

NOTE 1: This Framework, published on 1 September 2009, will be fully implemented on 1 September 2011. In the meantime, The Maldives National Qualifications Framework published by the Maldives Accreditation Board in August, 2001 will continue to function. However, for all course approval purposes this Framework, published on 1 September 2009, will be fully implemented. For validation purposes either framework may be used till 1 September 2011.

NOTE 2: When the functions of the Maldives Accreditation Board (MAB) was changed to the Maldives Qualifications Authority (MQA) on 17 May 2010, the Regulatory Board of the MQA, on its first meeting on 30 August 2010, decreed that all rules, regulations and procedures of the former MAB will be adhered to by the MQA until decreed otherwise by the Regulatory Board.

AMMENDMENT 1: The Regulatory Board of the MQA, on its meeting on 20 April 2011, decreed that all level 4 programmes approved by MQA on or after 1 September 2011 will be of 120 credits or more.

THE MALDIVES NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (MNQF)

MALDIVES ACCREDITATION BOARD

September 2009

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INTRODUCTION

The Maldives Accreditation Board (MAB) was created in August 2000 with a mandate to enhance the quality of post-secondary qualifications awarded in recognition of educational attainments.

The following year, the MAB established the Maldives National Qualifications Framework (MNQF) with a view to provide learners, employers and education providers with qualifications that are nationally standardized and quality assured.

With the rapid growth of post-secondary education, it became increasingly clear that the existing time based framework needed to be replaced by a competency based framework in order to enhance the quality of qualifications and align it with internationally accepted standards.

The process of revising the framework began in 2005. After extensive research and discussions with experts and concerned authorities, the process was completed in February 2009 and the strengthened MNQF came into effect when MAB formally endorsed it in September 2009.

The migration from a time based to a competency based system is one of the fundamental features of the strengthened framework. In the new framework, quality and content are given precedence over duration and hours.

In addition to increasing the relevance and quality of post-school education and training in the Maldives, the strengthened MNQF incorporates a broader and more coherent technical and vocational qualification. This provides the opportunity to put in place sustainable and strategic solutions for national human resource development needs.

Furthermore, the establishment of a national technical and vocational qualifications system based on national competency standards makes possible considerable flexibility in worker skills acquisition.

One of the primary focuses of the strengthened MNQF is the unified qualifications system which guarantees more international recognition for the qualifications and the skills and knowledge of Maldivian citizens.

The framework is internationally benchmarked, flexible, and responsive to the national, economic and social development of the Maldives. As a key step to promote international benchmarking of the qualifications, the Maldives Accreditation Board aligned qualifications to its 10 level framework using the level descriptors of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

The assigning of levels to all MAB accredited courses and qualifications would inadvertently facilitate student pathways for a smooth progression of qualifications and encourage life-long learning. Also this means that all qualifications no matter which area, can be recognized. Maldives Accreditation Board will include a full listing of all approved programmes on its website, with their level and purpose, for the information of learners and employers.

In addition, the Maldives Accreditation Board aims to formally benchmark its qualifications with the frameworks in the UK (including Scotland), with the new framework in Malaysia, with the vocational frameworks in Sri Lanka and Singapore and with the frameworks in Australia and New Zealand. Using the mechanism provided by new European Qualifications Framework, it will be possible to determine the alignment of levels with Frameworks in all EU member states.

In order to conform to the strengthened MNQF and make all qualifications consistent with the new national system by 01 September 2011, all

existing qualifications are required to be submitted for approval by the Maldives Accreditation Board.

The main objectives of the strengthened MNQF is to bring all recognised qualifications into a single unified structure with systems to support:

- a. National competency standards setting.
- b. Quality assurance of teaching, assessment and certification.
- c. Student and learner support and reporting.

CHAPTER 1

FEATURES

1.1 The Maldives National Qualifications Framework (MNQF)

THE MALDIVES NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (MNQF)	
LEVEL	QUALIFICATIONS TITLES
10	Doctoral Degree/ Higher Professional Certificate/Higher Professional Diploma
9	Master's Degree/ Advanced Professional Certificate/Advanced Professional Diploma
8	Graduate /Postgraduate Certificate/ and Graduate/ Postgraduate Diploma/ Bachelor's Degree with honours
7	Bachelor's Degree Professional Certificate/ Professional Diploma
6	Professional Certificate/ Advanced Diploma Associate Degree/ Foundation Degree
5	Diploma
4	Certificate IV
3	Certificate III
2	Certificate II
1	Certificate I

1.2 Key Features

Key features of the strengthened MNQF comprise the following:

- a. Inclusion of all post secondary-school qualifications from an initial certificate to advanced academic, technological and professional qualifications.

