

A large, abstract graphic on the left side of the cover consists of several overlapping, flowing ribbons in shades of blue and gold, creating a sense of movement and depth.

GUIDELINES TO GOOD PRACTICES: QUALITY VERIFICATION OF STAND-ALONE MICRO-CREDENTIALS

A large, light blue circular graphic is positioned in the lower half of the cover. Inside the circle, there are white silhouettes of two people, an adult and a child, facing each other. The text 'LEARNING NEVER STOPS' is written in a circular path around the silhouettes.

LEARNING NEVER STOPS

Guidelines to Good Practices: Quality Verification of Stand-Alone Micro-credentials

First Edition 2023

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PREFACE

In the conventional approach, HEPs have focused on designing and delivering academic and technical programs that lead to recognized awards or qualifications. These programs span one to four years, equipping students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and values for entry into the job market, further studies and societal participation. However, the dynamic nature of the national and global economy necessitates continuous learning and adaptation throughout one's career. Standalone micro-credentials, characterized by their shorter, personalized, demand-driven, and stackable nature, aim to broaden opportunities for reskilling and upskilling in response to changes in the workplace while providing alternative pathways to formal qualifications.

Micro-credentials play a pivotal role in the unbundling of accredited programs offered by HEPs, thereby making education more accessible to non-traditional learners, aligning with the national agenda for lifelong learning. In August 2020, MQA initiated this endeavour by issuing Guidelines to Good Practices: Micro-credentials.

In the pursuit of flexible higher education, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) has crafted a comprehensive set of Guidelines to Good Practices (GGP) specifically tailored for stand-alone micro-credentials. These stand-alone micro-credentials can either draw inspiration from courses within accredited programs or be entirely designed to address the specific needs of employers, industries, or individuals seeking particular knowledge, skills and competencies. These stand-alone micro-credentials aim to meet the evolving demands of the workforce for acquiring new knowledge, skills, and competencies.

The GGP firmly advocates MQA's support for and emphasizes the significance of stand-alone micro-credentials within the framework of flexible higher education. Empowering and guiding HEPs and other providers in the systematic development and unbundling of their programs for non-traditional learners while maintaining high quality is the primary objective of the GGP. To this end, the GGP clearly defines stand-alone micro-credentials and articulates key principles for their development, delivery and assessment in encouraging HEPs and other providers to adhere to these GGP.

The GGP further includes policy guidance to ensure alignment with the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) and other higher education policies, practices and requirements. These policies aim to ensure that stand-alone micro-credentials are valued, recognized and instilled with high confidence among all stakeholders. MQA expresses gratitude for the valuable feedback received from stakeholders through online surveys and live consultations, contributing significantly to the refinement of the GGP.

As the national Quality Assurance (QA) body, MQA introduces a voluntary quality assessment opportunity for standalone micro-credentials by HEPs and other providers to obtain third-party evaluations covers the design, delivery and enhancement of stand-alone micro-credentials. In a growing market flooded with credentials, the quality verification of stand-alone micro-credentials by the Quality Verification Centre appointed by MQA can serve as a crucial distinguishing factor for Higher Education Providers (HEPs) and other providers.

In conclusion, MQA is confident that this GGP will continue to drive the collective national aspiration to develop flexible, quality-assured higher education that garners the trust and confidence of all stakeholders. MQA wants to extend gratitude for the collaborative efforts that have contributed to refining and advancing this initiative.

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Abbreviations/Acronyms

No	Abbreviations/Acronyms	In Full
1	MC	Micro-credentials
2	SAMC	Stand-alone Micro-credentials
3	QV	Quality Verification
4	QVC	Quality Verification Centre
6	MQA	Malaysian Qualifications Agency
7	QMS	Quality Management System
8	MOOC	Massive Open Online Courses
9	OBE	Outcome-based Education
10	HEP	Higher Education Provider
11	HEI	High Education Institution
12	HE	Higher Education
13	APEL	Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning
14	MQF	Malaysian Qualifications Framework

SECTION 1

OVERVIEW

Micro-credentials – a term that gained currency around 2003, have a long history as short courses for continuous professional and executive development. These short courses play a critical role in ensuring that the graduates who enter employment are effectively on-boarded and trained to meet the ever-changing demands of their jobs, employers, the industry and the economy. The accelerated and discontinuous nature of change has heightened the need to reskill and upskill the workforce on a lifelong basis.

The private sector, public agencies and higher education providers (HEPs), in that order, are the primary providers of these short courses. Short courses unlike the programmes and modules offered by the HEPs, are relatively unregulated and therefore, their recognition and value are essentially a matter between the contracting parties. Hence, these courses or non-formal learning undergo a challenging process of analysis in order to enjoy recognition within the higher education sector.

This situation has changed dramatically as a result of the rapid pace of change in knowledge, technology and skills. The 4th Industrial Revolution is symptomatic of the rapid, fundamental and non-linear changes in the way we live, learn, work and play. To cope with and to remain productive in these times, graduates and employees must continue to upskill and reskill to keep their jobs and advance their careers – it is lifelong and life-wide learning! The rise of the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) has given the short courses a new image and life. Indeed, MOOCs have given these short courses a new label – micro-credentials (MC) focusing on the new credentialling technology. They have developed creative and unique MC labels - which are creatively named - nanodegrees, micro masters, X Series and, in some cases, protected. These online and mostly self-instructional MCs reached out to millions of the young. This genre of providers unlike their traditional providers, are nimble, agile, enterprising, demand-driven and innovative. They offer modern digital credentials which are portable and secure, and the digital badges carry rich information on the provider, provision, outcomes, assessment (typically optional and based on small bits of learning) and performance of the learners.

Faced with the need to keep the workforce and competitive economies, governments are looking beyond the HEPs to alternative providers of lifelong learning and development. Governments and HEPs are now beginning to take notice of the MCs as complementary, supplementary and even as substitutes to college degrees. We are, however, still in the early days of the micro-credentials. Realising the potential value of MCs, many governments have stepped up their support for lifelong learning through MCs by regulating them (e.g., New Zealand); facilitating pathways to HE qualifications (e.g., Australia); incentivising universities to consider offering MCs to support the hordes of unemployed who need to be rapidly reskilled to return to the job market (e.g., Australia and New Zealand); starting trials and pilots projects to consider its viability (US universities and European Commission) and developing guidelines for their HEIs to explore the unbundling of the degrees as MCs for the working population (e.g., Malaysia).

The Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) issued a Guidelines to Good Practices: Micro-credentials (2020) as part of the flexible education agenda to enable HEPs to micro-credentialise modules in their programmes to non-traditional learners whilst still maintaining the quality of these provisions for seamless credit transfers and articulation. As of 25th October 2022, HEPs had informed MQA of their plans to roll out some 14,209 MCs in popular fields of study. The unbundling of degrees via micro-credentialling is actively in motion.

The Guidelines to Good Practices: Micro-credentials (2020) is only one half of the MC development initiative. The bulk of the short courses for lifelong learning is provided by the private sector entities, public agencies and to a lesser extent HEPs. Whilst these short courses called stand-alone micro-credentials (SAMC) are critical to maintaining the competitiveness of the Malaysian workforce, there are a multitude of challenges. These SAMCs lack a credible approach to verifying their quality, to ensuring greater transparency and accountability, creating pathways to HE qualifications and certifications as well as providing secure credentials attesting to the learning acquired. It is with this in mind that MQA developed this companion Guidelines to Good Practices: Stand-alone Micro-credentials.

