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Proposed Recognition of Courses Conducted by PPA to Certificate, Master and Doctorate Levels

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Abstract

In line with the government's aspiration to develop the enhancement of knowledge among Malaysians, the process of learning should be a continuous process. Hence, the Centre for Academic Development (PPA) of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) has moved a step further by providing an innovative curriculum by recognizing the various programs conducted by PPA to be given credits to make the process of learning more meaningful. This working paper discusses the implementation of courses at the certificate, master and doctorate (Educational Development) levels through programs and courses conducted by PPA. The courses involved are Competency Level Assessment (PTK) courses as well as other courses which are organized by PPA. The overall objective of the programs is to produce excellent and professional academicians and academic administrators by focusing on the aspects of education, supervision, research and service in line with the UKM's aspiration. The entry requirements as well as the implementation methods for the certificate, master and doctorate programs will also be discussed.

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1. Introduction

The Centre for Academic Development (PPA) of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) has been training lecturers in disciplines related to teaching and learning besides organizing competency programs required by UKM. Training programs conducted by PPA have been restructured in order to come up with a suitable training pattern which meets the needs of the lecturers especially in the field of teaching, research, publication and service. Apart from that, PPA has also been directly involved in the successful implementation of the Competency Level Assessment (PTK) courses, which have been adapted to meet the competency needs of the academic staff. These

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courses are implemented through modules and also online so as to save time and increase the competency of its academic members.

PPA is determined to become a centre of reference and an initiator of academic programs to realize UKM's vision as the knowledge centre of choice by 2015. With this vision set in place, PPA is aspired to be the Centre of Excellence in Professional Development for Lecturers in Higher Learning Institutions. PPA's aspiration was endorsed at the University Management Meeting (MPU) through its letter on 8 September 2009. Thus, PPA in cooperation with the UKM's Faculty of Education plans to create a postgraduate program in educational development in its effort to achieve this. With this in mind, PPA plans to incorporate all its programs to form only one integrated program.

The proposed program is an integrated program which involves the awarding of certificates, master and doctorate degrees in Higher Education Development. The offering of this integrated program is in line with the government's intention to encourage people to take up lifelong education programs. (Grow, 1991; Norzaini, 2009). Through this program, participants who sign up for various PPA-conducted programs can be given credits as allowed by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) (KPT, 2010; Sharifah Hapsah, 2007; Sharifah Hapsah & Riza Atiq, 2009). The credits obtained can then be used to complete a program. Courses carried out through modules will be given certain credit values based on the total learning hours set by each course. The credits can be accumulated from one module to another. The courses in this program have been running smoothly and have successfully trained lecturers to become well-known scholars at both local and international levels. Therefore the awarding of certificates as well as master and doctorate degrees is justified through accumulation of the set credits. The targeted participants for this program are individuals at the institutions of higher learning in Malaysia and possess at least a degree qualification.

2. Curriculum Innovation

Curriculum is an important tool with the aim of producing graduates who have qualities required by the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (KKM). Curriculum refers to the composition aspect of knowledge area in a specific discipline. It is then described in detail through its course content. Attention is given to the curriculum delivery system including the teaching and learning method as well as the assessment process during course implementation.

The study curriculum is developed so that there is academic exploration continuity especially from the aspect of research and innovation among the students. Furthermore, the curriculum's effectiveness and delivery system are evident by having professionals who are efficient and competitive. This is to ensure that institutions of higher learning continue to provide high quality curriculum that meets the nation's needs and aspiration.

The proposed curriculum structure for the integrated program on higher learning development gives credits to course modules conducted by PPA. Credits can be accumulated from one module to another and can be used to complete certificate, master and doctorate programs. According to the guidelines set by KKM, a student who has completed a course of 20 credit hours is qualified to be given a certificate while a student who has completed 40 credit hours can be awarded a master's degree in his discipline. (KPT, 2010; Malaysian Qualifications Agency, 2008; Sharifah Hapsah, 2007; Sharifah Hapsah & Riza Atiq, 2009; Rosadah, 2008)

This program provides an alternative to the traditional pattern of learning. It also seems to fit the role of PPA which comprises the curriculum development and innovation as well as academic development. This is due to the nature of the curriculum itself which requires innovation so that it can achieve the university's objective of producing graduates who are intelligent, able to achieve their maximum potential and capable of competing at local and international levels. Curriculum innovation is a process which can be done systematically and continuously since the curriculum and its delivery are seen as dynamic and require innovation and development from time to time. Thus, innovation and curriculum development are important due to their dynamic and ever-changing characteristics which meet the needs of a learner.

