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is ESG-compliant

International Quality Review

Mid-Cycle Review

The Maldives National University

Review Report

January 2026

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About this mid-cycle review

This is a report of a mid-cycle review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at the Maldives National University. The mid-cycle review is desk-based and was conducted by a team of two, as follows:

- Harry Williams, Reviewer
- Chris McIntyre, QAA Officer

The full International Quality Review (IQR) in October 2023, resulted in a [published report](#). The QAA review team for the IQR in 2023 concluded that the Maldives National University met all 10 standards set out in Part 1 of the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(ESG\)](#) following the submission of additional evidence to address the conditions set at the review. The team identified three features of good practice and made 22 recommendations.

This mid-cycle review evaluates progress against the key actions since the IQR and considers any significant changes that may impact on the ability of the Maldives National University to continue to meet the ESG standards.

Outcome of the mid-cycle review

1 From the evidence provided, the review team concludes that:

The Maldives National University is making satisfactory progress since the successful IQR and that the period of validity of the QAA International Institutional accreditation be continued to the end of the five-year accreditation cycle, in October 2028.

Summary of IQR outcomes

Overview of the institution

2 The Maldives National University (MNU) was initially established in the 1970s to provide technical and vocational training for the country's workforce and has evolved into the Maldives' leading institution of higher education, offering a comprehensive range of undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral programmes. MNU's status as a university was granted under The Maldives National University Act – 3/2011 in 2011, which outlines MNU's establishment, governance, and functions.

3 MNU states that it has played a pivotal role in nation-building, knowledge creation, human capital development, and societal advancement. Guided by the philosophy of 'Iman and Ilm' (faith and knowledge), MNU has nurtured generations of Maldivian scholars, professionals, and leaders, while fostering research, innovation, and international collaboration. The university serves as a centre for knowledge and development, offering daily opportunities for learning, innovation, and societal engagement.

4 The university vision is that 'MNU will perform and be acknowledged as the outstanding academic institution of the nation and one of the finest in the region', and the mission is: 'to create, discover, preserve and disseminate knowledge that are necessary to enhance the lives and livelihoods of people and essential for the cultural, social and economic development of the society so that this nation shall remain free and Islamic forever.' MNU has the following core values:

- Honour, honesty and integrity
- Service to the nation

- Rational inquiry and critical thinking
- Life-long learning, teamwork and leadership
- Self-discipline and respect for the law
- Respect for people and our institution.

MNU's organisational structure was designed to achieve its mission and enable efficient functioning in the services it offers. A 5-year Strategic Goals (2026-2030) activity has led to a new Strategic Plan which was officially launched in mid-December 2025.

5 MNU has 10 stated goals covering appropriate areas of activity including academic excellence, research and innovation, engagement with society, student-centred excellence, and national regional and international engagement.

6 The university actively prioritises international partnerships and has relationships with institutions in a range of countries across South Asia and Australia, the UK, the US, and China which include strategic agreements, joint research initiatives, faculty, and student exchanges.

7 MNU's course portfolio has grown compared to the 2022 IQR reporting. In 2022, there were 158 MQA-accredited courses at all levels, while today a total of 186 such courses are offered (<https://courses.mnu.edu.mv/course>):

Certificate levels	Undergraduate Degree	Postgraduate Degree	Doctorate
58	83	27	18

8 The number of MNU faculties/schools/centres has grown from 13 to 16, with the College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, the Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences and the Centre for Security and Strategic Studies being new additions. MNU currently has five campuses: the central campus in Greater Malé, Hithadhoo Campus (HC) in Addu Atoll, Thinadhoo Campus (TC) in Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll, Gan Campus (GC) in Laamu Atoll, and Kulhudhuffushi Campus (KC) in Haa Dhaalu Atoll. Expansion to the rest of the Maldives is underway.

Good practice identified by the 2023 International Quality Review

- 9 The 2023 QAA review team identified the following features of good practice:
- MNU's close links with industry exemplified by the systematic inclusion of external stakeholders in Faculty Advisory Committees and the improvement to programmes as a result (ESG Standard 1.2)
 - the YouTube channel showing an 'Introducing MNU Admission Portal' video which is useful and informative (ESG Standard 1.8)
 - the positive engagement in external review and audit processes and a positive attitude towards these exercises which MNU uses as opportunities to self-reflect and learn (ESG Standard 1.10).

