

## Entry Criteria for MNQF Qualifications

Maldives Qualifications Authority, Ministry of Education, Male', Maldives

**(with effect from 01<sup>st</sup> January 2017)**

Level	Qualification(s)	Minimum Credits	Entry Criteria	
			General Entry	Alternative Entry
Level 1	Certificate I	10 credits (3 weeks full-time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of Basic Education AND</li> <li>• Ability to communicate in the language of instruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 years of age AND</li> <li>• Ability to communicate in the language of instruction</li> </ul>
Level 2	Certificate II	30 credits (10 weeks full-time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of Basic Education OR</li> <li>• Attainment of a Level 1 qualification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 years of age AND</li> <li>• Ability to communicate in the language of instruction</li> </ul>
Level 3	Certificate III	40 credits (15 weeks full-time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of Basic Education OR</li> <li>• Attainment of a Level 2 qualification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 years of age AND</li> <li>• Ability to communicate in the language of instruction</li> </ul>
Level 4	Certificate IV / Advanced Certificate	120 credits of which 90 credits at Level 4 (1 year (30 weeks) full-time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful completion of Lower Secondary Education OR</li> <li>• Attainment of a Level 3 qualification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 years old and 1 year work experience AND</li> <li>• Ability to communicate in the language of instruction</li> </ul>
Level 5	Diploma	120 credits of which 90 credits at Level 5 (1 year (30 weeks) full-time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful completion of Higher Secondary Education OR</li> <li>• Attainment of a Level 4 qualification in a related field OR</li> <li>• Attainment of a Level 4 Foundation Study Program approved for the specific Diploma program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of a Level 4 qualification (unrelated), and successful completion of an MQA approved University Preparation Program* OR</li> <li>• 20 years old, completion of secondary school, 2 years of <i>relevant</i> work experience, and successful completion of an MQA approved University Preparation Program</li> </ul>

Level 6	Advanced Diploma / Associate Degree	240 credits of which 90 credits at Level 5 and 90 credits at Level 6 (2 years (60 weeks) full-time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful completion of Higher Secondary Education OR</li> <li>• Attainment of a Level 4 qualification in a related field OR</li> <li>• Attainment of a Level 4 Foundation Study Program approved for the specific Diploma program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of a Level 4 qualification (unrelated), and successful completion of an MQA approved University Preparation Program*</li> <li>OR</li> <li>• 20 years old, completion of secondary school, 2 years of <i>relevant</i> work experience, and successful completion of an MQA approved University Preparation Program</li> </ul>
	Professional Certificate	40 credits (15 weeks full-time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attainment of a <i>related</i> qualification at Level 5</li> </ul>	
Level 7	Bachelor's Honours Degree	480 credits of which a minimum of 150 credits at Level 7; from which at least 15 credits to be awarded for research related projects or modules (4 years full-time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful Completion of Higher Secondary Education OR</li> <li>• Attainment of a Level 4 qualification in a related field OR</li> <li>• Attainment of a Level 4 Foundation Study Program approved for the specific Diploma program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of a Level 4 qualification (unrelated), and successful completion of an MQA approved University Preparation Program*</li> <li>OR</li> <li>• 20 years old, completion of secondary school, 2 years of <i>relevant</i> work experience, and successful completion of an MQA approved University Preparation Program</li> </ul>
	Bachelor's Degree	360 credits of which 90 credits at Level 7 (3 years full-time)		
	Professional Diploma	120 credits of which 90 credits at Level 7 (1 year (30 weeks) full-time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attainment of a <i>related</i> qualification at Level 6</li> </ul>	
	Professional Certificate	40 credits (20 weeks full-time)		

