



## Supporting Students with Disability Policy

### 1. Introduction

As the leading university in the Maldives, The Maldives National University (MNU) recognises the need to provide an inclusive and accessible working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its students are respected in assisting them in reaching their full potential.

The [Disability Act 8/2010](#) of Maldives place a positive duty on all public bodies, including the University, to eliminate discrimination and to promote equal opportunities for all persons with disabilities.

To address these matters, MNU provides reasonable steps to support all persons with disabilities in physical, learning and social spaces and in delivering academic courses and programs, without any form of discrimination

### 2. Definition of Terms

<b>Faculty:</b>	Institutes, centres, schools or other academic units with a major responsibility for teaching students.
<b>Learning disabilities:</b>	a permanent disorder that affects the manner in which individuals with normal or often above average intelligence acquire, retain, and express information.
<b>Student:</b>	A person who is admitted to an Award Program or Non-award Program offered by the University and is: currently enrolled in one or more Courses or study units; or not currently enrolled but is on an approved Leave of Absence or whose admission has not been cancelled.
<b>Study Period:</b>	The period during which a Course or study unit is offered, semesters, blocks, blended and sessions.
<b>University:</b>	The Maldives National University (MNU).
<b>Persons with disabilities:</b>	a person who has a long-term physical, mental intellectual or sensory impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity

### **3. Statement of Policy**

The purpose of this Policy is to:

1. Promote, create awareness and foster an environment which encourages positive, informed and unprejudiced attitudes towards people with a Disability.
2. Implement procedures for any reasonable adjustments needed by students with a Disability.
3. Ensure that positive and practical steps will be undertaken to enable people with disabilities to seek employment or student enrolment within the MNU
4. Employ all reasonable and appropriate teaching strategies and methods without compromising the essential content of a course or the course-requirement to demonstrate required skills or knowledge.
5. Ensure that the needs of people with a disability are met in relation to the physical environment of each campus, including buildings, facilities and grounds.

### **4. Scope**

This policy applies to all students and staff at MNU.

### **5. Policy Implementation**

The Policy implementation will be overseen by the Vice-Chancellor.

### **6. The process to support student with a disability**

The University commits to the provision of a study environment where students will not be subject to discrimination or harassment because of a Disability. For Further details refer to the MNU's Student Code of Conduct and Appeals' Process.

#### **6.1. Disclosure and Registering of Students with a Disability.**

- 6.1.1. Students with a Disability, wishing the University to adjust a process, policy or procedure or wish the University to provide reasonable adjustments, must first inform the Faculty via their batch/course coordinator disclosing the nature and extent of the Disability. The student is responsible for informing the batch/course Coordinator and providing the Disability notification.
- 6.1.2. Documentation provided by students to support their Disability must be dated and signed by the appropriate health or Disability professional, and should be:
  - a. No more than two weeks old for temporary conditions.
  - b. No more than six months old for fluctuating conditions.
  - c. No more than three years old for a learning Disability.
- 6.1.3. The documentation provided should be specific and:
  - a. State the impairment, mental health or medical condition.
  - b. Indicate whether the Disability is permanent, temporary, or fluctuating.
  - c. Recommend reasonable accommodations.
  - d. Clearly identify the health professional and their credentials
  - e. Be legible, on a letterhead, dated and signed.

- 6.1.4. At the Faculty -level each student will be assessed based on the provision of appropriate medical documentation and a detailed interview with the student.
- 6.1.5. The Faculty then inform, with all necessary documentations, of these students to be registered as 'Students Needing Disability Support' with the Student Support Services (SSS).
- 6.1.6. Throughout the student's course the course/batch coordinator is responsible for notifying new lecturers each semester and students are responsible to ensure the lecturers are aware of their conditions.
- 6.1.7. All information collected by the University on the student's disability will adhere to the University's policies and guidelines.

## **6.2. Reasonable adjustment.**

- 6.2.1. Measures taken by the University to enable students to have full access to the provision of all educational services on the same basis as students without a disability include, support in services such as:
  - a. Admission and enrolment
  - b. Participation in a course or program
  - c. Use of facilities and services
- 6.2.2. The adjustment may take the form of financial aid, provision of a facility or a service that the student requires because of his or her Disability.
- 6.2.3. Adjustments provided for students with disabilities must meet the academic requirements of the course or program studied as well as any inherent or essential requirements or components of the course of study, including the attainment of MNU's Graduate Attributes.