Recommendations of the 2023 International Quality Review

10 The 2023 QAA review team made the following recommendations:

- include student representatives on all faculty-level committees (Standard 1.1)
- systematically engage internal and external stakeholders in quality assurance, including the further participation of students, in the active management of education provision on committees at faculty level (ESG Standard 1.1)
- ensure the design, development and approval of new programmes fully comply with its policy (ESG Standard 1.2)
- ensure all relevant stakeholders, including students, are fully engaged in the design and development of new programmes (ESG Standard 1.2)
- ensure that the criteria for marking are published in advance and that they map onto the published grade boundaries (ESG Standard 1.3)
- put in place arrangements to ensure a consistent approach to the second marking and moderation of assessed work (ESG Standard 1.3)
- revise its current arrangements for the use of plagiarism-detection software (ESG Standard 1.3)
- revise the appropriateness and consistency of penalties applied to work submitted late (ESG Standard 1.3)
- revise its current arrangements for the consideration of student complaints (ESG Standard 1.3)
- conduct further work necessary to ensure the policies regarding student-centred learning and teaching are fully embedded and implemented across the University (ESG Standard 1.3)
- revise the current first-come first-served admissions process to ensure a transparent, consistent and standardised process (ESG Standard 1.4)
- monitor and report on student progression, recognition and certification data to enable effective management of student academic progress (ESG Standard 1.4)
- ensure that there are effective arrangements for the induction, training, and support of part-time staff across all faculties and campuses (ESG Standard 1.5)
- ensure that there are effective arrangements to identify and enable the sharing of good practice within and between faculties and campuses (ESG Standard 1.5)
- ensure all staff, full-time and part-time, are appraised in line with the relevant University policy (ESG Standard 1.5)
- revise the current process and criteria for promotion of academic staff to improve fairness and transparency (ESG Standard 1.5)
- develop support for students with special educational needs in a systematic manner through both policy and procedures to ensure a more inclusive student experience (ESG Standard 1.6)

- formalise and standardise pastoral support to ensure students are appropriately and consistently supported across all faculties and campuses (ESG Standard 1.6)
- collect and make accessible data on employability patterns of alumni for the benefit of students and their further choices (ESG Standard 1.7)
- ensure quality control of public information between marketing, faculty, schools and individual staff (ESG Standard 1.8)
- ensure all relevant programme information is consistently publicly available (ESG Standard 1.8)
- conduct further work necessary to ensure the policies and templates for programme reviews are fully effectively implemented (ESG Standard 1.9).

Changes since the last IQR review visit

11 There has been no change in MNU's legal status, trading name, or awarding body arrangements during this period, and the university has not merged with any other provider. MNU continues to serve as a centre for knowledge and development, fostering opportunities for learning, innovation, and community engagement, developing the workforce for developing the nation.

12 Since 2023, MNU has undergone significant restructuring. A new Vice-Chancellor was appointed in November 2023, along with three Deputy Vice-Chancellor posts with responsibility for core strategic portfolios. MNU states that the restructuring has enhanced decision-making, operational efficiency, and strategic oversight across academic and administrative functions.

13 MNU's academic portfolio has grown substantially in areas aligned with national priorities and of high national demand, and some courses have been developed in close collaboration with the government entities. Doctoral education has been expanded with the introduction of 16 new PhD programmes (in 2025), increasing the total to 18. This expansion, together with the establishment of a research-oriented centre on security studies, aims to position MNU as a research-intensive university, advancing scholarly output and national innovation capacity.

14 Student enrolment has increased by 2.5% from 2024 to 2025 (2024 = 6674 and 2025 = 6839), reflecting expanded access and increasing public trust in MNU as the primary national provider of higher education. MNU has also recorded a steady increase in international student enrolment since the establishment of the International Office in 2024. A dedicated International Students webpage has been developed to support recruitment, mobility, and academic guidance.

