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TAYLOR'S APEL.A LEARNER'S GUIDE 2024

Learner's Guide on Accreditation of Prior
Experiential Learning for Access – APEL.A

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1.0 Introduction

Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) through the MQA Act 2007 (Act 679) have an on-going commitment in assisting individuals in utilising their prior learning as much as possible. MQA assists in identifying learning that have taken place through various types of experiences throughout life that are not formally certified.

This process is called Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) and was set under the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF). APEL allows individuals to progress in the context of lifelong learning and widens the mobility of student participation and adult learners.

In the Malaysian context, APEL can be requested by a learner to support transition between informal and formal learning. In other words, the learners can base their application on any combinations of formal, non-formal or informal learning.

After the implementation of the APEL assessment to the public for the purpose of admissions to the Bachelor's programme (Level 6, MQF) on 1st September 2011, MQA continued to implement the APEL assessment for admissions to the Certificate (Level 3, MQF) and Diploma (Level 4, MQF) programmes beginning 1st February 2013. The implementation of APEL was then extended for student admissions to the Master's programme by coursework and mixed mode (Level 7, MQF) beginning 18th February 2014. From 1st March 2023 onward, the APEL assessment is extended to MQF Level 7 (Master) research-based programmes and MQF Level 8 (Doctorate) coursework, mixed mode, and research-based programmes.

1.1 Principles of APEL

APEL in Malaysia is upheld by the following core principles:

- a) Prior experiential learning should be recognised regardless of how and where it was obtained, provided it is related to learning or a form of competency acquisition;
- b) Assessment will be based on authentic, flexible, current and reliable evidence;
- c) Assessment will be conducted by practitioners/experts in the subject, in the related field;
- d) The method of assessment will be tailored to the level and experience of the learners, thus providing an opportunity for learners to demonstrate their acquired competencies;
- e) Decisions of APEL assessments should be transparent and subject to appeal and review;
- f) Information and support services will be actively publicised, taking into account the diversity of the students; and
- g) Quality assurance mechanisms should be clear and transparent.

Taylor's University has been appointed as APEL.A Assessment Centre for Malaysian who would like to pursue a Bachelor's (MQF Level 6) or Master's (MQF Level 7) degree by coursework and mixed mode programme at Taylor's University. This Learner's Guide provides an overview of APEL.A criteria, the assessment process and guide you on the application for APEL.A.

2.0 Scope of APEL.A

- 2.1 APEL.A is offered to Malaysian citizens seeking recognition of their prior learning. The APEL.A certification is an indication of the competencies and readiness of the learner to pursue a particular programme. However, the certification does not guarantee admission into the Taylor's University programme. Learners are still subjected to the procedures and additional requirements (if any) as determined by the University.

- 2.2 APEL.A certification can only be used for the purpose of learners furthering their studies in the chosen field, which should be relevant to their prior learning. It is not equivalent to the knowledge and competencies of a particular academic degree programme at an MQF level. The certification cannot be used for the purpose of seeking employment.
- 2.3 The APEL.A certification obtained through assessment at Taylor's University will allow the learner to apply for a Bachelor's degree or Master's degree programme at Taylor's University only. For Master's degree programme, the learner is only allowed to apply into the intended field of study at Taylor's University as specified during the APEL.A application. Learner needs to undertake another APEL.A assessment when changing the field of study for the Master's degree programme.

Refer to the list of programmes offered for admission through APEL.A at Taylor's University [website](#).

