



Designed for Malaysia

OpenCreds

A lifelong learning micro-credentialing framework



 openlearning

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1. Introduction

Rapid and fundamental changes to the global economy are disrupting labour markets and increasing demand for new jobs. In order for people to remain employable and to improve their standard of living, they must learn new skills, increase their productivity and be more adaptable. In response to both the challenges and the opportunities, society is looking towards continual and lifelong learning to prepare it for the future (Malaysian Qualifications Agency, 2020).

Malaysia has the opportunity to be a global leader in the nationwide implementation of industry-relevant, demand-driven, stackable micro-credentials by building on its strong higher education policy foundations and institutional capability.

Beginning in 2011, Malaysia launched the Blueprint on Enculturation of Lifelong Learning for Malaysia 2011-2020 to provide lifelong learning stakeholders with a road map to promote lifelong learning through formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Then, in 2014 the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) launched the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) Malaysia initiative under Shift 9: Globalized Online Learning in the Malaysian Education Blueprint (Higher Education) 2015-2025 and selected OpenLearning as the national platform for MOOCs from public universities and polytechnics. In the years since, thousands of freely accessible online courses have been offered by both public and private universities in Malaysia to encourage lifelong learning.

In order to achieve those aims, lifelong learning policies and programmes need to be coordinated, quality assured and accepted by industry, including with active involvement from small and medium enterprises through to multinationals and government linked companies. Beyond employment outcomes, lifelong learning programmes must provide learners with a pathway towards further study within Malaysia and overseas through existing processes, including recognising those for open access programs and prior experiential learning as credentials, which can leverage online lifelong learning to increase mobility (MOHE, 2011). The credentials in this context are defined as a key marker of achievement, and a potentially important signal to employers and others of a learner's skill, capability, and fit.

These blueprints have encouraged a greater level of collaboration between industry and higher education institutions, and hybrid degrees that incorporate on-the-job training and professional certification, which are now recognised in the accreditation system in Malaysia as expanded in the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) Version 2.0. The framework acknowledges "partial qualifications" as stated on Page 10, item 27:

"the Framework is also applicable in principle to the issuance of "partial qualifications" to support upgrading and upskilling initiatives of individuals such as short programmes and modular learning, as it may be accumulated and used to obtain full qualifications."

Supporting this effort, MQA has launched two guidelines in September 2016 - APEL for Credits (APEL(C)) and Guidelines on Credit Transfer for MOOCs, which recognises assessment of informal learning based on accumulated experience for the purpose of obtaining credits that goes towards a formal qualification.

These efforts and guidelines in support of lifelong learning and industry-relevant education have laid the foundations for micro-credentials in Malaysia. In July 2020, MQA released the Guidelines to Good Practices (GGP): Micro-Credential. Through the GGP, course providers are given greater

flexibility to meet learner/industry needs and diversify their revenue streams while still meeting their regulatory requirements. In the guideline, MQA defines micro-credentials as:

“digital certification of assessed knowledge, skills and competencies in a specific area or field which can be a component of academic programmes or standalone courses supporting the professional, academic and personal development of the learners.”

Typically, micro-credentials are shorter and in many cases cheaper than formal multi-year qualifications. However, the flexibility of micro-credentials has caused great excitement for some, and confusion for others (Adelman, 2017; Ifenthaler, Bellin-Mularski, & Mah, 2016; Milligan & Kennedy, 2017; Oliver, 2019): the need for definitions and quality assurance mechanisms has been frequently cited.

Already, several higher education institutions, including Taylor’s University, Open University of Malaysia (OUM) and Asia e-University have started offering this type of courses both internally (limited to the provider’s registered students) and to the public (Fadzil, 2020; Asian Centre of e-Learning (ACE), 2020). Beyond Higher Education Providers (HEPs), industry bodies like the Malaysian Institute of Accountants and the Finance Accreditation Agency are also actively exploring micro credentialing as a platform to upskill professionals. Both organisations are working closely with MQA to align their offerings with the nation’s agency that oversees educational standards.

It is with these aims in mind and in an effort to increase access to lifelong learning that OpenLearning is pleased to introduce the OpenCreds framework.

The OpenCreds framework is designed to provide **certainty and consistency in the quality, relevance and size of micro-credentials** to both education providers and lifelong learners across Malaysia. This document describes OpenCreds, who they are for, and how providers might consider using them for greater connectivity with learners through the OpenLearning lifelong learning platform.

The OpenCreds framework ties together and supports existing Malaysian education policies, the GGP for Micro-credentials and the Malaysian Qualifications Framework.

In particular, a key aim of this framework is to simplify the implementation of the GGP and APEL(C) for higher education providers while also providing a common structure for industry associations, TVET institutions and training providers to develop their own courses in line with a single micro-credentialing standard.

Unique among global micro-credentialing frameworks, OpenCreds connects the learning experience to qualitative evidence of the learning outcomes achieved through an automatically generated portfolio, enabling learners to showcase their skills, capabilities and credentials.

As employers begin to hire employees based on competencies in addition to, or instead of, degrees, they will place more value on skill sets and less on a certification or degree (Wells, 2017). The successful implementation of OpenCreds represents an opportunity for Malaysian course providers to offer short-form courses, credentials and pathways that meet the needs of industry and learners alike by providing a range of upskilling opportunities that could prepare Malaysians for a future of continuous, lifelong learning.

It is expected that the OpenCreds Framework will evolve over time to ensure it continues to meet the changing needs of lifelong learners, industry and education providers.

2. What are OpenCredits?

OpenCredits is the lifelong learning framework designed to meet the needs of the education sector, industry, and most importantly its lifelong learners. OpenCredits is an extension of OpenLearning, an Australian company and lifelong learning platform which exists to increase access to higher quality education.

This framework is designed to meet the needs of the Malaysian education sector, industry, and most importantly its lifelong learners. Set out in this framework is the concept of an **OpenCred** which is a distinct type of micro-credential, a certification of assessed learning that is additional, alternative, complementary to or a component part of a formal qualification.

An OpenCred may only be issued upon completion of a course from one of the three types of learning (Professional Learning, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) or Higher Education (HE)) that:

- Implements best practices in learning design as set out in a quality assurance criterion (refer to Appendix B).
- Assess learners based on the specified learning outcomes resulting in the learner producing authentic evidence of learning that demonstrates their development of knowledge, skills, and competency in a particular area.
- Specifies learning hours.
- is classified as one or a combination of two OpenCred classifications (Pathway, Credit-bearing and/or Industry-recognised).
- Delivered via the OpenLearning platform, an Australian lifelong learning platform designed around the principles of social constructivism and authentic assessment.
- Provide details of any learning paths, credit/recognition of prior learning, or industry/association agreements in place; including any expiration date if known.

An OpenCred may be offered by different types of education providers, which are categorised according to the type of learning (Higher Education, Technical and Vocational Education or Professional Learning) to facilitate interoperability and improve clarity for learners.

