

2013

STANDARDS:

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE AND GRADUATE DIPLOMA



Malaysian Qualifications Agency



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FOREWORD

The Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), as the sole national higher education quality assurance organization, facilitates quality through the development of quality assurance documents. These documents are Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF), Codes of Practice, Guidelines to Good Practices and Programme Standards, all of which must be used as a reference point in the conduct of a programme of study in Malaysia.

Standards for Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma have been developed to provide specific guidelines to higher education providers so as to fulfil the MQF requirements. These standards, if followed closely and wisely, enable the development and sustenance of quality programmes in Malaysia, consequently improving the access of students to higher education programmes, the quality of graduates and their employability and mobility.

The Standards for Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma provide directions to promote the development of MQF Level 6 programmes, for example Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma and Bachelor. The standards include the purpose of the programmes, credit loads, duration of study, entry requirements, learning outcomes, and articulation into these programmes.

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

The MQF has grouped Graduate Certificate (GC) and Graduate Diploma (GD) together with the Bachelor Degree at Level 6 of the MQF. However, at present, there has been no documentation pertaining to the development and delivery of Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma programmes which can be used as reference by interested developers of these programmes. This document has thus been drafted to fill this void. The objective is to assist curriculum developers (universities and university-colleges), MQA officers and panel of assessors, Ministry of Education (MOE), professional associations, employers and the wider public, including students, parents, and education and training bodies, to understand parameters or factors determining the level of these qualifications.

The set of specifications stated in this document shall be used as a standard reference for the design and accreditation of Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma qualifications as required by the MQF.

2.0. GRADUATE CERTIFICATE QUALIFICATION

2.1. Purpose of Qualification

The purpose of the Graduate Certificate qualification is to produce graduates who are capable of:

1. applying technical and theoretical concepts in a broad range of contexts to undertake professional work, and
2. pursue further studies or training leading to a Graduate Diploma and a Bachelor degree.

Graduate Certificate is a qualification that indicates the attainment of competencies at level 6 set by the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF). The main difference between the Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma is the total programme credit loading.

Graduate Certificate programmes or qualifications must be designed and accredited to enable graduates to demonstrate the learning outcomes expressed as knowledge, skills and application of knowledge and skills specified in the Graduate Certificate criteria and type descriptor.

Graduates at this level will have Bachelor degree knowledge and skills for professional work and for further studies and training to obtain a Graduate Diploma or a Bachelor degree.

- **Knowledge:** Graduates at this level will have theoretical and technical knowledge with some depth of a specific discipline or a broad field work and learning.
- **Skills:** Graduates at this level will have a broad range of cognitive, technical (psychomotor) and communication skills to select and apply standard methods and techniques to:

- i) analyze information to complete a range of professional activities;
 - ii) interpret and provide solutions to unpredictable and sometimes complex problems;
 - iii) communicate/transmit information and skills to others in the day to day professional operation/practice.
- **Application of knowledge and skills:** Graduates at this level will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills:
 - i) to adapt fundamental principles, concepts and techniques in known situations;
 - ii) in planning, problem solving and contributing to decision making in professional practice;
 - iii) with responsibility and accountability for self-directed learning and work in collaboration with others within broad parameters; and
 - iv) for pursuing further studies in the same or other disciplines.

The Graduate Certificate is used for purposes of continuing professional development, changing a field of training or expertise and as entry qualification to a higher level of study with permissible advanced-standing credit transfer.

The Graduate Certificate can be designed as a component or part of a larger programme to equip learners with appropriate knowledge and skills to enable the holder of a Graduate Certificate to pursue at Graduate Diploma or Bachelor degree.

Note: This qualification is different from “Graduate Certificate” qualifications awarded by universities in other countries like Australia, England and other countries. They are pegged at the same level of bachelor degree and prepare student for post-graduate level qualifications.

2.2. Level, Credit Loading and Duration of Study

Graduate Certificate qualifications are positioned in Level 6 of the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) in terms of academic qualification standing. The minimum number of credit units required for graduation in a Graduate Certificate programme is 36 credits (inclusive 6 credits of U1 subjects from general studies). As per MQF definition, 1 credit is equivalent to 40 notional study hours. The duration of study is a minimum of 2 semesters.

2.3. Entry Requirement

Candidates with the following criteria will be eligible for consideration of admission into the graduate certificate programmes. The minimum entry requirements are as follows:

- A Pass in Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia (STPM) with a minimum GPA 2.0 in any 2 subjects or equivalent;

OR

- A Diploma with a minimum CGPA 2.0 or equivalent;

AND

- 2 years of work experience.

Credit transfer for diploma graduates are not allowed since the program is very focus on niche area and the limitation of the graduating credits.