3.0 Definitions and Abbreviations

| ACRONYM / TERM | DETAILS / EXPLANATION |
|----------------------------|--|
| APEL | Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning refers to a systematic process that involves the identification, documentation and assessment of prior experiential learning (knowledge, skills and attitudes) to determine the extent to which an individual has achieved the desired learning outcomes, for access to a programme of study/or award of credits. |
| APEL Assessments | A combination of aptitude test and portfolio that a learner must pass to be awarded with APEL certificate. |
| APEL Certification Process | An indication of the competencies and readiness of a learner to pursue a particular programme. |
| Aptitude Test | A formal examination which the learner must pass. It is a test to assess the readiness of the learner to commence the tertiary education and not the ability to follow through with the entire programme of study. |
| Credit | A quantitative measurement that represents the learning volume or the academic load to achieve the respective learning outcomes. |
| Field of Study | A field of study consists of a broad area of academic and skills qualifications that come under a similar branch of subject knowledge (i.e. Business & Management, Information & Communication Technologies, Education, etc) |
| Formal Learning | Intentional learning or programme of study delivered within an organised and structured context (preschool, primary school, secondary school, college and university) that may lead to formal recognition or a recognised qualification. Example, SPM, A-Level, certificate, diploma and bachelor's degree programme. |
| Informal Learning | Learning which takes place continuously through life and work experiences (sometimes known as experiential learning). Example, |

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| | on the job training and job rotation, coaching and mentoring activities. |
| MQF | Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) An instrument that classifies qualifications based on a set of criteria that is approved nationally and benchmarked against international best practices. |
| Module | A component of a programme. The term module is used interchangeably with the term course or subject. |
| Non-formal Learning | Learning that takes place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training. It may be assessed but does not normally lead to formal certification. Example, language courses and specific skills training courses. |
| Portfolio | A compilation that documents the prior experiences of a learner which include formal, informal and non-formal learning. The portfolio is prepared by the learner to demonstrate that the learning acquired is relevant and specific to the five (5) cluster of learning outcomes outline in the MQF. |
| Programme | A set of modules that are structured for a specified duration and learning volume to achieve the stated learning outcomes, which usually leads to an award of a qualification. |

4.0 Entry Requirement

Learners must comply with the level of study criteria set by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) as follows:

4.1 Programme at Master's Degree Level (by Coursework or Mixed Mode)

- 4.1.1 a Malaysian citizen;
- 4.1.2 at least 30 years of age in the year of application;
- 4.1.3 possess at least STPM/Diploma/equivalent qualifications (or those with higher qualifications e.g. Advanced Diploma, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma)¹;
- 4.1.4 possess relevant work experience*; and
- 4.1.5 passed APEL.A assessment for Master's degree level.

4.2 Programme at Bachelor's Degree Level

- 4.2.1 a Malaysian citizen;
- 4.2.2 at least 21 years of age in the year of application;

¹ For International Qualifications Equivalency, refer to the document entitled "The List of Entry Qualifications for International Student" on the MQA website https://www.mqa.gov.my/pv4/nilai_taraf.cfm

- 4.2.3 possess relevant work experience*; and
- 4.2.4 passed APEL.A assessment for Bachelor's degree level.

* Relevant work experience will be calculated starting from the minimum age of eighteen (18) years.

5.0 Description of Learner's Competencies

The required competencies for the APEL.A assessment are guided by the MQF clusters of learning outcomes. Therefore, the APEL.A assessments conducted by Taylor's University aims to ensure that learners will have the following competencies:

- i. Knowledge and understanding
- ii. Cognitive skills
- iii. Functional work skills with focus on:
 - a. Practical skills
 - b. Interpersonal and communication skills
 - c. Digital and numeracy skills
 - d. Leadership, autonomy and responsibility
- iv. Personal and entrepreneurial skills
- v. Ethics and professionalism.

Each of the competencies are described below:

i. Knowledge and understanding

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

It may relate to a subject, a field of study or discipline, as well as to technical and occupational or workplace aspects of knowledge and understanding. It starts with basic general knowledge and progress to varied, broader, specialised and advanced knowledge including those relating to sustainable practices, rules and regulations, health and safety, especially relevant to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) type of and even professional programmes.

The scope of knowledge should include the common everyday knowledge within the environment of learners. This may also be acquired through formal, informal and non-formal learning circumstances-experiences. Developing personal values and ethics may derive from knowledge and experiences.