This promotes life-long learning, pathways for learners, the recognition of prior learning, credit accumulation and transfer and national and international recognition of the skills and knowledge of students and workers.

The Certificate I recognises the acquisition of a core of entry-level skills for a new worker. Certificates II, III, and IV, recognise increasing levels of capability and competence through to the fully qualified tradesperson. Diplomas, Advanced Diplomas and Higher Diplomas recognise technician, technologist, managerial and professional level skills and knowledge. Qualifications can be achieved through learning in institutions and in the workplace.

- b. The strengthened MNQF allows for a possible future interface with secondary education and provides a seamless progression for technical and vocational education graduates to move to advanced technological, professional and post-graduate learning.
- c. Through the new competency-based qualifications framework all achievements, no matter how modest, can be

recognized. Some students or workers may achieve only some of the competencies required for a full technical and vocational qualification. Yet they are able to receive an official record of that partial qualification. (Certificate of Achievement)

- d. The strengthened MNQF assesses all qualifications with reference to the descriptors of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.
- e. The strengthened qualifications framework incorporates a credit system so that the volume of learning may be recorded and students may receive credit for all achievement.

Credits are assigned to the components of qualifications on the basis of one credit for achievement of the specified learning outcomes of 10 total learning hours. In higher education this translates into 120 credits in an academic year.

- f. The framework also has an internationally benchmarked suite of higher education qualifications from Associate and Foundation degrees, Bachelor's and Master's degrees, through to higher technological and professional diplomas and Doctorates. This will allow valid international higher education qualifications to be recognized in the Maldives and promote mobility and recognition for Maldivian citizens travelling overseas for work or further study.

CHAPTER 2

QUALIFICATIONS DEFINITIONS

The qualifications definitions below are internationally referenced with credit requirements based on the national credit system adopted by the Maldives Accreditation Board, and derived from international good practice.

The qualifications titles are examples only, to encourage flexibility and the accurate assigning of qualifications to a level. For example, a small but highly specialised qualification may meet the descriptor for level 5 or 6, but not the credit requirements for a diploma or a degree. That can be termed a Certificate level 5 or 6.

2.1 Certificates

The Certificate I has a minimum of 10 credits. The Certificate II and the Certificate III have a minimum of 40 credits at or above the level at which they are awarded. The Certificate IV has a minimum of 60 credits at level 4 or above. Professional Certificate at Level 5 and Professional Certificate at Level 6 have 40 credits at or above the level at which they are awarded. Career programmes for school leavers will considerably exceed the minimum credits specified. Certificates awarded beyond level 7 should have a minimum of 60 credits at or above the level awarded. Certificates may be awarded from levels 1 to 10 and may carry a qualifier such as, professional, advanced professional or higher professional. Certificates awarded at level 8 maybe termed graduate or postgraduate.

2.2 Diplomas

A Diploma is a qualification that commonly has a wider theoretical base than a certificate and more specialised, technical, professional or managerial competencies. The minimum size of a diploma is 120 credits, and the level of the diploma is determined by the level of the highest 90 credits. Diplomas may be awarded from levels 5 to 10 and may carry a qualifier such as, professional, advanced professional or higher professional. Diplomas awarded at level 8 maybe termed graduate or postgraduate.

2.3 Associate / Foundation Degree

An Associate or Foundation degree is a programme designed to facilitate student successful progression to the full degree or directly to employment. These degrees focus on learning within a work context, underpinned by both vocational and academic understanding, and enable learners to demonstrate learning outcomes that are explicitly relevant to employment and professional requirements.

The associate and the foundation degree will have at least 240 credits of which at least 90 will match the level 6 descriptor.

2.4 Bachelor's Degree

A Bachelor's Degree is a systematic, research-based, coherent, introduction to the knowledge, ideas, principles, concepts, chief research methods and to the analytical and problem-solving techniques of a recognised major subject or subjects. A programme leading to this qualification usually involves major studies in which significant knowledge is available. Programme content is taken to a significant depth and progressively developed to a high level, which can provide a basis for post-graduate study and professional careers.

A Bachelor's Degree requires a minimum of 360 credits of which at least 90 will match the level 7 descriptor.

2.5 Bachelor's Degree with Honours

A Bachelor's degree with honours may be awarded to recognise advanced or distinguished study in advance of a level 7 Bachelor's Degree. This may occur by recognising outstanding achievement in a 480 credit (or more) Bachelors Degree especially in relation to work of a research nature (typically at level 8); or achieving at least 90 credits at level 8 following a level 7 Bachelors Degree (either as part of an integrated honours degree or as a separate qualification).