An OpenCred may be a stand-alone credential, designed to provide value to a learner independently of a formal qualification, or it may interact with a formal qualification in one of the following classifications:

1. A Pathway OpenCred:
 - a. this type of OpenCred is aligned to a formal qualification level to provide learners and employers with a clear understanding of their level of achievement; and/or;
 - b. successful completion of this type of OpenCred leads to an offer of admission to a formal qualification.
2. A Credit-bearing OpenCred: successful completion of this type of OpenCred earns credit for learning in a formal qualification, or a component of a course that is part of a qualification.
3. An Industry-recognised OpenCred: this type of OpenCred is recognised by an industry association or accrediting body as meeting the needs towards maintenance of continuing professional development requirements.

3. Who are OpenCreds designed for?

The OpenCreds framework is designed with one driving purpose: to enable lifelong learning to become a practical reality for Malaysian post-secondary learners. This requires the development of a quality-assured micro-credentialing framework that establishes trust, consistency of language and structure, as well as a clear articulation of value and (potential) pathways.

To achieve this, OpenCreds provides the following benefits to the below stakeholders:

Learners:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Quality-assured micro-credentials across any providers of OpenCreds.- Established framework for micro-credentials to build trust in their value and exchangeable value in potential pathways.- Enabled to more easily access just-in-time learning that is current, research-informed, and industry-relevant.- Centralised evidence of learning for any OpenCreds completed via the OpenLearning Portfolio making it easier to apply for recognition of prior learning.
Employers and Industry:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Quality-assured micro-credentials across any of the OpenCreds providers.- Enabled to train, upskill, and reskill employees.- Visibility of candidates and employee's skills, knowledge, and capability in practice.- Enabled to more easily measure return on investment for learning and development spend.
Education Providers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- A consistent micro-credentialing framework that is also aligned with MQA's GGP:Micro-Credentials and MQF.- A clear way to distinguish the value of their courses from the large number of non-accredited online courses in the market.- Easier to communicate potential pathways to learners.- A more scalable solution for Higher Education Providers and Accreditation Centre to diversify revenue streams.- Easier collaboration with/recognition of professional learning providers and industry partners.- Streamlined evidence gathering and recognition of prior learning processes using OpenLearning Portfolios.

4. Alignment of OpenCreds with the Malaysian Education Sector

OpenCreds have been developed with the awareness that whilst they largely sit outside of the MQF, to not factor in the levels, types, policies, and regulatory frameworks would be doing the learner and education providers themselves a disservice. On top of that, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) has also produced the Guidelines to Good Practices for Micro-Credentials (GGP), a document detailing the justification, principles and best practices for micro-credentials in Malaysia. OpenCreds is developed with these principles and good practices in mind.

By taking this approach, OpenCreds empower education providers with:

- greater flexibility to meet learner/industry needs whilst still meeting their regulatory requirements;
- the ability to diversify their revenue streams, and reach new markets;
- an approach to assessment that produces verifiable evidence of learning
- automatically generated portfolio for every learner to facilitate recognition of prior learning; and,
- a detailed and transparent framework for the development of high quality micro-credential courses.

In accordance with the GGP’s definition of micro-credentials, OpenCreds has identified three types of learning as represented and described in Table 1.

Table 1: Types of learning for an OpenCred.

DARK TEAL #1EA69E RGB: 30, 166, 158 CMYK: 77, 12, 44, 0 PMS: 3272C	<p>Professional Learning (PL) is the broad term used to encapsulate the variety of learning delivered by providers such as membership associations, employers, industry, CPD providers, and social organisations. It is important to note that HEPs may also deliver Professional Learning.</p>
DARK NAVY #05374D RGB: 5, 55, 77 CMYK: 98, 72, 47, 41 PMS: 7722C	<p>Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is the broad term used to encapsulate the variety of learning delivered by accredited education providers that deliver workplace-specific skills and knowledge.</p> <p>It is important to note that, there are two main TVET education providers in Malaysia:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. HEPs, Polytechnics and Community Colleges under the Ministry of Higher Education where the qualifications offered by these institutions are accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency b. Accreditation Centres recognised by the Department for Skill Development (DSD) of the Ministry of Human Resources
PURPLE #4D2847 RGB: 77, 40, 71	<p>Higher Education (HE) is the term used to recognise the accredited programmes offered by Higher Education Providers (HEP) in Malaysia:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> c. Public Institutions d. Private Universities

- e. University Colleges
- f. Accredited Training Centres
- g. Language Centres
- h. International Branch Campuses
- i. College

To further align with the GGP, OpenCreds has specified the requirements in articulating the value proposition of each OpenCred classification in Table 2.

Table 2: Requirement in articulating the value proposition of an OpenCred

Requirements	Credit-bearing OpenCred	Pathway OpenCred	Industry-recognised OpenCred
Specify <u>course learning outcomes</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes
Specify <u>learning hours</u> rounded down to the nearest of the seven Learning Hours volume (refer Diagram 1).	Yes	Yes	Yes
Produce at least <u>one artefact of learning</u> as evidence of learning that is unique to the learner and which demonstrates the competencies acquired during the learning for inclusion in the learner's portfolio	Yes	Yes	Yes
Be accepted by the TVET or HEP who offers the OpenCred for credit or as a pathway into a qualification	Yes	Yes	-
Aligned with MQF level of the associated programme(s)	Yes	Optional	-
Specify the number of credits that would be issued upon successful completion of the OpenCred and the associated programmes(s)	Yes	-	-

4.1. Evidence of Learning:

It is important to note that the reference to "at least one artefact" linked to the course learning outcome(s) is to set a minimum standard, particularly for an OpenCred of 4 hours of learning, and that the onus remains with the education provider to ensure that the evidence created sufficiently produces a quality and quantity of learning evidence to meet its requirements as a provider.

In alignment with OpenLearning’s social constructivist pedagogy, an OpenCred should be centred on the development of deeper learning opportunities that involve critical analysis of new ideas and experiences rather than a corrective approach to assessment which limits the application and transferability of the skill or knowledge. Taking inspiration from Experiential Learning (Kolb, 1984), OpenLearning encourages learning experiences and online activities which help students to become familiar with situations, problems, or scenarios so that they can reflect meaningfully, construct and discuss their own solutions and concepts, and then creatively apply this new knowledge in meaningful ways.

4.2. Learning Hours:

Learning hours are defined as the average amount of time required for a new learner with little or no experience to develop the required level of competency. It plays an important role in setting the expectation for learners during pre-enrolment of the likely amount of time it will take to achieve the specified learning outcomes and produce evidence of learning. It is a common theme used by all levels and types of education providers (and regulatory bodies) but acknowledges that the focus should be on the learner being able to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes.

Importantly, OpenCred courses are small and stackable, meaning that it is possible for learners to complete several OpenCred in order to develop the required level of competency.

The OpenCreds framework defines seven sizes for an OpenCred course that are aligned to a fixed number of Learning Hours and are designed for stackability. The tiers consists of 4, 10, 20, 40, 80, 120 and 160 learning hours as presented in Diagram 1. If the estimated number of learning hours for an OpenCred does not fit exactly with the hours in the tiers, it will be rounded down to the nearest tier.

