









# **Policy on Student Compensation and Refund**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Student Compensation and Refund Policy, a requirement of the Maldives Qualifications Authority for higher education providers, reflects the commitment of the Maldives National University (MNU) to provide students with the expected university experiences and achieve the published academic outcomes. This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies and guidelines including Policy on Withdrawal from Subjects/Courses which set out the amount fees to be refunded in special circumstances.

1.2 The purpose of this Policy is to set out the circumstances in which MNU will pay compensation and provide refunds, and to specify the authorities to decide such payments.

1.3 MNU remains committed to supporting all students to complete their courses of study, and considers compensations and refunds to be remedies of last resort.

## **2. APPLICATION**

2.1 This Policy applies to all applicants who have accepted the offer of a place at MNU, as well as the registered students of MNU. These persons include those students who receive a tuition fee loan from the Ministry of Higher Education or other relevant government body, those who pay their own tuition fees and those whose tuition fees are paid by a sponsor.

2.2 This Policy does not apply to former students of MNU who have completed their course of study.

## **3. AMENDMENTS TO THIS POLICY**

3.1 The MNU reserves the right to change, amend or alter this Policy during the academic year if doing so is in the general interests of those to whom this Policy applies and/or to ensure it reconciles with relevant laws and other MNU policies.

## **4. DEFINITIONS**

- 4.1 **Refund** means the repayment of sums paid by a student to the university or an appropriate reduction in the amount of sums owed in future by the student to the university. This could include tuition fees, other course costs, or accommodation costs of MNU hostels.
- 4.2 **Compensation** will relate to some other recognisable loss suffered by the student. This normally falls into two categories, either: (a) recompensing the student for wasted out-of-pocket expenses they have incurred, which were paid to someone other than the university (such as travel costs) or (b) an amount to recompense for material disadvantage to the student arising from a failure by the university to discharge its duties appropriately.

## 5. **GROUNDS FOR COMPENSATION AND/OR A REFUND**

### 5.1 **Tuition fee refunds.**

- 5.1.1 It should be noted that a person becomes a bona-fide student of MNU for a particular term on the completion of registration processes for that term after having paid the due tuition fees.
- 5.1.2 MNU limits its commitment to deliver a course in the time frame advertised, only for those students who pass each semester of the course. Students who fail may have their desired subjects unavailable at a certain time or may have to undertake an alternate subject, sometimes in a different campus than the one in which the course was initially offered.
- 5.1.3 Students who withdraw from a course may have their tuition fee refunded or partially refunded depending on the time of withdrawal. These refund conditions are specified in the *Policy on Withdrawal from Courses/Subjects*.
- 5.1.4 Students who withdraw from a course or subject before the first week of the teaching term will have their Student Union fees refunded.
- 5.1.5 In the unlikely event that MNU is unable to “teach out” current students on a discontinued course of study, students (or their sponsor) will be offered a refund of any fee payments made towards that course of study in the year of the discontinuation when the student is required to withdraw from MNU as a result of the course discontinuation. The refund of fees will only apply to tuition fee costs incurred in the term in which the academic course ceases to be offered.
- 5.1.6 If a person believes s/he is entitled to a refund, s/he may seek a refund by raising the matter in writing to the Student Administrative Services or the Registrar. The Registrar is responsible for determining the request for refund of tuition fees and issuing a written request to refund the tuition fees.

### 5.2 **Compensation**

- 5.2.1 In circumstances where MNU is no longer able to preserve continuation of an academic course of study, and students have already commenced study on that course, students may make a claim for compensation where they are forced to withdraw from MNU. This will only apply when MNU is ceasing to deliver a course of study before registered students of that course have completed their studies. In these circumstances, students can apply for financial compensation in respect of these additional costs incurred in travel and tuition fees.
- 5.2.2 In cases where a student has been informed of the starting of a course in a particular campus in writing and the student travels to that campus but the course is cancelled for a reason that may not constitute a force majeure, then the student may claim compensation for reasonable travel and accommodation costs incurred.
- 5.2.3 In the circumstances described in paragraph 5.2.2 above, MNU will also reimburse a student's reasonable maintenance and accommodation costs, where these have been wasted costs as a result of the inability to teach out the course and/or offer a reasonable alternative course, and/or reasonable travel costs as a result of relocation. In appropriate circumstances, other MNU-related costs, e.g., sports club membership/professional body registration fees for which membership is required, will be reimbursed in so far as they amount to wasted costs.
- 5.2.4 If a person believes s/he is entitled to compensation, s/he may seek it by raising the matter in writing to the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs who will constitute an hoc committee of five members to determine the merits of the case. If the committee decides compensation is payable, then the case must be forwarded to the Finance Committee for approval. The decision of the Finance Committee is final.

## **6 CONSIDERATION OF CLAIMS FOR COMPENSATION OR REFUNDS**

- 6.1 In making a final assessment of any compensation payment, consideration will be given to:
1. Whether MNU has failed to deliver on specific material undertakings given to students in the way the course would be delivered.
  2. Whether sufficient action was taken by MNU to ensure students had a fair and reasonable opportunity to complete the course.
  3. Whether there has been a demonstrable loss to the student.
  4. Whether the student achieved the learning outcomes for their course.
  5. Whether the students have met their own responsibility to minimise losses.
  6. Whether MNU followed its own processes in delivering the course.
  7. Whether the student has been affected in relation to a final degree award, external accreditation or the ability to take up a job offer.

8. Consideration of alternative arrangements/adjustments that were implemented for students to minimise loss and whether students took advantage of them.
9. Whether MNU communicated with students effectively throughout the process.
10. Whether a refund or compensation payment is the most appropriate way to deal with the issue.

## **7 PAYMENT OF REFUNDS AND COMPENSATION**

- 7.1 MNU will pay all refunds to the original payer by the original payment method; this is known as 'return to source' and is in accordance with money laundering regulations. Refunds are not transferable to third parties.
- 7.2 MNU is not liable for any currency fluctuations when making payments.
- 7.3 MNU is not liable for events outside of MNU's control, which includes but is not limited to war, terrorism, strike action, earthquakes, hurricanes, acts of government, plagues or epidemics.
- 7.4 If a payment is agreed and made, this will be considered a full and the final settlement of all claims arising out of the same issue.
- 7.5 The maximum amount of compensation for a single student is MVR 10,000 inclusive of all claims.

## **8 REQUEST TO REVIEW**

- 8.1 If a student is not satisfied with the University's refund and, where relevant, compensation relating to that student, they should refer the matter in writing to the Deputy Vice Chancellor for academic affairs setting out the reasons and any supporting evidence. A referral to the Deputy Vice Chancellor should be made promptly and in any event within 10 working days of the date the individual refund and, if relevant, the compensation plan is communicated to the student.

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*This document has benefited from similar policies of:*  
*Leeds Trinity University, UK*  
*University of London School of Economics and Political Science, UK*  
*London South Bank University, UK*  
*University of Leicester, UK*  
*The University of Sheffield, U*

