Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

CHED MEMORANDUM ORDER
No. 15
Series of 2019

SUBJECT: POLICIES, STANDARDS, AND GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE PROGRAMS

In accordance with the pertinent provisions of Republic Act (RA) No.7722, otherwise known as the *"Higher Education Act of 1994,"* in pursuance of an outcomes-based quality assurance system, in alignment with the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF), and by virtue of Referendum No. R070- 2019 dated December 19, 2019, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) hereby adopts and promulgates the following general policies, standards and guidelines (PSGs) for graduate programs.

ARTICLE I. INTRODUCTION

Section 1. Rationale for Upgrading Graduate Programs

The landscape and perspectives in offering graduate programs have dramatically changed in the past decades. These changes demand new or enhanced competencies among students to meet the requirements set by globalization, regional integration, internationalization of higher education, and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Thus, students must be able to optimally use 21st century skills in their daily work and professions thereby strengthening the nation's innovation, research, and development.

The Philippine education system has been undergoing reforms such as the introduction of the K to 12 program in basic education, the implementation of a new General Education curriculum and adoption of outcomes-based education (OBE) as a teaching-learning framework in higher education, and the enactment of RA 10931 (Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act). The signing of RA 10931 expanded access and equity to higher education as more students apply for, and will complete their degrees through government subsidy for tuition and miscellaneous fees and other education concerns.

Because of these government initiatives, it is therefore imperative that policies, standards, and guidelines (PSGs) for academic degree programs in higher education, including graduate programs, should therefore be made consistent or aligned with the reforms being instituted in the entire Philippine education system.

In 2013, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) created the Task Force on Graduate Education Reform (TFGER) to review the state of graduate programs in the country. The TFGER proposed policy options and action agenda to rationalize graduate programs. A revised set of PSGs governing graduate program is then necessary to pursue the needed reforms which include the cultivation of a culture of research and innovation in graduate programs.

Among the major concerns in graduate programs is the wide gap in the availability of and access to quality graduate programs in various disciplines deemed critical in achieving national development in a globalized world. Some graduate programs, especially in the fields of teacher education, public administration, and business administration, are

oversubscribed while there remains many underdeveloped areas of specialization across disciplines leading to the limited growth of said programs and consequently, constraining the potential for development of their respective sectors.

Existing PSGs governing graduate programs in the Philippines, specifically, CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 36, series of 1998 and CMO No. 9, series of 2003 need to be updated or revised to adequately address and meet the requirements of the above-mentioned conditions.

Section 2. Definition and Philosophical Underpinnings of Graduate Programs

Graduate programs constitute a level or stage of academic work that is considered an advanced program of study. It focuses on a particular or interdisciplinary academic discipline or profession and involves certain objective-options such as:

1. rigorous evaluation of work and interaction with professors and peers;
2. professional experience via internships, teaching, and research; and
3. production of original research or creative work.

Across all orientations and levels of graduate work, the ultimate goal is to contribute to the process of knowledge acquisition, generation, sharing, and exchange that is distinct from the baccalaureate level.

The general outcomes of graduate programs are the mastery of a specialized field of study, the development of original and critical thinking, and the demonstration of problem-solving skills that prepare the degree holder for advanced instruction and leadership positions in the areas of research, creative work, as well as the practice of his or her profession.

Section 3. Role of Graduate Programs

To better contribute to the attainment of sustainable development, graduate programs are expected to:

1. Achieve a clear progression beyond basic education and baccalaureate/ undergraduate education by stressing:

    a. Cutting-edge, integrative and interrogative teaching and learning contents and methods; and
    b. Higher competencies in knowledge production (research), knowledge sharing and exchange (teaching), and knowledge application and utilization.

2. Produce advanced competencies that can spur and sustain:

    a. Leadership and innovation;
    b. Scientific and technological growth;
    c. Creative and effective learning and teaching;
    d. Agro-industrial productivity;
    e. Entrepreneurship;
    f. Good governance;
    g. Inclusive economic development and environmental security;
    h. National sovereignty and independent international relations;
    i. Articulation of Filipino culture and arts;
    j. Cultural and religious diversity; and
    k. Nationalism.

ARTICLE II. AUTHORITY TO OPERATE

Section 4. Government Authority

All private higher education institutions (HEIs), state universities and colleges (SUCs), and local universities and colleges (LUCs) intending to offer graduate program/s in-campus and/or off-campus through any delivery mode must first secure proper authority from the Commission.

The Commission shall ensure careful scrutiny and intensive monitoring of all the curricular graduate programs, regardless of the mode of delivery, in order to do away with the remedial function currently observed in many graduate programs, and to rationalize research toward global standards and best practices.

Any HEI offering graduate programs in any more prescribed under this CMO shall first secure government authorization/recognition before they are allowed to offer graduate programs. Failure of the HEI to comply with the requirements stated therein within the prescribed period shall be deemed as abandonment of its application.

Section 5. Eligibility Criteria

Private HEIs, SUCs, and LUCs with CHED Institutional Recognition are eligible to apply for the appropriate government authority to offer graduate programs if they meet any of the following conditions:

1. With Center of Excellence (COE) or Center of Development (COD) status in the discipline being applied for; or
2. With international accreditation (such as AUN or ABET) in the corresponding undergraduate degree program; or
3. With at least Level III program accreditation or equivalent from CHED recognized accrediting agency in the corresponding undergraduate degree program.

ARTICLE III. GRADUATE PROGRAM LEVELS, OUTCOMES, AND TYPES

Section 6. Program Levels and Outcomes

1. Master's Level

Programs under the Master's Level are designed to provide students with advanced academic and/or professional knowledge, skills and competencies, leading to a second degree higher than the bachelor's degree. They contain a substantial research component. These programs are theoretically-based, but may also include practical components and are informed by state-of-the-art research and/or best professional practice.[1]

By level of outcome or competency, Master's programs are aligned with Level 7 of the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF). PQF Level 7 descriptors demand the following from graduates of master's degree programs:

a. Advanced knowledge and skills in a specialized, interdisciplinary, or multidisciplinary field of study for professional practice;

---

[1] Philippine Statistics Authority (June 2018), Philippine Standard Classification of Education (2017 PSCED)

b. Self-directed research;

c. Lifelong learning with a highly substantial degree of independence that involves individual work or teams of interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary experts; and

d. Application of the above-mentioned skills in research, professional, or creative work.

Entry into the Master's level that prepares a student for a higher degree normally requires the successful completion of a Bachelor's degree.

2. Doctoral Level

The doctoral level is the highest level of academic degree in any field of knowledge or discipline, thus making it a terminal degree.[2] Programs at this level lead to an advanced research qualification and devoted to advanced study and original research.[3]

Doctoral programs are aligned with Level 8 of the PQF. The outcomes with reference to PQF Level 8 descriptors would demand the following from the graduates of doctoral degree programs:

a. Demonstration of highly advanced systematic knowledge and skills in highly specialized and/or complex interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary field of learning;

b. Utilization of complex research/creative work and/or professional practice and/or the advancement of learning with full independence in individual work and/or in teams of interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary setting;

c. Application of more complex setting that demands leadership in research and creative work with strategic value added; and

d. Application of significant level of expertise-based autonomy and accountability to professional leadership for innovation, research and/or development management in highly specialized or interdisciplinary or multi-disciplinary field.