Level 8	Graduate Certificate / Post Graduate Certificate	60 credits (20 weeks full-time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A <i>related</i> Bachelor's Degree</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25 years old, completion of a <i>related</i> Level 5 qualification, and 6 years of <i>relevant</i> experience (of which 3 years of experience is obtained after completion of a Level 5 qualification), and achieved a pass rating from an interview or exam given by the institute.</li> <li>OR</li> <li>• 25 years old, completion of a <i>related</i> Level 6 qualification, and 4 years of <i>relevant</i> experience (of which 2 years of experience is obtained after the completion of a Level 6 qualification), and achieved a pass rating from an interview or exam given by the institute.</li> </ul>
	Graduate Diploma / Post Graduate Diploma	120 credits (1 year (30 weeks) full-time)		
Level 9	Master's Degree	120 credits (1 year (30 weeks) full-time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A <i>related</i> Bachelor's Degree OR</li> <li>• A <i>related</i> Graduate Diploma at Level 8</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25 years old, completion of a <i>related</i> Level 5 qualification, and 7 years of <i>relevant</i> experience (of which 3.5 years of experience is obtained after completion of a Level 5 qualification), and completion of an MQA approved Pre-Master's Program.</li> <li>OR</li> <li>• 25 years old, completion of a <i>related</i> Level 6 qualification, and 6 years of <i>relevant</i> experience (of which 3 years of experience is obtained after completion of a Level 6 qualification), and completion of an MQA approved Pre-Master's Program.</li> </ul>
	Advanced Professional Diploma	120 credits (1 year (30 weeks) full-time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attainment of a <i>related</i> qualification at Level 8</li> </ul>	
	Advanced Professional Certificate	60 credits (20 weeks full-time)		

Level 10	Doctoral degree	360 credits (3 years full-time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attainment of a <i>related</i> qualification at Level 9</li> </ul>	
	Higher Professional Diploma	120 credits (1 year (30 weeks) full-time)		
	Higher Professional Certificate	60 credits (20 weeks full-time)		

#### Explanation of Key Terms in the Entry Requirements of MNQF (2009)

**1. Ability to communicate in the language of instruction**

“Ability to communicate” is defined as the potential to share and exchange information in the language of instruction of the intended program, using the full range of linguistic skills (speaking, reading, writing and listening).

**2. Completion of Basic Education**

Completion of Key Stage 2 (Grade 6) of the Maldives National Curriculum Framework

**3. Completion of Secondary School**

Completion of the 10th grade of a lower Secondary School

**4. Successful Completion of Lower Secondary School**

Completion of Key Stage 4 (Grade 10) of the Maldives National Curriculum Framework with a minimum of 3 subjects with ‘passing grades’ in nationally recognized Secondary School Examinations. These include subject certifications awarded through national systems, normally awarded after 10 years of formal schooling. Passing grades at this level are those that are usually classified as acceptable for entrance to pre-university courses. For example, at IGCSE O/L, GCE O/L or SSC, a pass is considered C and above.

**5. Successful Completion of Higher Secondary Education**

Completion of Key Stage 5 (Grade 12) of the Maldives National Curriculum Framework with a minimum of 2 subjects with ‘passing grades’ in nationally recognized Higher Secondary School Examinations. These include subject certifications awarded through national systems, normally after 12 years of formal schooling. Passing grades at this level are those that are usually classified as acceptable for university entrance. For example, at GCE A/L, a pass is considered E and above. HSSC pass is considered C and above. “Shahaadhaa Saanaviyya” and International Baccalaureate from a recognized institute/school are considered as equivalent to Higher Secondary Education.

**6. Level 4 Foundation Study Program**

A Level 4 Foundation Study Program is a program of study that provides the entry requirements for a *specific* undergraduate course of study approved by MQA at MNQF level 5, 6 and 7. Such a program would need to be approved by MQA and consist of a minimum of 120 credits (one academic year, full-time).

## 7. University Preparation Program

A University Preparation Program is a program of study designed to facilitate successful completion of university-level education of adults who return to higher education through alternative entry routes. Such a program may include modules related to English for academic purposes, ICT and basic Mathematical skills for higher education (as described in the level descriptors for Level 4 qualifications). Modules within such a program may include topics such as reading and listening skills; purposes and types of academic writing; library and online researching for writing; language, punctuation and grammar; presentation skills; and time management. Such a program would need to be approved by MQA and consist of a minimum of 120 contact hours (15 academic weeks, full-time).

\*A student with an unrelated Level 4 or Level 5 qualification need not complete a University Preparation Program and may be given direct entrance to a Level 5 one year Diploma program, provided the unrelated qualification is inclusive of the modules as suggested above for the University Preparation Program.