15 MNU operates an expanding network of campuses and outreach centres across the Maldives, and there are further campuses and outreach centres under development. Preparations are underway for the MNU School of Medicine with a teaching hospital, for expanded training facilities for the School of Nursing and Faculty of Health Sciences, and for enhanced infrastructure for the College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences. Campuses include modern laboratories, simulation centres, specialised training facilities, and comprehensive library services. The expansion of campuses and new facilities represents an overall increase in institutional physical capacity exceeding 25%. Work is underway to establish a management system at MNU to streamline administrative, academic, and student processes across all campuses and units.

16 MNU regards innovation and entrepreneurship as a critical area of focus and has developed the MNU Innovate Hub, the first university business incubator in the Maldives, to promote creativity, applied research, and student-led enterprise, and to strengthen links between academia, industry, and society. MNU has also established three Language Centres to develop teaching facilities in hospitality, customer service, and airport services. Language centres will be further developed in other sites to deliver tuition in a wider range of languages.

17 Several major institutional policies have been introduced since 2023 to strengthen governance, academic quality, and operational excellence and additional policies are in the deliberation stage, including the Staff Sabbatical Leave policy. The newly developed policies are intended to further support and reinforce academic integrity, sustainability commitments, professional development, and student-centred governance and include policies on staff workload, staff development, student voice, sustainability, and disability support amongst others.

18 MNU actively promotes student leadership and participation in institutional decision making. Student representatives are appointed to all major committees and Vice Chancellor–student meetings are held twice per semester.

19 Over the last three years MNU has introduced a wide range of initiatives to enhance student and academic staff well-being, civic engagement, community impact and enhancing MNU-industry connections. These include a speaker series including student contributions, a book fair, the MNU Job Festival and Healthy Habits sessions.

20 MNU's new management has worked to strengthen institutional governance through the establishment of a new sub-committee at the University Council, the Audit and Risk Committee, which has initiated a comprehensive compliance audit across academic, administrative, and financial functions to ensure accountability and institutional integrity. Similarly, the Investment Committee, and the Planning and Development Committee has been established to streamline and efficiently manage MNU's development.

21 The proportion of academic staff holding PhDs has increased from 10.8% in 2023 to 12.2% in 2024 and 15.3% in 2025, reflecting strengthened academic capacity and research leadership across the university and the MNU research capacity has expanded exponentially as exemplified by the number of research engagements established. The university has been actively involved in more than 15 national and international projects and has been appointed as one of the institutes to manage the first National Research Fund: Emerging Research Grants (NRF-ERG).

22 Currently, MNU is participating in major global research networks and international projects with 334 international projects listed on MNU website. MNU's research conference portfolio has also increased with the hosting of a range of annual flagship conferences and symposia, and the university also hosts two international research journals, The Maldives National Journal of Research (MNJR), and the Maldives Journal of Engineering and Technology (MJET). MNU also conducts national studies at various levels on a diverse range of disciplines and sectors. These include national fertility study, COVID related social impact studies, WHO STEP survey, among many others. The newly established College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences (CFOS) has been conducting research, community engagement, and student awareness sessions since its establishment in 2024.

23 In 2024-2025 MNU expanded its resources through establishing a set of research and teaching facilities. These include laboratories for Embedded Systems, Prototyping and Fabrication, Devices and Instrumentation, and Pharmacy and Health Sciences. A centre to provide Chinese language teaching facilities has also been established.

24 Over the past two years, MNU has made significant strides in strengthening its global visibility, research culture, and institutional capacity. Key developments include:

- Participation for the first time in the Times Higher Education (THE) Sustainability Impact Ranking in 2025, marking an important step toward benchmarking MNU's sustainability performance against global universities.
- Establishment of new international partnerships in research, higher degrees, and professional development.
- Expansion of student mobility programmes, including study tours to China, Japan, Malaysia, and Pakistan.
- Strengthening of internal quality assurance processes, including programme reviews and policy updates.
- Reaccreditation efforts with international bodies and preparation for future global audits.
- Introduction of university-wide climate action and sustainability initiatives aligned with national priorities.
- Growth in research output, including participation in international conferences, publications, and competitive grant applications.
- An MNU student has been successful in achieving a King's Commonwealth Fellowship

25 As MNU undergoes growth and diversification, it has recognised several strategic challenges in areas including maintaining academic consistency across campuses and units; ensuring that all students receive high-quality learning experiences; faculty capacity and development; integration of administrative and academic processes; sustaining research excellence and innovation; student support and engagement; managing digital transformation and technology adoption and balancing growth with governance and compliance.