Entry into Level 8 programs requires the successful completion of specific Level 7 programs. Level 8 programs or doctoral programs usually concludes with the submission and defense of a dissertation or equivalent written work of publishable quality, representing a significant contribution to knowledge in the respective field of study. Therefore, these programs are typically based on research and not only on course work.[4] For a professional doctoral degree, prior work experience in the discipline being applied for is also required.

Furthermore, a doctoral degree is not determined solely by the number of units completed or the number of years in graduate school. As already mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, a doctoral program entails the creation of new knowledge in a field of specialization through a dissertation, which needs to be publicly presented and defended before a panel of doctoral holders in a specific field of study. It usually involves the publication of one's research in peer-reviewed academic journals to demonstrate contribution to advanced scholarship.

CHED determines the equivalency of any doctoral program subject to existing policies, standards and guidelines (PSGs), mutual recognition agreements, and other applicable international laws and policies.

---

[2] https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/doctorate; https://www.bestvalueschools.com/faq/what-is-a-terminal-degree/

[3] Philippine Statistics Authority (June 2018), Philippine Standard Classification of Education (2017 PSCED)

[4] Philippine Statistics Authority (June 2018), Philippine Standard Classification of Education (2017 PSCED)

Section 7. Types of Graduate Programs

I. **Master's Programs in the Sciences and in the Arts**

Graduate Programs in the Sciences - Master of Science programs focus on specialized professional fields and are commonly applied in programs related to the natural sciences, engineering and mathematics sciences, and information technology. These programs have more units in the sciences and technology and have laboratory classes. Thesis is a requirement for graduation.

Graduate Programs in the Arts - Advanced degrees in the arts (Master of Arts) offer broader education or liberal arts education. These degrees are common in programs related to the social sciences, humanities, and communication. Graduation requirement may either be a thesis or creative work, which passed rigorous academic or jury review.

II. **Master's Programs by Tracks**

The Master's programs have two (2) major tracks. These are the thesis track and the non-thesis track. The thesis track is research intensive while the non-thesis track is often referred to as a professional or course-based master's program.[5]

A. **Thesis Track (Master of Science/Master of Arts)**

Under the thesis track is the **Master of Science/Master of Arts (MSc/MA) degree program. The MSc/MA** is a graduate academic degree program consisting of advanced studies in an academic discipline with the primary purpose of contributing to the generation, production and advancement of knowledge rather than specific applications to professional practice. Programs of this type are research-focused and serve as preparation for a doctoral research program. There are two (2) sub-tracks under this, namely the Academic Track and the Research Track:

1. **Master of Science/Master of Arts (MSc/MA) Academic Track**

This program has at least twenty-four (24) units of coursework and at least six (6) units of thesis. It requires students to pass a comprehensive examination and requires a thesis. As a final output, the students must have at least one (1) publication in refereed journal or juried creative work. Creative work is a tangible evidence of creative effort in a specific field of specialization, such as artwork, literature, music, paintings, dance, drama, productions, architecture, and games and apps. Due to the arbitrariness of creative work, it is impossible that two people would create the same work independently.[6]

2. **Master of Science/Master of Arts (MSc/MA) by Research**

This program has at least a total number of thirty-six (36) units wherein there is less coursework and more research activities. All units to be taken is by

---

[5] "How to choose between a thesis and a non-thesis master's degree?"
http://alghurairfoundation.org/en/content/how-choose-between-thesis-and-non0000-thesis-master%E2%80%99s-degree
[6] CHED 2019 Application Guidelines for the Granting of Autonomous and Deregulated Status to Private Higher Education Institutions, p. 9

research (no coursework). It requires students to pass a comprehensive examination. As a final output, students have at least one (1) publication, specifically, evidence of acceptance to a refereed journal or have a juried creative work outlet.

B. Non-Thesis Track (Master's Degree – Professional Track)

Under the non-thesis track is the **Master's degree (Professional Track).** It is a professional track at the master's level with the primary purpose of applying knowledge in professional practice. A Master's degree of this type is either terminal or geared towards preparation for a doctoral degree program with a professional track.

The professional master's degree program has at least thirty (30) units of coursework consisting of advanced studies in professional or vocational fields wherein at least three (3) units of which shall be labeled as a capstone course or practiced-based project.

This program requires students to pass a comprehensive examination and complete a capstone project.

A capstone project culminates the student's academic or learning experience. It provides the student an opportunity to exhibit the knowledge and skills obtained during the course of graduate study. It can be featured through a long-term investigative project that concludes in a final output, presentation, or performance. A typical form is when a student may be required to choose a topic or a problem that interests them, perform a research on these topics and generate a final output (for example, in the form of essay, case study, research paper, or a short film or multimedia presentation) indicative of the student's acquisition of learning. The student presents the capstone project to a panel or committee of experts for grading and evaluation.

Other Types of Master's Programs

Because the current employment environment has become more competitive locally and globally, having a master's degree or multiple expertise in a shorter time period may be needed by Filipino graduates thus may accelerate success in their chosen careers. The Commission therefore encourages qualified HEIs to offer the following combination programs, if taken individually might take a longer time period:

1. Straight Bachelor's-Master's (SBM) Program[7]

In the Straight Bachelor's-Master's (SBM) program, both the Bachelor's degree and Master's degree (thesis track) can be earned together.

The SBM program allows students to take specific graduate courses even before they finish their bachelor's degrees. The graduate courses taken can be counted towards both the bachelor's and master's degree thus giving students the opportunity to earn both degrees simultaneously in a shorter time span, however, only up to 20% of the required coursework may be common for both degrees.

---

[7] Benchmarked with the University of the Philippines

The SBM program shall be designed as an honors program and thus, the HEI must have strict admission and retention policies. Students must be enrolled full-time and dropping of courses/subjects is not allowed. Students who fail at least one (1) course/subject shall automatically be disqualified from the program and can only pursue the regular Bachelor's program.

The maximum number of years to complete the program is five (5) years. If students are not able to complete the program within the five-year period, the students automatically enter the regular Bachelor's degree program.

The students shall be required to do a Master's level thesis. Prior to doing the Master's thesis, they need to pass a comprehensive examination. The final output for graduation is at least one (1) publishable journal article, which means evidence of submission to a refereed journal or juried creative work outlet.

2. Dual Doctor of Medicine-Master's Degree (MDMD) Program

In the Dual Doctor of Medicine-Master's Degree (MDMD) program, students may be awarded both the Doctor of Medicine and a Master's degree. Only up to 20% of the required coursework maybe common for both degrees.

Similar to the SBM program, the MDMD program shall also be designed as an honors program and thus, the HEI must have strict admission and retention policies.

The maximum number of years to complete the program shall be determined by the HEI subject to approval of the Commission. If students are not able to complete the program within the prescribed period, they can pursue the regular program of only one of the two degrees.

Besides meeting the requirements for the Doctor of Medicine, the students are expected to pass a comprehensive examination for the Master's program. If the Master's program is under the thesis track, the student has to complete a thesis and has at least one (1) publishable journal article, which means evidence or submission to refereed journal or juried creative work outlet/or presentation to a conference. If the Master's program is a professional degree, the student has to complete a capstone project.