## 8. Pre-Master's Program

A Pre-Master's Program is a program of study designed to facilitate post-graduate level learning and research skills for adults who return to pursue Master's degree level studies through alternative entry routes. A Pre-Master's Program should be developed for a specific area(s) of Master's level course of study. Such a program may include topics such as: subject-specific academic content for the specific area of study; critical and analytical reading; academic writing and presentations; library and online researching for writing; and introduction to research methods. Such a program would need to be approved by MQA and consist of a minimum of 120 contact hours (15 academic weeks, full-time).

## 9. Relevant Experience

"Relevant Experience" is prior experience of the prospective candidate that is aligned with the course of study for which that experience is applied for in providing entry. It is the responsibility of the given institution to obtain such information regarding relevant experiences of the candidate. Such information may include duration and types of experiences, and knowledge and skills gained from such experiences that relate to the outcomes of the specific course of study. Institutions may collect such information through prospective students' CVs, written self-assessment of relevant experience, and through admission interviews. Documentation pertaining relevant experience should be kept available for auditing purpose of MQA for up to 5 years.

It is expected that alternative entry requirements will not be the main route of entry into any course of study. Therefore, only a reasonable percentage of applicants per intake should be considered for enrolment in a given program of study through the alternative entry criteria.

## 10. Related Qualifications

What is meant by "*attainment of a Level 3 qualification in a related field*" among General Entry Requirements for Level 4 is a Level 3 qualification that is directly related (aligned in terms of discipline/technical area/skills and academic content) to the Level 4 qualification for which entry is to be granted.

What is meant by "*attainment of a Level 4 qualification in a related field*" among General Entry Requirements for Level 5, Level 6 and Level 7 is a Level 4 qualification that fulfills at least one of the following two conditions: (1) aligned in terms of discipline/technical area/skills and academic content to the Level 5, Level 6, and Level 7 qualification for which entry is to be granted, or (2) consists of content and skills similar to in scope and depth to the University Preparation Program of study described under item 7 above.

What is meant by "*Related Bachelor's degree*" among General Entry Requirements for Level 8 and Level 9 is an undergraduate degree that is aligned in discipline/content/skills to the Level 8 or Level 9 qualification for which entry is to be granted. In other words, it should be a qualification which is parallel to the study program to be followed. If the qualification is not parallel to the study program to be followed at Level 8 or Level 9; then, the student must have a qualification that enables to evaluate and apply a range of processes relevant to the field of study that is to be followed. For example a student with an MBBS qualification may enroll in an MBA program.

## 11. Provision of Advanced Standing or Credit Transfer

Upon granting admission of a student into a program of study, a given institution may grant academic credits for specific course of study as advance standing based on the following criteria. Advanced standing should be granted for modules or a group of units/subjects/modules deemed substantially equivalent (similarity of 70% or more) to units/subjects/modules in the specific course of study for which admission is granted by the institution. Once advanced standing is granted for units/subjects/modules, they should be clearly mentioned on student transcript as Exempt. Provision of advanced standing (transfer of credit for prior learning) will lead the student to complete fewer subjects overall to receive the qualification and henceforth the duration may be reduced.

It is the responsibility of the institution to assess content and outcomes of prior learning for the purpose of advance standing. For this purpose, the institution may obtain descriptions and learning outcomes of relevant units/subjects/modules completed by the student prior to joining in the respective course of study. Relevant prior learning from both recognized local and international

institutions could be considered. Factors that could be considered in providing advanced standing are: (1) content and learning outcomes of prior learning, (2) prior assessment details, (3) contact hours and (4) points value/ credit hours.

Advanced Standing should only be given for prior study that has been undertaken at a higher level than the minimum entry qualification level for a given course of study. For example, advanced standing in a Bachelor's degree cannot be given for a Level 4 Certificate IV, which is the minimum entry qualification for Bachelor's degree. Advanced standing for informal education or prior work experience cannot be taken into account.

Institutions must keep records to justify the provision of advanced standing for each student. Such documents may include descriptions of modules completed prior to enrolling in the respective course of study, enrolment interview records (if relevant), and results of any form of assessment undertaken for the purpose. Such records should be kept for up to 5 years, upon the completion of the course of study.