2.6 Master's Degree

A Master's degree is normally designed to extend the principal subject or subjects of the qualifying degree or may build on relevant knowledge and skills derived from advanced occupational experience. A Master's Degree contains a significant element of supervised research, normally embodied in a thesis dissertation or substantial research paper. The Master's Degree requires a minimum of 240 credits, with at least 90 matching the level 9 descriptors. Where the Master's degree builds upon a four year (or longer) Bachelor's Degree, it can be fewer than 240 credits but not fewer than 120 credits. The MAB will continue to recognise overseas one year Master's Degrees until the Bologna Process is fully implemented and these degrees are phased out.

2.7 Doctoral Degree

A Doctoral degree is a research qualification that is at a significantly higher level than the Master's Degree, reflecting scholarly

independence, and is awarded in recognition of research which has made a substantial and original contribution to knowledge.

The doctoral programme will be equivalent to a minimum of 3 years of full-time study, or 360 credits matching the level 10 descriptors.

CHAPTER 3

LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

The Maldives Accreditation Board assigns qualifications to its 10 level framework using to the descriptors for levels 3—12 of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. The Maldives Accreditations Board has acquired the agreement to use the SCQF level descriptors.

Reference to the Scottish level descriptors promotes international benchmarking of qualifications awarded in the Maldives, and could support or assist with valid equivalence recognition of international qualifications.

The descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of every level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of every level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels.

They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification should have all the characteristics.

Through the benchmarking already undertaken by the Edexcel, it is possible to assign GCSE grades D-G to level 2, GCSE grades A-C to level 3 and A Levels to level 4 of the Maldives National Qualifications Framework. That provides an anchor point for benchmarking all vocational and academic qualifications.

3.1 Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Level Descriptors

(SCOTTISH LEVELS 3-12 AS LEVELS 1-10 IN THE MALDIVES)

LEVEL 1 (Certificate I is an example of a qualification at this level)

Knowledge and understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic cognitive skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at this level include the ability to:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic knowledge in a subject/discipline • Simple facts and ideas associated with a subject/discipline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Relate knowledge with some prompting to personal and/or everyday contexts. ✓ Use a few basic, routine skills to undertake familiar and routine tasks. ✓ Complete pre-planned tasks. ✓ Use with guidance, basic tools and materials safely and effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Identify, with some prompting, a process to deal with a situation or an issues. ✓ Operate familiar context using given criteria. ✓ Take account of some identified consequences of action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use simple skills- For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce and respond to simple written and oral communication in familiar, routine contexts. • carry out simple tasks to process data and access information. • Use simple numerical and graphical data in everyday contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Work alone or with others on simple tasks under frequent supervision. ✓ Participate in the setting of goals, timelines etc. ✓ Participate in the review of completed work and the identification of ways of improving practices and processes. ✓ Identify, given simple criteria, own strengths and weaknesses relative to the work.

LEVEL 2 (Certificate II is an example of a qualification at this level)

Knowledge and understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic cognitive skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at this level include the ability to:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic knowledge in a subject/ discipline which is mainly factual. • Some simple facts and ideas about and associated with a subject / discipline. • Knowledge of basic processes, materials and terminology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Relate knowledge to personal and/or practical contexts. ✓ Use a few skills to complete straightforward tasks with some non-routine elements. ✓ Select and use, with guidance, appropriate tools and materials safely and effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use, with guidance, given stages of a problem solving approach to deal with a situation or issue. ✓ Operate in straightforward contexts. ✓ Identify and/or take account of some of the consequences of action/inaction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use straightforward skills- for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce and respond to simple written and oral communication in familiar contexts. • use the most straightforward features of familiar applications to process and obtain information. • use straightforward numerical and graphical data in straightforward and familiar contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Work alone or with others on straightforward tasks. ✓ Contribute to the setting of goals timelines etc. ✓ Contribute to the review of completed work and offer suggestions for improving practices and processes. ✓ Identify own strengths and weaknesses relative to the work.

LEVEL 3 (Certificate III is an example of a qualification at this level)

Knowledge and understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic cognitive skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at this level include the ability to:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic knowledge in a subject/ discipline which is mainly factual but has some theoretical component. • A range simple facts and ideas about and associated with a subject / discipline. • Knowledge and understanding of basic processes, materials and terminology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Relate ideas and knowledge to personal and/or everyday contexts. ✓ Complete some routine and non-routine tasks using knowledge associated with a subject/discipline ✓ Plan and organise both familiar and new tasks. ✓ Select appropriate tools and materials and use safely and effectively (eg without waste) ✓ Adjust tools where necessary following safe practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use a problem solving approach to deal with a situation or issue which is straightforward in relation to a subject/ discipline. ✓ Operate in familiar context, but where there is a need to take account of or use additional information of different kinds, some of which will be theoretical or hypothetical. ✓ Use some abstract constructs – eg make generalizations and / or draw conclusions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use a range of routine skills- for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce and respond to detailed written and oral communication in familiar contexts. • use standard applications to process, obtain and combine information • use a range of numerical and graphical data in straightforward context which have some complex features. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Work alone or with others on tasks with minimum supervision. ✓ Agree goals and responsibilities for self and /or work team with managers and supervisors. ✓ Take leadership responsibility for some tasks. ✓ Show an awareness for others' roles, responsibilities and requirements in carrying out work and make a contribution to the evaluation and improvement of practices and processes.