Knowledge and understanding enables the learners to relate their prior knowledge in the course of learning and/or work, as well as to expand to related fields. Knowledge provides the basis for applications of all other competencies.

ii. Cognitive skills

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

iii. Functional work skills with focus on:**a. Practical skills**

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

b. Interpersonal and communication skills

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

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

c. Digital and numeracy skills

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

These are the quantitative skills that require learners to acquire increasingly higher levels of numerical abilities. It is acknowledged as an important living skill relevant in study, work and daily life. It may include understanding of basic mathematics, symbols relating to statistical techniques and so forth.

d. Leadership, autonomy and responsibility

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

iv. Personal and entrepreneurial skills

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

Entrepreneurial skills require relevant knowledge, skills and expertise in key areas of an enterprise. Important personal qualities will include creativity, grit and drive. The drive to be an entrepreneur is set as personal skills but also requires the requisite of

relevant knowledge, cognitive and functional skills.

v. Ethics and professionalism

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

6.0 APEL.A Certification Process

APEL.A certification determines the eligibility of a learner to apply for admission into a bachelor's or master's by coursework or mixed mode programme at Taylor's University. Given the fact that APEL.A assessment may take as long as two (2) to four (4) months, learners are advised to apply for APEL.A certification 6 months prior to joining the programme. An APEL certification through assessment at Taylor's University qualifies the learner to apply for admission into Taylor's University only.

APEL.A certification process for Bachelor's degree or Master's degree by coursework or mixed mode levels is as illustrated in Appendix 2 below.

6.1 Pre-Assessment

6.1.1 Self-Assessment

- a) In deciding whether or not to undertake APEL, learners will need to consider the fact that it is a highly individualised process which will require the use of their skills such as self-motivation, reflection and time management.
- b) Learners must first ensure that the basic entry requirements set by the Ministry of Higher Education (refer Section 4: Entry Requirement) are met.
- c) Apart from being a Malaysian citizen as well as meeting the age and academic qualification requirements (only Master's degree level admission require academic qualification), learners must also assess the relevancy of their prior learning experience whether there is a match between their prior experience or certificated learning and the competencies stipulated in Section 5: Description of Learner's Competencies.
- d) It is important for the learner to understand the learning needs of the desired programme. If the learner feels he has the potential to pursue a level of study (Bachelor's degree or Master's degree) and have met the basic requirements, the learner may apply to be assessed through APEL.A.

6.1.2 Application Process

- a) Learner must register at MQA website https://www2.mqa.gov.my/apel_a/ and indicate Taylor's University as the designated APEL.A Assessment Centre to conduct the assessment.
- b) MQA will notify the learner upon receipt of the registration and direct the learner to Taylor's University for subsequent application and assessment.
- c) Learner must pay the application fee and submit the proof of payment

together with the following documents (certified true copies) to Taylor's University APEL Unit :

- i. A copy of the Identification Card (IC) must include both sides (front and back) on a single A4-sized paper.
- ii. A copy of the SPM/STPM/Diploma certificate.
- iii. A copy of the complete Diploma transcript (level 7 only).
- iv. A resume (personal biodata).

Refer to the Fee Schedule (Appendix 1) below.

6.2 Assessment

6.2.1 Portfolio Construction

- a) For recognition of prior learning, learners are required to disclose all formal, informal and non-formal learning in the form of a Portfolio as shown in [APEL.A Portfolio Evaluation Form](#). Thus, their claim may include certificated learning and experiential learning. For certificated learning, learners are required to attach certified copies of their certificates and documentation of courses.
- b) As for experiential learning, learners must be careful to match their experience to the stated MQF competencies (refer to Section 5: Description of Learner's Competencies). Learners also need to select relevant supporting evidence and link it to their reflective description. This may include documentary evidence, statements/testimonies from employers/clients/colleagues (refer to [Checklist of Evidence](#)). However, learners should be selective in choosing clear and concise evidence which have direct relevance to the learning acquired. Documents submitted as evidence that are not in English or Bahasa Malaysia must be accompanied by a certified full translation.
- c) Portfolio will help assessors to visualise and evaluate competences acquired by the learners either in informal or non-formal learning that have been stipulated in Section 5: Description of Learner's Competencies.

