

Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City  
Sixteenth Congress  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **3393**



Introduced by REP. ROMAN T. ROMULO

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The changing realities spurred by globalization underscore the shift in contemporary international education discourse from education to lifelong learning, and from education as transmission of expert knowledge to education as building learner competencies, including learning how to learn.

Learning throughout life is the key in the globalized world to help individuals "adapt to the evolving requirements of the labor market" and better master the "changing time frames and rhythms of individual existence."

Given that landscape, the quality of education presently being delivered by Philippine higher education institutions (HEIs) necessitate the establishment of a contemporary quality assurance system that can help promote quality HEI programs and institutions, mindful of the following: commitment of the Philippine government to the evolving efforts to recognize and develop a system of comparable qualifications, degrees and diplomas across the Asia-Pacific region under the auspices of the UNESCO and other multilateral bodies (e.g. ASEAN, APEC); the acceptance of internationally agreed upon frameworks and mechanisms for the global practice of professionals; and the reality of an ASEAN community by 2015 that will facilitate the free flow of qualified labor in the region and open up opportunities for graduates of Philippine HEIs.

The promotion of quality HEI programs and institutions, however, calls for a healthy balance of State intervention and respect for the constitutional guarantee of academic freedom granted to institutions of higher learning. In academic freedom, HEIs can actively contribute to a culture of quality that spurs innovations in learning leading to the improvement of existing programs and institutions that is responsive to the current needs of society.

Pursuant to Article XIV, Sections 1, 2 and 4 of the 1987 Constitution which mandates the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, as well as establish, maintain and support a system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society, but at the same time, giving due respect to the protected academic freedom of institutions of higher learning and the complementary roles of private and public educational institutions, the foregoing passage of this bill on the Quality Assurance System Act is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roman T. Romulo".

ROMAN T. ROMULO

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

**SIXTEENTH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 3393**

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Introduced by REP. ROMAN T. ROMULO

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**AN ACT**  
**ENSURING QUALITY IN ALL HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS THROUGH A**  
**QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in Congress of the Philippines assembled:*

**ARTICLE I**

**SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** This Act shall be known as the "*Higher Education Quality Assurance System Act*".

**SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** It is the policy of the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, as well as establish, maintain and support a complete, adequate and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society. In this regard, the State, exercises reasonable supervision and regulation of all educational institutions while recognizing the complementary roles of private and public institutions.

It is likewise the policy of the State to gear the programs of State-supported institutions of higher learning, taking into account regional and sectoral needs and conditions and shall encourage planning in the development of educational policies and programs in both the private and public institutions recognizing the academic freedom enjoyed by all institutions of higher learning.

**SEC. 3. *Coverage.*** Quality Assurance shall apply to all State-supported institutions of higher learning. Private institutions of higher learning, permitted or authorized by Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as such, that opt to undergo Quality Assurance System, shall likewise be subject to the same rules as provided in this Act.

**SEC 4. *Quality Assurance System.*** The CHED, after due consultation and public hearing, shall maintain and implement a Quality Assurance System for all Higher Education Institutions as provided in this Act.

**SEC. 5. *Guarantee of Academic Freedom.*** In maintaining and implementing a Quality Assurance System, the CHED shall ensure that Higher Education Institutions continue to enjoy its constitutionally guaranteed academic freedom. Nothing in this Act shall be construed as limiting the academic freedom of higher educational institutions.

## **ARTICLE II.**

**SEC 6. *Definition of Terms.*** For purposes of this Act, the following are hereby defined:

- a. Accreditation – shall refer to a particular form of quality assurance that leads to the formal approval of an institution or program which has been determined by a legitimate body to meet predetermined and agreed upon standards, eventually resulting in an accredited status granted to an institution of higher learning or program by the accrediting body/bodies;
- b. Accreditation bodies – shall refer to agencies that assess the quality of educational institutions based on a set of criteria, measured through surveys and onsite reviews by experienced accreditors;
- c. Assessment– shall refer to the process of the systematic gathering, quantifying, and using of information in view of judging the instructional effectiveness and the curricular adequacy of a higher education institution as a whole (institutional assessment) or of its educational programs (program assessment). It implies the evaluation of the core activities of the higher education institution (quantitative and qualitative evidence of educational activities and research outcomes. Assessment is necessary to validate a formal accreditation decision, but it does not necessarily lead to an accreditation outcome;
- d. Competencies – shall refer to the combination of knowledge, complex skills, behavior and attitude that enables an individual to perform a specific task or role;
- e. Evaluation – shall refer to the general process of a systematic and critical analysis leading to judgments and recommendations regarding the quality of a higher educational institution or a program;
- f. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) – shall refer to institutions of higher learning, such as universities, colleges or professional institutions providing higher education recognized by the CHED;
- g. Institutional Quality – shall refer to the quality of the HEI as institutions, as evidenced by the quality of programs of instruction, research and outreach or

extension programs, functioning internal quality assurance mechanisms, Institutional Accreditation or Institutional Sustainability Assessment;

