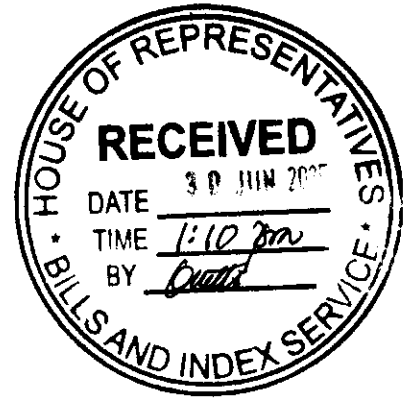


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS

House Bill No. **308**



Introduced by REP. JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution mandates the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and to take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all¹. It further requires the State to establish and maintain a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education that is responsive to the needs of the people and society².

At present, post-secondary education is administered separately by the Commission on Higher Education and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority. This bill seeks to establish the Department of Tertiary Education to unify its functions under a single agency, addressing long-standing issues of policy fragmentation, overlapping mandates, and the lack of alignment between academic and technical pathways.

The proposed Department will serve as the central agency responsible for the regulation, support, and coordination of all post-secondary education pathways, including universities, colleges, technical-vocational institutions, and non-traditional learning systems. It shall ensure unified standards, promote inclusive access, and align education programs with national workforce and development goals³.

By establishing a single authority for tertiary education, the State strengthens quality assurance, institutional efficiency, and the relevance of education in meeting the demands of a rapidly changing economy⁴.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "JMB", written over the printed name "JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ".

¹ 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, Article XIV, Section 1.

² Ibid., Article XIV, Section 2(1)-(3).

³ World Bank. (2022). Tertiary Education Sector Assessment: Building Higher Education Resilience in the Philippines.

⁴ Republic Act No. 10968, "An Act Institutionalizing the Philippine Qualifications Framework."

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TWENTIETH CONGRESS

House Bill No. **308**

Introduced by REP. JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ

AN ACT CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF TERTIARY EDUCATION,
DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSE

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title* – This Act shall be known as the “Department of
Tertiary Education of 2025”.

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. The State shall
take appropriate measures to ensure that education, including tertiary
education, is accessible to all. Tertiary education aims to deepen knowledge,
develop specialized skills, foster critical thinking, and prepare individuals for
professional careers or advanced academic pursuits following the completion
of secondary education.

The State further commits to encouraging and supporting non-formal,
informal, and Indigenous learning systems, as well as self-learning,
independent, and out-of-school study programs, particularly those that
address community needs. To this end, the Department of Tertiary Education
(“DTE”) shall be established, integrating the functions of the Commission on
Higher Education (“CHED”) and the Technical Education and Skills
Development Authority (“TESDA”) into a single agency for efficient
governance, streamlined regulation, and industry-aligned workforce
development.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms* – As used in this Act, the following terms are
defined as follows:

- i. Tertiary Education – The level of formal education that
follows secondary education, encompassing
undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate studies, as

well as professional and technical programs that lead to certifications, diplomas, or academic degrees;

- ii. Department of Tertiary Education (“DTE”) – The primary government agency responsible for regulating, overseeing, and enhancing all post-secondary education institutions, policies, and programs, including higher education, technical and vocational education, and non-traditional learning pathways;
- iii. Higher Education Institution (“HEI”) – A university, college, or academic institution authorized to offer undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate programs leading to academic degrees. HEIs may be public or private and are subject to accreditation and regulatory standards set by the Department;
- iv. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (“TVET”) – A structured learning system that provides skills-based education and hands-on training for specific trades, industries, or professions. TVET programs may be delivered through formal institutions, workplace-based learning, or community-based training initiatives;
- v. Accreditation – The process of evaluating and certifying the quality and standards of an educational institution, program, or training provider to ensure compliance with regulatory and academic benchmarks;
- vi. Industry Linkages – Partnerships between educational institutions and businesses to enhance employability and workforce development;
- vii. Workforce Development – The strategic effort to equip students and graduates with industry-relevant skills, knowledge, and competencies to enhance employability and economic productivity; *and*
- viii. Institutional Recognition – The formal authorization granted by the Department to an educational institution, affirming its compliance with academic standards, regulatory requirements, and national education policies.

SEC. 4. *Creation of the Department of Tertiary Education* – The Department of Tertiary Education, herein referred to as Department, is hereby created as the primary government agency responsible for the regulation, development, and coordination of both higher education and TVET in the country. It shall

formulate policies, set academic and competency standards, ensure quality assurance, and provide financial and institutional support to public and private tertiary education institutions. The DTE shall also oversee skills development programs, accreditation of technical-vocational institutions, and workforce alignment to industry needs, fostering a seamless, inclusive, and globally competitive tertiary education system.

SEC. 5. *Abolition of CHED and TESDA* – The CHED and TESDA are hereby abolished. Their powers, functions, assets, liabilities, and personnel shall be transferred to the Department of Tertiary Education (DTE), as deemed necessary for its operations, upon its official commencement.