6.2.2 APEL.A Assessment for Bachelor's Degree Level

a) Aptitude Test

- i. Aptitude Test is a formal examination which carries 30% of the total APEL.A assessment.
- ii. The purpose of the Aptitude Test is to assess the numerical literacy, languages, general knowledge, digital literacy and critical thinking abilities of the learner. The structure of the Aptitude Test with an estimated duration of 2 hours is as shown in the following table:

| Section | Test Content | Number of Questions |
|--------------------|--|---------------------|
| Numerical Literacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic descriptive statistics • Basic numeracy • Basic algebra • Problem-solving | 10 MCQ questions |

| | | |
|---|---|------------------|
| English Language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading & comprehension • Vocabulary • Grammar & tenses • Error correction • Spelling | 10 MCQ questions |
| Bahasa Malaysia Language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading & comprehension • Vocabulary • Grammar & tenses • Error correction • Spelling | 10 MCQ questions |
| General Knowledge, Critical Thinking and Digital Literacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Knowledge: current issues, digital literacy and information sourcing | 10 MCQ questions |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical thinking: logic reasoning, classification skills and pattern recognition | |

- iii. Learners are required to sit for the Aptitude Test on the time, date and place which will be informed by the APEL Unit during the application.
- iv. Learners must pass the Aptitude Test before the learner can proceed with the preparation of the Portfolio Assessment.

b) Portfolio Assessment

- i. Learner's Portfolio (in English) will be forwarded to the Panel of Assessors for evaluation.
- ii. Learners shall receive the decision within 20 working days of submitting the completed portfolio.
- iii. If the Panel of Assessors is uncertain with the evidence presented in the portfolio, other form of assessments shall be carried out. This could be in the form of interview, presentation, demonstration, etc.
- iv. The weightage of this Portfolio assessment is 70% of the total APEL.A assessment.

6.2.3 APEL.A Assessment for Master's Degree Level (programme by Coursework or Mixed Mode)

a) Aptitude Test

- i. Aptitude Test is a formal examination which carries 40% of the total APEL.A assessment.
- ii. Learners must pass the Aptitude Test before the learner can proceed with the preparation of the Portfolio Assessment.
- iii. The purpose of the Aptitude Test is to assess the knowledge and competencies of the learner in the aspects of numerical literacy, languages, general knowledge, critical thinking and digital literacy. The following table provides an overview of the content and structure of the Aptitude Test with an estimated duration of 2

hours and 30 minutes:

| Section | Test Content | Description of Question |
|---|---|--|
| Numerical Literacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic mathematics/ descriptive statistics Basic algebra Problem-solving | Part A: 25 Objective questions Part B: 1 Structured question |
| English Language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading & comprehension Grammar & prose Spelling Vocabulary Correction of errors | Part A: 12 Objective questions Part B: 1 Structured question |
| Bahasa Malaysia Language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading & comprehension Grammar & prose Spelling Vocabulary Correction of errors | Part A: 13 Objective questions Part B: 1 Structured question |
| General Knowledge, Critical Thinking and Digital Literacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Knowledge: current issues, digital literacy and information sourcing Critical thinking: logic reasoning, classification skills and pattern recognition | Part A: 25 Objective questions Part B: 2 Structured questions |

- iv. After passing the Aptitude Test, the learner can proceed with the preparation of portfolio, which must be prepared in English.

b) Portfolio Assessment

- i. The portfolio assessment carries a weightage of 40% of the total APEL.A assessment.
- ii. If the Panel of Assessors are uncertain about the authenticity, sufficiency or relevancy of the evidence presented in the portfolio, they may request to meet the applicant for verification or validation purposes.
- iii. The portfolio assessment process is expected to be completed within 30 working days from the date of submission.

c) Interview Assessment

- i. Upon successful completion of the Portfolio assessment, learners will undertake an interview assessment. This is a structured oral interview-based assessment to assess the learner's skills and knowledge/competencies to undertake tertiary studies.

