

Chapter 2: South East Asia¹

Section 4 : the Philippines

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1. Government Regulation and Certification/Assessment Activities for Credit and Grading Systems

(1) Outline of the Higher Education System throughout the Philippines

The Philippines is in the center of Southeast Asia, and is made up of 7107 islands. It can be geographically divided into the three areas of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. The country comprises 17 regions, 81 provinces, 136 cities, 1494 municipalities. The Philippines is the third largest English-speaking country in the world.

There are two types of higher education in the Philippines – institutions known as PHEI (Private Higher Education Institutions) and those known as SUC (State-run Universities and Colleges). There are 2060 higher education institutions accredited by the Commission on Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as CHED), which are distributed across the regions as shown below.

Table 1: Distribution of Higher Education Institutions by Region (as of September 2008)

Region	Public	Private	Total
I	29	85	114
II	22	48	70
III	51	163	214
IVA	71	203	274
IVB	46	35	81
V	45	97	142
VI	64	72	136
VII	31	111	142
VIII	40	55	95
IX	12	48	60
X	18	65	83
XI	16	75	91
XII	10	68	78
NCR	33	276	309
CAR	19	31	50
ARMM	16	48	64
Caraga	14	43	57

(Source: CHED website)

¹ This article is a part of Hotta, Taiji. *et al* (2010) 「ACTS と各国の単位互換に関する研究」 (Study on the ASEAN Credit Transfer System and Credit Transfer Systems in Asian Nations) [The Report of Mission Research by the Promotion Fund of Leading University Reform, The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in Japan (MEXT), 2009], Hiroshima University, 403 pp.

The institutions categorized as “public” in the table above include 110 SUCs, 334 branch schools of SUCs, 77 LUCs, 10 OGS (Other Government Schools) and one CSI (Supervised Institution), as well as five Special Higher Education Institutions.

1) Private Higher Education Institutions

According to the definition established by CHED, private higher education institutions are managed by the terms of the Philippine Corporation Code. Institutions that do not have religious affiliation are incorporated, owned and managed by organizations. In comparison with this, institutions with religious affiliation are non-stock, non-profit organizations, which are incorporated, owned and managed by religious organizations.

In general, the degree courses, curriculums, management, teaching staff structures, etc. of private higher education institutions must follow policies, standards and guidelines (PSGs) defined by CHED. The director of such an institution must implement organizational management in line with these PSGs.

35 PHEIs have been deregulated, or have been given autonomy over their own management (CMO No.59, series of 2007). Of these 35 institutions, 12 received autonomous management rights for five years (Nov. 2007 - Nov. 2012) and 11 for one year (Nov. 2007 - Nov. 2008). One of these institutions was deregulated for five years, and the remaining 10 for one year. Deregulating institutions and giving them the right to autonomy is a way of applauding institutions that have been exemplary in the areas of education, research and social contribution, while at the same time rationalizing their supervision (CMO No. 52, series of 2006).

2) Public Higher Education Institutions

State-run universities and colleges (known as SUCs) are education institutions that have been publicly accredited under law, and which are managed and subsidized by the central government. LUCs (Local Universities and Colleges) are institutions that have been established by local government edict. Financially, LUCs are also subsidized by local government in their operations. CSIs (Supervised Institutions) are those supervised by CHED, which are non-accredited higher education institutions, established based on law, and managed and subsidized by the central government. Other government schools (known as OGS) include professional training or vocational education institutions that offer higher education courses, and are public secondary or higher education institutions. Special higher education institutions are directly affiliated to government agencies, as specified in law, which engage in specialist training such as military science and national defense.

SUCs each have their own charter. Each university’s PGSs are formulated and approved by the board of regents (for state universities) and the board of trustees (for state colleges). The Chairman of CHED heads these boards. CHED Order No. 31 Series of 2001 of the Commission has also authorized CHED commissioners, however, to head the boards of trustees or regents of SUCs. Implementation of policies and management is vested on the president, staff and support organizations of public higher education institutions.

(2) Outline of Credits and Grading Systems

According to CMO No. 42, series 2003, section 107 (Assessment Criteria), marking and assessment is to be based on existing institutional academic policies. The final grade or rating given to a student should be based solely on his scholastic performance in any subject/course.

Standards required for assessment are defined in Section 109, as below.

