

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **6825**



Introduced by Representative LEILA M. DE LIMA

AN ACT
ENHANCING THE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO QUALITY TERTIARY EDUCATION
ACT, AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10931

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In the 17th Congress, Republic Act No. 10931, or the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, was enacted into law. The landmark law's passing was a bold and positive step forward towards ensuring that quality higher education is inclusive and made accessible to all Filipinos through providing free higher education in state universities and colleges (SUCs) and local universities and colleges (LUCs) and free technical-vocational education and training (TVET) in all post-secondary technical-vocational institutions (TVIs).

Under R.A No. 10931, the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) and the Student Loan Program for Tertiary Education were established for Filipino students in all SUCs, LUCs, private higher education institutions (HEIs), and all TVIs.

However, eight (8) years after the law's enactment, several issues and gaps in the law's implementation have emerged, thus necessitating the amendments proposed by this bill.

Among the issues that emerged is that while the TES was established to assist underprivileged students with education-related expenses, not all TES beneficiaries actually come from impoverished households. According to the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM 2), there was a sharp decline in TES grants for the poorest households, dropping from 74.24% in Academic Year (AY) 2018-2019 to

30.74% in AY 2022-2023.¹ Moreover, TES has also become increasingly inaccessible to the youth under the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps), with the intake of new 4Ps TES grantees dropping to 23 new grantees in AY 2019-2020 from forming a significant bulk of the intake at 7,433 new grantees in AY 2018-2019.²

This bill seeks to ensure that the most impoverished students are prioritized in the provision of TES by guaranteeing that all eligible 4Ps beneficiaries who complete Senior High School and are accepted into a CHED-recognized HEIs or TESDA-recognized TVI receive TES.

This bill also seeks to specify the inclusion of internship and related learning experience (RLE) fees, as required by the curriculum, in the coverage of expenses for which the TES may be used to further ensure that these additional financial burdens shall not be a hindrance to receiving truly inclusive higher education.

Finally, this bill proposes additional provisions to strengthen accountability and transparency in the implementation of the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Programs and other Student Financial Assistance Programs by mandating a monitoring and evaluation system for TES implementation, strengthening the validation and verification capacity of CHED regional offices, and establishing a grievance mechanism in relation to the implementation of R.A No. 10931.

In the past Congresses, several amendatory bills to R.A No. 10931 have been filed both in the Senate and the House of Representatives. This bill adopts provisions from Senator Paolo Benigno “Bam” Aquino’s Senate Bill No. 130 and Senator Risa Hontiveros’s Senate Bill No. 1245 under the 20th Congress.

In the interest of providing genuine quality, accessible, and inclusive higher education to all Filipinos, early approval of this measure is earnestly sought.



LEILA M. DE LIMA

¹ Fixing the Foundations: A Matter of National Survival. EDCOM II Year Two Report. (14 January 2025). Retrieved from <https://edcom2.gov.ph/media/2025/01/EDCOM-2-Year-2-Report-Fixing-the-Foundations-2025.pdf>.

² Ibid.

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

1 SECTION 1. Section 3(h) of Republic Act No. 10931 or the "Universal Access
2 to Quality Tertiary Education Act" is hereby amended to read, as follows:

3
4 "SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. – As used in this Act:

5
6 xxx

7
8 (h) *Other school fees* refer to fees charged by HEIs and technical-vocational
9 institutions which cover other necessary costs supportive of instruction,
10 specifically the following: library fees, computer fees, laboratory fees, school
11 ID fees, athletic fees, admission fees, development fees, guidance fees,
12 handbook fees, entrance fees, registration fees, medical and dental fees,
13 cultural fees, **INTERNSHIP AND RELATED LEARNING EXPERIENCE**
14 **(RLE) FEES REQUIRED BY THE CURRICULUM, INCLUDING THOSE FOR**
15 **NURSING AND OTHER ALLIED HEALTH PROGRAMS**, and other similar or
16 related fees;

17
18 SEC. 2. Section 7 of Republic Act No. 10931 or the "Universal Access to Quality
19 Tertiary Education Act" is hereby amended to read, as follows:

20
21 "SECTION 7. TES for Filipino Students. – To support the cost of tertiary
22 education or any part or portion thereof, a Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) is
23 hereby established for all Filipino students who shall enroll in undergraduate