26 In response to these challenges, MNU has adopted proactive measures to safeguard the quality of education and enrich its academic standards and enhance student learning. It has strengthened internal quality assurance mechanisms; implemented comprehensive faculty development programmes; established a unified integrated system; expanded student support services; created targeted research and innovation strategies; updated institutional policies and governance frameworks and placed an emphasis on digital literacy and e-learning.

27 MNU states that these strategies collectively ensure that its growth enhances, rather than compromises, academic excellence, student outcomes, and the institution's contribution to national development.

Findings from the mid-cycle review analysis

28 The 2023 IQR identified 22 recommendations, progress against which is described in the paragraphs below.

29 Under Standard 1.1 Policy for quality assurance, the 2023 IQR made two recommendations. The first of these was 'include student representatives on all faculty-level committees.' Following this, MNU updated its Student Voice Policy to affirm their view that students be 'at the centre of governance, decision-making, and in quality assurance and enhancement.' Putting this into practice, the university now has students as members at many decision-making and deliberative bodies. At an institutional level this includes

Academic Senate, Quality Assurance Committee, Higher Degrees Committee, and others. Students are also represented at faculty-level committees including Faculty Curriculum Committee and Faculty Quality-Management Committee.

30 The second recommendation under Standard 1.1 was: 'systematically engage internal and external stakeholders in quality assurance, including the further participation of students, in the active management of education provision on committees at faculty level.' The work undertaken by MNU to address the concerns related to student representation demonstrates a broader effort to engage internal stakeholders (for instance, students and student representatives) in quality assurance. External stakeholders are extensively engaged in the active management of educational provision on committees at faculty level, including Faculty Advisory Committees.

31 Recommendations under Standard 1.2 Design and approval of programmes relate to ensuring that 'the design, development and approval of new programmes fully comply with its policy' and that 'all relevant stakeholders, including students, are fully engaged in the design and development of new programmes.' The first of these recommendations is made in reference to a finding in the 2023 IQR report that some new programmes had been approved at Academic Senate, rather than Finance Committee, which was not in line with MNU policy at the time. Following the 2023 IQR, the university introduced a new Curriculum Development and Review Policy and Course Development and Approval Manual which, together, clearly outline and describe each step associated with the design, development, and approval of new programmes. If this new process is followed, this would address the intent of the first recommendation under this Standard. Students and student representatives appear to be engaged throughout the design and development of new programmes as members of key committees involved in scrutinising proposals at both faculty-level (Faculty Quality-Management Committee) and institution-level (Academic Senate and Higher Degrees Committee) though minutes of these committees do not always show their attendance or engagement. Minutes sometimes report the number of attendees rather than who they are, and comments made in committee are not always attributed to specific persons. The review team encouraged the university to reconsider the approach to minuting to provide a more detailed note of the engagement of individual members. Beyond the university's formal committee structure, students are also involved informally via the Student Panel, which provides feedback to university senior leadership on aspects of the student academic experience, including, potential new programmes and modifications to existing programmes.

32 A total of six recommendations were made under Standard 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching, and assessment. The majority of these concerned teaching practice and assessment:

- ensure that the criteria for marking are published in advance and that they map onto the published grade boundaries.
- put in place arrangements to ensure a consistent approach to the second marking and moderation of assessed work.
- revise its current arrangements for the use of plagiarism-detection software.
- revise the appropriateness and consistency of penalties applied to work submitted late.
- conduct further work necessary to ensure the policies regarding student-centred learning and teaching are fully embedded and implemented across the University.

33 The university has made changes in relation to assessment practices including establishing several new roles including Batch Coordinator, Subject Coordinator and

Lecturer. Role descriptors confirm that, at the start of each term, Subject Coordinators and Lecturers are responsible for ensuring that the criteria for marking are published.

34 MNU have revised their Assessment Policy to more clearly outline the arrangements for second marking and the moderation of assessed work. Now, all assessment components contributing more than 15% towards the final grade must be seen by more than one examiner.

35 The university has implemented a new Policy on Prevention, Detection and Penalty for Contract Cheating, which clearly outlines institutional expectations of both students and staff in relation to good academic conduct and the use of plagiarism-detection software. Training on the new policy has been provided to faculty.