This GGP creates a trusted system to verify the quality of the SAMCs through a network of approved centres in HEPs and amongst government and private agencies mandated to provide, fund, regulate and quality assure SAMCs. This is in line with the overall government plans to enhance the upskilling and reskilling efforts by ensuring that the SAMCs are demand-driven, agile, flexible and recognised not only by employers and industry but also by HEPs for credit transfers. It is also expected that the quality verification of SAMCs will encourage HEPs to partner with the SAMC providers to include or widen the options of more industry-based and job-related skills courses in their curricula – a move which will improve the employability of graduates.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES TO GOOD PRACTICES

The MQA issued two (2) Guidelines to Good Practices (GGP) namely Guidelines to Good Practices – Micro-credential (April, 2020) and Guidelines to Good Practices – Micro-credential (August, 2020) to enable, empower and guide the HEPs in unbundling their academic programmes into shorter and more focused micro-credentials (MC) for academic, professional, technical and personal development purposes. The MC initiative – which is a part of the broader flexible education and lifelong learning agenda, has resulted in the registration thousands of courses and modules registered with MQA to be offered as MCs. The GGP on MC, 2020 also provided for standalone MCs (SAMC) to be designed, delivered and recognised via the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning for Award of Credits (APEL.C), 2016 or Credit Transfer for MOOCs (2016) pathways. However, these GGPs did not provide a comprehensive guide to the thousands of industry-based short courses designed, delivered and benefitted by the working population under the auspices of different government agencies (e.g., HRD Corp.; PERKESO, CIDB, MARA and industry associations).

This GGP for Stand-alone Micro-credential is intended to enable, empower and guide all types of entities involved in the design and delivery of short courses in the form of SAMCs. This voluntary scheme can be used by SAMC providers, aggregators and/or regulators and funding bodies to facilitate the seamless recognition of these industry-oriented and job skills and competency-focused short courses for credits within the higher education sector. The GGP is expected to be instrumental in bringing all short and non-credentialed courses in the higher education and industry sectors under the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) enabling more pathways to the higher education qualifications facilitating the incorporation of quality verified SAMCs in the academic curricula to bring industry and jobs skills into higher education.

1.1.1 Definition of Stand-Alone Micro-Credential

The GGP: MC issued by MQA in August 2020 defined the MC as a digital certification of assessed knowledge, skills, and competencies in a narrow or specific area or field to support the learners' professional, technical, academic, and personal development. The accredited MCs are courses within MQA accredited programmes offered to learners. These MCs may be stacked towards an academic qualification.

SAMC is a digital certification of assessed knowledge, skills, and competencies in a narrow or specific area or field to support the learners' professional, technical, academic, and personal development. However, these MCs are not part of any accredited programme but can still be recognised for credits within any accredited academic programme.

The SAMCs shall include all kinds of short courses designed and delivered by the HEPs, private institutions, industries and government agencies for the purposes of

skilling, upskilling and/or reskilling of the workforce, students and graduates. It may also include courses inspired by modules in MQA accredited programmes.

1.2 THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY VERIFICATION OF SAMCS

MQA is empowered under Act 679 to accredit programmes. It also performs equivalency evaluation of qualifications and certifications which are not accredited by MQA. MQA is also authorised to undertake Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) which has resulted in various APEL schemes i.e., APEL.A (for admission), APEL.C (for award of credits) and APEL.Q (for the award of academic qualifications).

The GGP for SAMCs is the latest voluntary scheme to streamline and facilitate the recognition of non-formal learning within the higher education and industry sectors. This GGP provides a credible process for all providers of SAMCs to verify the quality of their SAMCs including the assignment of credits and MQF levels for easier credit recognition/transfers by local and foreign HEIs.

1.3 GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF STAND-ALONE MICRO-CREDENTIALS

The days when the college diploma or degree served an individual throughout his or her career with some on-the-job learning and training is long over. Due to the explosive growth and churn in knowledge, new skills, technologies and competencies are demanded of the workforce. A new professional development strategy is required to address the skills needed in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world which is non-linear and disruptive. Individuals must reskill and upskill to stay competitive, relevant and productive. Lifelong learning is not an option. This new mantra is indeed an imperative for the workforce to remain productive.

The on-going short courses and executive courses whether in-person, blended or online have in the past provided some measure of renewal of skills and knowledge in tandem with knowledge growth. Over the years, the supply of short professional and personal development courses has exploded into a torrent and has gone online with rapid spread of Internet access and growing adoption of broadband networks. With the advent of the MOOCs, these short courses have transformed into credible credentials known as micro-credentials. Experts predict that MCs will revolutionise the way skills and competencies are provided, acquired and recognised. These MCs are benchmarked to industry and international skills and competency frameworks, making them highly valued by employers. Besides filling the skill gaps, a flexible micro-credential learning and development programme can help an organisation become more resilient by enhancing its talent development programme as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Adapting Talent to Changing Needs

The strategic development of SAMCs will address both the nation's short and long-term talent development needs of the nation. Providers now have the opportunity to offer a variety of credentials, ranging from specific workplace skills such as problem-solving and communication to leadership and technical knowledge skills such as machine learning, digital marketing and data analytics. However, SAMC providers, learners and other users face a number of challenges. Without credible quality assurance (QA), employers have no basis to believe in the potential value of these credentials. There is no framework which can be relied on to understand the different credentials available in the market. These credentials often lack transparency in terms of content, learning outcomes, assessment and verification of providers and their provision. Articulation and credit recognition are only possible with better established MC providers who have collaborated with HEIs.

For MCs to be effective vehicles for skilling, reskilling and upskilling, it should be based on key principles in conceptualising, developing, designing, conducting, assessing and credentialing of these short courses as below.

1.3.1 Outcome/competency-centred

Providers of SAMCs should clearly state the learning outcomes i.e., knowledge, skills, attitudes or competencies, in a measurable or demonstrable manner. These learning outcomes wherever relevant should be referenced to skills, competency or industry frameworks for greater acceptance. The attainment of the learning outcomes/competency should be demonstrated through suitable assessment methods and reported in a user-friendly format.

1.3.2 Demand / Industry-driven

SAMCs should be designed and delivered in response to the demands of the learners, employers or industries for short and focused skill sets, knowledge and

technologies which are required for upskilling and reskilling of the workforce in preparation for the 4th Industrial Revolution and/or personal development. Active engagement with industries and employers is crucial to ensure the currency, relevancy and value of the SAMCs.

1.3.3 Personalisation

To the greatest extent possible, the providers should design SAMCs which allow the learners to select courses, time and mode that coheres with their needs, interests, and work. Ideally, the mode of delivery, the pace of learning and assessment methods should be appropriately personalised for optimal learning by different learners.

1.3.4 Digital Credentials

A digital credential is a digital file that serves as a visual representation of knowledge and skills that have been acquired over time, allowing for a more streamlined process for assessing abilities of an individual. A great deal of information (meta-data) can be embedded in a digital credential, including the name of the individual, the issuer, the date of issuance, the expiry date (if applicable), the specific skills acquired, and the learning artefacts (e.g., sample/s of assignment). See Figure 2 for an illustration.

Learners should receive a digital credential upon successful completion of an MC as a form of credential and evidence of the outcome. If the SAMC is a component of a larger series of SAMCs, digital credentials can be bundled together to form a comprehensive skillset (e.g., Web Designer, Events Manager, Pastry Chef etc.).