1 post-secondary programs of SUCs, LUCs, private HEIs, and all TVIs. The TES
2 shall be administered by the UniFAST Board and the amount necessary to fund
3 the TES shall be included in the budgets of the CHED and the TESDA:
4 *Provided, That* ~~[prioritization shall be given to students in the following order:~~
5 ~~(a) students who are part of households included in the Listahanan 2.0, ranked~~
6 ~~according to the estimated per capita household income, and (b) students not~~
7 ~~part of the Listahanan 2.0, ranked according to estimated per capita household~~
8 ~~income based on submitted documentation of proof of income to be determined~~
9 ~~by the UniFAST Board]~~ **ALL POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION STUDENTS**
10 **FROM QUALIFIED HOUSEHOLD-BENEFICIARIES OF THE PANTAWID**
11 **PAMILYANG PILIPINO PROGRAM (4PS), AS PROVIDED UNDER**
12 **REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11310, SHALL BE GUARANTEED TES GRANTEES,**
13 **UPON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL AND**
14 **ACCEPTANCE INTO A CHED-RECOGNIZED HIGHER EDUCATION**
15 **INSTITUTION OR A TESDA-RECOGNIZED TVI: *Provided, further, That*** ~~[such~~
16 ~~prioritization shall not apply to Filipino students in cities and municipality with~~
17 ~~no existing SUC or LUC campus]~~ **SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABLE FUNDS,**
18 **THE REMAINING TES SLOTS SHALL BE AWARDED BASED ON**
19 **FINANCIAL NEED, AS DETERMINED BY THE HOUSEHOLD PER CAPITA**
20 **INCOME OF APPLICANTS, TO BE ASSESSED BY THE RESPECTIVE**
21 **HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OR TVIS, IN ACCORDANCE**
22 **WITH GUIDELINES TO BE ISSUED BY THE UNIFAST BOARD: *PROVIDED,***
23 ***FINALLY,* THAT TES GRANTEES SHALL BE GUARANTEED CONTINUED**
24 **SUPPORT UNTIL THE COMPLETION OF THEIR UNDERGRADUATE**
25 **DEGREE OR TVET PROGRAM, SUBJECT TO THE MAINTENANCE OF**
26 **SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC OR TRAINING PERFORMANCE, AND**
27 **COMPLIANCE WITH INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES.**

28
29 The TES may, among others, and to support the cost of tertiary education or
30 any part or portion thereof, cover the following:

31
32 (a) **FULL** ~~[T]~~tuition and other school fees (**TOSF**) in private HEIs, and private
33 or LGU-operated TVIs, which shall be equivalent to the tuition and other school
34 fees of the nearest SUC or state-run TVI in their respective areas: ***PROVIDED,***
35 ***THAT SUCH TOSF SHALL NOT EXCEED THE AVERAGE AMOUNT SPENT***
36 ***BY GOVERNMENT PER STUDENT UNDER THE FREE HIGHER***
37 ***EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN SUCS AND LUCS: *PROVIDED, FURTHER,****
38 ***THAT IN CASES WHERE THE TOSF EXCEED THIS AVERAGE AMOUNT,***
39 ***THE UNIFAST BOARD SHALL ADMINISTER GUIDELINES IN SETTING***
40 ***THE AMOUNT OF THE TES;***

41
42 (b) An allowance for **MEALS**, books, **SCHOOL** supplies, transportation **TO**
43 **AND FROM SCHOOL**, and ~~[miscellaneous personal expenses, including a]~~
44 reasonable allowance for the documented rental or purchase of a ~~[personal~~

1 ~~computer or laptop~~ **DESKTOP OR PORTABLE COMPUTER**, and other
2 education-related expenses;

3
4 (c) An allowance for room and board cost incurred by the student;

5
6 (d) For a student with a disability, an allowance for expenses related to the
7 student's disability, including special services, personal assistance,
8 transportation, equipment, and supplies that are reasonably incurred; ~~and~~

9
10 **(e) INTERNSHIP AND RELATED LEARNING EXPERIENCE (RLE) FEES**
11 **THAT ARE REQUIRED BY THE CURRICULUM, INCLUDING THOSE FOR**
12 **NURSING AND OTHER ALLIED HEALTH PROGRAMS; AND**

13
14 **(f)** For a student in a program requiring professional license or certification, the
15 one (1)-time cost of obtaining the first professional credentials or qualifications,
16 which may include the following: application fees, notarial fees, review classes
17 fees, insurance premium fees, and documentation fees: *Provided*, That the
18 amount of subsidy shall be based on the guidelines set forth by the UniFAST
19 Board and on the annual budgetary appropriation for this purpose."