36 There are clear rules with respect to the penalties applied to work submitted late. These are outlined in MNU's updated Assessment Policy, which specifically states that: 'Where there is a percentage deduction for late submission, the deduction must be set at 5% of the total marks possible for the assessment task/activity for every 24-hour period (or part thereof) after the submission due time.'

37 The final recommendation under Standard 1.3 related to the review team's recommendation that MNU 'revise its current arrangements for the consideration of student complaints'. This recommendation was made in response to the IQR team noting that, originally, the university's complaints policy involved student complaints being heard by a faculty-wide committee which, in the view of the 2023 IQR team, may deter some students from submitting a complaint in the first place. Having considered this, the university has revised their Disciplinary Regulations for Students with student complaints now being heard by a 5-person Ethical Committee. Rather than being composed of all faculty members, this Ethical Committee is formed of the Head of Faculty, School or Centre, the students' Batch Coordinator, their Head of Department, a Lecturer, and a representative from the MNU Students' Union. The updated Disciplinary Regulations clearly outline the process by which a student may submit a complaint and, in the event that they remain unsatisfied, a formal appeal.

38 In addition to recommendations under Standard 1.3, the 2023 IQR team imposed a condition that MNU should 'conduct further work necessary to ensure the policies regarding student-centred learning and teaching are fully embedded and implemented across the University'. In response, the university adopted a new Student Voice Policy that sets out further steps MNU will take to engage students and student representatives in quality assurance matters. It appears that MNU have continued in the same vein by embedding student representatives as members of key decision-making bodies within the university's quality framework. Further, the university has made several changes including implementing a new Teaching and Learning policy that clearly outlined their approach to student-centred teaching and learning. Student-centred teaching and learning is also now a central part of the university's mission and updated strategy.

39 Under Standard 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition, and certification, the 2023 IQR made two recommendations. The first of these relates to MNU's admissions policy. The 2023 IQR noted that MNU implemented two alternative admissions processes simultaneously leading to the possibility of students being treated differently. This led to the following recommendation: 'revise the current first-come first-served admissions process to ensure a transparent, consistent and standardised process'. In response, MNU revised their Student Admissions Policy in November 2023 to remove any reference to first-come, first-served admissions. The updated Student Admissions Policy makes explicit that 'Eligible applicants will be offered seats on merit basis; that is, students are allocated seats based on

the academic achievements in their previous studies that meet the entry requirements set for the course'.

40 The second recommendation followed the 2023 IQR team noting that the arrangements for the monitoring of student progress varied significantly leading to the recommendation that MNU 'monitor and report on student progression, recognition and certification data to enable effective management of student academic progress'. Evidence provided demonstrates that individual faculties continue to take the lead in monitoring student progress, identifying those at risk of non-progression as well as those excelling. The review team also saw evidence that the central Student Support Services (SSS) proactively communicates with students inviting them to engage with central services should they need help. What remains unclear, and this speaks to the original recommendation, is how MNU monitors and reports on student progression, recognition, and certification data to enable effective management of student academic progress at an institutional level. The review team can see that some student data appears in the university's annual report and so it is not a question as to whether this information is collected. The question is whether MNU is making scrupulous use of student data to inform strategic decision-making and, further, how student data feeds into the university's key quality bodies, which have a role in overseeing the student academic experience. With this in mind, the review team encourages MNU to do more in this regard making the use of student data at the institutional level more explicit.

41 The 2023 IQR made four recommendations under Standard 1.5 Teaching staff, two of which are largely related to process. The first is made in reference to promotion decisions being taken by an anonymous ballot in-committee leading to the recommendation 'revise the current process and criteria for promotion of academic staff to improve fairness and transparency'. The review team notes that in 2023, the Maldivian government moved all MNU academic staff under a national unified pay structure, known as the Public Service Pay Framework. In accordance with this framework, and in conjunction with the Maldivian government, the university has revised its Academic Promotion Policy for academic staff. The new Academic Promotion Policy outlines the procedure for promotion which explicitly states that promotion decisions 'shall be a decision based on evidence' and that the criteria upon which decisions will be made will be publicly available. While generally positive, this updated policy remained a draft at the time of the mid-cycle review and so the review team strongly encourages the university moves forward with this work as soon as possible.