3. Dual Master's Degrees (DMD) Program[8]

The Dual Master's Degrees (DMD) program provides the opportunity for students to pursue graduate work in two fields of study and comply with the requirements of the two degrees simultaneously.

A common course work may be applied for the two master's degrees, but only up to 20% of the required coursework for both degrees may be credited. This overlapping or common course work reduces the time to complete both degrees if taken as regular programs.

Students must be enrolled full-time and dropping of courses/subjects is not allowed. Students who fail at least one (1) course/subject shall automatically

---

[8] Benchmarked with The University of Texas at Austin Graduate School, Florida State University, The University of Arizona, University at Albany-State University of New York, and Wright State University

be disqualified from the program, but they may enter the regular program of one of the Master's degrees being pursued.

The maximum number of years to complete the program shall be determined by the HEI subject to approval of the Commission. If students are not able to complete the program within the prescribed period, they can only continue with the regular program of one of the two Master's degrees.

For two (2) Master's degrees under the thesis track, the students shall be required to pass a comprehensive examination and complete a thesis covering both degree programs. The final output for graduation is at least one (1) publishable journal article, which means evidence of submission to a refereed journal or juried creative work outlet or presentation to a conference.

For one (1) Master's degree under the thesis track and one (1) Professional Master's degree, the students shall be required to pass the comprehensive examination covering both degree programs. They shall also complete a thesis covering both fields of study and have at least (1) publishable journal article, which means evidence of submission to a refereed journal or juried work outlet or presentation to a conference.

For two (2) Professional Master's degrees, the students shall be required to pass the comprehensive examination covering both degrees and complete a capstone project interconnecting the two programs.

III. Doctoral Programs

The doctoral programs have two (2) types, the Doctor of Philosophy and the Doctoral Degree (Professional Track).

A. Doctor of Philosophy

The **Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)** is a graduate program leading to a doctoral degree that focuses on research and prepares students for a life of scholarship in an academic discipline. A PhD student must show the capacity to make an original contribution in pushing the frontier of knowledge in a chosen field through dissertation, and to demonstrate ability to work independently as a student. Examples of this type of doctoral program are PhD in Education or PhD in Public Administration.

The PhD program has two (2) sub-tracks, namely the Academic Track and the Research Track.

1. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Academic Track

This program has at least twenty-four (24) units of coursework and at least twelve (12) units of dissertation.

There shall be a public defense of the dissertation. The HEI announces the schedule of the defense through posting in its HEI website/social media or sending email to its academic community.

Furthermore, students are required to pass a comprehensive examination. As a final output, the students must also have a publication, specifically evidence of acceptance to an internationally or nationally refereed and indexed journal or have a juried creative work outlet.

2. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) By Research

This program has at least seventy-five per cent (75%) of the total units focused on research-dissertation work. The remaining units shall be allocated for courses on various research methods and advance courses that will contribute to the development and writing of the dissertation.

There shall be a public defense of the dissertation. The HEI announces the schedule of the defense through posting in its HEI website/social media or sending email to its academic community.

The total units shall be determined by the HEI. The HEI has to ensure that a student has a minimum residency of three (3) years on a full-time basis.

Furthermore, students are required to pass a comprehensive examination. As a final output, the students must also have a publication, specifically evidence of acceptance to an internationally or nationally indexed journal or juried creative work outlet.

B. Doctoral Degree – Professional Track

The **Doctoral Degree (Professional Track)** represents a mastery of the subject matter and techniques of a professional field to a stage of competence parallel to that required for the PhD. Although the work for the professional doctoral degree may extend the boundaries of knowledge in the field, it is directed primarily towards distinguished-practical performance. Examples of this type of doctoral program are Doctor of Education and Doctor of Public Administration.

Students admitted to the program will be prepared to train or supervise others in the field or to discover new knowledge that has practical applications as demonstrated in one's profession.

Admission to the program requires prospective students to have the relevant professional experience. Applicants must therefore demonstrate a substantial actual professional work experience. The CHED Technical Panels may specify the minimum number of years of professional experience needed for their respective disciplines otherwise HEIs may impose the minimum number.

The professional doctoral degree program has at least twenty-four (24) units of coursework and twelve (12) units of practiced-based dissertation.

The students are required to pass a comprehensive examination. As a final output, the students must also have completed a practice-based research. There shall be a public defense of the dissertation. The HEI announces the schedule of the defense through posting in its HEI website/social media or sending email to its academic community.

A practice-based research is an original investigation to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice. For a doctoral dissertation, claims of originality and contribution to gaining new knowledge

may be demonstrated through creative outcomes such as designs, music, digital media, performances and exhibitions.[9]

C. Other Types of Doctoral Degrees

1. Straight Master's-Doctoral (SMD) Program

In the Straight Master's-Doctoral (SMD) program, both the Master's and Doctoral degrees can be earned together. Only up to 20% of coursework maybe common for both programs.

The HEI must have strict admission and retention policies. Students must be enrolled full-time and dropping of courses is not allowed. Students who fail at least one (1) course/subject shall automatically be disqualified from the program. If students are not able to complete the program within the maximum time period determined by the HEI subject to the approval of the Commission, the students shall also be disqualified from the program. The HEI shall determine the appropriate exit plan for disqualified students.

The students shall be required to pass a comprehensive examination corresponding to both programs. For programs leading to a PhD, the students have to complete a dissertation that has been publicly defended and have at least one (1) publication, specifically, evidence of acceptance to an internationally or nationally refereed and indexed journal or have a juried creative work outlet. For programs leading to a professional doctoral degree, the students have to complete a practice-based research and dissertation that has been publicly defended.

2. Dual Doctoral Degrees (DDD) Program

The Dual Doctoral Degrees (DDD) program provides the opportunity for students to pursue doctoral degrees in two fields of study and comply with the requirements of the two degrees simultaneously.

A common course work may be applied for the two doctoral degrees, but only up to 20% of the required coursework for both degrees may be credited.

The HEI must have strict admission and retention policies. Students must be enrolled full-time and dropping of courses/subjects is not allowed. Students who fail at least one (1) course/subject shall automatically be disqualified from the program, but they may enter the regular program of one of the doctoral degrees being pursued. The HEI shall determine the appropriate exit plan for disqualified students

The maximum number of years to complete the program shall be determined by the HEI subject to the approval of the Commission. If students are not able to complete the program within the prescribed period, they can only continue with the regular program of one of the two doctoral degrees.

For two (2) PhDs, the students shall be required to pass a comprehensive examination and complete a dissertation covering both programs. The dissertation should be publicly defended. The final output shall be at least

---

[9] Candy, Linda, "Practice Based Research: A Guide."
(https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257944497_Practice_Based_Research_A_Guide)

one (1) publication, specifically evidence of acceptance to an internationally or nationally refereed and indexed journal or juried creative work outlet.

For two (2) professional doctoral degrees, the students shall be required to pass a comprehensive examination and complete a practice-based research and dissertation integrating topics under each program.

Section 8. Summary Matrix of Graduate Programs

The succeeding table summarizes the types of graduate programs and their corresponding admission requirement, required minimum number of units, major requirement and student outputs.