20
21 SEC. 3. A new Section 7-A is hereby inserted to read, as follows:

22
23 **"SECTION 7-A. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, AND QUALITY**
24 **ASSURANCE OF THE TES. – THE UNIFAST BOARD SHALL:**

25
26 **(A) IMPLEMENT A SYSTEM FOR MONITORING AND VALIDATION TO**
27 **ENSURE THAT TES ALLOWANCES ARE UTILIZED IN ACCORDANCE**
28 **WITH THE PURPOSES PROVIDED UNDER SECTION 7, AND IMPOSE**
29 **SANCTIONS, INCLUDING DISQUALIFICATION NON-COMPLIANCE;**

30
31 **(B) IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DBM AND COMMISSION ON AUDIT**
32 **(COA), DEVELOP AN EFFICIENT DISBURSEMENT SYSTEM, INCLUDING**
33 **THE DISBURSEMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT COST, TO**
34 **ENSURE TES BENEFICIARIES RECEIVE THEIR SUBSIDIES DURING THE**
35 **SEMESTER FOR WHICH THEY ARE APPLYING THE TES AS WELL AS TO**
36 **FUND THE PROVISION OF LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES, AND MAY**
37 **UTILIZE THE PHILIPPINE IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM (PHILSYS) TO**
38 **FACILITATE THE VALIDATION OF ELIGIBLE BENEFICIARIES;**

39
40 **(C) COORDINATE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,**
41 **DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT, AND OTHER**
42 **GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, TO ESTABLISH A SYSTEM THAT INFORMS**
43 **SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS UNDER THE 4PS OF THEIR**
44 **AUTOMATIC ELIGIBILITY TO RECEIVE TES; AND,**

1 (D) MONITOR AND EVALUATE THE TES PROGRAM EVERY FIVE (5)
2 YEARS, INCLUDING THE UTILIZATION OF AN ONLINE INFORMATION
3 SYSTEM TO MONITOR THE PROGRESS OF TES GRANTEES WHILE THEY
4 ARE IN THE HEI, AND TRACER SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY PUBLIC AND
5 PRIVATE HEIS TO ASSESS AND ENHANCE THE PROGRAM DESIGN AND
6 IMPLEMENTATION, AND UTILIZE THE PHILSYS NUMBERS OF TES
7 GRANTEES FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION PURPOSES.

8
9 FURTHER, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HEIS SHALL UTILIZE THE PHILSYS
10 NUMBERS OF TES GRANTEES FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION
11 PURPOSES AND LIKEWISE PROVIDE LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES
12 TO TES BENEFICIARIES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO CAREER
13 COUNSELING, BRIDGING PROGRAMS, AND TUTORIALS.

14
15 THE CHED, IN COORDINATION WITH THE UNIFAST BOARD, SHALL
16 ESTABLISH A REGULAR QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS FOR HEIS
17 ENROLLING TES GRANTEES. THIS SHALL INCLUDE PERIODIC
18 ASSESSMENTS OF BOTH INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE AND
19 PROGRAM QUALITY, WITH A FOCUS ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS,
20 GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY, AND OTHER RELEVANT OUTCOMES, AND
21 COMPLIANCE WITH CHED POLICIES. HEIS FAILING TO MEET THE
22 MINIMUM QUALITY STANDARDS SHALL BE REEVALUATED AND MAY
23 BE DISQUALIFIED FROM ENROLLING NEW TES GRANTEES UNTIL
24 COMPLIANCE IS ACHIEVED.