LEVEL 4 (Certificate IV is an example of a qualification at this level)

Knowledge and understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic cognitive skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at this level include the ability to:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generalised knowledge of a subject/discipline. • factual and theoretical knowledge. • a range of facts, ideas, properties, materials, terminology, practices, techniques about/ associated with a subject/discipline. • Relate the subject/discipline to a range of practical and/or everyday application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Apply knowledge and understanding in known, practical contexts. ✓ Use some of the basic, routine practices, techniques and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline in routine contexts which may have non-routine elements. ✓ Plan how skills will be used to address set situations and/or problems and adapt these as necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Obtain, organize and use factual and theoretical information in problem solving. ✓ Make generalisations and predictions. ✓ Draw conclusion and suggest solutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use a wide range of skills- for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce and respond to detailed and relatively complex written and oral communication in familiar and unfamiliar contexts. • select and use standard applications to process, obtain and combine information • use a range of numerical and graphical data in routine context which may have non-routine elements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Take responsibility for the carrying out of a range of activities, where the overall goal is clear, under non-directive supervision. ✓ Take some supervisory responsibilities for the work of others and lead established teams in the implementation of routine work. ✓ Manage limited resources within defined and supervised areas of work. ✓ Take account of roles and responsibilities related to the tasks being carried out and take significant role in the evaluation of work and the improvement of practices and processes.

LEVEL 5 (Diploma is an example of a qualification at this level)

Knowledge and understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic cognitive skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at this level include the ability to:				
<p>✓ Demonstrate and/or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A broad knowledge of the subject/discipline in general. • Knowledge that is embedded in the main theories, concepts and principles. • An awareness of the evolving/ changing nature of knowledge and understanding. • An understanding of the difference between explanations based in evidence and/or research and other forms of explanations, and of the importance of this difference. 	<p>✓ Use some of the basic, routine professional skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with a subject/ discipline.</p> <p>✓ Practice these in both routine and non-routine contexts.</p>	<p>✓ Present and evaluate arguments, information and ideas which are routine to the subject/discipline</p> <p>✓ Use a range of approaches to addressing defined and/or routine problems and issues within familiar contexts.</p>	<p>✓ Use a wide range of routine skills and some advanced skills associated with the subject/ discipline - for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • convey complex ideas in well-structured and coherent form. • Use a range of forms of communication effectively in both familiar and new contexts. • Use standard applications to process and obtain a variety of information and data. • Use a range of numerical and graphical skills in combination. • Use numerical and graphical data to measure progress and achieve 	<p>✓ Exercise some initiative and independence in carrying out defined activities at a professional level.</p> <p>✓ Take supervision in less familiar areas of work.</p> <p>✓ Take some managerial responsibility for the work of others within a defined and supervised structure.</p> <p>✓ Manage limited resources within defined areas of work.</p> <p>✓ Take the lead in implementing agreed plans in familiar or defined contexts.</p> <p>✓ Take account of own and others' roles and responsibilities in carrying out and</p>

			goals/targets.	evaluating tasks. ✓Work with others in support of current professional practice under guidance.
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LEVEL 6 (Advanced Diploma, Associate Degree, Foundation degree, and Professional Certificate are examples of qualifications at this level)

