

Introduction

Effective 1st October 2001, a course leading to an award in the Maldives National Qualifications Framework (MNQF) is required to obtain approval to commence from the Maldives Accreditation Board (MAB). The purpose of this approval is to ensure adherence of courses to minimum standards of quality prescribed in the MAB's Pre-Qualifying Criteria (PQC).

Furthermore, all courses being offered as of 1st October 2001 are also required to complete course approval documents and submit to MAB before the end of December 2001.

The purpose of this booklet, therefore, is to **(1) introduce the PQC to course providers** and **(2) to provide the application form and guidelines for course providers to prepare the Application for Course Approval**. Included in this booklet are the following:

1. The Pre-Qualifying Criteria (PQC)
2. Guidelines for Preparing the Application for Course Approval
3. Application Form for Course Approval
4. The Format and Guidelines for Preparing Course Approval Document
5. Definition of Terms

Course providers who wish to obtain further information regarding the preparation of the Application for Course Approval are welcome to contact MAB.

Maldives Accreditation Board

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Pre-Qualifying Criteria (PQC)

The Pre-Qualifying Criteria sets the minimum standards of quality that must be present in courses leading to an award in the MNQF. Courses that meet PQC standards will receive the approval to commence teaching.

Ensuring that all the courses meet the PQC standards is the very first step of the MAB's quality assurance system: it does not amount to accreditation. However, courses that receive the approval to commence will qualify for the accreditation process that is to be introduced by MAB at a later stage.

Listed below are the PQC requirements, relating to course structure, academic load, admission, course content, instruction and academic staffing, student assessment, student withdrawal, student records, and institutional and management capacity of the course provider.

1. Course Structure

The course structure should be designed to include following standard components:

Course

Overall course description consisting of a course name, goal(s), objectives, a list of subjects, credit hours and points, entry requirements, course regulations, assessment grades and notations, and graduation requirements

Subjects

Individual subject descriptions consisting of credit points, pre-requisites, co-requisites, curricular content, learning outcomes, assessment criteria and methods, and reference materials

Lectures & Tutorials

Learning and teaching session (e.g. lectures, tutorials and seminars) outlines for each subject including lecturer notes and suggested teaching-learning activities

2. Academic Load

- 2.1 The academic duration of the course must meet the credit hour and credit point requirements of MNQF.
- 2.2 Credit hours and credit points for each subject should be stated.

3. Admission

- 3.1 The entrance requirements for the course must meet the minimum standard stipulated in the MNQF. The specific entrance requirements should be stated clearly. Where applicable, the course must also meet any award-specific requirements set by MAB.
- 3.2 If credit for prior learning is to be provided, a policy on advanced standing, equivalency, and verification of such credits should be in place.

4. Course Content

- 4.1 The goals and objectives of the course must be stated and they must relate to the award to be issued upon the completion of the course.
- 4.2 The process utilized in developing the course content must be documented and both the process and the course content must relate to the level and type of the course.
- 4.3 The course content should not contradict Islamic beliefs, principles and values.
- 4.4 Each subject must consist of an outline that describes the prerequisites, co-requisites, curricular content, topics for each lecture/tutorial, learning outcomes, assessment methods and reference materials.
- 4.5 An adequate set of curricular documents (e.g. handouts, workbooks, teacher guides, lecture notes, textbooks and/or computer software) to support learning and teaching should be available or identified for students.

5. Instructions and Academic Staffing

- 5.1 The course delivery system/methods (i.e., teaching methods and modes) must be appropriate to the course goals and objectives and the type and level of the course.
- 5.2 The mode(s) of delivery for each subject must be stated (i.e. lectures, seminars, workshops, distance education, group work etc).
- 5.3 The academic credentials of the lecturers/instructors should be higher or at least equivalent to the award to be granted upon the completion of the course. Names and qualifications of the lecturers should be available and their curriculum vitae should be retained at the registered administrative office of the course provider.
- 5.4 A course coordinator or a senior lecturer/instructor should be designated for supervising teaching and student assessment; her/his responsibilities must be stated clearly.
- 5.5 A staff appraisal mechanism should be in place.
- 5.6 An arrangement for periodic evaluation of teaching by students should be in place.
- 5.7 Each academic staff should have a job description and an employment contract/agreement.
- 5.8 A mechanism for recording staff attendance should be in place.
- 5.9 The student-teacher ratio planned for learning sessions (i.e. classrooms, lectures, seminars, lab sessions, etc.) should be appropriate to the type and level of the course.