25
26 SEC. 4. A new Section 9 shall be inserted as follows, with the provisions below
27 it renumbered accordingly:

28
29 **"SECTION 9. STRENGTHENING THE VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION**
30 **CAPACITY OF CHED REGIONAL OFFICES (CHEDRO) TO IMPLEMENT**
31 **THE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO QUALITY TERTIARY EDUCATION (UAQTE)**
32 **PROGRAMS AND STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**
33 **(STUFAPS). – EACH CHEDRO SHALL ESTABLISH A VALIDATION**
34 **AND VERIFICATION UNIT WITH SUFFICIENT PERSONNEL TO REVIEW,**
35 **VALIDATE, AND VERIFY THE DOCUMENTARY SUBMISSIONS FROM**
36 **HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND/OR STUDENTS TO ENSURE**
37 **ITS ADHERENCE TO EXISTING LAWS, RULES, AND REGULATIONS OF**
38 **THE RELEVANT STUFAPS AND UAQTE PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED BY**
39 **THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION."**

40
41 SEC. 5. A new Section 10 shall be inserted as follows, with the provisions below
42 it renumbered accordingly:
43

1 **"SECTION 10. UAQTE GRIEVANCE MECHANISM. – A GRIEVANCE**
2 **COMMITTEE SHALL BE ESTABLISHED WITHIN BOTH THE COMMISSION**
3 **ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS**
4 **DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY.**

5
6 **THE GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED IN THE COMMISSION ON**
7 **HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR INVESTIGATING**
8 **AND RESOLVING DISPUTES OR COMPLAINTS BY STUDENTS AND**
9 **HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN RELATION TO THE**
10 **IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS LAW. THE GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE SHALL**
11 **INCLUDE REPRESENTATION FROM UNIFAST.**

12
13 **THE GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED IN THE TECHNICAL**
14 **EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY SHALL BE**
15 **RESPONSIBLE FOR INVESTIGATING AND RESOLVING DISPUTES OR**
16 **COMPLAINTS BY STUDENTS AND TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL**
17 **INSTITUTIONS IN RELATION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS LAW.**
18 **THE GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE SHALL INCLUDE REPRESENTATION**
19 **FROM UNIFAST.**

20
21 **THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE TECHNICAL**
22 **EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY SHALL ENSURE**
23 **THAT INFORMATION ABOUT THE GRIEVANCE COMMITTEES AND ITS**
24 **PROCESSES ARE ACCESSIBLE."**

25
26 SEC. 6. Section 15 of Republic Act No. 10931 or the "Enhanced Universal
27 Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act" is hereby amended to read, as follows:

28
29 "Section 15. Appropriations. – The amounts necessary to carry out the
30 provisions of this Act, specifically Section 4, 5, 7 ~~{and}~~, 8, **AND 9** shall be
31 included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA) and shall be
32 appropriated under SUCs, CHED, and TESDA in accordance with the
33 provisions of this Act: *Provided*, That an amount equivalent to not more than
34 three percent (3%) of the TES and student loan program for tertiary education
35 provided under this Act may be used as administrative cost under the UniFAST:
36 **PROVIDED, FURTHER, THAT IN ADDITION TO THE ANNUAL**
37 **APPROPRIATIONS, SUCH SUMS AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO PAY FOR**
38 **ANY UNPAID OBLIGATIONS OR PRIOR YEAR DEFICIENCIES INCURRED**
39 **SHALL ALSO BE APPROPRIATED IN THE GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS**
40 **ACT, TO ENSURE THE FULL IMPLEMENTATION AND SUSTAINABILITY**
41 **OF THE BENEFITS GUARANTEED UNDER THIS ACT."**

42
43 SEC. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from the
44 effectivity of this Act, the UniFAST Board, in consultation with the CHED, DepEd,

1 DSWD, TESDA, and other stakeholders in higher and technical education, shall
2 promulgate the revised implementing rules and regulations of R.A. No.10931
3 necessary to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of this Act: *Provided*,
4 That the failure of the Board to promulgate the said rules and regulations shall not
5 prevent or delay the effectivity and implementation of this Act.

6
7 SEC. 8. *Separability Clause*. – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or
8 unconstitutional, the provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force
9 and effect.

10
11 SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause*. – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees,
12 presidential proclamations, letters of instruction, rules and regulations, or parts thereof
13 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended
14 accordingly.

15
16 SEC. 10. *Effectivity*. – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days after its
17 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation in the
18 Philippines.

Approved,