Knowledge and understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic cognitive skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at this level include the ability to:				
<p>✓ Demonstrate and/or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A broad knowledge of the scope, defining features, and main areas of a subject/discipline. • Detailed knowledge in some areas. • Understanding of a limited range of core theories, principles and concepts. • Limited knowledge and understanding of some major current issues and specialisms. • An outline knowledge and understanding of research and equivalent scholarly/academic processes. 	<p>✓ Use a range of routine skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline, a few of which are advanced or complex.</p> <p>✓ Carry out routine lines of enquiry development or investigation into professional level problems and issues.</p> <p>✓ Adapt routine practices within accepted standards.</p>	<p>✓ Undertake critical analysis, evaluation and/or synthesis of ideas, concepts, information and issues which are within the common understanding of the subject/discipline.</p> <p>✓ Use a range of approaches to formulate evidence solutions/responses to defined and/or routine problems and issues.</p> <p>✓ Critically evaluate evidence-based solutions/responses to defined and/or routine problems/issues.</p>	<p>✓ Use a range of routine of skills and some advanced and specialized skills associated with a subject/discipline - for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • convey complex information to a range of audiences and for a range of purposes. • Use a range of standard applications to process and obtain data. • Use and evaluate numerical and graphical data to measure progress and achieve goals/targets. 	<p>✓ Exercise autonomy and initiative in some activities at a professional level.</p> <p>✓ Take significant managerial or supervisory responsibility for the work of others in defined areas of work.</p> <p>✓ Manage resources within defined areas of work.</p> <p>✓ Take the lead on planning in familiar or defined contexts.</p> <p>✓ Take continuing account of own and others' roles, responsibilities and contributions in carrying out and evaluating tasks.</p> <p>✓ Work in support of</p>

				<p>current professional practice under guidance.</p> <p>✓ Deal with ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices under guidance.</p>
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LEVEL 7 (Bachelor's Degree is an example of a qualification at this level)

Knowledge and understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic cognitive skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at this level include the ability to:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A broad and integrated knowledge and understanding of the scope, main areas and boundaries of a subject/discipline. • A critical understanding of a selection of the principal theories, principles, concepts and terminology. • Knowledge that is detailed in some areas and /or knowledge of one or more specialisms that are informed by forefront developments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use a selection of principal skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline. ✓ Use a few skills, techniques, practices and/or materials that are specialised or advanced. ✓ Practice routine methods of enquiry and/or research. ✓ Practice in a range of professional level contexts which include a degree of unpredictability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Undertake critical analysis, evaluation and/or synthesis of ideas, concepts, information and issues . ✓ Identify and analyse routine professional problems and issues. ✓ Draw and a range of sources in making judgements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use a range of routine of skills and some advanced and specialised skills in support of established practices in a subject/discipline - for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make formal and informal presentations on standard/mainstream topics in the subject/discipline to a range of audiences. • Use a range of IT applications to support and enhance work. • Interpret, use and evaluate numerical and graphical data to achieve goals/targets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Exercise autonomy and initiative in some activities at a professional level. ✓ Take some responsibility for the work of others and for a range of resources. ✓ Practice in ways which take account of own and others' roles and responsibilities . ✓ Work under guidance with qualified practitioners. ✓ Deal with ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices seeking guidance where appropriate.

LEVEL 8 (Graduate/Post-Graduate Certificate and Graduate/Post-Graduate Diploma, and Bachelor's with honours are examples of qualifications at this level)

Knowledge and understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic cognitive skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at this level include the ability to:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge that covers and integrates most of the principal areas, features, boundaries, terminology and conventions of a subject/discipline. • A critical understanding of the principal theories, concepts and principles, • detailed knowledge and understanding in one or specialisms, some of which is informed by or at the forefront of a subject/discipline. • Knowledge and understanding of the ways in which the subject/discipline is developed, including a range of established techniques of enquiry or research methodologies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use a range of principal skills, practices and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline. ✓ Use a few skills, techniques, practices and/or materials that are specialised or advanced or at forefront of a subject/discipline. ✓ Execute a defined project of research, development or investigation and identify and implement relevant outcomes. ✓ Practise in a range of professional level contexts which include a degree of unpredictability and/or specialism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Critically identify, define, conceptualise and analyse, complex/professional level problems and issues. ✓ Offer professional level insights, interpretations and solutions to problems and issues. ✓ Critically review and consolidate knowledge, skills and practices and thinking in a subject/discipline. ✓ Demonstrate some originality and creativity in dealing with professional level issues. ✓ Make judgements where data/information is limited or comes from a range of sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use a wide range of routine of skills and some advanced and specialized skills in support of established practices in a subject/discipline - for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make formal and informal presentations about specialised topics to informed audiences. • Communicate with professional level peers, senior colleagues and specialists. • Use a range of software to support and enhance work at this level and specify refinements/improvements to software to increase effectiveness. • Interpret, use and evaluate a wide range of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Exercise autonomy and initiative in professional / equivalent activities. ✓ Take significant responsibility for the work of others and a range of resources. ✓ Practice in ways which show a clear awareness of own and others' roles and responsibilities. ✓ Work effectively under guidance in peer relationship with qualified practitioners. ✓ Work with others to bring about change, development and/or new thinking. ✓ Deal with complex ethical and professional issues in accordance

			numerical and graphical data to set and achieve goals/targets.	with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices. ✓ Recognise the limits of these codes and seek guidance where appropriate.
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LEVEL 9 (Master’s Degree is an example of a qualification at this level)