- ii. The interview assessment contributes to 20% of the total APEL.A assessment.
- iii. Learners will be contacted by APEL Unit to set the date of the interview.

6.3 Post-Assessment

6.3.1 APEL Assessment Results

- a) Learners must achieve at least 50% of each component (i.e. Aptitude Test, Portfolio and Interview (interview is only for Master's degree level)) in order to pass the APEL.A assessment.
- b) Learners shall receive notification from APEL Unit on the results of the APEL.A assessment.
- c) Learners who have passed the APEL.A assessment will be awarded the APEL certification by MQA via APEL Unit, which can be used to apply for admission into the programme offered by Taylor's University.
- d) Learners need to inform the APEL Unit if they prefer to have the APEL.A Certificate couriered to them, and pay the relevant fees for the courier service.
- e) The APEL.A Certificate is only valid for five (5) years. Learners can submit a new application for APEL.A assessment after the APEL.A Certificate had expired.

6.3.2 Appeal of APEL Results, Re-sit and Re-submission

- a) Learners have the right to appeal against decisions concerning their APEL.A assessment results, in a fair and equitable manner by submitting an official appeal for their APEL.A assessment results within one (1) week from the date of the official announcement of the result.
- b) A different Assessor shall be appointed to evaluate the merit of the appeal.
- c) Learners shall be informed of the outcomes of the appeal and the decision is final.
- d) Learners who have failed the Aptitude Test can re-sit for the Aptitude Test for a maximum of two (2) attempts. If the learner fails at the 2nd attempt, the learner must wait for a minimum of three (3) months before re-sitting for the 3rd time.
- e) Learners who have failed the Portfolio Assessment may resubmit the revised portfolio for another assessment.
- f) Learners who have failed the Interview Assessment may go through another interview by resubmitting a revised portfolio.
- g) However, the portfolio resubmission and repeat interview can only be made at least six (6) months after the date of notification of APEL.A result from APEL Unit.
- h) Learners shall complete and submit the [APEL.A Appeal Form](#) to APEL Unit.
- i) Fees will be charged for appeal. Refer to the Fee Schedule (Appendix 1) below.

7.0 Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1: Fee Schedule

a) APEL.A assessment fee for Bachelor's degree level

| Type of Assessment | Assessment Fee | Re-sit or Re-submission Fee |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Assessment material management | RM30.00 | |
| Aptitude Test | RM180.00 | RM180.00 |
| Portfolio | RM100.00 | RM100.00 |
| MQA Processing Charges | RM60.00 | |
| Total | RM370.00 | |