Types of Graduate Programs	Minimum Admission Requirement	Number of Units	Major Requirement and Student Output
A. MASTER'S PROGRAMS			
1. Master of Arts Academic Track	Bachelor's Degree	• With at least 24 units of coursework at least 6 units of Thesis	• Passing the Comprehensive Examination • Thesis • At least one (1) publication in refereed journal or juried creative work
2. Master of Arts By Research	Bachelor's Degree	• With at least thirty-six (36) coursework-units wherein there is less coursework and more research activities. • All units to be taken is by research (no coursework)	• Passing the Comprehensive Examination • At least one (1) publication in refereed journal or juried creative work outlet
3. Master of Science (MSc) Academic Track	Bachelor's Degree	• With at least 24 units of coursework and at least 6 units of Thesis	• Passing the Comprehensive Examination • Thesis • At least one (1) publication, in refereed journal or juried creative work outlet
4. Master of Science (MSc) By Research	Bachelor's Degree	• With at least thirty-six (36) coursework-units wherein there is less coursework and more research activities.	• Passing the Comprehensive Examination • At least one (1) publication in refereed journal or juried creative work outlet

Types of Graduate Programs	Minimum Admission Requirement	Number of Units	Major Requirement and Student Output
		• All units to be taken is by research (no coursework)	
5. Master's Degree (Professional Track)	Bachelor's Degree	• With at least 30 units of coursework, at least 3 units of Capstone or practice-based project	• Capstone project • Passing the Comprehensive Examination
6. Straight Bachelor's-Master's (SBM) Program	Exceptional performance in secondary education	• Maximum of five (5) years of study period. • Maximum of 20% of common coursework	• Comprehensive examination • Master's thesis • At least one (1) publishable journal article, which means evidence of submission to refereed journal or juried creative work outlet/or presentation to a conference
7. Dual Doctor of Medicine-Master's Degree (MDMD) Program	Bachelor's Degree	• Maximum number of units/years to be determined by HEI. • Maximum of 20% of common coursework	• Comprehensive examination • For Master's thesis track – thesis and at least one (1) publishable journal article, which means evidence of submission to refereed journal or juried creative work outlet/or presentation to a conference • For Professional Master's – capstone project
8. Dual Master's Degrees (DMD) Program	Bachelor's Degree	• Maximum number of units/years to be determined by HEI. • Maximum of 20% of common coursework.	• Comprehensive examination • For two Master's Thesis – one thesis and at least one (1) publishable journal article, which means evidence of submission to a refereed journal or juried creative work outlet or presentation to a conference • For Master's thesis and Professional Master's – one thesis and at least one (1) publishable journal article, which means evidence of submission to a refereed journal or juried creative work outlet /or presentation to a conference • For two Professional Master's – one capstone project

Types of Graduate Programs	Minimum Admission Requirement	Number of Units	Major Requirement and Student Output
B. DOCTORAL PROGRAMS			
1. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Academic Track	Master's Degree	• With at least 24 units of coursework and at least 12 units of dissertation	• Passing of Comprehensive Examination • Publicly defended dissertation (Theory-building) • Publication in an internationally/ nationally indexed journal or juried creative work outlet.
2. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) By Research	• Master's Degree • Demonstrated research aptitude, research experience and skills, and a body of past and/or ongoing research work and publications and/or capsule research proposal	• With at least seventy-five per cent (75%) of the total units focused on research-dissertation work • All units to be taken is by research (no course work) • The total units shall be determined by the HEI. • Students are required to have a minimum residency of 3 years on a full-time basis	• Comprehensive Examination • Publicly defended dissertation (Theory-building) • Publication in an internationally/ nationally indexed journal or juried creative work outlet.
3. Doctoral Degree (Professional Track)	• Master's Degree • 5 years of professional work experience related to the degree being applied for	• With at least 24 units of coursework and at least 12 units of practice-based dissertation	• Passing of Comprehensive examination • Publicly-defended practice-based dissertation • Practice-based research
4. Straight Master's-Doctoral (SMD) Program	As determined by the HEI	• Maximum number of units/years to be determined by HEI. • Maximum of 20% of common coursework.	• Comprehensive examination • Leading to PhD – publicly-defended dissertation and a publication, specifically, evidence of acceptance to an internationally/nationally refereed and indexed journal or juried creative work outlet. • Leading to a Professional Doctoral degree – practice-based research; and publicly-defended practice-based dissertation

Types of Graduate Programs	Minimum Admission Requirement	Number of Units	Major Requirement and Student Output
5. Double Doctoral Degrees (DDD) Program	As determined by the HEI	• Maximum number of units/years to be determined by HEI. • Maximum of 20% of common coursework.	• Comprehensive examination • For two PhDs – a publicly-defended dissertation and a publication, specifically evidence of acceptance to an internationally/ nationally refereed and indexed journal or juried creative work outlet. • For one PhD and one Professional Doctoral Degree – a publicly-defended dissertation and a publication, specifically, evidence of acceptance to an internationally/nationally refereed and indexed journal or juried creative work outlet. • For two Professional Doctoral Degrees - practice-based research and publicly defended practice-based dissertation

Notes:

Outlet refers to a journal or juried creative work outlet (e.g. Palanca award-winning articles, reviewed/critically-acclaimed theater productions or musical recitals, investigative journalism reports, etc.)

Indexed Outlet refers to journals selected to give citation index, e.g., Scopus, ISI, Web of Science.

Section 9. Publication Requirements for Graduate Students

Students in the Master of Science/Master of Arts (MSc/MA) Academic Track and by Research are required to have a publication in a refereed journal or juried creative work.

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Academic Track and PhD by Research are required to have publication/s in internationally/nationally indexed journals or juried creative work.

While indexed and high-impact publication outlets are desired in the graduate programs, the Commission, based on the recommendation of the CHED Technical Panel for each discipline, may specify or determine additional national publication outlets appropriate for their respective fields with some of the leading scholars in the field as members of the editorial boards and may also exclude outlets inconsistent with ethical research standards. The Technical Panels shall be directed to develop a roadmap for the creation of publication outlets cognizant of their respective fields while ensuring that both seasoned and developing HEIs have viable options for publication.

Section 10. Research and Creative Work Degrees

To promote the culture of Research and Creative Work (RCW) and increase RCW productivity, eligible HEIs shall be encouraged to offer RCW degrees.

The RCW degrees shall be for candidates with demonstrated RCW aptitudes, experience and skills, and a body of research and/or creative work and publications. Such programs of study shall require:

1. statement or outline of RCW purpose;
2. supervision by a senior adviser and designated RCW panels;
3. monitoring of progress of work;
4. record of progression of RCW skills and experiences;
5. rigorous internal and external reviews of work and results;
6. thesis/dissertation defense; and
7. publication in a refereed journal or juried creative work.

Research degree-based program aims to produce graduates who shall contribute to the body of knowledge in specific field of study or to have provided innovative, theory-based, systematic, and practical solutions to significant concerns of specific industries.

For this purpose, the Commission shall prescribe the guidelines for the selection and operation of HEIs to be authorized or deputized to offer research and creative work degree programs within the framework of academic freedom.

ARTICLE IV. CURRICULUM

Section 11. Curricular and Developmental Initiatives

Curricular content of graduate programs shall be strengthened by the offering higher education institutions (HEIs) to include strategic learning and teaching competencies that are key and relevant to contemporary global, regional, and national economic, political, and social development. In the exercise of academic freedom, the HEIs shall have the flexibility to innovate and enhance their curricular offerings, but must comply with the prescribed minimum curricular requirements, aligned with learning standards or outcomes-based education (OBE).

