGE | CHARACTERISTICS | AUSTRALIA | | |
		AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES	THE BREMER INSTITUTE OF TAFE	AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY (ACU)
Pre-assessment	1. **Pre-entry**	-	-	-
	2. **Initial contact**	Explaining eligibility, principles, guidelines, procedure, cost and condition to candidate.	Candidate contact or email to register RPL request.	Information about applications, administering assessment, fees, recording RPL assessment outcomes, appeal process and advising candidates such decision.
	3. **Learning Identification**	Information to the level of university learning together with range of assessment example.	Candidate will be emailed or posted RPL application and Information Kid.	Identify the relevance unit/ course/ qualification most suited to candidate needs.
	4. **Applications**	NIL	Online/ manual	Complete the foam by manual
	5. **Methods**	Method (A), (B), (C) and (E)	Method (A), (B), (E) and (G)	Method (A), (B), (C)
Assessment	6. **Advisor**	Academic staff / RPL counselor. In some cases workshop and training offered. Advise in term of how the prior learning can contribute to qualification.	Assist candidate to develop an Assessment Plan based on candidate current skills and knowledge. Guidance to the difference types of evidence candidate may collect.	Assist candidate to identify the learning outcomes associated with the experience and identify areas where claim might be formulated. Advise on gathering valid, current, sufficient and reliable evidence, the authentication required and format application. Provide advice on the learning outcomes against which candidate will be assessed.
	7. **Assessors**	NIL	NIL	RPL Advisor
	8. **Judgement**	-	Matching candidate existing skill to a qualification.	Judgements on the extent to which an individual has achieved the required learning outcomes.
	9. **Verification**	-	Third party verification.	Approval of RPL to be course specefic
	10. **Processing Time**	NIL	NIL	NIL
	11. **Appeal**	Based on university policy.	-	Student Appeals Policy
Award	12. **Accreditation and certification**	Credit points or credit banks (system where students store credit for later use).	Full or unit accreditation.	Partial of full credit
	13. **Recording**	Record according university information system requirement.	-	Record in student system and faculty (as for credit granted for formal learning)
Post assessment	14. **Guidance**	Counseled on how to adjust study plan and workload. The unsuccessful candidate is provided with career guidance.	-	-
	15. **Training**	-	Skill Gap Training if only partially successful	-
	16. **Ex. Audit**	-	-	-

STAGE		CHARACTERISTICS	AMERICA			
			UNITED STATES	UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA, CANADA	ALGONQUIN COLLEGE, CANADA	BRITISH COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
Pre-assessment	1.	**Pre-entry**	-	Candidate investigates PLA at institution. Institution distribute information	PLAR Administrator communicates with faculty to establish PLAR course eligibility.	-
	2.	**Initial contact**	Discover and describe the college-level learning that may have resulted from APL. Identify and relate relevant learning experience include time-line, resume, works description and autobiography.	Candidate meets with institutional advisor. PLAR information guidance.	-	Consult with central PLA office. Advice regarding the procedures of preparing and submitting an application.
	3.	**Learning Identification**	Articulation: Identify how relevant prior learning to chosen the study program. Candidate reflect what they have learned in practice and identify the gaps in their learning.	Self-assessment and identification of prior learning.	PLAR Administrator is available to assist candidate to identify appropriate courses for a prior learning assessment and will advise about specific course assessment procedures.	NIL
	4.	**Applications**	NIL	NIL	Candidate meet the PLAR Administrator, Program Coordinator or faculty.	Assessed by subject expert.
	5.	**Methods**	Method (A), (B), (C), and (E)	Method (A), (B), (C) and (E)	Method (A),(B), (C) and (E)	Method (A) and (C)
	6.	**Advisor**	Institution help candidate to gather and present the documentation for portfolio.	Institution supports learner through the availability of print materials, workshops, etc. Candidate develop portfolio with assistance of teacher or advisor.	-	NIL
Assessment	7.	**Assessors**	Faculty members/ special assessor/ campus wide committee	Teacher who knowledgeable of the learning outcomes of a particular course/ faculty members.	Program or course expert in college who had recent experience in teaching the courses being challenged.	Subject expert will assist the faculty with guideline of how to assess a claim.
	8.	**Judgement**	Indicate what types document is required for provides evidence of learning. Assessor ensures evidence accurate and authentic. Quality of documentation is important not the quantity. Assessor seeks more than one form of evidence and use more than one assessment.	Teacher will determine, develop and administer the combination of a challenge method that will allow candidate to demonstrate the prior learning in the best way.	Candidate is demonstrates learning that is equivalent to the basic learning outcomes required to pass the course. Interview the candidate to verify the judgement and to seek further information	NIL
	9.	**Verification**	Policies and procedure for granting credits. A second opinion – routine review	-	Submit the portfolio to the PLAR Office. Validate the documentation for appropriateness, authenticity and credibility.	NIL
	10.	**Processing Time**	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
	11.	**Appeal**	-	-	NIL	-
Award	12.	**Accreditation and certification**	NIL	Credit granted or not granted.	Credit record as grade or CR	NIL
Post assessment	13.	**Recording**	Place in transcription in the same manner as credit earned in classroom.	Credit post to candidate record.	Faculty will record credits into candidate official transcript and PLAR credit will be recorded as a grade. Failed attempts not be recorded in transcript.	NIL
	14.	**Guidance**	-	-	-	Records were kept by the central office
	15.	**Training**	-	-	-	-