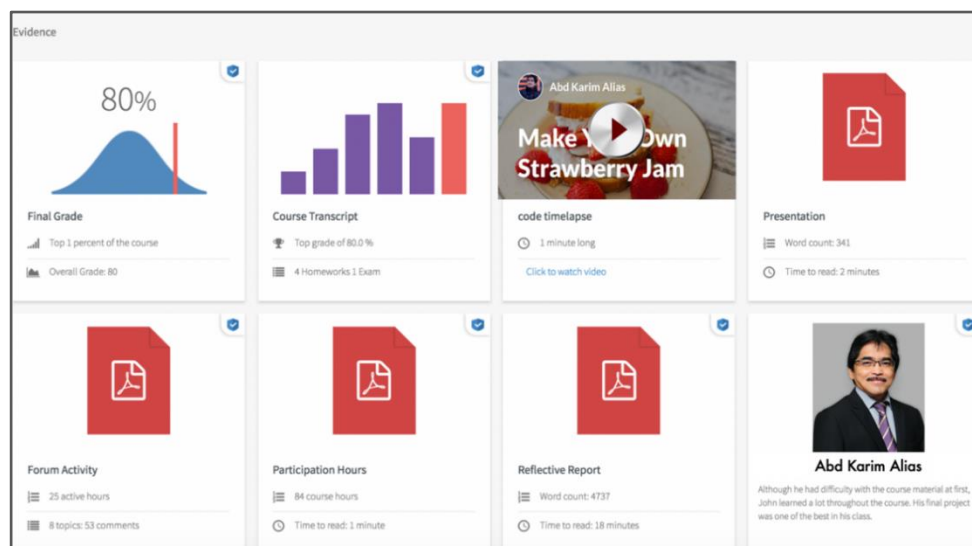


Figure 2: Sample Micro-credential with key information

1.3.5 Secure and Shareable Credentials

The digital credentials issued upon successful completion of a SAMC should ideally be based on technologies that protect the identities of the learners and prevent the certifications from being misused or altered to ensure user trust. The SAMC credentials should be shareable across multiple platforms including social media, email, blogs, and resumes with verification and authentication features built into them. Figure 3 shows an Illustration of an MC posted on social media.

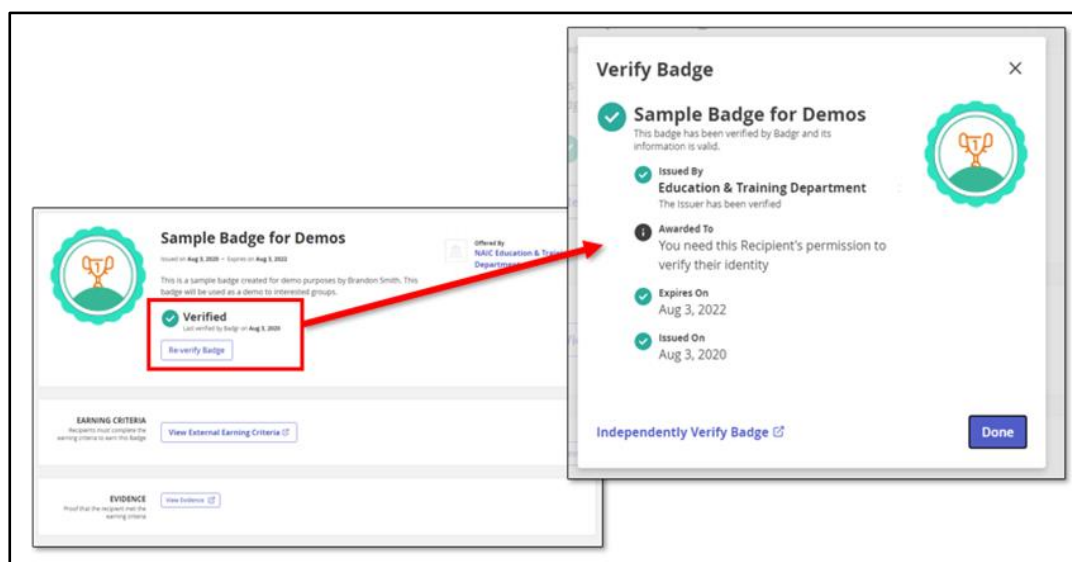


Figure 3: Secure and shareable.

(https://www.d2l.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/NAIC-Blog_Image-8.png)

1.3.6 Transparency

The providers of SAMCs should furnish complete and clear information on the courses. The information presented must be in a readable, friendly and easily accessible form. The information shall encompass SAMC objectives, outcomes (knowledge, skills and attitudes), mode of delivery, hours of learning, content, assessments, credits, recognitions, pathways, articulation and endorsements to the learners and other authorised users for purposes of evaluation and recognition.

1.3.7 Stackable

A stackable SAMC is one of a series offered by a provider that can be accumulated over time to demonstrate the expanded knowledge and competencies of an individual and to assist him or her in advancing within a career pathway. Ideally, the SAMC should be integrated into a larger portfolio of competencies or certification or qualification, providing options for learners who wish to obtain a formal qualification or achieve mastery of a larger set of skills or knowledge set. An illustration is provided in Figure 4 with an actual example is reflected in Figure 5.