The smallest Learning Hours tier is 4 hours that is in accordance to the Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF) requirement of a minimum of 4 hours to be eligible for claimable allowances (HRDF, 2020). While the biggest tier is 160 hours that is equivalent to a four credit hour HE course in an accredited program.

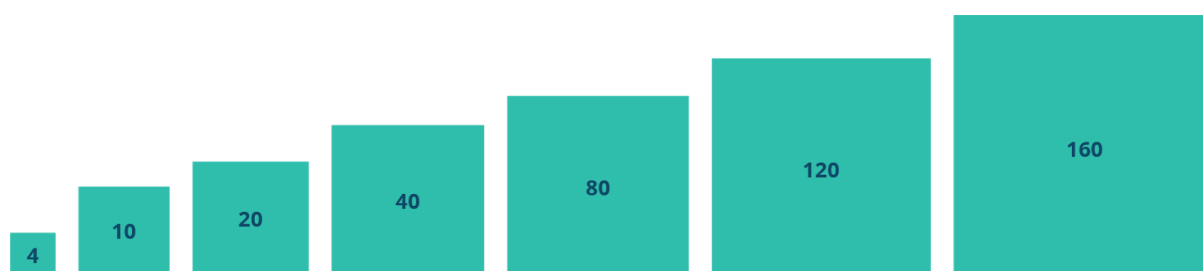


Diagram 1: An OpenCred comes in a range of sizes based on its learning hours that can be a stand-alone credential or “stack” towards a range of learning paths. This is applicable to all types of learning.

For education providers, the learning hours for an OpenCred provides a metric to assist with determining course pricing, staffing requirements, and the ability to align their micro-credential offering to accredited programs.

The education provider is responsible for determining the learning hours required for a learner to complete the OpenCred. This may be determined by estimating the guided learning hours and unguided learning hours. The guided learning hours is the amount of time the learner will spend on the learning with consultation from the educator. While the unguided learning hours is the amount of time the learner will spend on the learning independently. The calculation of Learning Hours must include both, which encapsulates a diverse range of:

- Learning materials and mediums;
- Delivery modes (including blended and online);
- Timeframes for completion; and,
- Evidence of learning.

The stackability of OpenCred makes it easier for education providers to:

- Define entry (or exit) learning paths;
- Assess the relevance and currency of the different types of learning that can be recognised in APEL or Recognition of Prior Achievements (RPA) applications;
- Meet market needs in a nimbler way; and,
- Partner with industry.

Diagrams 2,3 and 4 illustrate the stacking of OpenCred courses for different types of learning.

It is important to note that the learning hours are not designed to define how an education provider creates their courses; however, it is a common benchmark of hours for consideration when identifying articulation learning paths, recognition of prior learning against defined regulatory requirements (e.g. a credit in HE), accreditation requirements for regulated professions, or for those accredited providers who wish to unbundle their programs.

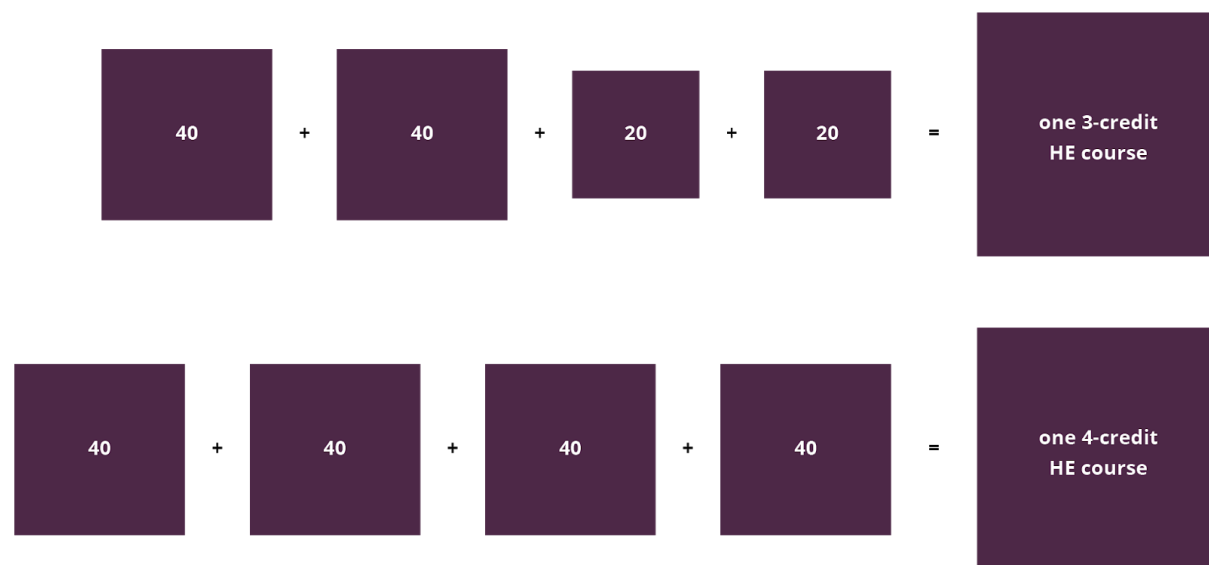


Diagram 2: An example of two different ways that OpenCred courses can stack towards one course (3 and 4 credits) for HE.