Table 3:   **(Cont.)**

STAGE		CHARACTERISTICS	ASIA	
			MALAYSIAN QUALIFICATION AGENCY	**OPEN UNIVERSITYMALAYSIA**
Pre-assessment	1.	**Pre-entry**	Applicant decides to apply for APEL certification at MQA. Applications are open throughout the year.	learners indicate their intention to apply APEL for courses which they claim to have prior knowledge
	2.	**Initial contact**	Contact the relevant MQA staff for any helps and enquiries. Given related form and reference number	The applications will be reviewed by subject matter/course experts from the corresponding faculties.
	3.	**Learning Identification**	Applicant has to review on their own experiences and certificated learning. They must make sure that there is a match between the prior experience and the competencies	applicants have to fill in the Knowledge Resume
	4.	**Applications**	Manually	Online
	5.	**Methods**	Method (A) and (C)	Method (A) and (C)
			However, if the committee is being uncertain about the portfolio, other form of assessment may take place.	Both assessments are developed based on specific course learning outcomes and are assessed by subject matter/course experts.
Assessment	6.	**Advisor**	Help applicant in preparing the assessment plan	Provides training and professional advice for learners. The advisor takes on the role of a facilitator who assists learners in preparing and compiling claims and evidence for prior learning assessment.
	7.	**Assessors**	APEL Committee: 9 academicians from local institution.	subject matter/course expert from the faculty
	8.	**Judgement**	Portfolio will be forwarded to APEL committee for approval	Evaluation is based on the extent to which the learners' prior experiential learning claims and evidence matched the learning outcomes of the specific course
			Aptitude test: MCQ test	
	9.	**Verification**	For certificated learning, it requires **certified** copies of your certificates and courses documentation	Assessor must verify the evidence given with the students,
	10.	**Processing Time**	Portfolio : 20 working days	Within 14 working days
	11.	**Appeal**	Portfolio: after 6 months	An appeal mechanism is available should learners intend to petition for their results
			Aptitude test: anytime	
Award	12.	**Accreditation and certification**	APEL certificate is given or else, applicant can appeal.	awarded with course credits and exempted from undertaking the course
	13.	**Informed Method**	Written notification regarding the assessment outcome will be to the applicants	Through online application
	14.	**Recording**	Hardcopy of portfolio is kept by MQA.	results will be integrated with the student information and campus management system
Post assessment	15.	**Guidance**	-	-
	16.	**Training**	-	-
	17.	**Ex. Audit**	-	-

