Policy on Student–Staff Ratios

1 Introduction

1.1 The Maldives National University (MNU) is committed to ensuring high-quality teaching, learning, supervision, and student support across all modes of study. Appropriate student–staff ratios are essential for maintaining academic quality, fostering student engagement, ensuring effective feedback and supervision, and supporting safe learning environments.

1.2 This Policy establishes the student–staff ratio standards for teaching, practical learning, professional practice, and research supervision activities undertaken by the University. The policy provides a framework for planning, delivering, monitoring, and reviewing academic activities, ensuring alignment with international quality assurance expectations and professional accreditation requirements.

2 Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this Policy is to:

2.1.1 Establish student–staff ratio standards for different teaching and learning activities;

2.1.2 Promote high-quality learning experiences and student engagement;

2.1.3 Ensure adequate academic support and supervision for students;

2.1.4 Ensure safe and effective conduct of laboratory, workshop, fieldwork, and clinical learning activities;

2.1.5 Guide academic planning, staffing, timetabling, and resource allocation;

2.1.6 Support compliance with professional accreditation and quality assurance requirements; and

2.1.7 Facilitate institutional monitoring of teaching quality and supervision capacity.

3 Scope

3.1 This Policy applies to:

3.1.1 Undergraduate programmes;

3.1.2 Postgraduate programmes;

3.1.3 Research programmes;

3.1.4 Face-to-face, blended, and online learning activities;

3.1.5 Clinical, laboratory, workshop, fieldwork, and studio-based activities;

3.1.6 Research supervision activities.

3.2 This Policy applies to all Faculties, Centres, Schools, Colleges, and academic units of the University.

4 Definitions

4.1 **Student–Staff Ratio** - The maximum number of students assigned to one academic staff member for a specific teaching, supervision, or learning activity.

4.2 **Academic Staff** - A staff member appointed to undertake teaching, supervision, research supervision, assessment, academic advising, or related academic responsibilities.

4.3 **Principal Supervisor** - The academic staff member with primary responsibility for guiding and overseeing a research student's thesis or dissertation.

4.4 **Co-Supervisor** - An academic staff member appointed to provide additional expertise and support to a research student.

4.5 **Interactive Teaching** - Teaching activities requiring substantial student participation, discussion, feedback, collaboration, or hands-on engagement.

5 Principles

5.1 The University shall apply the following principles:

5.1.1 Student–staff ratios shall support effective achievement of learning outcomes and meaningful student engagement.

5.1.2 Different teaching and learning activities require different levels of interaction, supervision, and support. Consequently, different student–staff ratios shall apply.

5.1.3 Student–staff ratios shall be established and monitored to maintain academic quality and support student success.

5.1.4 Laboratories, workshops, fieldwork, clinical placements, and other practical activities shall maintain ratios that ensure safe operation and appropriate supervision.

5.1.5 Where professional accreditation bodies prescribe lower ratios than those established in this Policy, the accreditation requirements shall prevail.

5.1.6 Student–staff ratios shall be regularly monitored and reviewed through the University's quality assurance processes.

6 Student–Staff Ratio Standards

6.1 Lectures

Teaching Activity	Maximum Ratio
Mass Lecture	300:1
Standard Lecture	120:1
Interactive Lecture	75:1

6.1.1 Where lecture enrolments exceed 300 students, academic units shall implement additional support mechanisms such as tutorials, discussion groups, teaching assistants, or supplementary academic support sessions.

6.2 Tutorials and Seminars

Teaching Activity	Maximum Ratio
Tutorial/Seminar	30:1

6.2.1 Tutorials and seminars shall prioritise active participation, discussion, feedback, and collaborative learning.

6.3 Computer Laboratories

Teaching Activity	Maximum Ratio
Computer Laboratory	30:1

6.3.1 Technical support staff may assist academic staff, but shall not be counted as replacements for academic supervision.

6.4 Science Laboratories

Teaching Activity	Maximum Ratio
Science Laboratory	20:1

6.4.1 Laboratory technicians may assist academic staff, but shall not be counted as replacements for academic supervision. >20 2 lecturers

6.5 Engineering Workshops and Technical Laboratories

Teaching Activity	Maximum Ratio
Engineering Workshop	15:1
Technical Laboratory	20:1
High-Risk Workshop Activity	10:1

6.5.1 Laboratory technicians may assist academic staff, but shall not be counted as replacements for academic supervision.