3. Lifelong Learning

Through this program, the culture of lifelong learning can be instilled in the students. Students who go through this program can prepare themselves to go to the highest level of education in the country. The concept of lifelong learning (Grow, 1991; Norzaini, 2009) is aligned with the National Higher Learning Strategic Plan (PSPTN)

launched by the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi on 27 August 2007. The Plan has several core strategies that can spur the higher education transformation to higher levels and this includes the culturalization of lifelong learning.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia is not alone in its effort to make lifelong learning as part of its culture. Many institutions of higher learning, locally or abroad, have realized the significance of lifelong learning and have started offering suitable programs by applying this concept. In Malaysia, the setting up of Universiti Terbuka Malaysia for example, has opened up opportunity to those who are interested in furthering their studies to higher levels.

Besides, the presence of part-time study and long distance learning programs have also given them opportunity for those who did not have the chance to continue their education due to financial constraint or work commitment. Such programs would make them realize the importance of education so that they can become more competitive in the workforce.

4. Continuous Professional Development

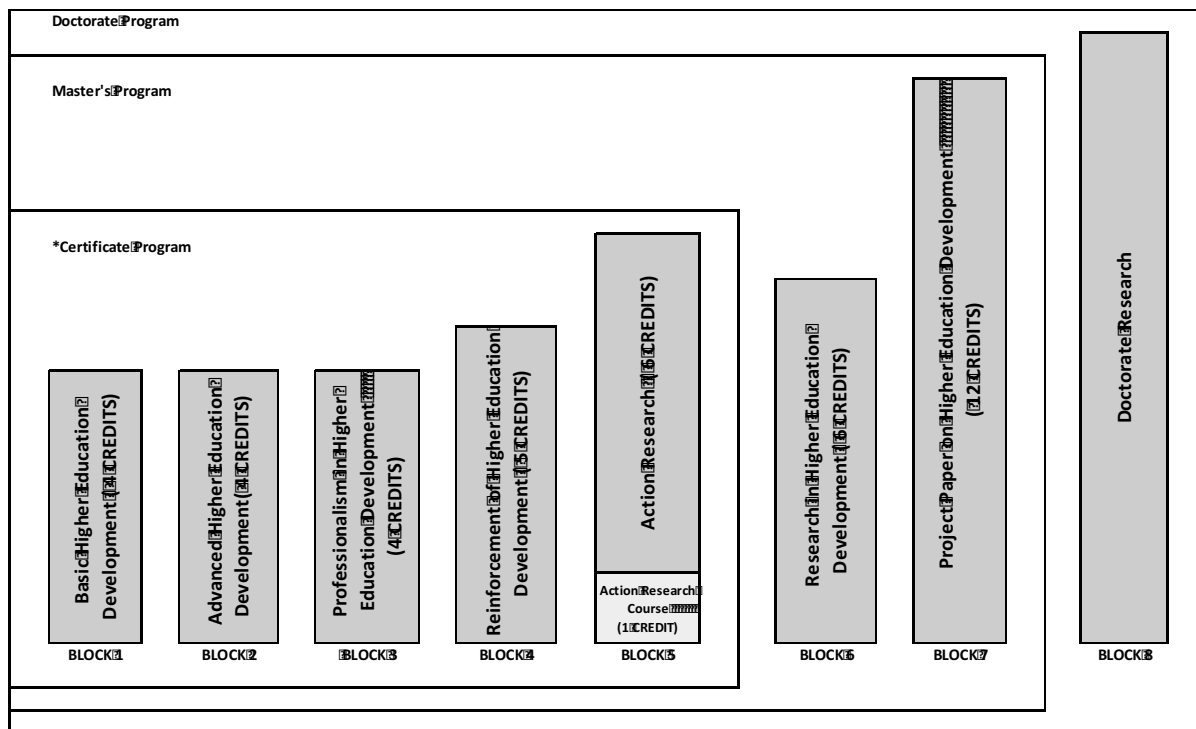
The concept of lifelong learning offered in this program also contributes towards continuous professional development for the academic members as well as the management of an institution. This is a long term objective as higher learning institutions with effective leadership, highly knowledgeable and professional teachers, good teaching and learning facilities, quality students and relevant curriculum will be more competitive in facing the global challenge. Effective leadership to spearhead a higher learning institution is crucial to ensure that the implementation and achievement of its strategic objectives are met, while teachers with excellent knowledge and credibility have the capability to educate and produce quality students.