Table 3: **(Cont.)**

STAGE		CHARACTERISTICS	EUROPE			
			UNITED KINGDOM (UCAS)	STAFFORDSHIRE	NYATANGA	NVQ APEL
Pre-assessment	1.	Pre-entry	-	-	Marketing of APL availability – Fliers, brochures, open days, press	NIL
	2.	Initial contact	Advice/guidance from designated staff	Contact Faculty APL administrator.	NIL	Guidance and discussion with Counselor
	3.	Learning Identification	Identification of study programme by applicants	Applicant identifies element of the academic program for APEL	Candidate gathering the necessary evidence required supporting the claim	Recognizes experience which is likely to link up with the qualification
	4.	Applications	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
	5.	Methods	Method (A)	Method (A)	Method (A)	Method (A)
Assessment	6.	Advisor	Negotiation of learning agreement if necessary	Advised whether Negotiated Assessment meets Module/s Learning Outcome.	determine what the goals of the candidate are and whether it can be met through APL	Further guidance in a case of insufficient evidence
	7.	Assessors	Subject specialist More than one assessor.	One external examiner for each subject area.	Subject matter expert	Subject expert Run a skills test, interview or simulation towards the candidates
	8.	Judgement	Using holistic approach	Moderate assessment for the students.	Assessors make a judgement and recommendations for or against credit recognition	Assessor evaluates the evidence
	9.	Verification	Assessor might ask student to undertake an assessment exercise or assessment interview	Student will be contacted for further information or clarification by Module or Award Leader.	The verifier endorses or rejects the recommendation of the assessor and either awards or does not award the credits to the candidate	Verification is given by the awarding Body
	10.	Processing Time	NIL	Within 10 working days	NIL	NIL
	11.	Appeal	-	Within 7 working days. A formal letter by the applicant to the Dean of Students and Academic Registrar. Final result will be given within 15 working days.	NIL	Undergo further guidance from counselor
Award	12.	Accreditation and certification	Assign credits approved by Boards of Examiners	The awarded grade is presented at the Award Boards.	Award credits to candidates	Issues award
	13.	Informed Method	NIL	Informed in writing	NIL	Informed by the awarding body
Post assessment	14.	Recording	Outcome recorded on student record	A short report by ADI on APLS short meeting.	NIL	NIL
	15.	Guidance	-	In case of rejected, guidance will be offered	Career counseling conducted upon success or failure.	candidate receives information on learning opportunities
	16.	Training	-	-	-	-
	17.	Ex. Audit	-	-	-	Judges quality of assessment and endorses claim

Table 3: **(Cont.)**

STAGE		CHARACTERISTICS	EUROPE		
			UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER	PEARSON EDUCATION LIMITED	EVC IN NETHERLANDS
Pre-assessment	1.	**Pre-entry**	Application for credit should be routed through the Admission Office in Registry Services	Awareness, information and guidance by the applicant.	-
	2.	**Initial contact**	Applicant will be provided with explanatory leaflet. The Admission Office will handle any queries.	Development of an assessment plan and tracking document or similar may be required to support the learner.	Applicant make inventory of experiences
	3.	**Learning Identification**	Applicant has to fill a claim form detailing the prior learning.	Learner will carry out the process of collecting evidence against the requirements of the relevant unit(s).	NIL
	4.	**Applications**	Manual	NIL	NIL
	5.	**Methods**	Method (A)	Method (A), (B) and (D)	Method (A), (B), and (E)
Assessment	6.	**Advisor**	Help student either taking a preparatory module or submitting a portfolio direst. Separate and distinct from assessor.	NIL	NIL
	7.	**Assessors**	The subject specialist in order to maintain the objectivity and rigor of the APEL portfolio assessment	designated personnel with the appropriate expertise	Run the interview with candidates
	8.	**Judgement**	take into account the level, standard, content, relevance and recency of the prior learning	Results for a qualification must be based on sufficient evidence	Based on the list of standardized criteria
	9.	**Verification**	a second assessment of the credit awarded may be undertaken by a suitably qualified assessor	The evidence gathered needs to meet the standards of the unit, or part of unit, that the evidence is being used for	Second interview
	10.	**Processing Time**	Six week of the lodging of the application	NIL	-
	11.	**Appeal**	NIL	Follow the standard center and then Pearson Enquiries and Appeals procedures	-
Award	12.	**Accreditation and certification**	APL Accredited will be identified on students' transcripts	gain all or part of a qualification without having to undertake a formal learning programme	Exempted from part of the module
	13.	**Informed Method**	NIL	NIL	-
	14.	**Recording**	All APEL claim will be internally moderated	Assessment and internal verification records, along with any additional RPL records completed, should be retained for the standard three year period following certification.	-
Post assessment	15.	**Guidance**	-	-	-
	16.	**Training**	-	-	-
	17.	**Ex. Audit**	annual report will be presented in the annual meeting	-	-