42 The second recommendation followed the 2023 IQR finding that a single member of part-time staff, despite working for MNU for over 10 years, had only been formally appraised once, leading to the recommendation 'ensure all staff, full-time and part-time, are appraised in line with the relevant university policy'. To support institutional appraisal processes, the university has implemented a new online system which should allow them to more closely monitor performance appraisal completion. Reminders are sent in advance of relevant deadlines either mid-year or towards the end of the academic year. The outcomes from performance appraisals inform decisions in relation to pay and promotion. They are also used to identify specific areas where additional support or training may be required in a more holistic manner. For example, in 2025, professional support staff received training on the use of artificial intelligence in the workplace. Meanwhile, academic staff attended sessions on marking and moderation and the use of different learning platforms in the classroom. At a more strategic level, recognising that a significant number of academic staff do not currently hold a teaching qualification, MNU has developed a Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education (PGDHE) for both their own staff and external academics. At the time of the mid-cycle review, the PGDHE programme had seen 41 enrolments. The review team was particularly supportive of MNU introducing the PGDHE programme, demonstrating its commitment to professional development.

43 The other two recommendations made under Standard 1.5 related to ensuring that existing arrangements were effective. The first related to a disparity in the arrangements for induction and training between full-time staff, which was overseen by the central Human Resources Department, and part-time staff, which was the responsibility of the relevant faculty. This led to the following recommendation: 'ensure that are effective arrangements for the induction, training, and support of part-time staff across all faculties and campuses'. To harmonise the management of part-time staff, the university has implemented a new 'Visiting Lecturer Attendance System' (VLAS), which allows for more systematic record keeping. The university has also developed school, faculty, and campus-based guides specifically for part-time staff which comprehensively outline local policies and procedure. Further, the Centre for Educational Technology and Excellence (CETE) has developed training that is open to part-time staff allowing them to develop professionally while appointed at MNU.

44 During the 2023 IQR team visit, the team noted that while there were some arrangements in place to enable the sharing of good practice across the university, they were mostly informal and done locally (within a single campus or department). The review team recommended therefore that MNU 'ensure that there are effective arrangements to identify and enable the sharing of good practice within and between faculties and campuses.' The university has continued its practice of 'Anthara seminars', which are centrally organised and cover a broad range of topics. These sessions are open to both academics and professional support staff. Data provided by the university suggests an average attendance in 2025 of 12-13 staff per seminar, which the review team considers quite low given the large number of staff employed by MNU (621 total academic and admin staff, according to the 2023 Annual Report). Individual faculties and departments also continue to identify local good practice and share this within their own teams. While recognising these practices are positive additions to university life, they were already identified in the 2023 IQR report and so the question remains as to what new processes are in place at MNU to specifically enable the sharing of good practice within and between faculties and campuses. Ultimately, the review team concludes that the university should more systematically collect data on staff attendance at Anthara and related activities and use this data to consider how they might improve attendance. Further, the review team considers that there remains work to be done at a strategic level to support the sharing of good practice beyond immediate teams. An example of how this might be implemented include a university-wide teaching and learning conference, inviting colleagues from all campuses and departments to highlight and discuss good practice identified within their teams.

45 Recommendations under Standard 1.6 Learning resources and student support relate primarily to student support. The first recommendation relates specifically to support for students with additional learning needs which the 2023 IQR report highlighted as lacking. This observation led to the following recommendation: 'develop support for students with special educational needs in a systematic manner through both policy and procedures to ensure a more inclusive student experience'. Since the 2023 IQR, the university has drafted a new Supporting Students with Disability Policy, which was formally approved by Academic Senate in February 2023 and is available on the MNU website. The new Supporting Students with Disability Policy outlines how MNU will provide 'reasonable steps to support all persons with disabilities in physical, learning and social spaces (to deliver) academic courses and programs, without any form of discrimination'. The policy clearly outlines the procedure for disclosing and registering a disability allowing the university to better track its students with additional learning needs. The policy also describes the types of reasonable adjustments that can be expected to be implemented following disclosure including reasonable adjustments during examination. Alongside this, MNU continues to make changes to their physical estate to make buildings and facilities more accessible.