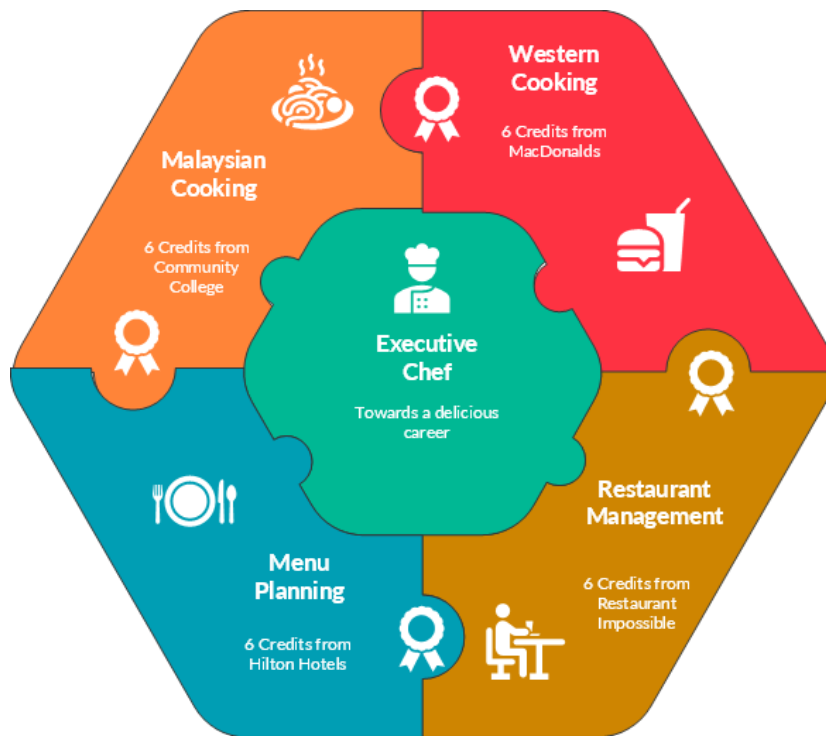


Figure 4: Stackable SAMCs towards a Position

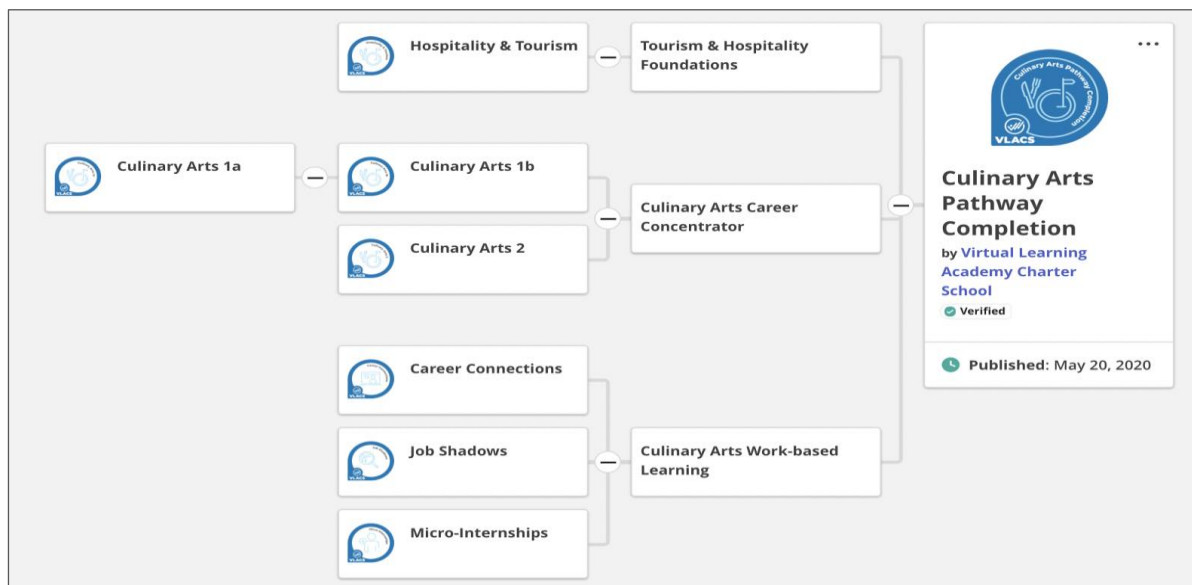


Figure 5: Stacking courses towards a Career.

Stackable credentials:

- provide flexibility for learners who must balance work and family responsibilities while pursuing professional development programmes for upskilling or reskilling.
- meet the needs of employers and organisations to remain competitive through continuous upskilling and reskilling of their workforce.
- provide organisation with the tools they need to address technological advancements that increase the need for education and training at all employment levels.

1.3.8 Learning-on-Demand

Adaptability of MCs enables learners to acquire knowledge just-in-time, just-enough, and just-for-me (personalised), allowing learners to start and continue the process of earning MCs on their own time and pace. This flexibility allows learners to begin and complete the process of learning micro-credentials on their own schedule. Learners who are interested in personal or professional development can tailor their schedules to meet their needs and scale up their learning as needed. Being able to schedule learning is a huge advantage for professionals who are constantly on the go without being committed to a formal degree programme.

1.3.9 Flexible learning pathway

The flexibility of SAMCs allows learners to set their own learning pathways based on their career and personal preferences. In other words, learners have total control over and take full responsibility of and for their own learning. Ideally, SAMC providers should identify different career and academic pathways for the learners to use as a guide in shaping their own goals.

1.3.10 Self-directed learning

SAMCs can be designed to be delivered through asynchronous online, blended, hybrid or face-to-face modes. However, the self-directed asynchronous online learning enables learners to learn independently and manage their own learning journeys more effectively. This can be accomplished by creating the SAMC in the form of a self-instructional module (SIM) that adheres to sound instructional design principles.

1.3.11 Assessment of outcome

SAMC should employ appropriate and credible assessment method/s to confirm learning. Assessment method/s should allow learners to demonstrate the knowledge, skills or attitude acquisition or gain preferably in an authentic context.

1.3.12 Verification/Authentication

SAMC and digital credentials should be fully transparent, portable and can be used for a multitude of purposes. These may include accumulating credits toward a qualification, demonstrating job-related skills, or transferring evidence of expertise between employers and organisations.

Digital credentials should be awarded upon successful completion of the module. It should contain the following minimum information:

- Credential name
- Credential URL
- Credential criteria
- Credential image/visual
- Credential Issuer
- Credential Issue date
- Credential Recipient
- Credential Tags
- Credential Alignment (Standards if applicable)
- Credential Expiration date (if applicable)
- Credential Evidence URL

Digital credentials, like digital badges, are easily shared and can be found in social networks and e-portfolios, among other places. As a result, encrypted credentials and open digital badges are quickly becoming the global standard for identification. To accomplish this, using some type of mechanism or appropriate system for digital credential authentication, such as blockchain technology is recommended.

SECTION 2

POLICIES ON QUALITY VERIFICATION OF STAND-ALONE MICRO-CREDENTIALS

The following policies establish the criteria for qualified SAMCs, qualified SAMC providers and quality verification centres, the control mechanisms, quality verification of SAMC, the validity of quality verification centres and updating of quality verified SAMCs.

2.1 Limitations of SAMCs

SAMCs which are related to foundation studies or about internships, practical/industrial training, final year project or research shall not be accepted for quality verification.

2.2 Size/Duration of SAMCs

Only SAMCs which are designed for a minimum of 40 hours of notional learning time or effort shall be considered under this GGP. Any notional hours of learning beyond this minimum shall be in increments of 20 hours. The notional learning time comprises a combination of face to face, independent learning and assessment. This notional learning time or effort includes the total effort in hours required of learners before, during and even after the delivery of the SAMC by a provider.

2.3 Qualified SAMC Providers

Only SAMCs delivered by registered and authorised entities with at least 1 completed cohort learners shall be deemed as qualified providers under this GGP. Registered and authorised entities include HEPs, government departments, statutory bodies, companies, associations, cooperatives and other formal establishments whose functions, among others, relate to the provision of SAMCs for the professional development of its members or their target groups.

2.4 Credit Transfer of Quality Verified SAMCs

A SAMC by a provider which has been quality verified can be recognised by HEPs up to 70% of the credits in the applicable programme subject to the credit transfer policies of MQA and the HEP.

2.5 Digital Credentials and Malaysian Micro-credentials Statement

The SAMC provider must issue or make arrangements for the issuance of digital credentials to the learners who have successfully completed and passed the SAMC. This digital credential shall contain, as appropriate, the information stated in the Appendix 2 – Digital Credential Requirements.

2.6 Quality Verification Centres (QVC)

Quality verification of SAMCs shall be carried out by MQA and other MQA approved QVCs based on a prescribed methodology developed as part of this GGP.

2.7 Validity of Quality Certification of SAMC

The Quality Verification granted to an SAMC shall be valid for no more than three (3) continuous years. The quality certification may be ended by voluntary withdrawal or as sanction imposed by QVC/MQA for violation of the terms of quality verification by a SAMC provider after due process.

2.8 Limitations of QVC

2.8.1 Only approved QVCs established by HEPs that award MQF level 7 (Master) and 8 (Doctorate) qualifications shall verify SAMCs related to these levels.

2.8.2 Approved QVCs may verify SAMCs from their own organisation provided the SMEs appointed to carry out the assessment are independent outside SMEs.

2.9 Quality Verification

Quality verification is a process by which a SAMC designed and delivered by a provider is assessed by an approved QVC as meeting and capable of meeting the good practice criteria in this GGP, as well as establish the appropriate MQF qualifications level/s and the credits. The quality verified status of a SAMC will be indicated by the listing in a public SAMC registry by MQA.

SECTION 3

QUALITY VERIFICATION CENTRES: THE REQUIREMENTS

Quality Verification Centres (QVC) are entities which meet the conditions outlined below and are authorised by MQA to undertake quality verification of SAMCs subject to this GGP for a specific duration. The following conditions are intended to ensure that QVC applicants are bona fide entities which have a role in driving, supporting, financing and evaluating short courses for skilling, upskilling and reskilling purposes.

3.1 Establishment

- 3.1.1** To be eligible, the QVC must be an institution/organisation/entity that is established in Malaysia as an association, company, cooperative, statutory body or a public authority empowered to regulate or provide or support or fund training and development.
- 3.1.2** It may be an entity with one of the following statuses: Berhad (Bhd.) / Sendirian Berhad (Sdn. Bhd.)/Limited Liability Partnerships, Association / Industry-based training centre and Government / Semi-Government Institution.