6.5.2 Additional safety requirements may necessitate lower ratios.

6.6 Studio-Based Teaching

Teaching Activity	Maximum Ratio
Art and Design Studio	25:1
Architecture and Interior Design Studio	15:1
Media Production Studio	15:1

6.7 Clinical and Professional Practice Activities

Teaching Activity	Maximum Ratio

Clinical Skills Laboratory	20:1
Simulation Laboratory	101
Nursing Clinical Placement	10:1
Allied Health Clinical Placement	8:1
Microteaching Session	15:1
Teaching Practicum Supervision	10:1
Hospitality Practicals	15:1
Medical Clinical Placement	15:1

6.8 Fieldwork

Teaching Activity	**Maximum Ratio**
Standard Fieldwork	20:1
Environmental or Marine Fieldwork	15:1
High-Risk Field Activities	10:1

7 Research Supervision

7.1 Research supervision differs from class-based teaching in that supervision is undertaken on an individual student basis; therefore, the figures below indicate maximum supervisory loads rather than student–staff ratios for instructional activities

7.2 Undergraduate and Postgraduate Supervision

Research Activity	**Maximum Ratio**
Supervision up to 30 credits	15:1
Supervision 30 to 60 credits	12:1
Supervision 60 to 120 credits	10:1

7.2.1 The ratio refers to active students assigned to a principal supervisor.

7.3 Doctoral Supervision

Research Activity	**Maximum Ratio**

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	6:1
Professional Doctorate	6:1

7.3.1 A principal supervisor shall normally not supervise more than six active doctoral candidates at any given time.

7.3.2 Where a supervisor has exceptionally high completion rates and demonstrated supervisory capacity, the Dean may approve a higher number upon recommendation of the Higher Degrees Committee.

7.4 Co-Supervision

7.4.1 The appointment of co-supervisors does not alter the principal supervisor ratio but may be used to strengthen supervision quality and provide support

8 Online and Blended Learning

8.1 Online and blended learning activities shall adhere to the same student–staff ratio standards as equivalent face-to-face activities.

8.2 Faculties may establish lower ratios where additional student support is required.

9 Exceptions

9.1 The following activities may be exempted from the prescribed ratios:

9.1.1 Independent study;

9.1.2 Examinations

9.1.3 Directed reading courses;

9.1.4 Individual performance instruction;

9.1.5 Customised professional training;

9.1.6 Contracted programmes;

9.1.7 Externally funded specialist programmes;

9.1.8 Programmes governed by external accreditation requirements prescribing alternative ratios.

9.2 All exceptions shall be approved by the Dean and reported annually to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs).

10 Monitoring and Reporting

10.1 Each academic unit shall annually report:

10.1.1 Student–staff ratios by programme;

10.1.2 Student–staff ratios by teaching activity;

10.1.3 Research supervision loads;

10.1.4 Courses exceeding prescribed ratios;

10.1.5 Measures implemented to maintain teaching quality;

10.1.6 Compliance with accreditation-related ratio requirements.

10.2 The reports shall be submitted to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) and considered through institutional quality assurance processes.

11 Responsibilities

11.1 Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)

11.1.1 Oversee implementation of this Policy.

11.1.2 Monitor institution-wide compliance.

11.1.3 Approve exceptions where required.

11.2 Registrar

11.2.1 Support monitoring and reporting processes.

11.2.2 Ensure institutional records are maintained.

11.3 Deans and Heads of Academic Units

11.3.1 Ensure compliance with the Policy.

11.3.2 Plan staffing arrangements to meet prescribed ratios.

11.3.3 Monitor supervision workloads.

11.4 Academic Staff

11.4.1 Deliver teaching and supervision in accordance with this Policy.

11.4.2 Notify academic leaders where ratios may adversely affect quality or safety.

Approved by: Academic Senate
Responsible Office: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)
Administered by: Registrar and Faculties/Centres
Effective Date: 5 July 2026
Review Cycle: Every Five Years