The grading system for a student in curricular or component subjects/courses of any degree program shall strictly comply with the conditions or requirements as follows:

No provisional, conditional, or temporary final grade for any curricular or component subject/course shall be given to a student.

In case a student fails to take a final examination or submit an academic requirement for completion of a subject/course and that his/her scholastic performance is not sufficient to merit a final passing grade, an institution may, consistent with its academic policies, give the student a final grade which does not earn any academic credit nor indicates failure such as "NC" for "No Credit" or "NG" for "No Grade". Such a grade is permanent and cannot be subsequently changed. Provided however, that where the failure to take the final examination, or to submit the academic requirements, is due to excusable grounds, such as sickness, emergency, or accident, the student may be given an incomplete mark or "INC". Provided further, that the institution allows special or completion examinations, or additional time for compliance of the requirements. In no case shall an incomplete or "INC" mark remain for more than one (1) academic year.

Educational institutions are required to publish their current marking and assessment policies.

(a) Government definition of "Student Load"

According to the Manual of Regulations for Private Higher Education (MORPHE), one credit requires 54 hours of study. The following regulations relate to the amount of study required of students ("student load") (CHED).

Article 19, Section 90

The subject load shall be in accordance with the approved curriculum with the program. Reasonable exceptions may be permitted taking into account the best interests of students and the objectives of the educational system.

(b) Number of years required for undergraduate or graduate degree completion, as defined by the government

- Bachelor's degree: 4 years (depending on course)
- Master's degree: 2 years (depending on number of credits attained by student)
- Doctoral degree: 5 years (depending on number of credits attained by student)
- Faculty of medicine: Unanswered

(c) Number of credits required for undergraduate or graduate degree completion, as defined by the government (minimum number of credits required as defined in law)

- Bachelor's degree: depends on the course

- Master's degree: Total 36 credits (9 credits in language, 21 credits in major, 6 credits for thesis)
- Doctoral degree: Total 60 credits

(Total number of credits depends on the curriculum approved by each HEI)

(3) Setting of Study Program Policies and Standards

Based on the regulations of the Republic Act 7722, which is also known as the "Higher Education Act of 1994", CHED has adopted the following policies, with the purpose of rationalizing higher education degree program policies, and defining standards.

Rationale

Study program policy and standards have been compiled by a range of technical panels, and distributed by CHED. A need has been identified for the implementation of this type of survey of program policies and standards by CHED in order to understand similarities and differences, and to standardize the process of definition. Such standardization is required not only to simplify the process of HEIs creating programs, but members of the Commission have also requested the following:

- The implementation of a statistical survey of the current state of definition of degree programs by a government agency
- Clearer monitoring and definition of assessment standards
- A more integrated definition of policies and standards, which utilizes the individual attributes of different programs

Objective

This document aims to coordinate the definition of policies and standards for the state's study programs. In addition to demonstrating a joint framework for policies and standards, it also touches on conditions for individual programs.

Definition of terms

The following definitions are used in the application of policies.

- A "degree" is defined as the qualification given to students completing a defined program of study. Degrees can be categorized into Certificate/Diploma/Bachelor's Degree/Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma/Master's Degree/Doctor's Degree, etc. Specifically, students may acquire a Bachelor degree in biology, a Master's degree in chemistry, a Doctoral degree in physics, etc.
- A "degree program" is defined as the name for the entire course required in a particular area. This can also be called the "study program"
- "Program level" is defined as the level of the study program being undertaken (Bachelor, Master or Doctoral)
- A "program major" is defined as the area in which a student takes a defined number of credits, or the area on which his/her research is focused, in order to acquire a degree. For example, literature or mathematics as studied for an educational Master's degree.