- h. Institutional Sustainability Assessment – shall refer to a quality assurance process that assesses the institutional sustainability of an HEI in the key areas of quality of teaching and learning as supported by governance and management; support for students; relations with the community; and management of resources;
- i. Learning competency-based standards – shall refer to standards that are based on duly-specified learning competencies for a particular field of study or discipline;
- j. Outcomes – shall refer to the (a) anticipated or achieved results of programs or the accomplishment of institutional objectives, as demonstrated by a wide range of indicators (such as student knowledge, cognitive skills, and attitudes.) (b) Outcomes are direct results of the instructional program, planned in terms of learner growth in all areas. An outcome must be distinguished from an objective, which is a desired result. Generally, each outcome statement should describe one effect of the instructional program, and not accumulate several into one statement. Also, the statements should be clearly detailed and easily understandable by all teaching staff and students in the given area or department;
- k. Student learning outcomes – shall refer to the statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning as well as the specific intellectual and practical skills gained and demonstrated by the successful completion of a unit, course or program;
- l. Learning outcomes-based education – shall refer to the kind of education where the desired results or “exit outcomes” are first determined, which become the goals for which the strategies, processes, techniques and means are put in place;
- m. Quality - shall refer to the discrete integration of the following elements and functions expected of institutions and programs: (1) the guaranteed achievement of minimal standards and benchmarks; (2) the drive to excellence (3) outcomes determined by the HEI's vision and mission, and (4) the ability to satisfy the demands of the market and stakeholders;
- n. Quality Assurance – shall refer to the processes and schemes that have the objective of assessing, monitoring, guaranteeing and maintaining and/or improving quality in higher education institutions and/or programs for the purpose of accountability or improvement;

- o. Internal Quality Assurance – shall refer to the intra-institutional practice/s used by an HEI to monitor and improve the quality of its processes, both institutional and program-oriented;
- p. External Quality Assurance – shall refer to the concerns the inter- or supra-institutional mechanism/s of reviewing, assessing, maintaining and improving the quality of institutions and/or programs and fall under the responsibility of a competent body having the authority to engage in such activities;
- q. Quality Culture – shall refer to the integration of internal quality assurance procedures into the organizational culture and management systems of the institution, so that its members share a core set of academic quality values and approaches.

### ARTICLE III.

**SEC. 7. *Quality Assurance System (QAS)*.** The Quality Assurance System or framework shall include two aspects:

(1) Internal Quality Assurance Process – which shall begin with an assessment of the institution of its capacity to: a) translate its vision, mission and goals into desired student learning outcomes; b) establish the proper learning environment through the implementation of teaching-learning systems as well support processes and procedures; c) review against performance indicators and standards defined in the assessment system; and d) enhance programs and systems.

The maturity of the HEI's internal quality assurance can be seen in the institutionalization and documentation of systems/processes by the HEI, the extent of implementation of these system processes, and the quality outcomes that contribute to program excellence.

(2) External Quality Assurance Mechanism – which shall refer to a system by which an HEI subjects itself to evaluation and monitoring by an external quality assurance agency that has autonomous responsibility for its operations and has the appropriate mechanisms in place to ensure that reviewers/assessors are free from conflict of interest.

**SEC. 8. *Coordinating Body*.** The CHED shall serve as the coordinating body to the recognized external quality assurance agencies, such as the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities-Commission on Accreditation (PACU-COA), Association of Christian Schools, Colleges and Universities-Accrediting Agency (ACSCU-AA), Accrediting Association of Chartered Universities in the Philippines (AACUP), Association of Local Colleges and Universities-Commission on Accreditation (ALCU-COA) and Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU), and other accrediting agencies that shall be established to facilitate and

ensure that there are appropriate standards for evaluation and monitoring of programs and/or institutions for quality assurance purposes.