Table 3:   **(Cont.)**

STAGE		CHARACTERISTICS	EUROPE	
			FETAC, IRELAND	FRANCE
Pre-assessment	1.	**Pre-entry**	RPL information leaflets prepared by the provider	Centres and points of information and advice (PIA) welcome and inform applicant on the VAE procedure
	2.	**Initial contact**	-	Give guidance in preparing the portfolio and for interview
	3.	**Learning Identification**	FETAC will refer learners to an appropriate approved provider for advice and assistant	PIA assist in analyzing and finding the financial aid options
	4.	**Applications**	-	Online
	5.	**Methods**	Method (A)	Method (A) and (B).
Assessment	6.	**Advisor**	A mentor may support a learner	Certifying or validating bodies
	7.	**Assessors**	Review the portfolio against the standards for the award identified. Score and grade the evidence according to the scoring and grading mechanisms	At least quarter of the members of validation panel must be skilled representatives.
	8.	**Judgement**	-	-
	9.	**Verification**	Direct evidence will provide direct proof, Indirect evidence need to be linked to the standards as clearly as possible	-
	10.	**Processing Time**	-	-
	11.	**Appeal**	-	Can do follow up in a case of partial validation
Award	12.	**Accreditation and certification**	Based on the evidence presented	Can be: • Full validation • Partial validation • A validation refusal
	13.	**Informed Method**	Confirm in writing the outcome of the application for credit	NIL
Post assessment	14.	**Recording**	-	-
	15.	**Guidance**	-	-
	16.	**Training**	-	-
	17.	**External audit**	To ensure consistency and compliance with national standards	-

Table 4:   **Gap analysis of RPL/PLA/APEL Process Model on assessment**

CHARACTERISTICS	HE INSTITUTION IN SOUTH AFRICA	SAQA	AFRICA MAURITIUS QUALIFICATION AUTHORITY (MQA)	UNISA
Assessment method				
A. Portfolio	Build evidence of portfolio includes copies of previous qualification and other pieces of evidence.	Portfolio development and related workshop by one-to-one advising.	Facilitator spend minimum 10 hours to guide the candidate to build portfolio complete with evidence require. Candidate guided towards RPL assessment.	Mark criteria: Mandatory/ Optional/ Elective
B. Interview	NIL	NIL	-	NIL
C. Test and examination	NIL	NIL	-	Mark criteria: Mandatory/ Optional/ Elective
D. Presentation	-	-	-	-
E. Demonstration	NIL	-	-	NIL
F. DVC	-	-	-	-
G. Site Visit	-	-	-	NIL
Assessment criteria	-	Assessment in term of validity, authenticity, relevance and sufficiency of evidence. Assess with holistically and without bias.	Compare the candidate evidence provided with the standard to assess the competencies acquired. Rules of transparency, reliability, validity, consistency and coherence practiced while guiding candidate portfolio.	Use assessment criteria, rubric or marking memorandum to ensure reliability of marking.
Assessment step	-	-	-	1. Candidate submit (portfolio, challenge answer script, work based project) 2. Evidence assessed by panel of assessor. 3. Panel interview or site visit, candidate demonstration. 4. Recommended placement of candidate and top-up training strategy 5. Recommended placement of candidate submitted to organizational decision –makers for verification and ratification. 6. Candidate notified of the outcome (Assessment feedback letter).
Evaluation	-	Evaluation of the completeness and appropriates of the evidence. Evaluation made after readiness of the evidence for presentation	Use appropriates technique, ensure evidence provided is sufficient.	Moderators check the relationship of the assessment to the started learning outcomes (validity), the level of the assessment in relation to the level at which the qualification pegged. Check the quality of candidate performance and their standard attainment (the reliability of the marking process).
Post assessment step				1. Document and records updated. 2. Candidate pit in contact with learner support where recommended. 3. When required, appeals procedure activated and appeal referred to Tuition Committee. 4. Feedback to candidate and record updated where relevant.