## **6.3. Examination adjustments for students with disabilities.**

- 6.3.1. To provide students with an equitable opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and competency for assessment purposes, the University will make adjustments to examinations for students with a Disability.
- 6.3.2. Students must first comply with the requirements stated under Section 6.1 of this policy and the timeframes for exam adjustment requests.
- 6.3.3. Alternate arrangements for examinations will be recommended after considering standard practices that redress the impact of a student's Disability on their performance in examinations. These may include adjustments such as:
  - a. Extensions of time
  - b. Use of assistive technology
  - c. A separate room
  - d. Use of reader, scribe or computer where necessary
  - e. Use of ergonomic chair
  - f. Alternative formatting of exam papers
  - g. Negotiation of an alternative assessment.

#### 6.4. Exceptions under the policy

- 6.4.1. Before refusing a student's request for a reasonable adjustment, the Faculty must be satisfied that the grounds for refusal can be justified. All refusals of reasonable adjustments must be documented.
- 6.4.2. The following can be identified as exceptions to the requirement for provision of all necessary measures and reasonable adjustments for students with a Disability:
  - a. Where, even with the provision of all appropriate adjustments, the student remains unable to fulfil the requirements of a course of study;
  - b. Where the provision of adjustments or measures would undermine the academic integrity of the course of study, assessment or accreditation process; and
  - c. Where a student with a Disability has an infectious disease or other condition that requires isolation in order to protect their health and welfare or the health and welfare of others, and where the University is unable to provide reasonable adjustments that will enable the student to receive relevant services and facilities so that they may continue with their studies.

#### 6.5. Grievances

Students seeking to resolve issues of discrimination and harassment can seek support and information from the Course/Batch Coordinator and/or the Student Support Services.

Complaints of discrimination and harassment will be treated seriously by the University and will be managed promptly in a thorough and confidential manner. For Further details refer to the MNU's Student Code of Conduct and Appeals' Process

### 7. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
<b>Course/Batch Coordinator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gather evidence of students who have a disability as stated in 6.1, and as per the Roles and Responsibilities of the Batch Coordinator</li><li>• Work with the Faculty to determine the nature of assistance required by the student as stated in 6.2.</li><li>• Ensure all lecturers teaching the student during the course of the study period are aware of the assistance the student needs and adjustments are made accordingly.</li><li>• Make regular records of the students' progress.</li></ul>

<b>Subject Lecturer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject lecturers must make reasonable adjustments to teaching and forms of assessment accordingly.</li> <li>• Discussions must be held with the subject coordinator with regard to such changes.</li> <li>• Keep records of such reasonable adjustments made and inform the Batch Coordinator, Subject Coordinator and the HoD.</li> </ul>
<b>Faculty</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A registry of students who have a disability must be kept in the Faculty and shared with SSS.</li> <li>• The form of reasonable adjustment must be decided during the first month of the first semester of the course, approved by the Faculty Curriculum Committee or ARC and the information shared with SSS and the Examinations Controller as stated in 6.1 above</li> </ul>
<b>Examinations Department</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A registry of students requiring assistance during Examination must be maintained and adjustments must be made according to 6.3 above.</li> </ul>
<b>Student Support Services (SSS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect information on students requiring reasonable adjustments in the first month of each intake.</li> <li>• Ensure the list is shared with the Registrar, Revenue and the Examinations Controller.</li> <li>• Maintain a record of all students needing reasonable adjustments.</li> <li>• Periodically check the status of the reasonable adjustments made to the students on the register of 'Students Needing Disability Support' and follow-up where necessary.</li> <li>• Provide help to the Faculty when additional support is required.</li> </ul>
<b>Student Administrative Services (SAS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The registry of students requiring tuition fee help (see 6.2.2) must be sent to the Revenue Section and amendments made on the Self Service accordingly.</li> </ul>
<b>Revenue Section</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the subsidised tuition fee is charged from students needing reasonable adjustments.</li> </ul>

<b>Facilities Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all Facilities related adjustments are catered to.</li> <li>• Ensure all MNU buildings have wheelchair access and they are maintained.</li> </ul>
<b>Student</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is the responsibility of the student to familiarise themselves with the University policies, abide by them, and when needed, seek help from the MNU community.</li> </ul>
<b>TDU</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all staff at MNU have the necessary training &amp; skills to support students with disabilities</li> <li>• Mandatory training will be provided for all staff at MNU to ensure they are equipped to provide the best possible support for these students</li> </ul>

**8. Policy Review**

This Policy shall be reviewed periodically to ensure adequacy and relevance to all University quality assurance interventions in its academic provision. The Policy shall be reviewed at least every five years or more frequently if the need arises.

**Academic Senate Approval Date:** 05<sup>th</sup> February 2023

**Policy Effective Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> February 2023

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