ARTICLE I

Powers and Functions of the Department

SEC. 6. *Powers and Functions* – The Department shall have the following powers and functions:

i. Regulatory and Policy Functions:

- a. Formulate and implement policies, plans, and programs for tertiary education and TVET;
- b. Set academic, competency, and training standards for universities, colleges, and technical-vocational institutions;
- c. Ensure compliance with quality assurance mechanisms through accreditation, assessment, and monitoring of institutions;
- d. Establish a unified qualifications framework to standardize academic and technical certifications and facilitate career mobility; *and*
- e. Promote lifelong learning and skills development through flexible education pathways and recognition of prior learning.

ii. Institutional Development and Support:

- a. Provide financial assistance and grants to public and private tertiary institutions for capacity building and infrastructure development;
- b. Oversee licensing and accreditation of HEIs and TVET providers;
- c. Enhance faculty development programs through scholarships, research grants, and training;
- d. Support research and innovation by funding projects that contribute to national development; *and*

- e. Encourage industry-academe linkages to ensure curricula are aligned with labor market needs.

iii. Student Support and Scholarship Programs:

- a. Administer government-funded scholarship, grant, and financial aid programs for students in higher education and technical-vocational training;
- b. Develop and implement a national student loan program to ensure access to quality tertiary education;
- c. Provide career guidance and job placement services to facilitate employability of graduates; *and*
- d. Promote inclusive education by supporting disadvantaged and marginalized students, including persons with disabilities ("PWDs"), indigenous peoples ("Ips"), and out-of-school youth.

iv. Workforce Development and Industry Collaboration:

- a. Conduct labor market analysis to align educational programs with industry demands;
- b. Develop competency-based training programs in coordination with industries and employers;
- c. Certify and assess technical-vocational graduates based on industry-recognized competency standards;
- d. Promote apprenticeships, on-the-job training ("OJT"), and dual-training programs in partnership with private sector employers; *and*
- e. Facilitate skills retraining and upskilling programs for workforce adaptability in emerging industries.

v. Governance and International Cooperation:

- a. Coordinate with local and international education bodies to ensure global competitiveness of Filipino graduates;
- b. Foster internationalization of education through student exchange programs and transnational education partnerships;
- c. Standardize credit transfer and recognition systems to enable mobility between higher education and technical-vocational training;
- d. Develop digital learning and open education resources to expand access to quality tertiary education; *and*

- e. Ensure equitable regional distribution of educational opportunities by supporting institutions in underserved areas.

ARTICLE II Organizational Structure

SEC. 7. *Composition* – The Department of shall be composed of the following:

- i. Office of the Secretary
 - a. Secretary of Tertiary Education – Head of the department, responsible for overall leadership, policy direction, and administration;
 - b. Undersecretary for Higher Education – Oversees universities, colleges, and other degree-granting institutions;
 - c. Undersecretary for TVET – Manages technical-vocational institutions and workforce development programs;
 - d. Undersecretary for Institutional Development and Student Affairs – Handles accreditation, scholarships, and student support programs; *and*
 - e. Undersecretary for Industry Collaboration and International Affairs – Focuses on industry linkages, apprenticeships, global partnerships, and educational mobility.
- ii. Attached Agencies and Bureaus
 - a. Higher Education Sector
 - 1. Commission on Higher Education Development (CHED Board) – A policymaking and advisory body within DTE for higher education institutions;
 - 2. Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction for Higher Education – Develops academic programs, competency frameworks, and research policies;
 - 3. Bureau of Quality Assurance and Accreditation – Ensures compliance with educational standards and accreditation of institutions; *and*
 - 4. Bureau of Scholarships and Financial Assistance – Administers grants, scholarships, and student loan programs.

b. Technical-Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Sector

1. Technical Skills and Workforce Development Authority (TSWDA) – Replaces TESDA as a governing body under the Department, focusing on TVET policies;
2. Bureau of Competency and Skills Development – Designs and updates training standards and competency-based education;
3. Bureau of Industry Partnerships and Workforce Alignment – Strengthens collaboration between TVET institutions and industries; *and*
4. National Assessment and Certification Center – Conducts competency assessments and issues certifications for technical skills.

iii. Regional and Local Offices

- a. Regional Offices – Oversee the implementation of policies and programs in their respective areas; *and*
- b. Provincial and City Offices – Manage coordination with local universities, colleges, and TVET providers.

ARTICLE III
Transition and Funding

SEC. 8. *Transition Provisions* – All existing CHED and TESDA personnel shall be absorbed into the DTE based on merit and qualifications. A Transition Committee shall be created to facilitate the smooth integration of systems, processes, and personnel.

SEC. 9. *Appropriations* – The initial funding for the Department shall be sourced from the current appropriations of CHED and TESDA. Subsequent funding shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (“IRR”)* – Within 90 days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department Secretary, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, shall formulate the IRR to operationalize the Department.

SEC. 11. *Separability Clause* – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions shall not be affected.

SEC. 12. Repealing Clause – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 13. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,