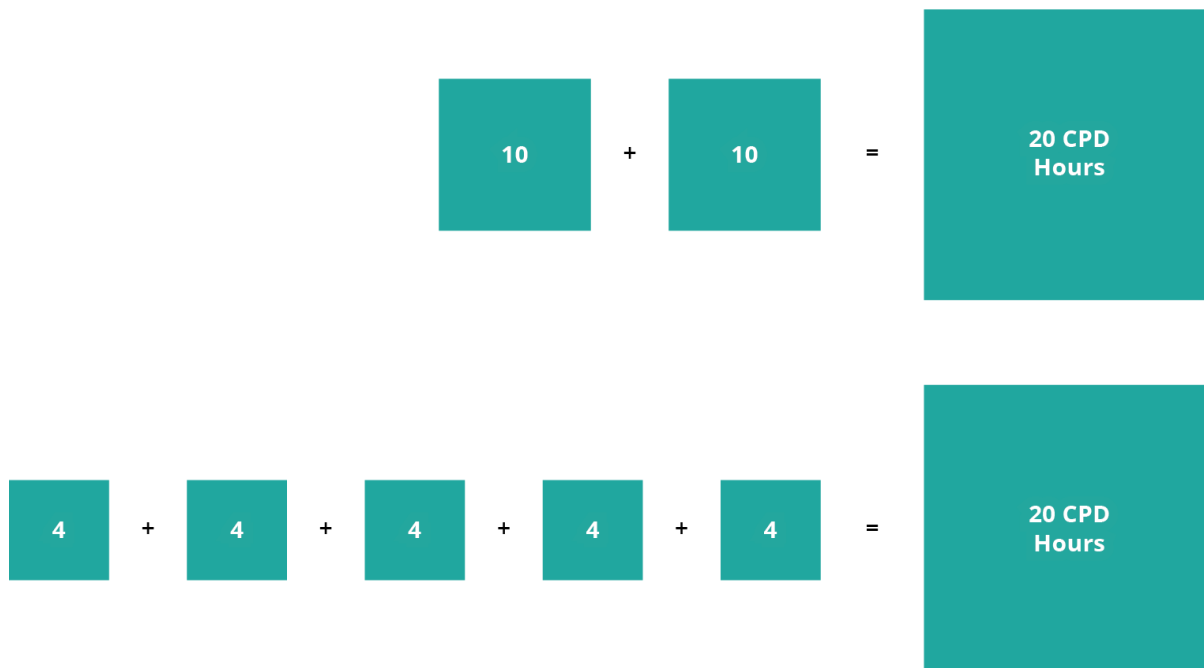


Diagram 3: An example of two different ways that OpenCred courses can stack towards 20 CPD hours of a certification for PL.

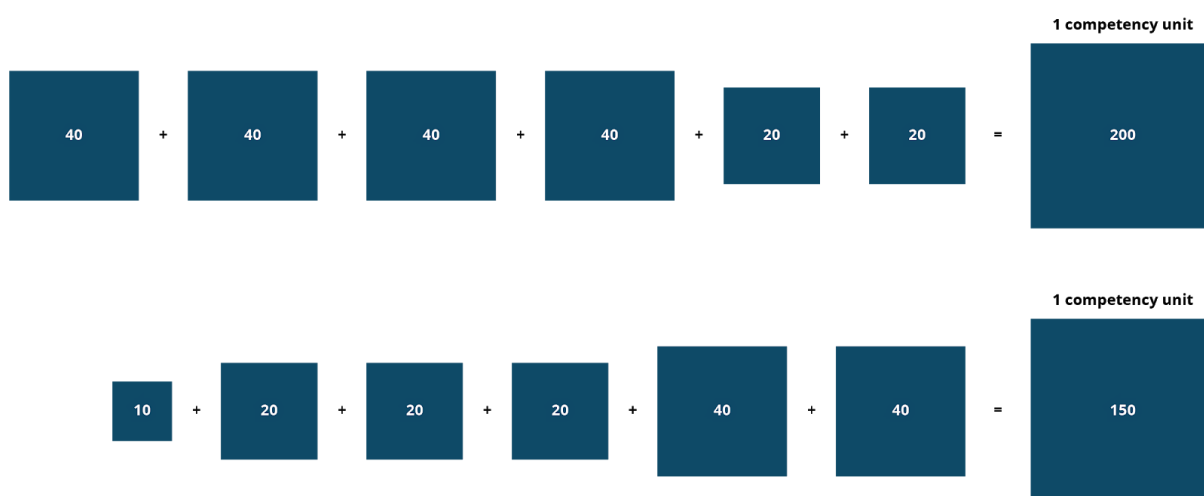


Diagram 4: An example of two different ways that OpenCred courses can stack towards 1 competency unit for TVET

4.3. OpenCred Classifications:

OpenCreds framework has defined three OpenCred classifications namely Pathway, Credit-bearing and Industry-recognised. An OpenCred can be classified as one or up to two classifications. Table 3 presents the alignment between the OpenCred classifications with GGP classifications.

Table 3: OpenCred classifications alignment with GGP classifications.

OpenCred Classifications	GGP Classifications
Credit-bearing	credit-bearing
Pathway	stand-alone
Industry-recognised	

4.3.1. Pathway OpenCred:

A Pathway OpenCred is delivered by either an Accreditation Centre, HEP, or professional learning provider with an established agreement in place with one of the aforementioned organisations.

This term is used for an OpenCred that is aligned to a unit but not equivalent to the full requirements to meet all of the criteria of the admitting provider; or, where successful completion leads to an offer of admission towards at least one formal qualification.

Examples of a Pathway OpenCred may include but are not limited to:

- A course that does not directly align to the course outcomes of an accredited course but may be recognised towards meeting the requirements as part of APEL or Recognition of Prior Achievements (RPA) application.
- A course that is developed by a Professional Learning provider or Industry that can be delivered as part of a qualification (e.g. an accounting package software course) or as a standalone OpenCred.
- A bridging course that addresses a gap between the learners' current skills/knowledge/capabilities and the entry requirements of the selection qualification.
- A Language, Literacy, and Numeracy course that is designed to upskill a learner's capability prior to entry into the selected qualification.

4.3.2. Credit-bearing OpenCred:

A Credit-bearing OpenCred is delivered by either an Accreditation Centre, HEP, or professional learning provider with an established credit agreement in place.

This term is used for an OpenCred that forms part of at least one formal qualification offered by the education provider. As aligned with GGP, a Credit-bearing OpenCred can be a component of accredited programs in a single HEP or multiple HEPs. The duration and effort required in the collective credit-bearing OpenCred/s are in keeping with the amount of credit earned. The credit may be an entry pathway into a qualification, or comprise credit normally earned during the qualification.

For HEPs offering credit-bearing OpenCred, the title or nomenclature for a Credit-bearing OpenCred should not, in any way conflict with any qualification title stipulated in the MQF or programme which the micro-credential is a part of, or any other titles which have been trademarked.

Examples of a Credit-bearing OpenCred may include but are not limited to:

- An OpenCred that has been created by an education provider that is either equivalent or a mirror of the delivery that occurs for learners that have enrolled in the full qualification.
- A combination of OpenCred courses that mirrors and contributes to the academic standards required in the target qualification (e.g. unbundled post-graduate qualifications, a certificate offered by a TVET sector).
- A course that is developed by a Professional Learning or Industry Provider that has a current articulation agreement in place with at least one accredited education provider.

4.3.3. Industry-recognised OpenCred:

An OpenCred with this phrase is delivered by either an Accreditation Centre, HEP, or professional learning provider. Use of this term is reserved for providers that have either gained accreditation to be an approved provider or are the creator of the product and/or methodology.

This term is used for an OpenCred that is recognised by an industry association or accrediting body as meeting the needs of continuing professional development requirements.

Examples of an Industry-recognised OpenCred may include but are not limited to:

- An OpenCred that has been created to meet mandatory professional development requirements for accredited professions (e.g. Teaching, Nursing, and Engineering).
- An OpenCred that has been created to ensure correct use of a product (e.g. Brand certification).

5. OpenCreds in practice

OpenCreds have been designed to foster partnerships, support recognition of prior learning, and set the benchmark for the quality of micro-credentials. As illustrated in Diagram 5, this approach facilitates interoperability between education providers, enabling a HEP to more easily recognise professional learning and/or vocational education, and vice versa.