3.2 Mandate

- 3.2.1** Public authority mandated to conduct, manage, fund training and development and other related activities.
- OR**
- 3.2.2** An organisation which has been formally empowered by a public authority as stated in 3.1.1 is eligible to be considered as a QVC.
- OR**
- 3.2.3** An entity established with the objective of conducting training and development maybe considered as a QVC provided it has been in operation for at least 5 years.

3.3 Experience

The organisations as stated in 3.1 have experience in managing training and development as a provider or provision by other providers or have collaborated with human resource development agencies.

3.4 Good Standing

The organisations as stated in 3.1 are currently in good standing as a legally established organisation i.e., not blacklisted by any related authorities for non-compliance.

3.5 Capacity Requirements/Criteria

To carry out the functions of a QVC, the QVC must have financial, expert, physical, staff and information technology resources to undertake the functions of the QVC.

3.6 Financial Resources

The QVC must have a minimum paid up capital of RM100,000 or have minimum reserves to the value of RM50,000 for organisations without paid up capital (*Information from CCM or financial statement or ROS records*).

OR

Receive financial assistance, allocation or grant from the governmental or non-governmental bodies as a public authority. This can be cited via the Annual Budget documents.

OR

Have a minimum allocation of RM100,000 for training and development related funding activities including training verification functions. (*Information can be cited from the approved financial documents of the association*)

3.7 Expert Resources – Subject Matter and MQF Experts

The QVC requires expert assessors who will be tasked with evaluating the submissions by the SAMC providers which will contain information about the provider and the SAMC. The QVC needs two types of expert assessors namely;

The Outcome-based Education (OBE)/Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) expert assessors who will evaluate the SAMC based on the criteria established in the GGP. This panel must attend specific training required by MQA for this purpose which focuses on the credit eligibility, level of MQF and course design and development as well as the assessments

AND

Subject Matter Experts (SME) will evaluate the SAMCs in specific skills area with a focus on the relevancy, adequacy and currency from the knowledge, industry or practice perspective.

Notes:

The QVC must be able to provide evidence that the identified expert resources have obtained support from industry, professional bodies to provide or allow access to their expertise. QVCs that plan to offer QVC services in a wider range of areas or fields must show access to content assessors in these areas or fields.

The SME and OBE/MQF experts may be two different individuals or it can be the same individual who has both credentials.

3.8 Physical and Human Resources

The QVC is required to have a registered and operational physical office with basic facilities to carry out its functions in a safe and conducive setting.

AND

The QVC must have adequate administrative staff and support systems to undertake the functions of a QVC.

Notes:

Successful QVCs will be required to attend a briefing session by MQA to familiarise the QVC and its staff with the GGP, MQF, OBE and other related matters

3.9 Governance and Management System

The QVC must have a clear system of governance and management to carry out the functions as a QVC as outlined below. The final decision on the SAMC quality verification shall reside with the unit or division or centre that seeks to be a QVC and shall not be referred to other parts of the larger organisation. The governance and management system must be approved and be operationally ready at the time of the application.

The functions of the QVC include the following;

- 3.9.1** To receive and vet the SAMC applications from qualified providers (QPs) for completeness of required information and descriptions in QVC-01 (Appendix 3).
- 3.9.2** To identify, appoint, instruct and manage qualified content and MQF assessors.
- 3.9.3** To manage and monitor the applications by SAMC providers based on the client charter.
- 3.9.4** To consider the recommendations of the assessors and make a final decision to return, reject or to provide quality verification.

- 3.9.5** To submit details of the quality verified SAMC to MQA for further action.
- 3.9.6** To monitor the quality verified SAMCs and their providers for compliance with the terms of the QV.
- 3.9.7** To educate, inform and advice potential SAMC providers on the policies, processes and procedures for QV.

3.10 SAMC Quality Verification Management System

The QVC must establish a SAMC Quality Verification Management System – the structure, policies, standards, processes, procedures, people and records with which the QVC functions outlined in 5.3 will be carried out. The SAMC Quality Verification Management System must encompass the following processes;

- a.** Evaluate the eligibility of the SAMC providers
- b.** Accept SAMC applications from qualified providers
- c.** Identify Panel of Assessors for the SAMC
- d.** Manage the assessment of the SAMC based on established cycle time and procedures
- e.** Manage the decision making after recommendations from the panel.
- f.** Submit the details of the SAMC to MQA for further action including listing.
- g.** Inform the SAMC provider of the listing.
- h.** Monitor and review these activities relating to SAMCs by the SAMC providers as necessary and require improvements, if needed.
- i.** An online management system is mandatory encompassing the processes listed in 3.10 to fulfil the functions stipulated in 3.9.
- j.** Where the QVC has contracted with third parties for specific service support in carrying out the functions as a QVC (stated in 3.9), the Memorandum of Agreement must clearly provide for the security, privacy and confidentiality of all data and information provided by QPs.

QUALITY VERIFICATION CENTRE (APPLICATION, EVALUATION, APPROVAL AND MONITORING)

This section of the GGP deals with the application, evaluation, pilot SAMC quality verification, approval, listing, monitoring and review as well as updating and renewal of QVCs. A general flowchart of the process is provided in Figure 6.

4.1 Application

Eligible QVC must complete the QVC-01 (Appendix 3) and provide the supporting documents and evidence to MQA.

4.2 Self-Review

The QVC must carry out a self-assessment of the organisation, structures, systems and processes identifying the challenges that are or will be faced and the proposed or possible solutions to overcome or mitigate these constraints as part of the QVC-01 (Appendix 3) template.

4.3 Panel of MQA QVC Assessors

A panel appointed by MQA will assess the QVC based on compliance with this GGP. The QVC must achieve a satisfactory level of compliance with the GGP for MQA to approve the application.

4.4 Pilot SAMC Review

The QVC shall submit at least 1 SAMC which has been assessed by the SMEs appointed by the QVC for each of the areas or fields it proposes to carry out quality verification. The outcome of the quality verification of the SAMC by the QVC shall be evaluated by the Panel of QVC assessors and recommendations made to MQA including the need to see more evidence of quality verification of SAMCs.

4.5 Representation Session

The QVC shall make representation of its application, systems and readiness to a Panel of QVC Assessors appointed by MQA to address concerns and issues raised by the Panel in evaluating the QVC application. The Panel shall finalise the consolidated report with their recommendations for consideration by the MQA.

4.6 Validity of the QVC Approval

The approval granted to a VC shall be valid for no more than 5 continuous years. The validity period may be reduced on request or as a result of non-compliance with the terms of the approval after due process.

4.7 Registry of Verification Centres

All approved QVCs shall be listed, and such a list shall be accessible to the public via MQA website for reference.

4.8 Quality Verification Mark

SAMCs which have been quality verified by QVCs as in compliance with the requirements of this GPP, shall be permitted to use an MQA quality verification mark with the required information.

4.9 Monitoring and Review of QVCs

All approved QVCs are required to provide periodic reports on their QV activities. MQA shall carry out desk-based and/or physical, virtual or hybrid on-site as necessary.

4.10 Renewal of Approval of QVCs

There shall be a process to renew the approval of QVCs after the expiry of the validity period. The QVC can apply to terminate the approval and MQA shall update the same in the QVC database as public information.