In addition, a nation's competitiveness relies critically on its capability to develop quality human capital with first class mentality. In this context, programs to promote highest academic achievements should be encouraged. The much needed human capital can be produced provided there is commitment to develop oneself to the highest level and contribute to the society, nation and the world. However, as of 2005, the enrolment of postgraduates especially PhD students was still low, which was 6882, meaning that institutions of higher learning need to upgrade their postgraduate programs. The country's targeted enrolment of PhD students was 21,680 in 2010 and 55,500 in 2020. Hence, with these programs, academic members and management with excellent skills can be produced to manage world class higher education institutions and eventually, students who can compete at a higher level globally.

Apart from UKM, the Centre for Continuing Education at Universiti Malaya also offers various professional courses for executives in areas such as administration, marketing, language proficiency, and early child education. These courses, which see increasing number of participants every year, have significantly helped the lecturers and staff of higher learning institutions in terms of professional development. With the presence of such programs, the objectives of one of the core strategies in PSPTN which targets 100,000 Malaysians with PhD's by 2020 could become a reality.

5. Integrated Program Concept

The program will be integrated and involve the certificate, master and doctorate levels as shown in the diagram below.



The Concept of Integrated Program for Higher Education Development

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6. Program Goals And Objectives

Program Goals

The goals of the program are to provide:

- i. Knowledgeable and skilled human resource that will apply the latest knowledge in the related discipline
- ii. The learning process at the certificate, master and doctorate levels which will assist the human resource with credibility in the university management
- ii. The human resource with global views on research, analysis and decision making as well as capable of becoming visionary leaders with high credibility

Program Objectives

The overall objectives of the program are to produce:

- i. Academicians and academic managers who are highly skilled to manage world class institutions of higher learning
- ii. Academicians and academic managers who can contribute their social service to the society responsibly
- iii. Academicians who become reference experts in their respective disciplines and contribute in the nation's policy making process
- iv. Lead scholars who are excellent in education and research
- v. Academicians and academic managers who are competitive in realizing UKM's mission and vision

Program Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes for Higher Education Development Certificate Program

- i. Capable of becoming highly skilled and professional academicians and academic managers with emphasis on the aspects of education, research, supervision and service

- ii. Able to align self planning with the directions and image of UKM
- iii. Able to conduct teaching and supervision effectively
- iv. Able to carry out research and innovation in teaching and learning
- v. Able to conduct research and manage international standard research findings including publishing articles in high impact journals.

Learning Outcomes for Higher Education Development Master's Program

- i. Capable of becoming highly skilled and professional academicians and academic managers with emphasis on the aspects of education, research, supervision and service
- ii. Able to align self planning with the directions and image of UKM
- iii. Able to conduct teaching and supervision effectively
- iv. Able to carry out research and innovation in teaching and learning
- v. Able to conduct research and manage international standard research findings including publishing articles in high impact journals.
- vi. Able to become program accreditation examiner in their respective disciplines and reference experts
- vii. Able to state the responsibility of academic leadership as a role model, mentor and administrator
- viii. Able to devise strategic planning and manage finances strategically
- ix. Able to deliver inaugural lectures and other similar lectures
- x. Able to lead a multi-discipline academic team and make collective decisions
- xi. Able to become a lead scholar