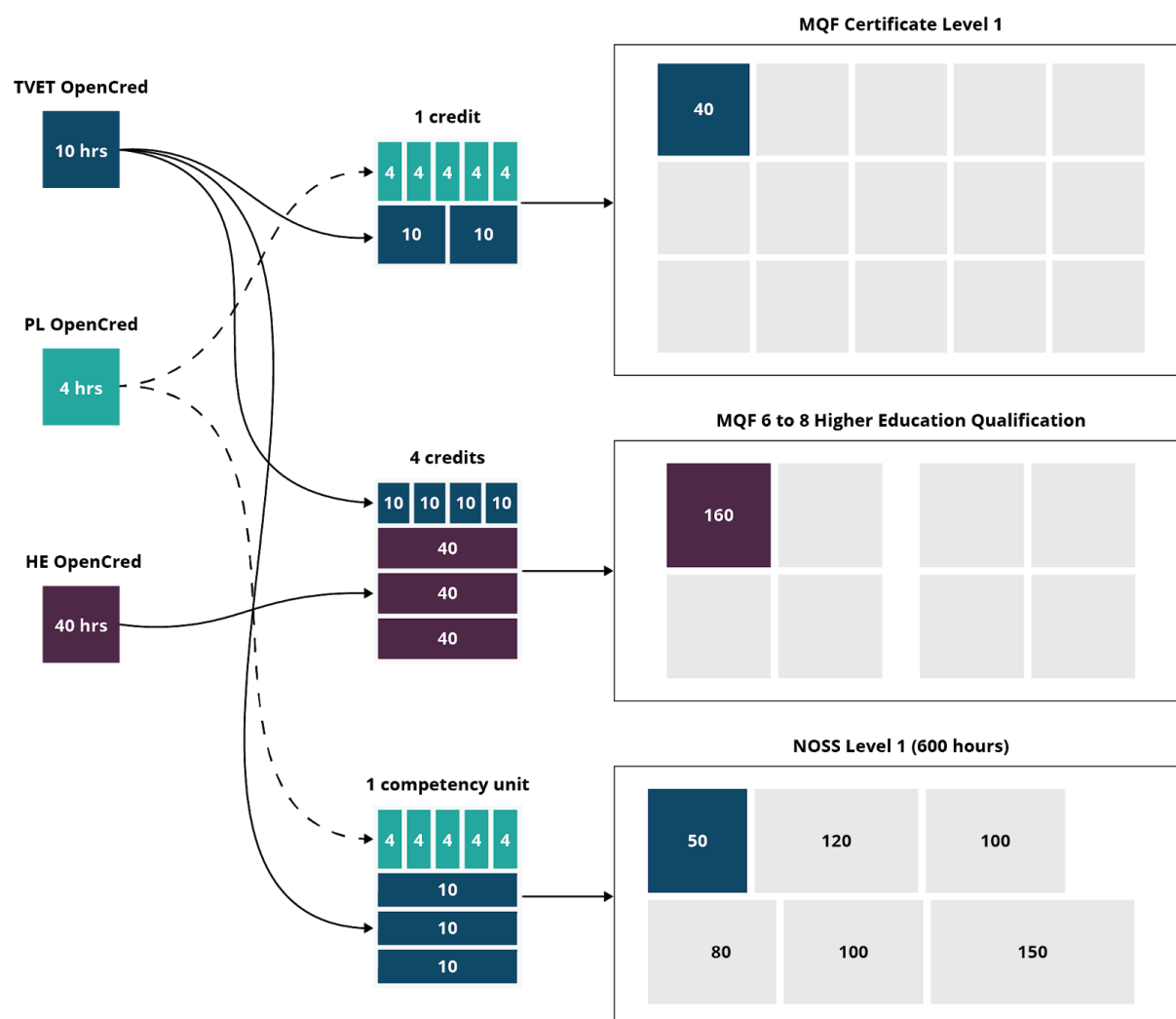


Diagram 5: Potential learning paths for an OpenCred to demonstrate the ability to stack OpenCred(s) towards a qualification.

Prior to enrolment, a learner should have a clear understanding of the learning experience, outcomes, and value of an OpenCred course. In addition, the specified recognition and/or learning paths should be clearly articulated. The potential fields are shown in Table 4 with those in bold being mandatory.

Table 4: Pre-enrolment information included on an OpenCred course landing page.

Element	Detail
Course name	According to MQF, the course name must be unique when being offered within a single HEP.
Provider name	The official name of the education provider offering an OpenCred.
Type of learning	Professional Learning, TVET or HE

	(To be verified by OpenLearning as part of the quality assurance process)						
Learning Outcomes	A learning outcome is a clear statement of what a learner is expected to be able to do, know about and/or value at the completion of a course. The achievement of the learning outcomes must be proven with the evidence of learning deemed appropriate by the education provider.						
Learning Hours	To be verified by OpenLearning as part of the quality assurance process						
Year of Release	The Year of Release is used to reflect the date that the course was created and/or updated.						
Classification	The choice of three classifications below where an OpenCred needs to be classified as one or up to two classifications.						
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>i. Pathway</td> <td>Summary of any agreements relevant to the learner should be provided</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ii. Credit-bearing</td> <td>Summary of any agreements relevant to the learner including of MQF level of the associated program should be provided</td> </tr> <tr> <td>iii. Industry-recognised</td> <td>The industry association or professional body that has agreed to recognise the OpenCred</td> </tr> </table>	i. Pathway	Summary of any agreements relevant to the learner should be provided	ii. Credit-bearing	Summary of any agreements relevant to the learner including of MQF level of the associated program should be provided	iii. Industry-recognised	The industry association or professional body that has agreed to recognise the OpenCred
	i. Pathway	Summary of any agreements relevant to the learner should be provided					
	ii. Credit-bearing	Summary of any agreements relevant to the learner including of MQF level of the associated program should be provided					
iii. Industry-recognised	The industry association or professional body that has agreed to recognise the OpenCred						

The following three examples are representations of how OpenCredits can be used. Fields that are not relevant to a particular OpenCred have been removed in order to minimise confusion for a learner.

Example 1:

Element	Detail
Course name	Safety: Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Risk Control (HIRARC)
Provider name	Centre for CPD <i>(Not a real provider name)</i>
Type of learning	Professional Learning DARK TEAL
Learning Outcome(s) (LO)	At the end of this course, the learners will be able to: (LO1) Identify hazard(s), risk(s) and risk control in an organisation. Suggested evidence of learning: (Evidence of LO1) Learners prepare a risk identification report from a real world organisation/project. <i>Note: Learning outcome(s) and evidence of learning are determined by the education provider.</i>

Learning Hours	8 hours
Year of Release	2020
Classification(s):	Industry-recognised: Completing Safety: Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Risk Control (HIRARC) will contribute 10 CEP (Continuous Education Program) points by the Department of Occupational Safety and Health Malaysia.

Note: For Industry-recognised courses, if there is an expiration date for the recognition period, this must be included on the course landing page.