- A “double degree” is defined as one in which a student simultaneously studies for two degrees.
- “Double major” is defined as a situation in which a student studies two areas as majors within a single degree program.
- A “semester” is defined as a unit of time during which study takes place, several of which go to make up an academic year. Universities may divide their year into two, three, or four semesters, the practice of which is known accordingly as a “two-semester”, “three-semester” or “four-semester” system.
- A “curriculum” is defined as the integrated planned educational course within a degree program.
- “Curriculum level” is defined as the level of learning within a degree program. It generally refers to undergraduate students, divided into first year, second year, etc.
- A “course” is defined as a unit of study within a degree program, indicated by name and outline, as well as syllabus and overview. It is also referred to as a “subject”.
- “Credit subjects” are defined as subjects the completion of which counts towards the completion of a course or advancement to the next level.
- “Compulsory subjects” are defined as courses that must be taken, in which students learn the basic knowledge and study techniques required for their area.
- A “major” is defined as the subject that the student is specializing in.
- A “subsidiary major” is defined as a subject that is closely linked to the major.
- “Elective subjects” are defined as subjects unrelated to the major, which a student is free to select from a list of predetermined courses.
- “Required subjects” are defined as subjects that require completion in order to pass to the next subject. They can be taken in advance, or several subjects can be taken simultaneously.
- “Co-curricular subjects” are defined as subjects that must be taken during the same semester.
- “Required subjects” are defined as subjects that require completion in order to pass to the next subject.
- “Credits” are defined as units awarded at the completion of each subject or course, based on the number of hours studied. In both undergraduate and graduate studies, 17 hours of study are required for the award of one credit, and in practical courses, 51 hours of classes are required for 1 unit.
- “Contact time” is defined as the amount of time a student actually spends in class.

CHED documentation defining the elements and attributes of each program, as well as its definition and curriculum, is referred to as “Study Program Policies and Standards”. The following elements are the minimum requirements for inclusion in a “Study Program Policies and Standards” document.

Introduction

This chapter explains the basis of how the proposed policies and standards reflect the needs and demands, and the background to their definition. It also touches on actual strategies for implementation, and anticipated benefits.

Required authority

Permission must be granted by CHED before any degree program can be proposed. In addition, this permission must be declared. All private higher education institutions (PHEIs) wishing to offer the (name of degree) must, in line with current regulations, receive the appropriate authority from CHED. State universities (SUCs) and local universities must also comply with the policies and standards contained herein.

Program specification

Program name

Program explanation

Objectives

Future path of graduates (employment, etc.)

Major

Explanation of major

Objective

Future path of graduates (employment, etc.)

Other related programs: programs that survey the implementing organization or competence of teaching staff, etc.

Competency standards

This category clarifies the competency required in order to complete the program, such as knowledge, attitude, values, skills, etc. It can take the form of an outline or of specific categories.

Curriculum

Explanation of curriculum: Explain the course structure based on the following categories

- Relationship of different courses
- Most important courses within the curriculum
- Courses particularly beneficial for student's study, whether or not these courses are compulsory or elective
- Suggestions of alternative courses to raise the quality of the program

Outline of curriculum: divide the course up according to categories shown below, and compile into a table. Include an overview of all courses and the total number of credits they are worth.

General education (GE) course (in line with 1996 CMO 59 series, and 1997 M4 series)

Compulsory courses

Major courses

Elective or special courses

Courses included in graduation credits (PE/NSTP, etc.)

Example of summary: table of courses, per semester, including credits

Table 2: BS science curriculum (example, year 1)

Semester 1	No. of credits	Semester 2	No. of credits
Basic science I (Lectures)	3	Basic science II	3
Basic science I (Practical)	2	Basic science II (Practical)	2
Algebra	3	Trigonometry	3
General education courses	9	General education courses	9
Total	17	Total	17

Requirements for thesis/research/project

Requirements for on-the-job-training (OJT) or practical course

Course specifications: Based on the categories below, explain each course (compulsory/
major/elective/special)

Course name: Official names and numbers of each course, eg. English I, English II

Course outline: Simple explanation of course contents

No. of units divided into taught and practical work

No. of hours per week, divided into taught and practical work

Required courses, related subjects

Course objectives

Summary: Themes, practical work and issues to be covered, with time required for each category
if possible

Equipment, materials, chemicals required, etc.

Compulsory (items that must be prepared)

Voluntary

Other recommendations

Textbooks and reference materials

Compulsory (materials that must be prepared)

Recommendations

Requirements for specific programs must be defined in line with the contents above, and any
stricter requirements must be created after taking advice from the technical panel.

(4) Guidelines for Student Exchange and Credit Transfer

Despite the fact that the Philippines is home to over 2000 higher education institutions, CHED
permits institutions judged as level 2 or above to form international cooperative relationships as
part of their learning program or organization. This criteria gives around 300 institutions that
fulfill the conditions. International cooperative relationships involve both teaching staff and

students, and take a range of forms, including study overseas, welcoming foreign students into Philippine institutions, short-term programs of overseas study, etc.