CHARACTERISTICS	AUSTRALIA		
	AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES	THE BREMER INSTITUTE OF TAFE	AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY (ACU)
Assessment method			NIL
A. Portfolio	Describe the experience in which learning occurred by provide documenting of learning evidence. Instrument to impact on self-awareness and self-esteem.	In a manner that enables an assessor to readily ascertain whether the required competencies have been demonstrated.	
B. Interview	NIL	To validate claims and review evidence.	Invite the applicant for interview and seek further information from the candidate about any aspect of the application and supporting documentary evidence.
C. Test and examination	NIL	-	Undertake an examination or practical assessment to determine the achievement of the learning or competency outcomes.
D. Presentation	-	-	-
E. Demonstration	NIL	NIL	-
F. DVC	-	-	-
G. Site Visit	NIL	To validate claims and review evidence.	-
Assessment criteria	Outcomes clearly explained.	Candidates assessed through a combination of observation (site visit), practical demonstration and third party verification.	Be evidence and outcome-based, Be equitable, culturally inclusive, transparent and accountable. Assessment based on the current information provided to the specific professional requirements and learning and competency outcomes.
Assessment step	-	-	-
Evaluation	-	-	Identify what the candidate knows and can do. Match the candidate skills, knowledge and experience to a specific requirement/ unit/ course/ qualification and learning. Credit the candidate for the skill, knowledge, understanding and experience.
Post assessment step	-	-	-
Appeals	-	-	6 stages of appeal: 7. Preliminary dialogue 8. Application for clarification 9. Application for review 10. Appeal 11. Appeal 12. Independent Arbiter (judge)

CHARACTERISTICS	AMERICA		
	UNITED STATES	**UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA, CANADA**	**ALGONQUIN COLLEGE, CANADA**
Assessment method			
A. Portfolio	Organize the evidence. Provide all the evidence that learning taken place like documentation of work samples, report, certificates, letter of reference etc. Written explanation of how prior learning relates to the study programmed.	Candidate prepares for assessment/interview by collecting and organizing documentation, preparing for assessment. Institution supports learner through the availability of print materials, workshops, etc. Provide proof that learning taken place.	Describes candidate relevant experience, identifies and analyses of learning achievements and provides validation of that learning through a collection of documents. Match the learning achievements with the requirements of the course and verify these learning accomplishments with supportive documents Indirect and direct documentation.
B. Interview	NIL	NIL	NIL
C. Test and examination	Candidate provided with a syllabus and given 30-90 days to study.	Course outline will be provided and have access to appropriate texts and other learning materials to prepare for the challenge examination. Candidate demonstrates through challenge examination that they have equivalent learning.	Encompass a paper and pencil test. The exam is depending on the nature of the learning requirement.
D. Presentation	-	-	-
E. Demonstration	NIL	Course outlines and performance checklist provided.	NIL
F. DVC	-	-	-
G. Site Visit	-	-	-
Assessment criteria	9) Fit assessment method to the learning activity 10) Fit assessment method to the learner. 11) Utilize assessment as learning. 12) Ensure Reliability 13) Ensure validity 14) Plan the process and train assessor. 15) States result objectively 16) Encourage supervised self-assessment.	If credit transfer, candidate submit document and decision will made by teacher. Learning outcomes provide guidance to the assessor in making judgement and to the candidate who must aim to prove the knowledge and skill. Assessor should fit the assessment method to the candidate and use techniques that are appropriate to the background and characteristic of the candidate.	Learning is assessed to determine whether or not it is equivalent to learning in a given course. When candidate have extensive relevant experience, the assessment may be at academic level or program. Assessment techniques focus on valid and reliable measures of performance against academic standards.
Assessment step	-	1. Define criteria 2. Select assessment method 3. Structure the assessment 4. Adapt the assessment 5. Observe the assessment 6. Judge the learning	7) Read through the portfolio to understand the candidate unique experience and achievement. 8) Identify and analyze the documented learning achievements and compare them to the course learning requirements. 9) Validate the documentation for appropriateness, authenticity and credibility. 10) Make a tentative judgement based on experts understanding of course learning requirements. 11) nterview the candidate to verify the judgement and to seek further information. 12) Assign the grade and transcribe using the established process.
Evaluation	Judging the quality and relevance of the learning that has taken place outside the institution.	NIL	NIL
Post assessment step	Candidate receives feedback after evaluation.	Candidate re-visit plan and may revise as necessary.	Notify the candidate of the result.
Appeals	-	-	NIL