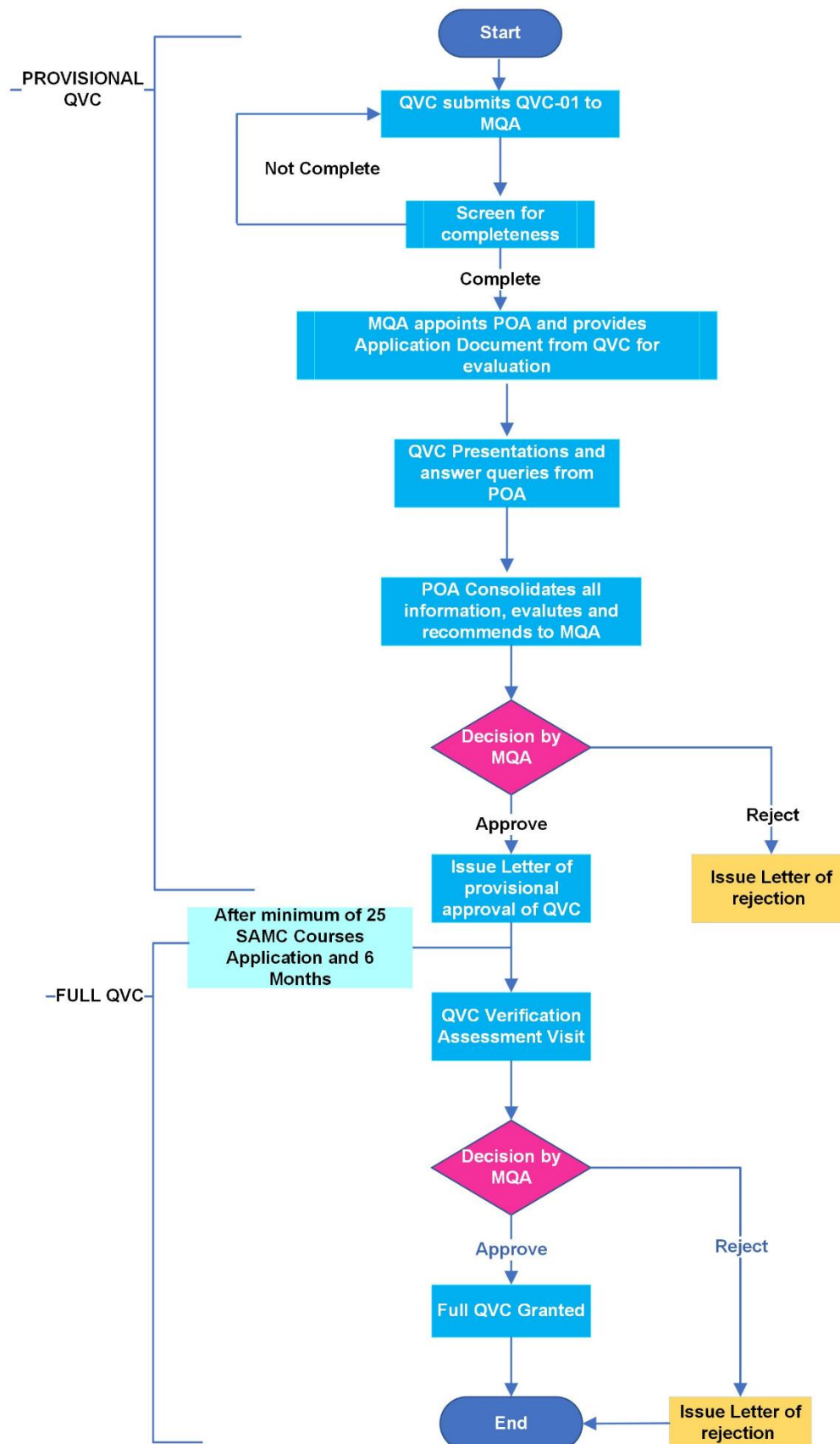


Figure 6: Application Process to be a Quality Verification Centre

SECTION 4

QUALITY VERIFICATIONS OF STAND-ALONE MICRO-CREDENTIALS

An approved QVC shall apply the following standards, criteria and processes in verifying the quality of an SAMC and determine the credits and applicable MQF level/s. A general flowchart of the process is provided in Figure 7.

5.1 Application by a SAMC Provider to an Approved QVC

A qualified SAMC provider shall apply for the QV of a SAMC using the SAMC-01 (Appendix 4) by providing all the required information and description with supporting documents and making all required payments. The application shall be made in the format prescribed by the relevant QVC to which the SAMC application is directed. No SAMC application shall contain more than one short course. Although SAMC provider may develop a stack of SAMCs for further studies or jobs, quality verifications of SAMCs shall not be considered as endorsement or approval of the stack or bundle. Only individual SAMCs are quality verified.

To prevent applications to multiple QVCs and to ensure transparency in the event of re-applications after rejections, the SAMC providers must disclose their application status failing which their applications can be rejected with prejudice.

5.2 Pre-Screening of SAMC Application

The QVC shall carry out an initial screening of the SAMC application against a standard checklist to ensure completeness of the application for further processing. Feedback shall be provided to SAMC applicants whose application is found to be incomplete. The applicant may resubmit after addressing the shortcomings identified by the QVC.

5.3 Quality Verification of the SAMC

Upon ensuring the completeness of the application by a QP, the QVC shall systematically, diligently, and objectively assess the extent to which the SAMC meets the requirements outlined in 5.3.1 to 5.3.9.

5.3.1 SAMC Design Framework

The SAMC shall be presented in the prescribed format (SAMC-01: see Appendix 4) stating all the required SAMC details and information. The following criteria shall be used by the QVC to assess the SAMC and determine whether it has, at the minimum, satisfied all the requirements as judged by the SMEs appointed by the QVC.

5.3.2 SAMC Title

The title of the SAMC must reflect the content (subject matter), the outcomes (knowledge, skills and abilities), the level of complexity (basic, intermediate, advanced), positions (CEO, Accounts, Web Designer etc.) and other pertinent characteristics.

5.3.3 Intended Learning Outcomes

The intended learning outcomes (ILO) shall be stated in an observable or measurable manner. A well-defined action verb, condition and criterion must constitute the outcome statement/s. No more than two (2) ILOs are expected for a SAMC with one (1) credit (equated with 40 notional hours of learning time). The SAMC must address at least 1 MQF outcomes in the ILOs.

5.3.4 Delivery Strategies and Methods

The instructional approaches, strategies and methods used in the delivery of SAMC are clearly stated and is appropriate to the ILO/s content.

5.3.5 Subject Matter

The content / subject matter provided in the SAMC is suitable, adequate and current.

5.3.6 Assessment of Learning

The assessment methods used to demonstrate the achievement of learning by the learners/trainees must be stated clearly including the type of assessments (formative, summative) and the relative weight amongst these assessments. These assessment methods must be aligned with or appropriate to the ILOs. Policies and rules guiding the management of assessments to ensure it is valid, reliable and fair are provided.

For this purpose, the SAMC providers must provide samples of assessments, the rubrics and the grading from at least one cohort of learners.

5.3.7 Learning Time

The estimated total Learning Time (LT) is stated with the computation and rationale explained. The learning time shall be stated in hours.

5.3.8 Credits

The first 40 notional hours of learning time is equated with 1 credit and subsequent credits can be recognised in multiples of 20 hours or 0.5 credits.

5.3.9 MQF Level

The best fit MQF level/s is/are stated with the bases for this determination clearly explained. The SAMC must address at least one (1) of the generic outcomes in the MQF at the expected level of complexity and depth as described in the MQF Levels Descriptor.

5.4 The Quality Management System (QMS) of the SAMC Provider

An effective QMS covering all aspects of the design, development, delivery, assessment, monitoring, review and improvement, and credentialling must be established, maintained and improved by the SAMC provider. In general, the SAMC provider must observe the following processes appropriate to the complexity and nature of the SAMC offered to ensure consistent quality of the SAMCs.