46 The IQR review team also recommended that MNU 'formalise and standardise pastoral support to ensure students are appropriately and consistently supported across all

faculties and campuses'. To support this, the university implemented an Academic and Pastoral Support Policy, which was approved by Academic Senate in March 2023. This now clearly outlines the support available and, importantly, differentiates support at programme/faculty-level, which is provided largely by the students Course or Batch Coordinator, versus that provided by the central Student Support Service (SSS). The review team notes further work the university has done to enhance information provided during student orientation to clearly explain what student support is available and how it can be accessed.

47 There was a single recommendation in Standard 1.7 Information management, which was to 'collect and make accessible data on employability patterns of alumni for the benefit of students and their further choices'. In 2024, the university introduced its first 'tracer study', an 11-question survey that asks recent graduates about their current employment status and reflections on their studies. The first implementation of this survey received 233 responses, which corresponds to approximately a 14.6% response rate of 2023/2024 graduates. The results from the graduate survey are reported in the university's annual report, which is publicly available on the MNU website. Looking forward, the university may wish to take further actions to meet this recommendation more fully, for example, by indicating the graduate outcomes for its programmes of study using real data derived from its graduate study rather than, as is the case now, simply indicating potential future career titles. The review team notes that MNU also has plans to regularly report further student data, such as first-generation degree-enrolment, from 2026 onwards. The review team supports the university in these plans.

48 At the time of the 2023 IQR, there was no policy or standardised process in place regarding what was authorised to be published publicly. This led to the first of two recommendations under Standard 1.8 Public information, which was to 'ensure quality control of public information between marketing, faculty, schools and individual staff'. In response, the university has implemented a new Public Information Policy that seeks to ensure all public information is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and readily accessible. Roles for staff involved in producing, publishing, and reviewing public information are clearly outlined. The process for the approval and publication of materials is also clear. To support the production of high-quality materials, the university has developed a new Visual Identity Manual. Further, to ensure the ongoing accuracy of published information, the university plans to conduct a full review of their website at least twice a year. At the time of the mid-cycle review, MNU had not yet conducted a full review of their website in-line with their new Public Information Policy, however, the review team did see evidence of reviews taking place in a more targeted manner, for example, at programme level. Looking forward, the review team strongly encourages MNU to continue its work in this area.

49 The review team also noted that some course information, such as intended learning outcomes and the teaching, learning and assessment procedures, could not be found using the MNU website. This led to the second recommendation under Standard 1.8 Public information: 'ensure all relevant programme information is consistently publicly available.' Since the 2023 IQR, the university has launched a new course portal on their public website which provides course-specific details including entry criteria and indicative study programmes. The university has also produced a range of marketing materials to advertise its higher education offer demonstrating a commitment to ensuring programme information is available beyond the MNU website.

50 Finally, there was a single recommendation under Standard 1.9 Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes specifically that MNU should 'conduct further work necessary to ensure the policies and templates for programme reviews are fully effectively implemented'. As outlined in paragraph 36, MNU has introduced a new Curriculum Development and Review Policy, which was approved in April 2023. This new policy has

resulted in all MNU courses being fully reviewed against a set of approved criteria. These criteria are designed to ensure programme alignment with the university's strategic aims, institutional policy in relation to course design, and the requirements of external regulators. This work is driven by the relevant Faculty Curriculum Committee and the university's central Committee on Courses (CoC). Internal approval is provided by Academic Senate with final approval provided by the national regulator in the Maldives, the Maldives Qualifications Authority (MQA). The deadline for these programme reviews to be completed is the end of 2026. Programmes should then be periodically reviewed according to the scheduled set out in the Curriculum Development and Review Policy.