CHED issued guidelines for transnational education in 2008. These cover both distance learning and conventional contact-based learning, categorized into three types, and allows for credit transfer based on agreements at the same level, regardless of format. At present, however, CHED has not clarified its policy regarding the incoming transfer of academic credits attained by students overseas. As a result, decisions regarding the incoming transfer of credits attained in partner institutions outside the Philippines differ depending on the individual educational institution. Standards implemented by each individual institution are generally based on a two-way agreement with the partner institution, and there is no consistent policy regarding credit transfer.

Recently, however, CHED has begun to plan for the establishment of a policy relating to the incoming transfer of academic credits, as a result of its participation in University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP). The Foreign Ministry is reported to be considering the establishment of a UMAP Philippine branch office, and at the same time looking at establishing guidelines for the incoming transfer of academic credits. Based on this, the Ministry is considering creating a policy that will make UMAP Credit Transfer Scheme (UCTS) the standard for incoming transfer of academic credits for all higher education institutions.

(5) Outline of the Accreditation and Assessment System

In order to achieve autonomy of operation, private higher education institutions must meet certain conditions set by the organization known as PAASCU (Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities), and be accredited by them. According to PAASCU, which is a non-stock, non-profit private corporation, which was registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission on 2nd December 1957. PAASCU is a private organization, which accredits academic programs that meet certain standards of quality education. In November 1967, the Bureau of Education (now the Department of Education) officially recognized PAASCU and endorsed its work as an accrediting agency.

Since 1991, PAASCU has been a full member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). As of 2005, INQAAHE was composed of 150 accrediting agencies coming from over 60 different countries. These agencies have also created regional networks, one of which is the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN). PAASCU also has links with the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), which is a private, nonprofit national organization that coordinates accreditation activity in the United States, as well as with the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA), which is based in Washington, D.C.

Much emphasis is placed on the formulation of the school's purposes and objectives. Only when its goals are clear can the school discover the extent to which such purposes and objectives are being achieved. Essential in the accreditation process is the self-evaluation completed by an institution applying for accreditation. The self-evaluation is an analysis by its own staff of the

institution's educational resources and effectiveness in relation to its own purposes and objectives. PAASCU judges an institution not by comparison with other institutions, but primarily by the degree to which each institution's own avowed purposes are matched by actual practice in the various areas being evaluated. Thus, a school is judged on the basis of the "total pattern" presented by it.

During the survey visits, the following areas are evaluated:

1. College/School Community Involvement
2. Faculty
3. Instruction, content of classes
4. Library
5. Laboratories
6. Physical Plant
7. Student Services
8. Administration

For graduate school programs, the areas on Faculty, Library and Administration are retained, while the other remaining areas specific to graduate programs are Curriculum and Instruction, Research, Students, and Other Resources. For basic medical education programs, the areas evaluated are: Faculty, Curriculum and Instruction, Clinical Training/Service Facilities, Research, Students, Library, Administration, and Physical Plant & Other Resources.

"Program accreditation" refers to the accreditation of academic courses such as liberal arts, sciences, education or commerce. PAASCU's policy extends accreditation by program. This means that individual courses of study, such as liberal arts, sciences, commerce and education are evaluated by PAASCU and given proper accreditation.

In contrast, "institutional accreditation" refers to the accreditation of the school, college or institution as a whole. This focuses on the overall quality of the school, college or institution based on the quality of its core program offerings, namely Arts and Sciences, Education and Business.

On the college level, PAASCU accredits courses or programs in:

1. Liberal Arts/Sciences
2. Education
3. Commerce
4. Nursing
5. Engineering
6. Agriculture
7. Accountancy
8. Social Work
9. Medical Technology
10. Computer Science/Information Technology
11. Pharmacy

12. Physical/Occupational Therapy
13. Hospitality Management
14. Basic Medical Education
15. Interior Design/Fine Arts
16. Radiologic Technology
17. Criminology
18. Nutrition and Dietetics

On the graduate level, PAASCU accredits courses or programs in Liberal Arts/Sciences, Education and Business Administration.

PAASCU began accreditation of secondary schools in 1963. The accreditation of elementary schools was started in 1971, Graduate school accreditation in 1988, Basic Education accreditation in 2001, and accreditation of Medical schools in 2003.