Example 2:

Element	Detail
Course name	Prepare Child Meals Schedule and Menu
Provider name	Early Childhood Development Centre <i>(Not a real provider name)</i>
Type of learning	Technical and Vocational Education and Training DARK NAVY
Learning Outcome(s) (LO)	At the end of this course, the learner should be able to: (LO1) Analyse children's dietary and nutrition requirements. (LO2) Produce a child's meal menu and schedule. Suggested evidence of learning: (Evidence of LO1) A profile analysis report on a sampled child's personal profile, health condition and menu preferences. (Evidence of LO2) Recommendation for a child's meal menu with its schedule. <i>Note: Learning outcome(s) and evidence of learning are determined by the education provider.</i>
Learning Hours	40 hours
Year of Release	2020
Classification(s):	Pathway: Prepare Child Meals Schedule and Menu is one of the work activities for NOSS in Early Childhood Care and Progress

Note: It is the responsibility of the education provider to include information on the recognition of prior learning processes and any deadlines (such as certificate expiry date) on the course landing page.

Example 3:

Element	Detail
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Course name	Management, Theory and Practice
Provider name	ABC Higher Education Provider (Not a real provider name)
Type of learning	Higher Education PURPLE
Learning Outcome(s) (LO)	<p>At the end of this course, the learner should be able to:</p> <p>(LO1) Describe the fundamental theory of management. (LO2) Analyze the concepts of management in an organisation (LO3) Demonstrate the practice of the management theory in a real world environment.</p> <p>Suggested evidence of learning: (Evidence of LO1) A creative presentation that reflects the learner's understanding of the theory of management (e.g. infographic poster, mind maps, video etc). (Evidence of LO2) Case study analysis on the concepts of management. (Evidence of LO3) A video of role play in dealing management crisis in a real world environment.</p> <p><i>Note: Learning outcome(s) and evidence of learning are determined by the education provider.</i></p>
Learning Hours	120 hours
Year of Release	2020
Classifications:	<p>i. Pathway: Completion of this course is valid as part of the entry qualification to a degree program Masters of Art (Management) at University of X and degree program Masters of Business Management at Universiti Z.</p> <p>ii. Credit-bearing: Completion of this course is equivalent and eligible for credit to MGMT101 (Fundamentals of Management) at University of X and PGRS001 (Introduction to Management) at Universiti Z.</p>

Note: It is the responsibility of the education provider to include information on the recognition of prior learning or credit transfer process, and any deadlines (such as certificate expiry date) on the course landing page.

6. How do OpenCreds differ to what is already in the market?

Learning platforms elsewhere have created new micro-credential “currencies”. OpenLearning’s micro-credential currency, an *OpenCred* gives maximum flexibility to providers. Furthermore, OpenCreds framework recognises the benefits of partnerships – and encourage providers to partner with industry, membership organisations, and continuing professional development providers in courses designed to benefit learners.

Table 5: A comparison of OpenCreds and other micro-credential “currencies”.

Platform	Coursera	edX	FutureLearn	OpenLearning
Micro-Credential Name	Coursera Specializations	edX MicroMasters	European Micro-credential Framework	OpenCred
Level	Masters	Masters	Levels 6-7 in the European Qualification Framework	Level 7 in the Malaysian Qualification Framework
Relationship with a formal qualification	Seven specialisations comprise an Australian Masters	25% of an Australian Masters	Approximately one unit in an Australia higher education qualification	Determined by the provider, including: Pathway or Credit-bearing OpenCreds lead towards qualifications
Partnership arrangements				Encouraged. Flexibility and interoperability of OpenCreds reduces barriers for partnerships and collaboration.
Learning Hours per Unit	20 hours to 100 hours (no set standard)	150 hours	100 hours or more	Specified sizes between 4 hours to 160 hours

7. How do OpenCreds fit into the broader online learning ecosystem?

The introduction of OpenCreds creates new opportunities for online learning across the higher education, vocational education, and professional learning sectors.

By ensuring that every course that leads to an OpenCred is primarily delivered through the OpenLearning platform and adheres to this framework, online course providers will have a central point of integration (OpenLearning), clearly defined user journeys and a ready market for their products, thereby enabling them to innovate without reinventing the wheel.

It is envisaged that the OpenCreds ecosystem, anchored by OpenLearning, could incorporate the following types of education technology products and services:

- Student acquisition, marketing and recruitment services
- Badging/credentialing platforms
- Work integrated learning and workplace training providers
- Learning designers and content producers
- Student support and tutoring services
- Job placement and skills matching
- Learning record stores and analytics tools

While the OpenLearning platform provides all the functionality required to deliver an OpenCred, it is likely that education providers will look to differentiate their courses through specific integrations, additional experiences, and new technologies.

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

These questions and answers are not intended to cover all the stakeholders may have. If you have a question that is not addressed below, please reach out using the contact details included on page 24.

Question: How have the Learning Hours been constructed?

Answer:

The requirement for Learning Hours was constructed based on MQA's calculation for completing 1 credit (1 credit equals to 40 learning hours). In a professional setting, a minimum of 4 hours of training is required for an organisation to be able to apply for allowances.

Learning Hours are included to provide flexibility whilst also enabling learners and providers with a common language and framework to support the "stacking" of micro-credentials.

Question: Are OpenCreds free?

Answer:

OpenCreds may be free or attract fees at the discretion of the provider(s). Decisions about pricing of OpenCreds are at the discretion of the provider. Because OpenCreds are sized based on learning hours, calculating the financial and workload implications is relatively straightforward for educational providers.

Question: What is the benefit of creating a Pathway OpenCred over a Credit-bearing OpenCred?

Answer:

There are a couple of elements that have been considered in this approach:

1. Not all accredited providers have the same degree of autonomy in the way that programs are approved.
2. Education providers have challenges in the speed to which accredited programs and training packages are created, endorsed and implemented.
3. Accredited providers who operate in the delivery of customised accredited training solutions often experience difficulty in maintaining compliance against the training package/program, meeting customer expectations, and the scalability of their operations.

A Pathway OpenCred allows for a nimbler approach to meeting learners and market needs whilst providing a pathway towards a credit, skill set, or qualification.

Question: Can an OpenCred be co-developed?

Answer:

OpenCreds offer interoperability between higher education, vocational education, and industry and OpenLearning encourages such partnerships. Providers — including universities, industry, professional bodies, and vocational and private providers — may offer an OpenCred independently, or they may work together to combine the benefits of OpenCreds for learners. For example,

- a university and an industry association may co-create an OpenCred that lead to credit towards a formal qualification;
- a university may recognise an OpenCred provided by a vocational education provider as credit towards a formal qualification;
- two providers of the same kind (for example, a public university and an international university) may share costs by co-creating an OpenCred, then both offer learners credit towards their formal qualifications.

Question: How can OpenCreds be used for Credit and APEL or Recognition of Prior Achievements (RPA)?

Answer:

There are two components in response to this question:

1. For an individual learner:

The OpenLearning Portfolio is a digital living showcase of learning artefacts and achievements that truly reflects a learner's skills, personal development, and capabilities.