Table 4:   **(Cont.)**

CHARACTERISTICS	AMERICA
	BRITISH COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
Assessment method	
H. Portfolio	Recorded as Pass or Fail on the transcript. Restriction:
	• Credit sought by portfolio cannot duplicate other coursework
	• Total number of credit allocated for one portfolio is six credits
	• Students must be registered with the University to apply or receives services
	• The onus lies with the students to prepare an acceptable portfolio
I. Interview	-
J. Test and examination	Recorded as Pass or Fail on the transcript. Restriction:
	• A student may challenge an exam onlyonce and not for a course that has been failed or previously registered in
	• A student must be registered with the University to apply or receives services.
	Credit is granted at the undergraduate level.
K. Presentation	-
L. Demonstration	-
M. DVC	-
N. Site Visit	-
Assessment criteria	-
Assessment step	
	Portfolio assessment:
	The student uses a credit-by-portfolio registration form to request a portfolio assessment
	The credit-by-portfolio registration is submitted to the central PLA office
	After discussion with the PLA coordinator and with the department and content esperts, the student is advised id the department offering the course(s) in question.
	The department designates a faculty member or committee with appropriate expertise to conduct the portfolio assessment.
	The faculty member or committee may recommend minor adjustments to the portfoli, in content or structure. The student would then be asked to ressubmit it with changes and the portfolio would be reassessed. If the student chooses to make changes, no additional fee for assessment will be charged.
	Academic standards in assessing the amount and wuality of learning demonstrated by portfolio are to be equiavalent to the learning expected in the course whern credit is acquired via instruction.
	The faculty assessment is completed within a reasonabe time frame.
	Fees must be paid in full at time of registration
	The faculty member or committee assigns a 'Pass" or 'Fail' standing.
	Challenge Exams:
	The student must submit a written request to challenge an exam
	The written request is submitted to the central PLA office
	The request must then either be approved or denied by the department offering the courses.
	The student must write the exam within the first three weeks of class.
	A minimum passing grade of "C" or 60% must be obtained in the challenge exams.
	Fees for the challenge exam must be paid in full prior to taking the exam.
	The academic appontee assigns a "Pass" or "Fail" standing.
Evaluation	-
Post assessment step	-
Appeals	-

Table 4: **(Cont.)**

CHARACTERISTICS	ASIA	
	MQA	**OUM**
Assessment method		
d) Portfolio	Help assessors to evaluate and visualize competences acquired by the learners either in informal or non-formal learning. Portfolio will be forwarded to APEL committee for approval. Any uncertainty will allows the assessors to carry out other assessment for clarification	Online submission of portfolio through myAPEL system. Learners may attach various file types such as images, documents, web files, audio/video and even 3D files as evidence.
e) Interview	-	-
f) Test and examination	Aptitude test is done to cater certain aspect of the applicant which is the numerical, language and general knowledge/critical thinking.	Examination that assessed prior learning against the learning outcomes of the course. Paper based examination.
g) Presentation	-	-
h) Demonstration	-	-
i) DVC	-	-
j) Site Visit	-	-
Assessment criteria	Evidence based	Build based on specific course learning outcome and assessed by subject matter/course expert. Portfolio 4 criteria: i. Relevancy ii. Authenticity iii. Sufficiency iv. currency
Assessment step	Applicant have to take both assessment either concurrent or not.	Portfolio: i. Learners put input of the claims and attach evidence into the system ii. Submit the portfolio iii. Portfolio will be assigned to designated assessor iv. Assessor view the portfolio and rate the portfolio v. Give award based on the evaluation
Evaluation		Based on the extent to which the prior experiential learning claim and evidence matched the learning outcome of the specific course.
Post assessment step	MQA will issue a written notification regarding the outcome.	Learners that success will be awarded with course credit and exempted from undertaking the course. Unsuccessful learners has to undergo the course through the usual method.
Appeals	Applicant can make appeals to MQA for both assessment.	Appeal is available