2.4. Learning Outcomes

The Graduate Certificate is conferred on learners who are able to:

1. demonstrate knowledge and comprehension on fundamental principles of a field of study, acquired from advanced textbooks;
2. use the knowledge and comprehension through methods that indicate professionalism in employment;
3. argue and solve problems in the field of study;
4. communicate effectively and convey information, ideas, problems and solutions to experts and non-experts;
5. show techniques and capabilities to search and use data to make decisions having considered social, scientific and relevant ethical issues;
6. apply team and interpersonal skills which are suitable to employment; and
7. possess independent study skills to continue further study with a high degree of autonomy.

3.0. GRADUATE DIPLOMA QUALIFICATION

3.1. Purpose of Qualification

The purpose of the Graduate Diploma qualification is to develop graduates who are capable of:

1. applying technical and theoretical concepts in a broad range of contexts to undertake professional work, and
2. as a pathway for further studies or training leading to a Bachelor degree.

Graduate Diploma is a qualification that indicates the attainment of competencies at level 6 set by the MQF. The main difference between the Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma is the total programme credit loading.

Graduate Diploma qualifications must be designed and accredited to enable graduates to demonstrate the learning outcomes expressed as knowledge, skills and application of knowledge and skills specified in the Graduate Diploma criteria and type descriptor.

Graduates at this level will have Bachelor degree knowledge and skills for professional work and for further studies or training to complete the Bachelor degree.

- **Knowledge:** Graduates at this level will have a theoretical and technical knowledge with some depth of a specific discipline or a broad field of work and learning.
- **Skills:** Graduates at this level will have a broad range of cognitive, technical (psychomotor) and communication skills to select and apply standard methods and technologies to:
 - i) analyze information to complete a range of professional activities;

- ii) interpret and provide solutions to unpredictable and sometimes complex problems;
 - iii) communicate/transmit information and skills to others in the day to day professional operation/practice.
- **Application of knowledge and skills:** Graduates at this level will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills:
 - i) to adapt fundamental principles, concepts and techniques in known situations;
 - ii) in planning, problem solving and contributing to decision making in professional practice;
 - iii) with responsibility and accountability for self-directed learning and work in collaboration with others within broad parameters; and
 - iv) for pursuing further studies in the same or other disciplines.

Graduate Diploma is used for purposes such as continuing professional development, changing a field of training or expertise and as entry qualification to a higher level of study with permissible advanced-standing credit transfer.

The Graduate Diploma can be designed as a component or part of a larger programme to equip learners with appropriate knowledge and skills to enable the holder of a Graduate Diploma to pursue a Bachelor degree.

Note: This qualification is different from “Graduate Diploma” qualifications awarded by universities in other countries like Australia, England and other countries. They are pegged at the same level of bachelor degree and prepare student for post-graduate level qualifications.

3.2. Level, Credit Loading and Duration of Study

Graduate Diploma qualifications are positioned in Level 6 of the MQF in terms of academic qualification standing. The minimum number of credit units required for graduation in a Graduate Diploma programme is 66 credits (inclusive 6 credits of U1 subjects from general studies). As per MQF definition, 1 credit is equivalent to 40 notional study hours. The duration of study is a minimum of 3 ½ semesters.

3.3. Entry Requirement

Candidates with the following criteria will be eligible to be considered for admission into the Graduate Diploma programmes. The minimum entry requirements are as follows:

- A pass in Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia (STPM) with a minimum GPA 2.0 in any 2 subjects or equivalent;

OR

- A Diploma with a minimum CGPA 2.0 or equivalent;

AND

- 2 years of work experience.

OR

- A Graduate Certificate in the relevant field

Credit transfer for diploma graduates are not allowed since the program is very focus on niche area and the limitation of the graduating credits.

3.4. Learning Outcomes

Graduate diploma is conferred on learners who are able to:

1. demonstrate study skills to pursue further study. Demonstrate knowledge and comprehension on fundamental principles of a field of study, acquired from advanced textbooks;
2. use the knowledge and comprehension through methods that indicate professionalism in employment;
3. argue and solve problems in the field of study;
4. communicate effectively and convey information, ideas, problems and solutions to experts and non-experts;
5. show techniques and capabilities to search and use data to make decisions having considered social, scientific and relevant ethical issues;
6. apply team and interpersonal skills which are suitable to employment; and
7. possess independent study skills to continue further study with a high degree of autonomy.

4.0. Articulation

As the Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma and Bachelor programmes are classified within the same level 6 of MQF, vertical progression within the three levels is permissible.

Credit transfer is determined on the basis of the degree of similarity or dissimilarity between the intended discipline of study and the one already studied as reflected in the awarded graduate certificate or graduate diploma. Credit transfer arrangement is permissible without limit subject to complying with subject mapping policy as followings:

- subject passing grade of minimum C;
- subject with similar credit value;
- similarity of curriculum of at least 80 percent; and
- subjects can be transferred only from accredited programmes.

For entry from a Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma to a Bachelor Degree programme, assessment for advanced-standing credit transfer will apply.