OpenLearning Portfolios are automated and tagged against the learning outcomes of the course, that provide learners with the ability to curate their portfolio.

A unique profile link enables learners to share their portfolio for a range of use cases: to peers, an educator, employer, or for a recognition of prior learning applications.

2. For all learners:

HEPs may enter into an articulation agreement with OpenLearning which recognises the quality assurance process undertaken, the quality of the evidence curated, and enables a more scalable approach to building learning pathways/credit recognition.

OpenLearning welcomes collaboration with education providers that reinforces the interoperability of the OpenCreds Framework.

Question: What if my OpenCred course learning hours does not fit exactly to any of the Learning Hours volume?

Answer:

For stackability purposes, the learning hours for an OpenCred course must be greater than or equal to the stated number of hours specified in the Learning Hours tiers (refer Diagram 1). If

the course learning hours does not fit exactly to any of the Learning Hours tiers, then it should be rounded down to the nearest tier. For example, a course that is recommended to be completed in 12 hours will be rounded to be in the 10 hours tier.

Question: What is the quality assurance process that an OpenCred goes through before being offered via OpenLearning?

Answer:

The quality assurance process for an OpenCred will extend OpenLearning's existing course quality assurance process to ensure that the proposed OpenCred adheres to this framework and provides all the necessary information to a potential learner prior to enrolment.

OpenLearning's Customer Success team will review the design of the course with a focus on learning outcomes, modules, content and resources, learning activities, look and feel, promotional page and assessment.

Upon successful completion of this review, a course will be able to use the word "OpenCred".

Question: Are OpenCredits only for Australian and Malaysian learners?

Answer:

Even though OpenCredits are launched in Australia and Malaysia, the intention is that they are global in reach and provision. OpenCredits on the OpenLearning platform are a strategy designed to attract the attention of millions of learners from multiple countries.

They also broaden the access for Australian and Malaysian providers to learners who may wish to study in either or both countries; learn online from their own country; or access further learning opportunities as an alumnus. OpenCredits present an opportunity for education providers to consider offering their courses – large or small, credit-bearing or not – to learners looking to learn across the lifespan from anywhere in the world.

Next steps – Implementation

Outlined below are the steps in the lead up to the launch of OpenCreds:

Step	Key Dates
OpenCreds Focus Group to gather feedback on usability and technicalities	03 November
OpenCreds Framework for Malaysia finalised and OpenLearning to work with interested parties to implement	26 Nov onwards

Contact details:

Questions and inquiries can be directed to:

mylearningservices@openlearning.com or nadia@openlearning.com

About OpenLearning

OpenLearning Limited (ASX:OLL) is a Sydney-based, ASX-listed, software-as-a-service company that provides a scalable online learning platform and learning design services to education providers; and a global marketplace of world-class short courses and online degrees for learners.

Globally, OpenLearning has partnered with 76 education providers to deliver online or blended education to 2.17 million unique learners in 165 countries.

Founded in 2012, OpenLearning is led by founder and Group CEO Adam Brimo, founder and CTO David Collien, MD Australia Cherie Diaz, MD Malaysia Sarveen Kandiah and CFO Huat Koh.

Since 2014, OpenLearning has had a strong presence in Malaysia especially when it started off as a proud platform provider for the Malaysia MOOCs and Politeknik MOOCs initiative. Besides being a platform provider, OpenLearning provided knowledge transfer from Australia to Malaysia to develop world class MOOCs and online courses.

The regional office in Kuala Lumpur was established in 2015 and since then, OpenLearning has had the privilege to empower Malaysian universities, polytechnics, individuals and corporations to take their teaching, learning and training online. Over 90k international students enrolled in MOOCs created by Malaysian educators, bringing Malaysian education to the world.

From 2014 to 2018, OpenLearning provided free cloud hosting, technical support, training, marketing and software licensing as part of its investment in the Malaysian education system. To date, there are over 60 OpenLearning's partners in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia ranging from public and private higher education institutions, private K-12 education providers, training providers, government agencies and NGOs.

To date, OpenLearning has invested over RM10 million in Malaysia and through collaborative partnerships with top universities and government agencies, OpenLearning has provided more than RM300,000 in direct sponsorship for events, research grants, training and promotions in addition to hosting international conferences both in Sydney and in Kuala Lumpur.

The impact that OpenLearning has in Malaysian Education has been very positive. Educators were not only trained to provide high quality online courses, they also use the platform to conduct research leading to over 2,170 research papers on MOOCs . OpenLearning's presence and unique standing in Malaysia has been a point of reference internationally.

Through novel implementation of social constructivist educational theory, OpenLearning is at the forefront of a new wave of education delivery.

OpenLearning's educational philosophy

The OpenLearning platform has been built from the ground up on solid educational foundations since its inception.

The goal is to provide a social learning environment in which students feel empowered, deep learning experiences are fostered, students are intrinsically motivated, and passionate communities of practice flourish through well-designed constructive experiences. This has been realised with the latest social technology, and is designed for a global, connected society.

The educational philosophy, which governs the design of the OpenLearning Platform is based on the educational foundations of:

- a) student empowerment to foster deeper learning through intrinsic motivation;
- b) authentic, active learning experiences which go beyond publishing content; and
- c) community and connectedness to encourage sharing, build student rapport, and support collaboration.

Additionally, OpenLearning is an innovator in the field, and extends existing educational theory to not only the platform mechanics, but by providing a launch pad for new academic research.

OpenLearning is at the forefront of education technology research, tying together and applying a large body of educational research including Social Constructivism, Experiential Learning, Virtual Communities, Affective Learning, Situated Learning, Emotional Design, Project-based learning, Learner-Centred Design & Environment, Distributed Scaffolding, Deep (rather than surface) Learning and E-Learning theory & Cognitive load theory.

OpenLearning works with both educators and technologists in continual experiments with novel educational mechanics.

By implementing this educational philosophy, education providers are able to achieve higher levels of student engagement, increased student retention, better attainment of learning outcomes and a lower cost of education delivery.

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Appendix A: Key Terms and/or Definitions

Below is a glossary of the primary terms and/or definitions used or drawn upon in creating OpenCreds.