Table 4:   **(Cont.)**

| CHARACTERISTICS | EUROPE | | | |
	UK	STAFFORDSHIRE	NYATANGA	NVQ BY MCKELVEY AND PETER
Assessment method				
A. Portfolio	Consists of several activites: • Compile a comprehensive list of learning experiences • Identify the learning gained from this experiences. • Express the learning in learning statements which precisely indicate the nature and level of learning. • Collect evidence of the learning	Applicants may have a Negotiated APL modules in a case that the academic interest is not explicitly explored in the existing syllabus.	All claims have to be checked and verified by subject matter experts.	Submission of evidence of achievement to the assessor.
B. Interview	Held as assessment interview after the portfolio assessment.	-	-	-
C. Test and examination	-	-	-	-
D. Presentation	-	-	-	-
E. Demonstration	-	-	-	-
F. DVC	-	-	-	-
G. Site Visit	-	-	-	-
Assessment criteria	Criteria most commonly used: • Authenticity • Quality • Currency • Sufficiency	Internal assessment will be undertaken by the appropriate staff within the faculty.	-	-
Assessment step	-	-	-	-
Evaluation	-	-	-	-
Post assessment step	-	-	-	-
Appeals	-	Appeals can be made in term of review of the assessment. Applicant must write to the Dean of Students and Academic Registrar. The result of the application will be final.	-	-

Table 4:   **(Cont.)**

CHARACTERISTICS	EUROPE	
	PEARSON	**UNIVERSITY OF WORCHESTER, UK**
Assessment method		
A. Portfolio	Evidence could be work experiences record, validated by managers, previous portfolios of evidence, or essays and reports validated as being the learner's own unaided work.	Can be a mix of: • Copies of transcripts, syllabi, references • A portfolio of evidence • Attendance of an interview • A simulation or practical exercise • A diagnostic test(s)
B. Interview	-	-
C. Test and examination	-	-
D. Presentation	-	-
E. Demonstration	-	-
F. DVC	-	-
G. Site Visit	-	-
Assessment criteria	Subject to the usual quality assurance procedures of the center	Assessors take into account the level, standard, content, relevance and recency of the prior learning.
Assessment step	-	Assessors assessed the portfolio using a checklist: • Validity • Reliability • Sufficiency • Authenticity • Relevance
Evaluation	Learners must write to Pearson Edexcel Vocational quality standards Team within 14 days of being notified of the outcome. Learners must first appeal to the centre before going to Pearson Edexcel. Outcome of the enquiry will be given within 30 calendar days of receiving. If the learner does not satisfied with the outcome, s/he may request a Quality Review is undertaken. If Pearson Edexcel decides to uphold an enquiry or appeal, the fee will be returned.	-
Post assessment step	-	-
Appeals	-	-

CHARACTERISTICS	EUROPE		
	EVC IN NETHERLAND	FETAC, IRELAND	FRANCE
Assessment method			
A. Portfolio	Contain of an overview of a person's educational and professional career, as well as candidate leisure activities.	A portfolio can include: • Curriculum vitae • Certificates • Job description(s) • References/testimonials • Products / samples • Evidence from courses attended • Work place assessment, test results • Interviews • other	Taken into account: • Activities practices in a continuous or discontinuous way, full or part time, in France or abroad.
B. Interview	Structured criterion-referenced interview The interview is based on a list of standardized criteria. Second interview to assess whether the candidate can reflex accurately on the task that has just been perform and whether s/he is able to transfer the method of working to other situations in the same domain.	As further assessment after the portfolio.	To complete the assessment of the file and the practical examination for validation
C. Test and examination	-	-	-
D. Presentation	-	-	-
E. Demonstration	Candidates are required to perform a task for the purpose of testing Candidates will receive the assignment a few days before the test. The precise questions that will be asked are not given in advanced.	-	-
F. DVC	-	-	-
G. Site Visit	-	-	
Assessment criteria	-	• Sufficiency • Currency • Authenticity • Validity	There must be proof of at least three years of salaried, non-salaried or voluntary activities in direct relation with the intended certification.
Assessment step	-	-	The panel controls and assess professional skills acquired and compared them with the system of references of the certification/activities
Evaluation	-	-	-
Post assessment step	-	-	-
Appeals	-	-	In a case of partial validation, applicant can do follow up with the certifying or validating bodies