b) APEL.A assessment fee for Master's degree by coursework or mixed mode level

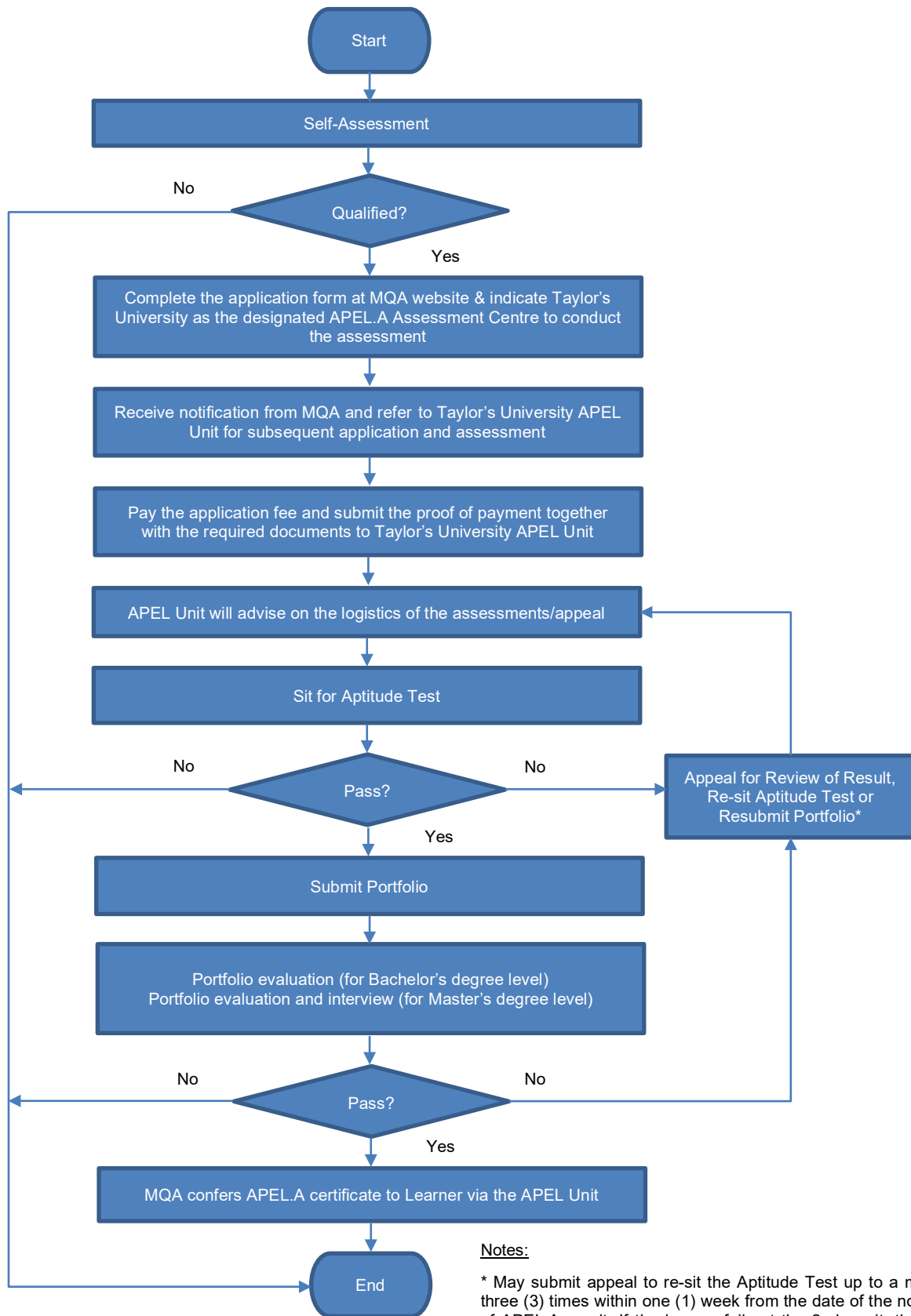
| Type of Assessment | Assessment Fee | Re-sit or Re-submission Fee |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Assessment material management | RM30.00 | |
| Aptitude Test | RM200.00 | RM200.00 |
| Portfolio | RM100.00 | RM260.00* |
| Interview | RM160.00 | |
| MQA Processing Charges | RM60.00 | |
| Total | RM560.00 | |

* Learners who have failed either the portfolio or interview must repeat both assessments by re-submit the portfolio and attend interview.

c) Review of APEL.A assessment results fee

- i. For Bachelor's degree level : RM155.00
- ii. For Master's degree level : RM200.00

8.2 Appendix 2: APEL.A application process for Bachelor’s degree or Master’s degree by coursework or mixed mode levels



Notes:

* May submit appeal to re-sit the Aptitude Test up to a maximum three (3) times within one (1) week from the date of the notification of APEL.A result. If the learner fails at the 2nd re-sit, the learner must wait for a minimum of three (3) months before re-sitting for the 3rd time.

Portfolio re-submission and repeat interview can only be made at least six (6) months after the date of notification of APEL.A result.