Term	Key Term/Definition
Accreditation Centres	A skill training institution or place of work recognised by the Department of Skills Development. It offers candidates the Malaysian Skills Certification for participating and training in areas of specific levels of expertise based on National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS)
Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)	A systematic process that involves the identification, documentation and assessment of prior experiential learning i.e. 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 and/or for the award of credit
APEL(C)	Award of credits for the prior experiential learning towards a course in an accredited programme of higher education provider. APEL(C) provides the mechanism to recognise the individual's prior experiential learning that is relevant and specific to a course within a programme of study. The credit award is granted based on the knowledge and skills acquired through informal and non-formal learning. These forms of learning which emphasises experiential learning will need to be formally reviewed and assessed. The process will determine if learning has occurred and is in line with the learning outcomes of the course(s) concerned. It is the learning and not the experience of the learners which is being evaluated.
Artefact of Learning	An artefact of learning is an object created by students during a course to display their skills, knowledge, or competency against the specified learning outcome/s of the course.
Assessment	There are three categories of assessment recognised within the OpenCreds framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment for Learning (Formative Assessment); - Assessment of Learning (Summative Assessment); and, - Assessment as Learning.
Credential	A key marker of achievement, and a potentially important signal to employers and others of a learner's skill, capability, and fit.
Credit	MQF defines credit as the quantitative measure that represents the volume of learning or academic load to attain the set learning outcomes
Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	Continuing professional development is how professionals in a particular field maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge, expertise, and competency as well as developing the personal and professional qualities required. Depending on the field, a minimum number of hours of learning may be required each year in order to maintain accreditation to work in the industry.
Course	This paper recognises that the course has multiple meanings across the education sector. With regards to OpenCreds, a course is the individual unit of learning delivered via OpenLearning.

Digital Badge (Badge)	An electronic certification of the attainment, or successful demonstration, of a knowledge, skill, or behaviour. The certification is visual, available online and supported by evidence embedded as metadata that provides context, meaning, process and result of an activity.
Higher Education Providers	This paper uses the term Higher Education in reference to the range of Higher Education Providers in Malaysia as defined in the GGP, Micro-credentials, 2020.
Learning Hours	An estimate of the Hours of Learning that the average learner is likely to dedicate to an OpenCred to meet the specified outcomes.
Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA)	A statutory body in Malaysia set up under the Malaysian Qualifications Act 2007 to accredit academic programs provided by educational institutions providing post-secondary or higher education and facilitate the accreditation and articulation of qualifications.
Malaysian Qualification Framework (MQF)	The Malaysian Qualification Framework is an instrument that classifies qualifications based on a set of criteria that is approved nationally and benchmarked against international best practices
Micro-credential	A certification of assessed learning that is additional, alternative, complementary to or a component part of a formal qualification.
Learning Outcome	A learning outcome is a clear statement of what a learner is expected to be able to do, know about and/or value at the completion of a course.
National Occupational Skills Standard	The National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS) is a Standard established under Part IV of the National Skills Development Act 2006 [Act 652]. NOSS is defined as a specification of the competencies expected of a skilled worker who is gainfully employed in Malaysia for an occupational area, level and the pathway to achieve the competencies (Department of Skills Development, 2020).
OpenCred	An OpenCred is a certification of assessed learning that is additional, alternative, complementary to or a component part of a formal qualification. OpenCred courses are developed based on the components of OpenCredits
OpenCredits	OpenCredits is the lifelong learning framework designed to meet the needs of the Australian education sector, industry, and most importantly its lifelong learners. OpenCredits is an extension of OpenLearning, an Australian company and lifelong learning platform which exists to increase access to higher quality education. After its initial launch in Australia, OpenLearning adapted the framework for Malaysia's education sector
Professional Learning	Professional Learning is the broad term used to encapsulate the variety of learning delivered by providers such as: membership associations, employers, industry, CPD providers, and social organisations. HEPs may also deliver Professional Learning.
Recognition of Prior Achievement (RPA)	Known in Bahasa Malaysia as Pengiktirafan Pencapaian Terdahulu (PPT) is a method to give recognition to any individual who can demonstrate skills outlined in the National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS) based on prior experience and achievements

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)	Vocational Education and Training (VET) is the broad term used to encapsulate the variety of learning delivered by accredited education providers that deliver workplace-specific skills and knowledge.
Skill sets	Training package skill sets are composed of one or more units of competency from a training package and are designed to meet licensing or regulatory requirements, or a defined industry need.

Appendix B: OpenCred Course Quality Criteria

OpenCred Course Quality Criteria

For a course to be considered as an OpenCred, both Part A and Part B must be satisfactorily completed.

Part A:

1. Learning Outcomes:

- Learning outcomes are statements that describe what students will be able to do by the end of your course.
- Begin with a verb related to the desired action or performance and end with what the learners will know or be able to do by the end of the course.

2. Modules and Module Sets:

- Are relevant to the learning outcomes
- Are well structured with a relevant and logical flow
- Build topic knowledge appropriately

3. Content and Resources:

- Are relevant to the learning outcomes
- Are relevant to the module topics
- Are scaffolded and sequenced on pages in a way that maximises the learning impact and engagement, whilst also reducing cognitive load
- Use a variety of resources in meaningful ways (e.g. video, text, images, audio)

4. Learning Activities:

- Are relevant to the learning outcomes
- Are relevant to the course and page topics
- Are structured to take the course length into account
- Capture learners' interest, intrinsic motivation and foster enjoyment in learning
- Enable interaction and social learning among learners (e.g. discussions, sharing, group work, projects)
- Enable learners to connect concepts authentically to their own world
- Allow learners to reflect on their learning
- Invite learners to apply concepts in personally meaningful ways
- Encourage self-expression and open-ended contribution (e.g. using share widgets)

5. Course Homepage:

- Contains a message and/or tone that would make learners feel welcomed to the course community
- Includes details about how learners can contact you/the educator if they need assistance
- Would attract learners' attention and interest through use of relevant examples, analogies, anecdotes etc

- Contains an icebreaker/welcome activity that is relevant to learners, invites them to share and fosters a sense of rapport and community

6. Course Look and Feel:

- Uses images throughout that are relevant and engaging
- Uses relevant and engaging images for page thumbnails
- Utilises page designs that are visually appealing and logically sequenced
- Utilises the tone, instructions and explanations throughout the course in ways that are friendly, clear and build rapport with learners
- Is free from grammar/spelling errors

7. Course Landing (Promotion) Page:

- Has a relevant and enticing course title
- Has a relevant and engaging course promotional video/image
- Has an inviting and relevant course banner image that includes the course title
- Contains key information that students need to know prior to enrolment presented in a succinct manner
- Is well-written in an engaging manner

Part B:

1. Course Setup:

- Has the portfolio functionality turned on so that learners artefacts are automatically added to their OpenLearning Portfolio

2. Course Promo Page:

- Includes details of any pathway, credit-bearing, or articulation agreements in place
- Specify the industry association or professional body that has agreed to recognise the OpenCred (where relevant)
- Includes any information about the version or currency of the course/OpenCred that a learner should know prior to enrolment
- Specifies whether a certificate is issued upon completion

3. Final Step:

- Once you have clicked the “Request to be listed” button in Course Setup > Setup Wizard > Step 3 Listing on OpenLearning, send an email to opencreds@openlearning.com with the following information:

Element	Information required
Type of Learning	Choose one of the 3 options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional Learning - Technical and Vocational Education and Training - Higher Education

OpenCred Classification	Choose which of the following applies (you can choose up to 2): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pathway - Credit-bearing - Industry-recognised
Learning Hours	Choose one of the 7 options: 4, 10, 20, 40, 80, 120, 160
Pathways/Agreements	Provide details of any pathway, credit/recognition of prior learning, or industry/association agreements in place; including any expiration date if known.