Knowledge and understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic cognitive skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at this level include the ability to:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge that covers and integrates most, if not all, of the main areas, of a subject/discipline – including their features, boundaries, terminology and conventions. • A critical understanding of the principal theories, principles and concepts. • A critical understanding of a range of specialised theories, principles and concepts. • Extensive detailed and critical knowledge and understanding in one or more specialisms, much of which is at or informed by developments at the forefront. • Critical awareness of current issues in a subject/ discipline and one or more specialism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use a significant range of principal skills, techniques, practices and/or materials that are associated with a subject/ discipline. ✓ Use a range of specialised skills, techniques, practices and/or materials which are at forefront or informed by the forefront developments. ✓ Apply a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent instruments and techniques of enquiry. ✓ Plan and execute a significant project of research, investigation or development. ✓ Demonstrate originality or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Apply critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis to issues which are at the forefront or informed developments at the forefront of a subject/ discipline. ✓ Identify, conceptualise and define new and abstract problems and issues. ✓ Develop original and creative responses to problems and issues. ✓ Critically review, consolidate and extend knowledge, skills practices and thinking in a subject/ discipline. ✓ Deal with complex issues and make informed judgements in situations in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use a range of advanced and specialized skills as appropriate to the subject/ discipline - for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate using appropriate methods, to a range of audiences with different level of knowledge/ expertise. • Communicate with peers, more senior colleagues and specialists. • Use a wide range of software to support and enhance work at this level and specify new software or refinements/ improvements to existing software to increase effectiveness. • Undertake critical evaluations of a wide range of numerical and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Exercise substantial autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities. ✓ Take responsibility for own work and/ or significant responsibility for the work of others. ✓ Take responsibility for a significant range of resources. ✓ Demonstrate leadership and/ or initiative and make an identifiable contribution to change and development. ✓ Practise in ways which draw on critical reflection on own and others’ roles and responsibilities ✓ Deal with complex ethical and professional issues and

	<p>creativity in the application of knowledge understanding and/ or practices.</p> <p>✓ Practice in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional level contexts.</p>	<p>the absence of complete or consistent data/ information.</p>	<p>graphical data.</p>	<p>make informed judgements on issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.</p>
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LEVEL 10 (Doctoral degree and Higher Professional Diploma are examples of qualifications at this level)

Knowledge and understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic cognitive skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at this level include the ability to:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A critical overview of a subject/ discipline including critical understanding of the principal theories, principles and concepts. • A critical, detailed and often leading knowledge and understanding of forefront of one or more specialisms. • Knowledge and understanding that is generated through personal research or equivalent work which makes a significant contribution to the development of the subject/ discipline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use a significant range of principal skills, techniques, practices and/or materials that are associated with a subject/ discipline. ✓ Use and enhance range of complex skills, techniques, practices and materials at forefront of one or more specialisms. ✓ Apply a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent instruments and techniques of enquiry. ✓ Design and execute research, investigative or development projects to deal with new problems and issues. ✓ Demonstrate originality or creativity in the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Apply a constant and integrated approach to critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas, information and issues. ✓ Identify, conceptualise and offer original and creative insights into new and complex abstract ideas, information and issues. ✓ Develop creative and original responses to problems and issues. ✓ Deal with very complex and/ or new issues and make informed judgements in situations in the absence of complete or consistent data/ information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use a significant range of advanced and specialized skills as appropriate to the subject/ discipline - for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate at an appropriate level to a range of audiences and adapt communication to the context and purpose. • Communicate at the standard of published academic work and/or critical dialogue and review with peers and experts in other specialisms. • Use a range of software to support and enhance work at this level and specify software requirements to enhance work. • Critically evaluate numerical and graphical data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Exercise a high level of autonomy initiative in professional and equivalent activities. ✓ Take full responsibility for own work and significant responsibility for the work of others. ✓ Demonstrate leadership and/ or originality in tackling and solving problems and issues. ✓ Work in ways which are reflective, self-critical and based on research/ evidence. ✓ Deal with complex ethical and professional issues. ✓ Make informed judgements on new and emerging issues not addressed by current

	<p>development and application of new knowledge understanding and practices.</p> <p>✓ Practice in the contexts of new problems and circumstances.</p>			<p>professional and/or ethical codes or practices.</p>
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CHAPTER 4

QUALITY ASSURANCE

The new strengthened MNQF also facilitates trainers to develop full-time training programmes. They can modularise training and offer part time courses at times to suit workers so that a full qualification is achieved over time.