51 The 2023 IQR also identified three features of good practice. The first feature of good practice was in Standard 1.2 Design and approval of programmes and reflects 'MNU's close links with industry exemplified by the systematic inclusion of external stakeholders in Faculty Advisory Committees and the improvement to programmes as a result'. MNU continues to make scrupulous use of external stakeholders in the development of its higher education portfolio including through its Faculty Advisory Committees. These positive working relationships have led to the introduction of several new courses (Certificate III in Sign Language, requested by the Ministry of Social and Family Development), the expansion of existing courses (teaching-related Certificate IV programmes, in response to the Ministry of Education), and the development of new higher education programmes entirely (Bachelors of Occupational Therapy, developed with the Occupational Therapy Association of the Maldives; masterclasses envisaged as part of the new Centre for Security and Strategic Studies). There remain close links between faculty and industry, relationships which ultimately enable students to undertake work placements and internships during their programmes of study. Ensuring externality goes beyond individual programmes, all new MNU committees (for example, eLearning Committee and Sustainability Committee) and some existing bodies (for example, University Council, Higher Degrees Committee, Research Ethics Committee) now include external members.

52 A second feature of good practice was identified in Standard 1.8 Public information, specifically 'the YouTube channel showing an 'Introduction MNU Admissions Portal' video which is useful and informative'. The university has continued its practice of using social media to communicate its activities. Content comes in a variety of formats from short-form videos to long-form talks and lectures. The feature of good practice initially identified referred specifically to the use of YouTube, however, the university has since established a presence on other platforms including Instagram and TikTok. Internally, MNU uses videos to advertise important events, such as the opening on the Subject and Teaching Evaluation (STE) survey, and to explain how to navigate university systems. The university continues therefore to make extensive use of non-traditional means to communicate effectively with staff, current and prospective students, and stakeholders external to the university.

53 The third feature of good practice comes under Standard 1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance and is in reference to 'the positive engagement in external review and audit processes and a positive attitude towards these exercises which MNU uses as opportunities to self-reflect and learn'. The university continues to engage positively in cyclical external review processes. In-line with national requirements, MNU has recently undergone institutional re-accreditation by the Maldives Qualifications Authority (MQA). The final outcome is yet to be communicated. At a programme-level, the university has sought further subject-specific accreditation. In particular, the Bachelor of International Hospitality Management (BIHM) programme has received certification from the École Hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL).

54 In summary, the 2023 IQR identified 22 recommendations across each ESG Standard. The report also identified three features of good practice. The university has taken deliberate and, in many cases, significant steps to address both the text and spirit of the

recommendations wholesale. The university has also consolidated its position with respect to features of good practice. Reflecting on their experience of the IQR and progress since that time, the university notes that '... measurable progress (has been) achieved in governance, academic quality, internal assurance, stakeholder partnerships, and student engagement.' The team conducting the mid-cycle review agree with this statement.

Development of quality assurance and enhancement procedures

55 The university has continued to develop its quality assurance and enhancement procedures following their engagement in the IQR process. Many of the recommendations from the 2023 IQR report relate to quality-related policies and procedures and so many of the changes made in relation to these recommendations apply here. However, there are some changes that were not captured in the university's response to recommendations about specific processes and procedures. These are explored below.

56 MNU's implementation of a new Quality Assurance and Accountability Framework (QAAF) is one such example. Referenced in the 2023 IQR report as a positive sign of an institution developing its quality culture, the QAAF aims to 'provide the structures, functions, processes and measures including distribution of responsibilities that ensure consistency, rigor and high-quality standards'. In practice, the QAAF describes the internal quality framework at MNU and explains how these internal systems feed into external quality assurance (e.g. national compliance processes). It also establishes what it describes as 'quality standards', which are expectations for specific university functions. The university is commended for moving forward with this work.

57 The university continues to engage extensively with national and international networks focussed on quality assurance, learning and teaching, and research. MNU is now a member of the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN), Association for Commonwealth Universities (ACU), and International Association of Universities (IAU). The university has also engaged with several international cooperation projects, for example, the Erasmus+ Capacity Building for Higher Education (CBHE) project. Positive engagement with these projects, organisations and networks allow MNU to learn from others and engage with the higher education community more broadly.

58 In September 2025, in-line with national priorities, MNU approved its first Sustainability Policy which aims to 'integrate sustainability principles into teaching, research, and campus operations.' Implementation of this policy led to the creation of a Sustainability Committee, which has ownership of the university's broader Sustainability Action Plan. This action plan describes 10 pillars (for instance, 'Pillar 2 Research, Innovation, and Knowledge Exchange for Sustainability'), each of which map onto relevant UN Sustainability Goals (SDGs). For each pillar, MNU has identified several specific actions that aim to further embed sustainable practices across the university operation.

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