6. Student Assessment

- 6.1 A grading system for the course, based on student performance, should be developed.
- 6.2 Course completion and graduation requirements must be stated.
- 6.3 A policy on student attendance should be in place.
- 6.4 A mechanism to periodically monitor and report students' academic progress should be in place.
- 6.5 Institutional policy and procedure for conducting student evaluation and examinations under monitored conditions should be in place.
- 6.6 An arrangement to issue academic transcripts upon the completion of the course should be in place.
- 6.7 A policy on academic dishonesty and plagiarism should be in place.

7. Student Withdrawal

7.1 A policy on withdrawal of students, based on poor attendance, weak academic performance and/or misconduct should be in place.

7.2 A policy on voluntary withdrawal of students should be in place.

8. Student Records

8.1 A reliable mechanism to maintain records of student attendance and academic performance should be in place.

9. Institutional Capacity and Management

9.1 The course provider must be duly registered with the Ministry of Education.

9.2 Adequate physical facilities such as classrooms, furniture, and teaching-learning resources that are essential to conduct the course must be available.

9.3 Students should have access to academic facilities and information resources.

9.4 The institutional management structure and personnel should be sufficient to manage effective course delivery.

9.5 The course provider must have secured sufficient financial resources to commence and sustain the delivery of the course.

9.6 A fee policy should be provided.

9.7 A financial management system that would enable an audit trail should be in place.

**Guidelines for Preparing the
Application for Course Approval**

To apply for course approval, the course provider is requested to complete the Application Form for Course Approval on the next page and submit it with a Course Approval Document. The format and guidelines for preparing the Course Approval Document are provided on pages 7 to 10.

The Course Approval Document should be prepared on A4 size sheets, using black ink, and the information should be presented clearly and precisely. The Document must follow the topics and sub-topics and respective numberings.

If you need additional information regarding how to prepare the Course Approval Document, please contact MAB at:

Telephone: (960) 335890

Fax: (960) 320206

E- mail: mab@thauleem.net

The information provided on the Course Approval Document will be disclosed to the staff of the MAB Secretariat, the members of the MAB panel who review the respective course and the members of the Maldives Accreditation Board.

The Format and Guidelines for Preparing Course Approval Document

Please follow the sequence of topics, sub-topics, and respective numbering provided below. Also please ensure that the information provided is precise and presented clearly. Accuracy and completeness will avoid delay in processing your application.

1. Admission Requirements

- 1.1 Academic requirements
- 1.2 Experience-related requirements
- 1.3 The rationale for providing advanced standing (only if advanced standing is to be provided)
- 1.4 The basis of equivalency that would be used in granting advanced credit
- 1.5 Methods of verifying the validity of prior learning to grant advanced credits
- 1.6 Maximum credit points to be granted as advanced standing

2. Course Content

- 2.1 Goals of the course
- 2.2 Objectives of the course
- 2.3 Method/process utilized in course content development
- 2.4 Number of subjects (modules/units)

(Please see page 10 for a separate format for developing subject outlines for each subject)

3. Instruction and Academic Staffing

It is essential for course providers to have secured all necessary teaching staff members before commencing a course. MAB requires teaching contracts/agreements along with CVs of academic staff members to be retained at the registered administrative office of the course provider.

- 3.1 Full name of the Course Coordinator
- 3.2 Academic qualifications and teaching experience of the Course Coordinator
- 3.3 Responsibilities of the Course Coordinator
- 3.4 The performance criteria and process to be utilized for staff appraisal
(If available, attach appraisal instruments such as observation checklists, questionnaires and self-assessment guidelines developed for staff appraisal)
- 3.5 Arrangement in place for students' evaluation of the Course (If available, attach evaluation instruments developed for student evaluation of the Course)

4. Student Assessment

- 4.1 The procedure in place to periodically (e.g. on semester basis) report students' academic progress
- 4.2 Graduation requirements (e.g. attendance, academic performance and completion of an internship)
- 4.3 Policy on academic dishonesty and plagiarism, including consequences of students' academic misconduct.