There can be a mix of training off the job and training in the workplace with assessment results being combined towards a full award. Assessment can be conducted in the workplace. Assessment can recognise prior learning and award competencies without course attendance.

A quality assurance model has been adopted based on institutional self-assessment and continuous improvement.

Regulatory quality assurance requires that all training agencies and education providers take responsibility themselves for excellent performance. They then need to demonstrate to the regulatory body and to stakeholders that their quality management systems meet, or exceed, minimum requirements.

All training providers will develop their own coherent quality management system of organisational structure, responsibilities, procedures and resources for setting and implementing quality policies.

The system ensures that the training provider has the capability to establish and maintain an environment fit for delivering education and training to meet or exceed the specified standards.

As the central agency responsible for quality assurance, the Maldives Accreditation Board proposes three clusters of activities to support the new national qualifications arrangements, where qualifications are delivered through training institutions:

- a- Establishment of a quality management system at the time of registration;
- b- Programme accreditation;
- c- Ongoing monitoring and institutional quality audit.

After MAB endorsement, the new competency-based qualifications will be open to delivery through institutions and through structured workplace training.

Institutions will develop robust teaching programmes based on the endorsed competency standards and qualifications and seek MAB accreditation. Institutions will teach and assess their students, with the close overview of the MAB, prior to national certificates being issued.

For training in the industry, the MAB will ensure that registered assessors are available to conduct assessment of trainees in the workplace. They will undertake their assessments in a quality assured environment established through the MAB.

There will be processes to assure the national validity and consistency of assessment for all qualifications.

Foreign qualifications delivered in the Maldives will be accommodated within the new framework, and be assigned to an appropriate level.

Progressive skills acquisition will also be recognised through the new system. A worker achieving just some of the units or modules, and not all the skills specified in a national qualification, will be provided with an official Certificate of Achievement.

Consistent with their commitment to quality, all accredited providers will be authorised to award qualifications.

Details of all qualification achievement are remitted to the central MAB database. The MAB will provide a template for the new competency-based technical and vocational certificates and the Certificates of Achievement.

This will enhance the national and international mobility of Maldivian citizens and facilitate ready verification of the authenticity of qualifications.

Only accredited providers may offer qualifications.

CHAPTER 5

CREDIT SYSTEM

Credit systems have been adopted in higher education in many jurisdictions. Those nations with comprehensive qualifications frameworks which have adopted national credit systems, have done so principally because of the perceived benefits of a common “currency” across all qualifications.

5.1 Credit Policy under the Strengthened National Qualifications Framework

- a- The credit system for the Maldives National Qualifications Framework (MNQF) awards one credit for every ten hours of total learning time.

The calculation is based on determining the duration an average student would take to achieve the learning outcomes specified for every unit or module of a complete qualification; taking into consideration, class contact time, workshop or laboratory time, time spent on practical activities, research and self directed study and completion of assignments.

The total number of hours is divided by ten to give a credit rating for a unit or module.

- b- The system accommodates students who may achieve the outcomes faster or students who may find the learning difficult, and who may need more time.

Courses maybe designed to cater to the learning needs of students with different levels of competence, with the duration of the course

adjusted accordingly but in accordance with the minimum credit requirement..

- c- Having credits associated with the units or modules facilitates for full cross-credits, to be created for students across institutions. The credits give an idea of the volume of learning and facilitate comparison of total learning outcomes.

For example, an accredited module in basic wood skills in an atoll training centre may be able to be credited towards an Institute of Technology programme, if the outcomes are clearly specified and comparable to those in the receiving institution's programme.

- d- The ten hour calculation was originally based on a full-time student in a tertiary institution completing about 1200 hours of total learning time in a standard academic year (ie 30 weeks at the rate of 40 hours per week) Therefore on average it is expected that 120 credits are achievable in a year.
- e- Students undertaking programmes longer than standard duration would be able to earn more than 120 credits in a calendar year.
- f- Despite the origins of the calculation, the system can be applied easily to short courses, to apprenticeship training, and to training conducted fully on the job.
- g- A large duo-decimal number is preferred as it can be divided by most digits up to ten. This would make it easy to accommodate those in short courses in the new structured workplace training, or in community education programmes.

For example, having 60 credits in a year would mean that courses shorter than 20 hours would need to be allocated a fraction of a single credit. 120 is divisible by 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8 and easily allows for credit to be calculated for full-time, part-time, community based and on the job training.