#### ARTICLE IV

**SEC 9. *Evaluation and Monitoring of Programs.*** The evaluation and monitoring of programs and institutions shall be two-fold, namely:

- a) Direct assessment of educational inputs and learning outcomes wherein the program outcomes are largely measured against the policies, standards, and guidelines of the discipline; and
- b) Evaluation of the quality system of an institution to determine whether these are sufficiently robust and effective to ensure that all programs are well designed and deliver appropriate outcomes. Such an audit will consider program-level evidence to the extent necessary to ensure that institutional systems are functioning properly. In doing so, it takes into consideration the vision, mission and goals of the HEI.

**SEC 10. *Compliance with Institutional Sustainability Assessment.*** Private HEIs accredited by the five existing accrediting agencies such as PACUCOA, ACSCUAA, AACUP, ALCU-COA and PAASCU and other accrediting agencies that shall be established shall be deemed compliant with the Institutional Sustainability Assessment (ISA) processes provided in this Act.

#### ARTICLE V

**SEC. 11. *Indicators of Quality.*** HEIs are classified according to the four indicators of quality: (1) the guaranteed achievement of minimal standards and benchmarks; (2) the drive to excellence (3) outcomes determined by the HEI's vision and mission, and (4) the ability to satisfy the demands of the market and stakeholders.

**SEC 12. *Criteria for Commitment to Excellence and Institutional Quality.*** In assessing the HEI's commitment to Excellence, points shall be awarded to the HEI based on the presence of Centers of Excellence and/or Development, program accreditation and international program certification.

In assessing the Institutional Quality of an HEI, points shall be awarded to the HEI based on factors such as functioning internal QA mechanisms, institutional accreditation, program accreditation, institutional certification, the Institutional Sustainability Assessment (when applicable) and international institutional certification.

**SEC.13. *HEI Quality Classification.*** There are three classifications of HEIs according to quality:

- a. Autonomous HEIs (by Evaluation) - demonstrate exceptional institutional quality and enhancement through an effective internal QA system, and demonstrate excellent program outcomes through a high portion of accredited programs, the presence of Centers of Excellence and/or Development, institutional accreditation and/or international certification.
- b. Deregulated HEIs (by Evaluation) - demonstrate very good institutional quality and enhancement through functioning internal QA systems, and demonstrate very good program outcomes through a good proportion of accredited programs, the presence of Centers of Excellence and/or Development, and/or international certification.
- c. Regulated HEIs - are those institutions which still need to demonstrate good institutional quality and program outcomes.

**SEC. 14. *Program Excellence.*** Program Excellence is manifested through accreditation, Centers of Excellence and Development and international certification.

**SEC. 15. *Institutional Quality.*** Institutional Quality is manifested through institutional accreditation, institutional quality assessment or other evidences in the areas of governance and management, quality of teaching and learning, quality of professional exposure, research and creative work, support for students, and outreach or extension programs with the community.

## ARTICLE VI

**SEC. 16. *Incentives for Compliance*** – HEIs classified or typed in accordance with the provisions of this CMO are assured of the following incentives:

- a. Benefits appropriate to quality classification such as: For *autonomous* HEIs, (1) exemption from regular monitoring and evaluation visits by the CHED, (2) exemption from the issuance of Special Orders for their graduates (3) privilege to determine and prescribe curricular programs and revise the same, (4) the privilege to offer new courses/programs in the undergraduate or graduate level without securing authority from the CHED (except for disciplines that are under moratorium) (5) privilege to establish branches or satellite campuses without securing authority from the CHED (6) privilege to offer extension classes and distance education courses and establish affiliation with recognized foreign HEIs in pursuit of international standards of education and (7) authority to grant *Honoris Causa* to those deserving, per pertinent provisions of existing CHED issuance on conferment of honorary degrees.

For *deregulated* HEIs, they shall be afforded the same benefits as those HEIs classified as autonomous except those benefits provided in (4), (5) and (6).

- b. The inclusion of the classified HEI and its programs in the list of comparable degrees of the CHED, in reference to the UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Studies, Degrees, Diplomas and Qualifications in Asia and the Pacific, to which the Philippines is a signatory.
- c. Priority in the allocation of government fund assistance for State-funded HEIs and qualified private HEIs that have exhibited their commitment to program excellence and institutional sustainability and enhancement.
- d. Such other benefits as may be deemed appropriate and authorized by the CHED in accordance with law and existing rules and regulations.

## ARTICLE VII

**SEC. 17. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the CHED, in consultation with respective Professional Boards in the Professional Regulation Commission, COCOPEA, and Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines shall issue the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the objectives of this Act.

**SEC. 18. *Repealing Clause.*** For purposes of this Act, all other laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with any provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

**SEC. 19. *Effectivity.*** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in any two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,