(6) Examination standards for accreditation of study programs

For the purpose of receiving benefits, educational programs are classified into one of four accredited categories

- a. Candidate Status: for programs which have undergone a preliminary survey visit and are certified by the federation/network as being capable of acquiring accredited status within two years.
- b. Level I: Accredited Status: for programs which have been granted initial accreditation after a formal survey by the accrediting agency and duly certified by the accreditation federation /network, effective for a period of three years.
- c. Level II: Re-accredited Status: for programs which have been re-accredited by the accrediting agency and duly certified by the accreditation federation/network, effective for a period of three or five years based on the appraisal of the accrediting agency.
- d. Level III: Re-accredited Status: for programs which have been re-accredited and have met the additional criteria/guidelines set by the federation/network for this level.

Level III re-accredited undergraduate programs must satisfy the first two of the following criteria and two others of the succeeding ones:

- i. A reasonably high standard of instruction;
- ii. A highly visible community extension program. A description of the programs, the nature and extent of student, faculty and staff involvement, and other details shall be required documentation for this indicator;
- iii. A highly visible research tradition. The following must be observable over a reasonable period of time:

- Provision for a reasonable budget
- Quality of completed outputs
- Measurable result such as publication, etc.
- Involvement of a significant number of faculty members
- Visible, tangible and measurable impact on the community

iv. A strong faculty development tradition, evidenced by an appropriate budget allocation.

v. A highly creditable performance of its graduates in licensure examinations over the last three years. (Will apply only to those programs where such examinations are required)

vi. Existence of working consortia or linkages with other schools and/or agencies. Documentary evidence shall include a description of the nature, mechanism, working agreements and other details of consortia.

vii. Extensive and functional library and other learning resource facilities.

Level III accredited graduate programs must satisfy i and iii and any two (2) of ii, iv, v, vi and vii above.

The institutions should submit pictorial and documentary evidence to support its claims.

Only programs that have been granted “clean” re-accreditation, meaning that no progress report or interim visit is required within the five-year accreditation period, may apply for Level III status.

e. Level IV accredited Status: accredited programs which are highly respected as very high quality academic programs in the Philippines and with prestige and authority comparable to similar programs in excellent foreign universities.

These programs must have met the following additional criteria/guidelines:

Excellent outcomes in -

- Research as seen in the number, scope and impact of scholarly publications in refereed national and international journals;
- Teaching and learning as proven in excellent performance of graduates and continuing assessment of student achievement;
- Community service and the impact of contributions to economic and social enhancement, on both regional and national levels.
- Evidence of international linkages and consortia;
- Well developed planning processes, which support quality assurance mechanisms.

HEIs should provide adequate documentation in support of application for Level IV accredited status.

The following benefits for the different accreditation levels shall be provided:

For Private Sector Institutions:

A. Level I/Level II

i. Full administrative deregulation, provided that reports of promotion of students and lists of graduates are available for review by CHED at all times

- ii. Financial deregulation in terms of setting of tuition and other school fees and charges.
- iii. Authority to revise the curriculum without CHED approval provided that CHED and Professional Regulation Commission minimum requirements and guidelines, where applicable, are complied with and the revised curriculum is submitted to CHED Regional Offices.
- iv. Authority to graduate students from accredited courses or programs of study in the levels accredited without prior approval of the CHED.
- v. Priority in the awards of grants/subsidies or funding assistance from CHED-Higher Education Development Fund (HEDF) for scholarships and faculty development, facilities improvement and other development programs.
- vi. Right to use on its publications or advertisements the word "ACCREDITED," pursuant to CHED policies and rules.
- vii. Limited visitation, inspection and/or supervision by CHED supervisory personnel or representatives.

B. Level III

- i. All the benefits for Level I/II.
- ii. Authority to offer new courses allied to existing Level III courses without need for prior approval, provided that the concerned CHED Regional Office (CHEDRO), is duly informed.
- iii. Privilege to apply for authority to offer new graduate programs, open learning/distance education, and extension classes and to participate in the transnational education.

C. Level IV

- i. All the benefits for Levels I, II and III.
- ii. Grant of full autonomy for the program for the duration of its Level IV accredited status.
- iii. Authority to offer new graduate programs allied to existing Level IV courses, open learning/distance education and extension classes without need for prior approval by CHED provided that the concerned CHEDRO is duly informed.

References

- CHED (<http://www.ched.gov.ph/hes/index.html>) (<http://www.chedro8.ph/article22.html>)
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- UNESCO Bangkok (2008). The Philippine higher education system: Current trends and developments.