Abstract

Executive Diploma Programme is a part-time academic programme designed for working adults and professional in order to enhance their knowledge and skill in their respective field. Compared to Conventional Diploma programme offered by university and college in this country, the uniqueness of this programme come from its academic structure which is design from combination of academic program and student accumulate working experience which known as Recognition Prior Learning (RPL). This paper highlights the learning experience and challenges on Executive Diploma Programme operated by School of Professional & Continuing Education to fulfil education need for working adults and professional. Discussions are also focused on Executive Diploma Programme structure, issues, accreditation, strategy and efforts taken to enhance the future of Executive Programme through UTMSPACE model.

Keywords: Continuing Education, Life-long Learning, Working Adult Training

1. Introduction

   Although UTMSPACE Executive Diploma Programme is design for industries and private sector, UTMSPACE have a vision that one day, Executive programme will be accepted by Government Sector. UTMSPACE also hope that people who graduated with Executive Diploma can pursue their education to higher level in IHL or colleges. Therefore, UTMSPACE management has been taking steps towards MQA accreditation for Executive Diploma Programme by year 2011. In order to apply for the accreditation, UTMSPACE gradually upgrading and restructuring the existing Executive Diploma Programme to fulfill Malaysia Qualification Framework (MQF) requirement.

2. Recognition Prior Learning

   As describe earlier, key feature of the Executive Diploma Programme is the entry requirements which are based on Recognition Prior Learning or RPL which would allow the candidate to apply for credit exemption. Recognition of Prior Learning is a mechanism used by UTMSPACE to recognize applicant's current skills and experience in order to convert their skills and experience into programme credits. RPL can be applied on many competencies. Applicants can base their RPL on any combination of formal or informal training and education, skills,
The RPL assessment will be based on:

a) Interview or professional conversation with UTMSPACE officer on applicant’s education background, working experience and skills.
b) Observation on applicant background including visits to applicant workplace
c) Portfolio of work, which may include current or completed project related to their working.
d) Result from supplementary assessment, tasks or challenge test provided by UTMSPACE (oral, written or practical)
e) Authentication of evidence by current or previous supervisor/employer

Unsuccessful applicants have the right to formally appeal to the RPL assessment, through the UTMSPACE academic appeals process.

3.0 UTMSPACE Executive Diploma Programme Structure

As describe earlier, event though UTMSPACE Executive Diploma Programme still do not have accreditation by MQA, UTMSPACE have taken steps to apply for MQA accreditation. Therefore, UTMSPACE use Malaysia Qualification Framework or MQF to construct credit structure for Executive Diploma Programme.

Figure 1 show the proposed UTMSPACE Executive Diploma Level in Malaysia Qualification Framework.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Award</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 8</td>
<td>Executive Doctorate</td>
<td>Thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 7</td>
<td>Executive Master</td>
<td>Min 40 Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>Executive Bachelor</td>
<td>Min 120 Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Executive Diploma</td>
<td>Min 90 Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1-3</td>
<td>Executive Certificate</td>
<td>Min 60 Credit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1 : Proposed UTMSPACE Executive Diploma in Malaysia Qualification Framework

UTMSPACE is gradually upgrading and restructuring the existing Executive Diploma to fulfill minimum credit in Malaysia Qualification Framework diploma level which is minimum 90 credits. The proposed module structure for Executive Diploma by UTMSPACE is shown in Figure 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>No. of Module</th>
<th>Credit Per Module</th>
<th>Credit Hour</th>
<th>Study Learning Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio-1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio-2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project-1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project-2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPL/Bridging</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2 : Proposed Module Structure for UTMSPACE Executive Diploma Programme

Figure 2 show that UTMSPACE Executive Diploma Programme consist of 48 credit for learning module (core module, general module and elective module), portfolio and project with 6 credits each. The RPL is 30 credits from minimum 5 years of working experience. The total sum of overall credit hour is 90 credits which is similar to Conventional Diploma minimum credits of MQF. The explanation above are delivered through semester system. This will formed 20 month minimum duration for UTMSPACE Executive Diploma Programme. Based on regulation set by UTMSPACE, all student who enrol in Executive Diploma Programme must register maximum of 12 credits per semester.

Entry requirement for UTMSPACE Executive Diploma Programme is slightly lower than Conventional Diploma Program since the criteria is based on combination of applicant’s education background and RPL. Applicant must have Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia or SPM with at least 3 credits in any subject and must have minimum 5 years of working experience in related field. UTMSPACE will look forward to run Executive Certificate, Executive Bachelor, Executive Masters & Executive Doctorate.

4.0 Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance for UTMSPACE Executive Diploma Programme comprises of planned, systematic procedures and activities. This is to provide adequate demonstration where quality is being achieved, maintained, enhanced, and meets the specified standards of teaching and learning process.

The quality assurance evaluation would be based on:

b) The Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation (COPPA).
c) The Code of Practice for Institutional Audit (COPIA).

The quality evaluation process covers the following nine areas:

I. Vision, mission, educational goals and learning outcomes.
II. Curriculum design and delivery.
III. Assessment of students.
IV. Student selection and support services.
V. Academic staff.
VI. Educational resources.
VII. Programme monitoring and review.
VIII. Leadership, governance and administration.
IX. Continual quality improvement.

The outcome for the programme quality evaluation have to achieved standard that define each criteria and serve as a performance indicator for executive decision. According to COPPA, there are two standards to look at which is Benchmark Standard & Enhanced Standard. Benchmarked standards are standards that must be met and its compliance demonstrated during a programme accreditation exercise. It is expressed as a “must” statement. Enhanced programme standards are standards that should be met as the institution strives to continuously improve itself. It is expressed by a “should” statement.

5.0 Conclusion

UTSPACE Executive Diploma Program is a programme develop to fulfill education needs for working adults in an industry and private sector. It is very important for the country’s development.

For the future, UTSPACE will look forward to run Executive Certificate, Executive Bachelor, Executive Masters and Executive Doctorate in order to provide education pathway for Executive Programme Graduate.

References

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