Furthermore, integrative and interrogative methods shall be stressed. Given the significant role of ICT in education, and the rationale of OBE in conjunction with the PQF based on RA 10968, the validity of conventional and non-conventional teaching-learning delivery and management systems are hereby recognized and shall form part of the total delivery system of graduate programs.

The CHED Technical Panels shall be directed to formulate a **sample curriculum** for their respective disciplines that leads to the attainment of specified outcomes. This sample curriculum shall show a set of courses sequenced based on flow of content, with each course having a specified title, description and credit unit. For this purpose, the CHED Technical Panels shall employ and show as part of the PSGs of their disciplines, a **sample curriculum map**, which is a matrix of all courses and the minimum set of program outcomes showing which outcome(s) each course touches upon and in what way.[10]

---

[10] CHED Administrative Order No. 01, Series of 2014, "Revised Guidelines in the Formulation of CHED Policies, Standards and Guidelines (PSGs) of Baccalaureate Level Academic Programs"

ARTICLE V. DELIVERY MODES IN GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Section 12. In-Campus or Off-Campus Graduate Programs

Graduate programs are usually offered in-campus or as residential programs. They can also be offered off-campus as extension programs.

A. In-Campus or Residential Graduate Programs

Some HEIs have multiple campuses and the Commission classifies these campuses as follows:

1. Main Campus

A **main campus** is the primary location of an HEI. It has the educational facilities required to offer degree programs and to provide student services. The main campus is also where the institution's top administrators are based.

2. Branch Campus

A **branch campus** is a school facility where: (1) a separate site and attendant educational facilities such as building and classrooms specifically for the institution have been established; (2) it is offering higher education programs which may also be offered at the main campus; and (3) it offers degree programs that are not restricted to a special clientele, but are open to the general public. A branch is located in a separate city or municipality from the main campus. All public and private HEIs shall secure approval from the Commission through the concerned CHED Regional Office/s in the establishment of a branch. The HEI may choose to apply as a separate HEI rather than a branch. If this is the case, the HEI must comply with the requirements pertaining to the establishment of a new school.[11]

3. Annex Campus

An **annex campus** is similar to a branch campus except that all of the degree programs offered at the annex campus are not being offered at the main campus. The annex campus is found within the region where the main campus is located.

Graduate programs offered or to be offered at any of these campuses shall be referred to as **in-campus or residential graduate programs.**

B. Off-Campus or Extension Graduate Programs

Off-campus graduate programs are graduate programs offered at a site not identified as the main, branch, or annex campus. The Commission allows such arrangement to make quality graduate programs more accessible to Filipino professionals who are based in areas without or with limited number of HEIs offering graduate programs, and that could address their continuing education needs such as upgrading their knowledge, skills and competencies relative to their professional practice.

---

[11] CMO No. 40, Series of 2008, Manual of Regulations for Private Higher Education of 2008

An off-campus graduate program is offered as an extension graduate program. It is offered to a specific group of special clienteles and it is not available to the general public. It is held in a learning center or site that possesses the characteristics of a campus except that administrative and support facilities are not available at the learning center, but merely classrooms or instructional facilities. The off-campus or extension graduate program is temporary in nature[12] and as such, it ends when the cohort of students finished the program within the time frame agreed between the HEI and the requesting organization or party.

Since an extension graduate program targets a specific group of professionals, only the professional graduate degrees may be offered as extension graduate programs.

Section 13. Non-Conventional Graduate Programs

1. Distance Education

Distance Education (DE) is a mode of educational delivery whereby teacher and learner are geographically separated and instruction is delivered through materials and methods using communication technologies, and supported by organizational and administrative structures and arrangements. The delivery medium is typically online but can be by print-based modules or by mobile phone.[13]

2. Transnational Education[14]

Transnational Education (TNE) is a higher education delivered in a country other than the one where an awarding institution is based. Graduate programs may be classified as inbound TNE or outbound TNE. An inbound TNE program refers to a higher education program being offered in the Philippines by a foreign higher education provider while an outbound TNE program refers to a higher education program being offered by a Philippine HEI outside of the Philippines.

Categories of TNE programs include academic franchising; articulation; branch campus; international branch campus; international extension program; joint and double degrees; online, blended, and distance learning; TNE Offshore Institution; twinning arrangements; and validation. Description of each category can be found in CMO No. 62, series of 2016, "Policies, Standards and Guidelines (PSGs) for Transnational Education."

3. Consortium-delivered Graduate Program[15]

A Consortium-Delivered Graduate Program refers to a graduate program delivered by an organization of two (2) or more HEIs with expertise in a particular discipline delivering a common program by sharing physical and human resources for program delivery, allowing learners to cross-enroll among consortium member HEIs, and to take courses that are considered the expertise of the respective consortium school.

Consortium member HEIs may be situated in different regions. In such cases, the strength of the proposed design or implementation of program delivery shall be assessed by the Commission.

---

[12] CMO No. 40, Series of 2008, Manual of Regulations for Private Higher Education of 2008
[13] CMO No. 62, Series of 2016, Policies, Standards and Guidelines (PSGs) for Transnational Education (TNE) Programs
[14] CMO No. 62, Series of 2016, Policies, Standards and Guidelines (PSGs) for Transnational Education (TNE) Programs
[15] Based on CMO No. 04, Series of 2016, "Guidelines for Graduate Education Delivery for Faculty and Staff Development in the K to 12 Transition Period"

ARTICLE VI. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

All eligible private HEIs, SUCs, and LUCs have to comply with the following minimum standards or requirements to operate a graduate degree program:

Section 14. Institutional Arrangements

All private and public HEIs offering or planning to offer graduate programs are required to maintain a solid research and/or creative work program in the chosen specific area or field of study. The HEI is expected to have these institutional arrangements:

1. Research and Creative Work (RCW) Office

The HEI has an Office that develops and implements a working mechanism that facilitates the planning, management, conduct, and monitoring and evaluation of research and creative work across the different programs.

2. RCW Policies

The HEI has policies and guidelines on benefits and incentives for faculty undertaking research or creative work, such as de-loading, research awards, and support for publications and other scholarly or creative works, among others. These policies should be reflected in the Graduate Program Manual of Operations (GPMO).

3. RCW Agenda

The HEI has a clearly-stated research and creative work agenda that includes the discipline being applied for. The agenda has to be:

a. anchored on the institution's philosophy and framework;
b. responsive to identified goals and prioritized niches in the arts and sciences;
c. aligned with the research and development thrusts and agenda of the country as articulated by national government institutions such as the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of Health (DOH), Bureau of Agricultural Research-Department of Agriculture (BAR-DA), and CHED through its National Higher Education Research Agenda (NHERA); and
d. responsive to the development needs of industry and society.

4. Ethical Standards

The HEI maintains ethical standards to be observed by faculty and students when they conduct research/thesis/dissertation involving human participation or using animal subjects. The HEI may adopt ethical standards developed by the appropriate government agencies such as the Department of Science and Technology (DOST).

Furthermore, the HEI has its own research ethics review mechanism or may partner with a recognized ethics review board, provided that the cost of ethics review should not be charged to students.