Note: A SAMC provider who has previously been assessed by this QVC or any other authorised QVC when submitting a new SAMC, can be fully or partially exempted from this part of the assessment under 3.4 if the earlier provider assessment is not more than 1 year old at the discretion of the QVC.

5.5 SAMC Development Policy and Design Process

The provider must have documented policies, proper governance, structures (committees, teams), processes, persons, by which the need for the SAMC is established, the SAMC is developed and designed to meet the needs or requirements of employers, industries, regulating, funding and other pertinent bodies.

5.6 Delivery Policy and Process

The provider must have documented structures, policies, guides and processes for determining and managing the mode (online, blended, in-person), approach (guided instruction, self-instruction), delivery method (lectures, workshops, seminar) and strategies (didactic, active, immersive, collaborative etc.) of SAMC subject to the requirements of the employers, industries, regulating, funding and other pertinent bodies or good practices.

Where the delivery involves collaboration with other parties including employers of trainees, the policies and means to formalise and manage these collaborations must be provided.

5.7 Management of SAMC Delivery

The provider must have policies for and the mechanisms to plan and conduct the SAMCs based on the approved design of the short course consistent with all the requirements specified. Feedback from learners, instructors and employers or regulators or funding bodies must be obtained to ascertain the effectiveness of the delivery and to rectify any shortcomings.

5.8 Assessment of learning

The provider must have policies, processes and mechanisms in place which;

- 5.8.1 ensure the validity (alignment to outcomes), reliability (criteria and rubrics to ensure consistency), integrity (tasks to be given for trainees to demonstrate their achievement), authenticity (assessment tasks reflect real work challenges) and fairness of assessment methods (trainees are accorded right to appeal if aggrieved);
- 5.8.2 describe the grading system (how you report on the achievement of trainees), and define the management of assessment (who is responsible for deciding, administering, grading and communicating);
- 5.8.3 provide for security and safety of assessment related documents and artifacts before, during and after assessment; and
- 5.8.4 secure the maintenance of key assessment outcome records for future reference.

5.9 Management System

The policies, processes and procedures for the management of the SAMC including promotion, enrolment, withdrawal or deferment, attendance, instructor assignment, scheduling, teaching, learning, the use of the online platform, peer collaboration, assessment system – grading, pass threshold, reporting of achievement, resit/repeat, appeal and the credentialing should be established, implemented and improved.

5.10 Financial resources

The SAMC provider must have financial resources proportionate to the expected enrolment in the SAMC to acquire and prepare all other necessities for the conduct of the SAMC as promised and/or required for the effective delivery.

5.11 Training/educational resources

The SAMC provider must have the required training resources such notes, books, manuals, materials for group work, flip charts, writing boards, equipment, labs, software, manuals, cases, CDs, videos, audio and video recording devices necessary for the SAMC delivery.

5.12 Physical or virtual resources

The SAMC provider must have suitable physical training place/s to conduct the SAMC which includes but not limited to classrooms, labs, seminar rooms, auditoriums, discussion and workshop rooms, halls, online systems etc.

5.13 Instructor management policies and processes

The provider must have processes and procedures for the identification, appointment, training (if needed to use the educational technology deployed), monitoring, performance evaluation of the instructors in delivering the SAMC and providing feedback for improvements.

5.14 Learner experience

The provider must collect information on the experience of learners at appropriate intervals to validate the delivery system. Both quantitative and qualitative information should ideally be solicited from the learners before, during and after the SAMC. This information should be used to assess the effectiveness of the delivery and improve the quality of the SAMC.

5.15 Credential Management System

The provider must have or have arranged for the issuance of safe, secure and portable digital micro-credentials i.e., digital records for the trainees who have successfully completed the SAMC and passed the assessments. Such a credentialing system must be secure, accessible, and free of fraudulent practices. The responsibility for the credentials remains with the provider even if a third party is contracted to provide the credential services. These digital credentials must be owned by or accessible (with or without customisable features) to the learners with the information stated in **Appendix 2**.

5.16 Monitoring, review and improvement

The provider must have policies and mechanisms to monitor (collect key quality information), review (analysis of the data) and plan appropriate actions based on the analysis.

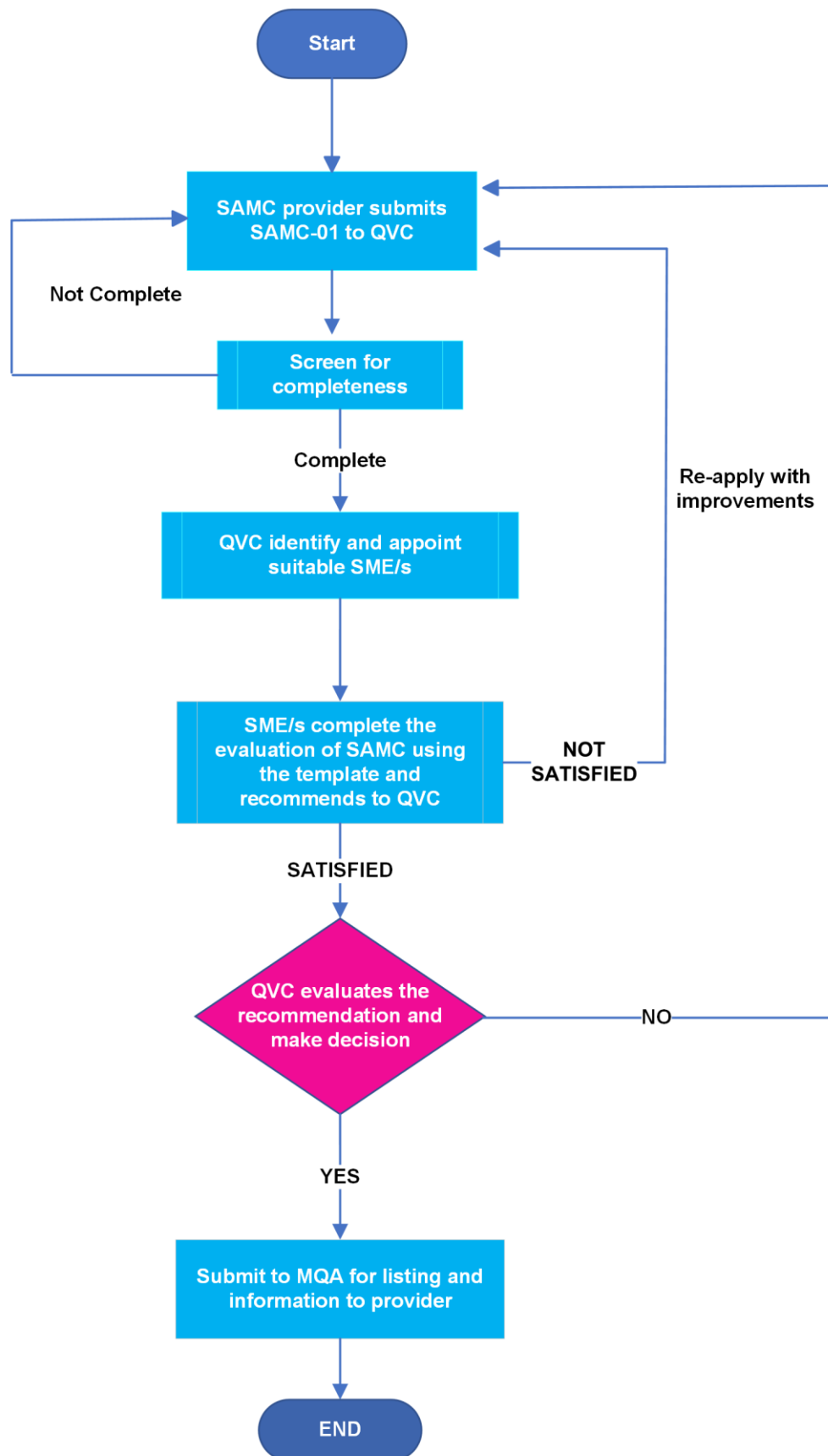


Figure 7: Flowchart of SAMC verification processes

SECTION 5

ROLES OF MQA

MQA will carry out the following roles in ensuring that the GGP is effective in developing a robust and credible system of quality verification of the SAMCs.