Learning Outcomes for Higher Education Development Doctorate Program

- i. Contribute in the form of adaptation, application and interpretation of the present knowledge and the advancement of knowledge in the area of higher education development
- ii. Present comprehensive views and overview of literature, experiments, creative works, or other systematic approaches or carry out critical reevaluation related to theory and professional practice
- iii. Produce academic articles of international standard
- iv. Demonstrate the ability to present a project concept, design and implementation in order to generate new and meaningful knowledge or understanding
- v. Demonstrate the ability to synthesize and innovate in problem solving regarding complex issues in the area of higher education development

7. Program Courses

Courses for the Higher Education Development Certificate Program:

Block 1 – Basic Higher Education Development

Block 2 – Advanced Higher Education Development

Block 4 – Reinforcement of Higher Education Development

1. Qualitative Research Data Analysis
2. Basic Internal Auditing
3. Basic Research and Publication
4. Quantitative Research Methodology
5. Action Research
6. Counseling
7. Quality Learning Sustainability at Institutions of Higher Learning
8. Rasch Measurement Model with Winsteps
9. Reinforcement of Internal Auditing
10. AMOS Structural Equation Modeling
11. Online Teaching and Learning
12. Appreciation of MS ISO Quality Management System
13. Stress Management

14. Article Writing in Impact and Indexed Journals
15. Question Preparation
16. SPIN and e-Kandungan
17. Effective Mentoring Strategies
18. Effective NCR Reply Techniques

Block 5 – Action Research

(including an action research course from Reinforcement Program)

Courses for the Higher Education Development Master’s Program:

Block 1 – Basic Higher Education Development

Block 2 – Advanced Higher Education Development

Block 3 – Professionalism in Higher Education Development

Block 4 – Reinforcement of Higher Education Development

1. Qualitative Research Data Analysis
2. Basic Internal Auditing
3. Basic Research and Publication
4. Quantitative Research Methodology
5. Action Research
6. Counseling
7. Quality Learning Sustainability at Institutions of Higher Learning
8. Rasch Measurement Model with Winsteps
9. Reinforcement of Internal Auditing
10. AMOS Structural Equation Modeling
11. Online Teaching and Learning
12. Appreciation of MS ISO Quality Management System
13. Stress Management
14. Article Writing in Impact and Indexed Journals
15. Question Preparation
16. SPIN and e-Kandungan
17. Effective Mentoring Strategies
18. Effective NCR Reply Techniques

Block 5 – Action Research

(including an action research course from Reinforcement Program)

Block 6 – Research in Higher Education Development

Block 7 – Project Paper on Higher Education Development

Courses for the Higher Education Development Doctorate Program:

Block 1 – Basic Higher Education Development

Block 2 – Advanced Higher Education Development

Block 3/Block 4/Block 6/Faculty of Education

- Professionalism in Higher Education Development, OR
- Reinforcement of Higher Education Development, OR
- Research in Higher Education Development, OR
- Any selected courses at the master’s level from the Faculty of Education (Curriculum and Pedagogy, Measurement and Assessment, Education Administration, Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counseling).

Block 8 – Doctorate Research

8. Entry Requirements

- Bachelor's degree and 5 years' work experience at a higher learning institution; OR
- Master's degree and working at a higher learning institution; OR
- Master of Education degree from any recognized local institution of higher learning

9. Preparation Of Course Synopsis

Each course conducted by PPA for this integrated program comes complete with its synopsis according to the block as required by Malaysian Qualifications Framework (KPT, 2010; Malaysian Qualifications Agency. 2008; Sharifah Hapsah. 2007; Sharifah Hapsah & Riza Atiq. 2009; Rosadah. 2008; Wan Hamidon. 2009). The aspects covered are course title, synopsis, references, learning outcome matrix, lesson plan and assessment. Appendix 1 shows a sample of a synopsis.

10. Conclusion

The program is currently underway and serves as training to upgrade the capacity and competency of UKM's academic staff. The results of this program are evident based on the high number of its staff members who have achieved scholarly level. Therefore, the recognition of this program by awarding credits that can be accumulated in order to obtain certificates as well as master and doctorate degrees is justified. The working paper for this program has been forwarded to the Faculty of Education to be considered at the next Senate meeting.

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