5. RCW Funding

In order to ensure continuous operation and for a more dynamic and proactive research and creative work initiatives, the HEI shall allocate a regular budget for RCW and the capacity to mobilize other sources of funding to support its similar

undertakings. The Commission shall define the threshold for the RCW budget for each discipline as recommended by CHED Technical Panels.

6. RCW Collaboration, Partnerships or Networks

The HEI collaborates and/or partners with other research institutions and networks that demonstrate leadership in RCW, innovation, and extension.

The HEI may link up with other faculty and graduate institutions and with research organizations and creative groups within and outside the country.

7. Graduate Program Manual of Operations

The HEI has a system of rationalizing offerings of graduate programs in matters of curriculum, research and creative work, supervision and resource optimization to be included in a Graduate Program Manual of Operations (GPMO). The GPMO shall also include policies on plagiarism, anti-sexual harassment, and research and teaching assistantship program, among others.

Section 15. Program Requirements

All private and public HEIs offering or intending to offer graduate programs should adhere to the following minimum program requirements:

1. Structure of Graduate Programs

A graduate program shall be organized and managed by discipline or field of specialization. In cases of HEIs which have been originally constituted only as a graduate school, the requirement on vertical articulation shall not be mandatory, provided these institutions offer interdisciplinary graduate programs of high standard as determined by CHED.

2. OBE Graduate Program Design

The HEI follows the outcomes-based education (OBE) framework in its graduate program design. The HEI has to submit the following documents:

a. The Complete set of program and learning outcomes, including its proposed additional program outcomes.
b. Proposed curriculum and its justification including a curriculum map.
c. Proposed performance indicators for each outcome.
d. Proposed measurement system for the level of attainment of each indicator.
e. Proposed outcomes-based syllabus for each course.
f. Proposed system of program assessment and evaluation
g. Proposed system of program Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI).

3. Administration

The qualifications of the administrators of the graduate programs are as follows:

a. The Dean or Head of the academic unit shall be a holder of a doctoral degree in the discipline or allied fields and has published works in refereed journals in one of the disciplines under the academic unit.

b. The designated Department Chair/Program Coordinator/Head shall be a holder of a doctoral degree in the discipline or allied fields.

c. For a Professional Master's Program, the Dean or the designated graduate program head shall hold a doctoral degree in the discipline or allied fields or at least a master's degree in the discipline or allied fields and relevant professional experience outside the academe.

4. Faculty Requirements

Generally, faculty teaching in graduate programs, specially the doctoral level, shall be holders of doctoral degrees who have track record of scholarly work (research or creative work) and with publications in refereed journals and/or books published in reputable academic publishing companies.

Industry-oriented Master's programs may require at least one (1) faculty with a doctoral degree, depending whether there is a dearth in doctoral degree holders in the discipline. However, those with only Master's programs shall be required to have equivalent extensive industry experience, as determined by the various CHED Technical Panels, but they cannot serve as a thesis adviser.

For scholarly work, faculty members are expected to show proof of publications in refereed academic journals, internationally/nationally indexed journals (e.g., Scopus and Web-of-Science), or in industry/professional-based journals (e.g., journals in medical science field).

For recognition of creative work by reputable bodies, the faculty members are expected to show proof of award or recognition from reputable bodies for their exemplary creative works.

For faculty members who have graduated from foreign HEIs, there should be certification from CHED that the foreign HEI is a duly recognized HEI by the country where it is based.

5. Number of Qualified Faculty

The number of qualified faculty for the graduate programs are as follows:

a. **For Master's Programs**, there shall be at least four (4) faculty members per program at all times.

- *For the Thesis Track:*
  - Four (4) full time faculty who have doctoral degrees in the discipline and with published works in refereed journal/s and/or have produced publicly recognized creative and/or technology outputs; or

  - If there is a dearth in doctoral degree holders in the discipline, at least one (1) full-time faculty who has a doctoral degree in the discipline and with published works in refereed journal/s and/or have produced publicly recognized creative and/or technology outputs; and at least three (3) full-time faculty who are master's degree holders, but with doctoral units in the discipline and have at least one (1) publication in a refereed journal. The faculty with master's degrees plus doctoral units can only teach in the Master's program, but cannot serve as thesis advisers.

- *For the Non-Thesis Track:*
  - o Four (4) full time faculty who have doctoral degrees in the discipline and with published works in refereed journal/s and/or have produced publicly-recognized creative and/or technology outputs; or

  - o If there is a dearth in doctoral degree holders in the discipline, at least one (1) full-time faculty who has a doctoral degree in the discipline and with published works in refereed journal/s and/or have produced publicly-recognized creative and/or technology outputs; and at least:

    - ▪ three (3) full-time faculty who are master's degree holders, but with doctoral units in the discipline and have at least one (1) publication in a refereed journal. However, they can only teach courses, they cannot serve as thesis advisers; or
    - ▪ for industry-oriented programs, three (3) full-time faculty who are master's degree holders, but with extensive industry experience. However, they can only teach courses, they cannot serve as thesis/capstone advisers.

  b. **For Doctoral Programs**, there shall be at least four (4) full time faculty members per doctoral program at all times. They are all doctoral degree holders in the discipline and with published works in internationally/nationally indexed journal/s and/or have produced publicly recognized creative and/or technology outputs.

6. **Adviser to Student Ratio**

   Academic advising is a fundamental dimension of any graduate degree program, students must be assigned an adviser at the time of admission and must be provided with the regular opportunity to communicate with their advisers to discuss not only choice of course enrollment and satisfaction of degree requirements, but other intellectual and professional concerns as well. Therefore, at all times, the adviser to student ratio is one (1) full-time faculty per maximum of five (5) students, inclusive of both in and off-campus students.

   In the case of thesis/dissertation adviser to student ratio, it shall not be more than 1:5 as well, inclusive of both in and off-campus students.

7. **Thesis/Dissertation Panel**

   The thesis or dissertation panel shall have among its members content and method specialists. The thesis/dissertation adviser shall be selected from the content specialists, but he/she must be a doctoral degree holder with completed and ongoing research/creative work.

   The method specialist shall provide technical advice on the appropriate research methodology to be used including the specific research design and appropriate technique to analyze either quantitative or qualitative data.

   The Thesis defense panel shall have at least three (3) members, while the dissertation panel shall have at least five (5), the membership of which include content and method specialist.

8. Library

The library requirements for undergraduate programs in the discipline shall be coupled with:

a. subscription to at least two (2) peer-reviewed professional journals or internationally-refereed journals;
b. at least five (5) titles of graduate reference books (print and non-print) on specialized discipline for every subject offered under the program, published within the last five (5) years. At least one (1) of the five (5) titles is a foreign reference published by a reputable academic press; and
c. Subscription or have access (through a consortium/interlibrary basis) to electronic databases of international and reputable journals indexed in internationally recognized indexes of scholarly journals. Examples of these databases are ProQuest, EBSCOHost, ScienceDirect, Sage, Taylor and Francis, Oxford, Cambridge, and Philippine eLib.

The use of the internet, materials in electronic format, open educational resources and other education technologies is encouraged. These library requirements shall be accessible to students.