6.1 Evaluating and Approving QVCs

- 6.1.1** MQA is responsible for the appointment of assessors to evaluate the readiness of the QVC applicants.
- 6.1.2** MQA is responsible for the approval of the QVCs and the registry of approved QVCs.

6.2 Capacity building

- 6.2.1** MQA will provide training to QVCs in carrying out the functions entrusted to them under this GGP and share good practices from other QVCs to ensure all QVCs are strengthened.
- 6.2.2** MQA will provide training support to SAMC providers to help them better understand the processes and requirements for quality verification.
- 6.2.3** MQA will be responsible for training the panel of assessors of QVC.
- 6.2.4** MQA will provide training to SMEs on the determination of credits and MQF levels.

6.3 Monitoring the QVCs and SAMC

- 6.3.1** MQA will monitor the QVC performance and carry out reviews as necessary to ensure all QVCs are diligently and scrupulously following the terms and spirit of this GGP in quality verification of SAMCs.

6.4 Listing of SAMCs

- 6.4.1** MQA will be responsible for developing and managing a list of quality verified SAMCs for public reference.

6.5 Enhancing the GGP

- 6.5.1** MQA will engage with and gather feedback from the QVCs in order to further improved the GGP through the regular revisions.
- 6.5.2** MQA will review the policies in this GGP from time to time to ensure their continued effectiveness.

6.6 Value added services

- 6.6.1** MQA will work with the QVCs and SAMC providers to assist with the provision of digital credentials to the learners.

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APPENDIX 1

Design of SAMC to meet the requirement stipulated in this GGP can be done in the manner illustrated below:

SAMC Design

Module ILOs: 1. 2. 3.				1. SAMC – Basic Business Management 2. Credits – 2 credits (90 hrs) 3. Outcomes – 3 Module ILOs 4. Assessment – all sub-module assessments + summative assessment.
Basic Finance	20 Hrs	Sub-Module ILOs	Module Assessment	
Basic Marketing	20 Hrs	Sub-Module ILOs	Module Assessment	
Basic HRM	10 Hrs	Sub-Module ILOs	Module Assessment	
Basic Operations	20 Hrs	Sub-Module ILOs	Module Assessment	
Basic Management	10 Hrs	Sub-Module ILOs	Module Assessment	
Basic Accounting	20 Hrs	Sub-Module ILOs	Module Assessment	
Module Summative Assessment: Case Analysis				

APPENDIX 2

DIGITAL CREDENTIAL

The following is the list of detailed information about the SAMC provided:

1. **Title of SAMC**
2. **Mode of delivery**
online, face-to-face, blended, remote etc
3. **Medium of instruction**
the language used
4. **MQF Level**
the best fit level for the SAMC
5. **Intended Learning outcomes**
what the learner will know, be able to do and develops attitudes towards objects or subjects.
6. **Learning Time (LT)**
the estimated time for average learners to successfully complete the SAMC.
7. **MQF Credits**
1 credit = 40 notional hours of learning
8. **Assessment outcome**
based on the system used
9. **SAMC provider**
The entity which provides the SAMC.
10. **Quality Verification**
by QVC and MQA

List of Panel Members

BIL	PANEL MEMBERS	ORGANISATION
1.	Dr. Hazman Shah Abdullah (Chairman)	Quality Assurance Expert
2.	Dr. Sr. Ir. Suhaimi Abdul Talib	Quality Assurance Expert
3.	Prof. Dr. Andy Liew Teik Kooi	HELP University
4.	Prof. Madya Ts. Dr. Muhammad Fahmi Miskon	Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM)
5.	Prof. Madya Dr. Nurbiha A. Shukor	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)
6.	Prof. Dr. Abd Karim Alias	Quality Assurance Expert
7.	Dr. Eddy Chong Siong Choy	Taylor's University
8.	Prof Madya Dr. Wan Zuhainis Saad	Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)
9.	Ms. Rosmaizura Abd Razib	Jabatan Pendidikan Politeknik dan Kolej Komuniti (JPPKK)
10.	Ms. Rosmawati Mat	Social Security Organisation (SOCSO)
11.	Mr. Musalman Ahmad Iskandar Shah	Social Security Organisation (SOCSO)
12.	Ms. Heryanti Hilmi	Construction Industry Development Board Malaysia (CIDB)
13.	Mr. Nik Naharudin Mohd Nasir	Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC)
14.	Mr. Elyaraj Rethnam	Human Resource Development Corporation (HRDCorp)

Glossary

No	Terms	Explanation
1	Micro-credentials	Micro-credential is digital certification ³ of assessed knowledge, skills and competencies in a specific area or field which can be a component of an accredited programme or stand-alone courses supporting the professional, technical, academic and personal development of the learners.
2	Stand-alone Micro-credentials	A Stand-alone Micro-credential is the digital certification of assessed learning acquired through a short course or a narrow area for personal, professional, technical and academic development which is not part of or a module in a larger programme.
3	Quality Verification	Quality Verification is the process of evaluating whether a SAMC is in compliance with the GGP on SAMCs.
4	Quality Verification Centre	Quality Verification Centre an MQA approved centre to carry out quality verification of SAMCs.
5	Quality Verification Centre Applicant	Quality Verification Centre Applicant is an authorised organisation which seeks to become a QVC by meeting all the requirements of this GGP.
6	Quality Verification Mark	A digital and visual sign that denotes the SAMC has been assessed by a QVC and found to be in compliance with the GGP on SAMCs.
7	Stand-alone Micro-credentials Registry	A depository which lists all the SAMCs that have been quality verified for public information.
8	Credits	A quantitative description of the learning effort required to successfully completed a course. One (1) credit is equivalent to 40 notional hours of learning time.
9	Malaysian Qualifications Framework Level	The qualifications level describes the expected outcomes i.e., knowledge, skills, competencies associated with any qualification acquired by a learner in any one of the 8 levels in MQF.

10	Subject Matter Experts	An expert who verifies that the content of an SAMC is suitable, adequate and current given the course outcomes.
11	MQF Assessors	An expert who verifies that the SAMC design consistent with the requirements of OBE and has best fit to one or more MQF Levels.
12	Learning Time	The time required/estimated in hours to prepare for, attend lectures, workshops, labs etc., and carry out all the readings, discussions, reflections, assignments, presentation before, during and even after the short course.
13	Digital Credential	An electronic record of the provider, the course, the learner, his/her performance and other information as stated in Appendix 2.
14	Authentication	A process of verifying that the learner who bears the digital certification is, in fact, the learner who attended the course.
15	Credit Transfer	A process of evaluating and recognising a module, course, MC or SAMC as equivalent to modules in a programme leading to exemptions or acceptance of grades.
16	Malaysian Micro-credential Statement	A document that lists the information that should be included in any digital certification issued to learners who have successfully completed an MC or SAMC.
17	Quality Management System	The policies, processes, procedures and structures which ensure that the SAMC is developed, designed, delivered, reviewed and improved based on feedback from learners and other stakeholders.
18	Credential Management System	As sequence of processes (system) by which a SAMC provider certifies a learner as having successfully passed all requirements by providing a portable digital certificate that provides details of the provider, the learner, the learning and the achievement to other users.



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QUALITY VERIFICATION OF STAND-ALONE MICRO-CREDENTIALS