5. Student Withdrawal

- 5.1 The policy on the withdrawal of a student based on poor attendance, weak academic performance and/or misconduct
- 5.2 The policy on voluntary withdrawal and tuition fee reimbursement

6. Institutional Capacity and Management

- 6.1 The organizational-chart, including management functions/units, key management staff names and titles, academic departments/units and the number of academic and administrative/support staff

- 6.2 Relevant facilities and resources
 - 6.2.1 Furnished classrooms (state the number and student capacity)
 - 6.2.2 Laboratories (briefly describe and state student capacity)
 - 6.2.3 Computer rooms (state no of computers and accessibility to internet)
 - 6.2.4 Library (include number of books and other resources)

- 6.3 Projected yearly costs (provide sessional costs for courses shorter than one academic year) for delivering the course
 - 6.3.1 Academic staff salaries
 - 6.3.2 Administrative expenses
 - 6.3.3 Marketing expenses
 - 6.3.4 Material production expenses
 - 6.3.5 Student services expenses
 - 6.3.6 Space rental expenses
 - 6.3.7 Other expenses (please specify)
 - 6.3.8 Total estimated costs

- 6.4 Estimate sources of income per year or session for delivering the course
 - 6.4.1 Income from tuition fees
 - 6.4.2 Income from student service or administrative fees
 - 6.4.3 Grants
 - 6.4.4 Allocated funds from the course provider
 - 6.4.5 Loan funding
 - 6.4.6 Total funds

- 6.5 Fee collection policy
 - 6.5.1 Proposed course fee
 - 6.5.2 Fee collection intervals and amounts (i.e. one-time-only, weekly, monthly, semester-wise, or yearly)

6.5.3 Late payment charges (if applicable)

7. Format for Preparing Subject Outlines

Please prepare an outline for each subject according to the format provided below.

- 7.1 Subject name
- 7.2 Subject Code Number (if applicable)
- 7.3 Credit hours and credit points
- 7.4 Minimum qualification and experience required by instructors/lecturers
- 7.5 Maximum class-size per instructor
- 7.6 Pre-requisites (if applicable)
- 7.7 Co-requisites (if applicable)
- 7.8 Expected learning outcomes
- 7.9 The mode(s) of delivery (i.e. lectures, seminars, workshops, distance education, group work etc)
- 7.10 Curricular content in terms of topics and a summary of content planned for each lecture/tutorial session/seminar, etc
- 7.11 Assessment methods and grading criteria
- 7.12 List of reference materials, if relevant

If available, attach additional curricular documents such as handouts, workbooks, teacher guides, lecture notes or textbooks.

Definition of Terms

Academic Year	The 30 to 34 week period, normally from January/February to November/December during which the academic institution conducts its courses.
Advanced standing	Credit granted for previous post-secondary achievement (normally from another institution) that qualifies the student for direct entry to the second or a later semester of a course.
Award	A certificate, diploma, advanced diploma or a degree conferred by an educational institution upon successful completion of a course.
Course	An approved set of subjects that a student is required to complete to obtain a particular award.
Course Coordinator	A designated member of the academic staff of an institution who assumes responsibility for all academic matters of a course.
Credit Point	A numerical value denoting the academic worth given to a subject to be counted towards completion of a course.
Credit Hour	An hour spent in learning activities that directly relates to the requirements to complete a subject or a course.
Distance Education	Study of courses/subjects offered externally (i.e., off campus) using self-study materials where attendance to regular lectures, laboratory or practical work etc. on campus is not required.
Grade	An alphabetical letter denoting a student's level of achievement in a subject.
Graduate	A person who has been awarded a degree.
Graduation Requirement	A condition stipulating the core and elective subjects to be followed with a certain level of attainment and attendance that is required to achieve an award.
Lecturer	An academic staff member who assumes the key responsibility to teach a particular subject in a course.
Programme	The approved group of related subjects or combination of subjects in which a student is enrolled in any one session or year.
Semester	A time period during which courses are offered. Semesters are typically fifteen to eighteen weeks in length. The words "semester" and "term" are often used interchangeably. There are usually two semesters in a year.
Subject	A specific field of study (e.g., Accounting, Biology, Computing, Mathematics, etc) or a coherent unit of learning activities leading to a certain number of credit points within a course of study.
Transcript	A transcript is a record of a student's academic activity and achievements in an institution. An official transcript is one that is signed and sealed by the institution.
Transfer Credit	The credit transferred towards completion of a course at the student's registered institution based on an equivalent subjects or course enrolled at another institution.
Tutor	Any member of the academic staff who takes a tutorial session
Tutorial	In a tutorial, a group of (usually) 12 to 20 students meet with a tutor to discuss a specific topic. The topic may relate to one of the lectures in the subject and one or more students may be asked to give a presentation for other students to discuss.