9. RCW, Laboratory and Other Facilities

The HEI provides adequate and relevant research and creative work (RCW) facilities and equipment to support research and creative work in the specified discipline or access to the same, which may be available or sourced through linkages and partnerships with industry, communities, and pertinent social organizations.

The requirements for laboratory and other facilities for graduate programs shall be coupled with:

a. provision for research equipment and facilities in the basic sciences, if applicable (detailed requirements can be determined in the specific CMOs by discipline);
b. instructional laboratories for Professional Master's Programs;
c. extensive information technology facilities that will allow for internet access;
d. subscription to various software programs to detect plagiarism and to analyze quantitative and qualitative data that are accessible to faculty and students; and
e. occupational safety and health policies/standards for laboratories handling nanomaterials, radioactive materials and other hazardous chemicals.

10. Admission Requirements

There shall be a system for assessing the ability of students who will be admitted in the graduate program taking into consideration their aptitude, motivation and capacity to pursue and complete further studies, conduct research, or apply advanced knowledge in professional practice.

11. HEI-Industry Partnership

The HEI offering professional graduate programs has formally engaged professional associations, business, and industry to participate in curriculum planning and development, instruction, research and development, production, research immersion or internship, and other related activities.

ARTICLE VII. ADDITIONAL MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Section 16. For Extension Graduate Programs

To ensure that quality extension graduate programs are provided, these programs must go through an extensive approval process set by the Commission.

A. Coverage of the Extension Graduate Programs

1. Only graduate programs under the professional track can be offered as extension graduate programs.
2. Professional graduate programs to be offered as extension should be CHED recognized graduate programs already being offered at the main, branch, or annex campus, that is, the professional extension graduate programs should be residential graduate programs first at any of these campuses.
3. The extension graduate programs may only be offered within the region where the main, branch, or annex campus is located. In other words, the HEI must first establish its institutional presence in the region where it intends to offer the extension graduate programs.
4. In no instance shall a graduate program declared to be under moratorium by the CHED be offered as extension graduate program.

B. HEI Eligibility Criteria

The HEI with established institutional presence in the region is eligible to apply to offer extension graduate program in the same region if any one (1) of the following conditions is met:

1. With Center of Excellence (COE) or Center of Development (COD) status in the discipline being applied for; or
2. With international accreditation (such as AUN or ABET) in the professional graduate program to be extended; or
3. At least Level III accreditation or equivalent from CHED recognized accrediting agency in the professional graduate program to be extended.

C. Other Requirements[16]

Besides complying with the minimum standards or requirements specified in Article VII of this CMO, the HEI must also comply with the following general requirements:

1. Institutional Presence

As mentioned in preceding sections, the HEI has an established campus (main, branch, or annex) recognized by the Commission in the region where the extension graduate program shall be offered.

2. Program Administration

The extension graduate program shall be under the direct supervision of a campus-based academic unit handling the professional graduate program

---

[16] Benchmarked from the University of Illinois-Graduate College, "Chapter 5: Policy for the Off-Campus/Online Delivery of Graduate Degree or Certificate Programs," as revised in May 2016

being applied for. There shall be an administrator of the extension graduate program who will oversee its implementation. The program administrator shall be a qualified faculty teaching in the concerned professional graduate program.

1. **Learning Center**

   The extension classes shall be held in a learning center that has a semblance of an HEI. It shall have the necessary infrastructure to host the graduate program. For instance, it has classrooms and areas with internet connections for the students to meet, study and do research. It is also compliant with the safety and sanitary requirements of the concerned local government unit.

   Furthermore, the learning center should be able to provide the adequate academic support. This includes access to computer technologies and software, or classrooms or laboratories which are well-equipped and up to the standards required for graduate study. Library resources should contain the necessary books and periodicals and be accessible at times convenient for the off-campus students. The library resources available off-campus shall be supplemented by e-learning resources of the HEI.

2. **Memorandum of Agreement**

   The HEI enters into a partnership with another HEI, agency or any entity on the offering of the extension professional graduate education program. The partnership is supported with a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) showing the specific responsibilities of each party, duration of the program, and the specific clientele who will be enrolled in the program.

   The MOA should indicate the cohort of students that will complete the program within the specified period. Within this period, the HEI shall not accept new students who are not included in the specified cohort. If a new cohort shall be identified, the HEI shall seek a new government authority from the Commission to offer another extension graduate program, as supported by a new MOA. However, this new authority shall only be secured only after the previous extension graduate program has ended.

   For partnership with another HEI, the specific clientele shall be limited to the academic and/or non-academic personnel of the requesting HEI. The extension program shall not be offered to the general public. Furthermore, the requesting HEI shall provide a dedicated learning site within its campus for this purpose.

3. **Student Enrollment and Student Advising**

   The student enrollment should be commensurate with the resources (human, infrastructure, and other learning resources) of the HEI.

   Since academic advising is a fundamental dimension of any graduate degree program, students must be assigned an adviser at the time of admission and must be provided with the regular opportunity to communicate with their advisers to discuss not only choice of course enrollment and satisfaction of degree requirements, but other intellectual and professional concerns as well.

It is reiterated here that at all times, the student to adviser ratio is not more than 1:5. Advisees include both the residential and off-campus students.

6. Faculty

The faculty members who will handle the extension classes are in the faculty roster of the HEI with the corresponding qualifications for the discipline. Adjunct faculty members may be hired by the HEI for the reason of their ability to make unique contributions to the program because they possess professional skills, experiences, or perspectives that are not represented or not available within the HEI's own graduate faculty.

7. Learning Management System (LMS)

The HEI shall have a learning management system (LMS), which is a software-based platform, that will facilitate student access to the e-learning resources of the HEI and facilitate student enrollment and advising/consultation, among others and support online learning if necessary.

8. Delivery Mode

The extension graduate program is primarily delivered through face-to-face or classroom-based instruction, but can be supplemented with distance learning. If the extension graduate program shall be delivered through blended learning (combination of the face-to-face mode and distance education), other requirements specified in the CMO governing open and distance learning shall also be complied with by the HEI.

9. Other Components

Other components of extension graduate programs specific to a discipline as determined by the Commission through the concerned Technical Panel.

Section 17. For Graduate Programs by Distance Education

1. Qualification of Higher Education Institutions to Offer Graduate Programs through Distance Education

Only HEIs with the following status are qualified to offer a graduate program by distance education:

a. With Center of Excellence (COE) or Center of Development (COD) status in the discipline being applied for; or
b. With international accreditation (such as AUN or ABET) in the corresponding graduate program; or
c. With at least Level III program accreditation or equivalent from CHED recognized accrediting agency in the corresponding graduate degree program.