5.2 Determining Credit and Qualification Level

- a- When a new course or programme is developed, the total average time required for an average learner at that level, to achieve all the learning outcomes should be taken into consideration. The developer should then assign a level and credit rating to the module and to the total programme.
- b- The Maldives Accreditation Board (MAB) will check the accuracy of that assignment when approval or/and accreditation takes place or when a competency-based qualification is being endorsed.
- c- The MAB has the central task of ensuring, through accreditation and endorsement, the validity and reliability of all decisions about levels and credits so that there is consistency across all post- school education and training in the Maldives.
- d- Decisions will be listed on the MAB website so that there is a public record of all accreditations. This provides accessibility for overseas institutions to check the level and volume of learning associated with qualifications presented by students travelling overseas and seeking recognition for further study or work.
- e- Where units or modules are common to several courses, the MAB will standardise the credit for those common modules. This would make it

possible for credit pathways to be cleared for students wishing to progress to more advanced qualifications.

- f- The standardising will emerge through discussions with interested parties. This will support student pathways, and promote high quality teaching and assessment as teachers from different training providers work together.
- g- The standardisation will not restrict institutional freedom to develop courses tailored to meet the needs of particular clients.
- h- An institution may have additional modules in life skills to meet its own clients' needs. These can be part of an accredited programme but may not be common to any programme elsewhere. Accreditation indicates that they are of good value, although perhaps not readily transferable.

5.3 General and Specific Credits

- a- Qualifications will have credit totals derived from adding up credits from the modules or units which constitute them.

For Example: A qualification in carpentry will commonly have modules in basic wood skills, basic tool skills and more advanced skills in construction. There are likely to be modules in trade calculations, safety in the workplace and perhaps small business management. The qualification could also include modules in personal health and social skills. This type of qualification would have a fixed set of modules, all of which must be achieved successfully for the qualification to be awarded. All credits are for specifically named modules.

- b- Another approach is to allow for a small credit total to count towards the qualification from a number of optional modules, perhaps in restricted areas of learning.

For example, to guarantee a good base of general education from which to build skills, a carpentry qualification could specify 50 credits from any accredited modules at level one or two of the framework. Students may then carry forward credits from a range of valid learning, all of which give them a sound basis for their vocational training.

The pool of credits could be restricted in some way, or students could be required to have credits in certain specified areas such as English, mathematics or computing. This approach gives students flexibility and opens pathways to those without full school leaving certificates.

The remainder of the qualification would come from specified modules from the skill area for which the qualification has been developed.

For Example: A Certificate in Business could be made up of a base of 50 credits from levels 1 or 2 in such areas as literacy, numeracy, English, and computing. The specific business skills would build on that base.

This approach widens opportunities for young people to enter further education but allows for more targeted entry criteria to be set, if necessary.

- c- A variation to this approach would allow advanced credit options for students. Students would complete a set of basic modules in business, then be required to achieve 20 credits in one of finance, accounting, marketing or management, depending upon their interests.

Having an open credit total, allows students the freedom to specialise at the end point of their studies.

- d- The accredited credit approach also makes it possible for students to accumulate credits across institutions, or to take a few credits to suit their needs.

5.4 Allocated Minimum Credits of the MNQF

Level	Qualification(s)	Minimum Credits
Level 1	Certificate I	10 credits (3 weeks full-time)
Level 2	Certificate II	40 credits (15 weeks full-time)
Level 3	Certificate III	40 credits (15 weeks full-time)
Level 4	Certificate IV	120 credits (1 year (30 weeks) full-time)
Level 5	Diploma	120 credits of which 90 credits at Level 5 (1 year (30 weeks))
Level 6	Advanced Diploma/ Associate Degree/ Foundation Degree	120 credits of which 90 credits at Level 6 (1 year (30 weeks)) - diploma route
		240 credits of which 90 credits at Level 5 & 90 credits at Level 6 (2 years (60 weeks)) - Higher Secondary route
	Professional Certificate	(40 credits 15 weeks)
Level 7	Bachelor's Degree	360 credits (3 years)
	Professional Diploma	120 credits of which 90 credits at Level 7 (1 year (30 weeks))
	Professional Certificate	40 credits (20 weeks)
Level 8	Graduate Certificate	60 credits (20 weeks)
	Graduate Diploma	120 credits (1 year (30 weeks))
	Bachelor's Degree with honours	480 credits (4 years)

Level 9	Master's Degree	240 credits (2 years)
		120 credits (1 year (30 weeks))
	Advanced Professional Diploma	120 credits (1 year (30 weeks))
	Advanced Professional Certificate	60 credits (20 weeks)
Level 10	Doctoral Degree	360 credits (3 – 5 years)
	Higher Professional Diploma	120 credits (1 year (30 weeks))
	Higher Professional Certificate	60 credits (20 weeks)

NOTE: The Regulatory Board of the MQA, on its meeting on 20 April 2011, decreed that all level 4 programmes approved by MQA on or after 1 September 2011 will be of 120 credits or more.