2. Guiding Principles[17]

All subjects/courses offered in distance education shall adhere to the following guiding principles:

---

[17] CMO No. 27, Series of 2005, Policies and Guidelines on Distance Education

a. **Learner-Centered**

Distance education program shall focus on the needs of the students and the goal of facilitating independent learning. Such program shall not be driven merely by available technologies, but rather by the need to enable demonstrable learning in an accessible environment.

b. **Rigorous and Sound Instructional Design**

Distance education program shall be equivalent in challenge and depth to conventional programs. Academically qualified individuals must make instructional design decisions in the analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation of distance education courses.

c. **Transparency and Peer Review to Guide Informed Choice**

Distance education program implementers shall make information about their programs particularly on the curriculum and delivery system, instructional materials development, delivery mode/strategies, student support services, and other relevant information available to accrediting bodies, academic peers, regulators, and students. Updates/information shall be made accessible through such media as the World Wide Web.

d. **Public Responsibility and Accountability**

Implementers shall take heed of the public impact of distance education programs and shall always exercise due diligence in avoiding harm to program stakeholders, especially students. Consumer protection, in particular, shall be a priority because of the high value that Filipinos put on education.

e. **Quality and Continuous Improvement**

Implementers shall embed in their program framework the proactive identification of student and stakeholder needs and the monitoring of student and stakeholder satisfaction in order to continuously improve all aspects of development and delivery. Because of the realities of global education, it is also imperative that distance education programs meet internationally acceptable quality standards.

3. Institutional Management and Commitment

   a. The name "Open University" shall be used by an HEI only if it is a separate, autonomous, degree granting academic entity qualified to operate as a University.
   b. The HEI's mission, budget and policy statement shall reflect its commitment to its distance education program.
   c. The HEI shall have the organizational structure and clear institutional procedures for managing and ensuring academic oversight over its distance education system.
   d. The HEI shall designate a competent key person who will manage and be responsible for its distance education.
   e. The HEI shall have an internal quality assurance management system appropriate to distance education programs.
   f. The HEI shall show evidence of a program of continuous self-evaluation directed toward program improvement targeting more effective pedagogy, advances in the assessment of student achievement of intended outcomes, improved retention rates and effective use of resources.

4. Components of Distance Education[18]

Components of distance education pertaining to curriculum and delivery system, instructional materials development, delivery mode/strategies, and student support services and other requirements stipulated in CMO No. 27, series of 2005, "Policies and Guidelines on Distance Education," shall be complied with by HEIs offering or intending to offer graduate programs by Distance Education.

Section 18. For Graduate Programs by Transnational Education

The minimum requirements stipulated in CMO No. 62, series of 2016, "Policies, Standards and Guidelines (PSGs) for Transnational Education (TNE) Programs," shall be complied with by HEIs offering or intending to offer graduate programs by TNE.

Section 19. For Consortium-Delivered Graduate Programs

The consortium of HEIs should together meet the specific requirements for the graduate program being applied for. In addition, the following should also be met by the consortium:

1. HEI Eligibility

At least two (2) consortium member HEIs must hold a Level III accreditation in the corresponding undergraduate program or Center of Excellence/Center of Development (COE/COD) status in the discipline. Other member HEIs without Level III accreditation or COE/COD status, cannot be the degree granting institutions.

2. Memorandum of Agreement

There is a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to establish the consortium, as agreed upon by all consortium member HEIs. The MOA should specify the resource sharing and responsibilities of each member HEI as well as identify the coordinating member HEI that shall communicate with the Commission and ensure compliance of the consortium with the minimum requirements set for graduate programs. The MOA shall also indicate the degree granting institution/s. The MOA shall be approved by the Commission.

3. Implementation Plan

The consortium has a detailed implementation plan that shows how the graduate program shall be delivered. This includes how the consortium shall monitor and evaluate the graduate program.

The Commission through the recommendations of the CHED Technical Panel may determine other requirements to ensure delivery of a quality consortium-delivered graduate program.

4. Other Components

Other components of consortium-delivered graduate programs specific to a discipline as determined by the Commission through the concerned Technical Panel.

---

[18] CMO No. 27, Series of 2005, Policies and Guidelines on Distance Education

ARTICLE VIII. OTHER RESOURCES

Section 20. Research and Teaching Assistantships

HEIs offering or intending to offer graduate programs are encouraged to provide opportunities for graduate students to avail of research and teaching assistantships. Research and teaching assistants doing related work may be hired for graduate education faculty conducting funded research.

The HEI shall have a transparent and equitable policy on the research and teaching assistantship program including terms of reference, rates and benefits. This policy shall be included in the Graduate Program Manual of Operations.

Section 21. Electronic Database of Research Work

In order for students to have a comprehensive review of related literature especially in the context of the Philippine setting, all private and public HEIs are encouraged to develop a searchable electronic database of the theses/dissertations/publications of their graduates and of their faculty. This database shall be made accessible to the academic community.

Furthermore, electronic copies of research publications of students and faculty shall be submitted to the Commission through the Office of Planning, Research, and Knowledge Management (OPRKM).

Section 22. Transcript of Records

The Transcript of Records (TOR) of students after successful completion of the program shall include:

- Title of thesis/dissertation/research project and date when it was successfully defended; and

- Complete citation of the journal article/s published using any standard format (e.g. APA) as preferred by the HEI.

ARTICLE IX. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Section 23. Registry of Recognized Graduate Programs

The Office of Programs and Standards Development (OPSD) in coordination with the CHED Regional Offices (CHEDROs) shall be tasked to monitor and evaluate the compliance of all HEIs offering or intending to offer graduate programs with the requirements provided in this CMO.

Only those HEIs with graduate programs authorized or recognized by the Commission shall be included in the Registry of Recognized Graduate Programs. This Registry shall be published in the CHED website for the information of the general public and the international community. The OPSD shall be the data owner of this Registry and it shall

ensure that it is consistent or aligned with the data to be included in the Philippine Qualifications Register (PhQuar).

ARTICLE X. TRANSITORY AND OTHER PROVISIONS

Section 24. Transitory Provision

All private HEIs, SUCs, and LUCs currently offering graduate programs at any campus/site and through conventional/non-conventional mode are mandated to fully comply with all the minimum requirements in this CMO within a period of three (3) years after the date of its effectivity.

For disciplines which currently have their own PSGs, the minimum requirements provided for in this CMO shall prevail. The Technical Panels for these disciplines shall be tasked to revise the PSGs in accordance with this CMO as well as in consideration of the needs of their respective disciplines.

Graduate programs found to be non-compliant after the transitory period shall be phased-out by the Commission.

Section 25. Optional Application

The following institutions by virtue of special laws may opt to adopt the provisions of this CMO, namely:

- University of the Philippines --- by virtue of its status as the national university of the Philippines and its mandate, per RA 9500, to "(a) lead in setting academic standards and initiating innovations in teaching, research and faculty development in philosophy, the arts and humanities, the social sciences, professions and engineering, natural sciences, mathematics, and technology; and maintain centers of excellence in such disciplines and professions;" and

- Institutions created or recognized by law as graduate educational institutions:
  - Asian Institute of Management --- per Presidential Decree (P.D.) No. 639, January 21, 1975
  - National Defense College of the Philippines --- per P.D. No. 190, May 11, 1973
  - Philippine Public Safety College --- per Republic Act 6975

Section 26. Repealing Clause

CMO No. 36, series of 1998 and CMO No. 9, series of 2003, as well as other CHED issuances, rules, and regulations or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this CMO, are hereby repealed. This CMO also repeals the benefit of autonomous HEIs to offer graduate programs without prior government authority until otherwise decided by the Commission to bring this benefit back based on the quality of graduate programs currently being offered by such HEIs.

Section 27. Effectivity Clause

This CMO shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette, or in two (2) newspapers of national circulation.

Quezon City, Philippines, Dec. 19, 2019.

For the Commission:

J. PROSPERO E. DE VERA III, DPA
Chairman