

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 11181



Introduced by Representative ANTOLIN “LENLEN” A. ORETA III

AN ACT

STRENGTHENING THE INTERNATIONALIZATION CAPACITY OF PHILIPPINE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS, ESTABLISHING A HIGHER EDUCATION, CREATING AN INTERNATIONALIZATION SUPPORT FUND, PROVIDING FOR INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION ON EDUCATION EXPORT, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines has strong potential to become a competitive destination for international higher education. Its widespread use of English, cultural diversity, and relatively affordable tuition make its higher education sector attractive to foreign students and academic partners. Yet, despite these advantages, the country remains a modest participant in global academic mobility. Foreign student enrollment increased from 14,132 in 2017 to 22,247 in 2022, but still trails behind neighboring countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand.

This gap reflects persistent institutional barriers, including complex regulatory processes, limited opportunities for foreign faculty, inadequate funding, weak international partnerships, and insufficient campus facilities. While existing laws, including Republic Act No. 7722 and Republic Act No. 11448, provide a foundation for higher education development and transnational education, they do not establish a comprehensive and sustained national strategy for internationalization.

This measure seeks to address these gaps by establishing a National Internationalization Framework for Higher Education, supported by institutional internationalization plans and an Internationalization Support Fund. The framework will support student and faculty mobility, international research partnerships, joint academic programs, and Internationalization at Home, allowing students to gain global competencies even without studying abroad. The measure also strengthens coordination among CHED, the Department of Trade and Industry, and the Department of Foreign Affairs to promote Philippine higher education internationally.

Internationalization should not be pursued solely as a means of competing with other countries. It should strengthen the quality of Philippine higher education, expand opportunities for Filipino learners, and connect institutions across the country to the global academic community. Through a coordinated and inclusive national policy, the Philippines can move from having the potential to internationalize to actually becoming an active participant in global higher education.

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


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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "*Philippine Higher Education Internationalization Act*".

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote the internationalization of Philippine higher education as a strategic driver of national development, global competitiveness, and social equity. Consistent with the constitutional mandate to promote the right of all citizens to quality education, the State affirms that the systematic integration of international, intercultural, and global dimensions into higher education advances academic excellence, expands opportunity, and strengthens the capacity of Filipino learners and institutions to contribute to and benefit from a rapidly changing global environment.

Towards this end, the State shall pursue the following goals:

- (a) Embed internationalization as a core and enduring function of Philippine higher education, integrated into institutional governance, academic programming, quality assurance, research, and student development, in a manner consistent with academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and national interest;
- (b) Ensure equitable and inclusive access to the benefits of internationalization for all learners, faculty, and institutions, regardless of geographic location, institutional type, or resource level, through structured public investment, capacity-building, and differentiated support;
- (c) Strengthen the global engagement capacity of Philippine higher education institutions through international partnerships, academic mobility, collaborative research, and transnational education, resulting in measurable improvements in teaching quality, research productivity, and institutional capability;
- (d) Develop Philippine higher education as a competitive and credible education destination for international learners, scholars, and researchers, contributing to foreign exchange earnings, expanding global academic networks, and enhancing national reputation, while strengthening the contribution of higher education internationalization to the country's innovation ecosystem, workforce development agenda, and long-term economic resilience; and
- (e) Advance internationalization at home as a quality-oriented, access-equalizing approach that ensures all learners benefit from global and intercultural learning within domestic educational environments.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* -As used in this Act:

- (a) Academic Mobility refers to the movement of students, faculty members, researchers, or academic professionals across national borders for purposes of study, teaching, research, training, or academic collaboration;
- (b) Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) refers to digitally enabled, faculty-led, and curriculum-integrated teaching and learning activities conducted jointly by partner institutions in different countries, without requiring physical travel;
- (c) Dual or Double Degree Program refers to an academic program jointly delivered by partner institutions in different countries, resulting in the conferment of two separate but coordinated qualifications, each awarded by the respective partner institution;
- (d) Education Export refers to the provision, marketing, and delivery of Philippine-based higher education services to international learners, institutions, governments, and organizations through any of the following modes: cross-border supply; consumption abroad; commercial presence; and presence of natural persons, encompassing student mobility, transnational higher education arrangements, joint and dual degree programs, collaborative research, and digital or virtual learning;
- (e) Internationalization at Home refers to deliberate institutional policies and practices that embed international and intercultural learning outcomes into domestic curricula, pedagogy, co-curricular activities, research, and campus environments, ensuring inclusive global exposure regardless of physical mobility;
- (f) Internationalization of Higher Education refers to the intentional, systematic, and sustained integration of international, intercultural, transnational, and global dimensions into the purpose, governance, core functions, delivery modalities, and outcomes of higher education, encompassing instruction, research, extension, student services, quality assurance, and institutional management;
- (g) Joint Degree Program refers to an academic program jointly designed, delivered, and quality-assured by two or more higher education institutions in different countries, leading to the conferment of a single qualification awarded jointly by the partner institutions; and
- (h) Transnational Higher Education (TNHE) refers to all modes of delivery of higher education programs, courses, or educational services, including distance education, branch campuses, franchise arrangements, and study-abroad programs, in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based, or where the program involves the education systems of a country other than where the program provider operates

SEC. 4. *National Internationalization Framework for Higher Education.* - The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall establish, implement, and maintain a National Internationalization Framework for Higher Education, hereinafter referred to as the Framework, which shall serve as the central policy, planning, coordination, and governance instrument for all internationalization and education export efforts across the Philippine higher education sector, and shall guide public and private higher education institutions (HEIs) in integrating international, intercultural, and global dimensions into their core institutional functions, consistent with academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and national interest.

The Framework shall:

- (a) Define strategic national objectives for higher education internationalization and education export, aligned with national development priorities, workforce strategies, research and innovation agendas, and the country's economic, social, and diplomatic goals;
- (b) Identify priority geographic markets, partner countries, disciplines, and fields of study with strong international demand, strategic national importance, or high potential for global collaboration and education export, without compromising domestic access, equity, or quality;
- (c) Establish outcome-based performance indicators and benchmarks to assess institutional readiness, program effectiveness, and sector-wide impact, including metrics on international student enrollment, academic mobility, joint and dual degree offerings, international research collaboration, faculty global exposure, and education export outcomes, designed to promote continuous improvement rather than punitive regulation;
- (d) Prescribe differentiated and inclusive pathways for internationalization, recognizing variations in institutional mission, typology, geographic context, disciplinary strengths, and resource capacity, and enabling all categories of HEIs, including state universities and colleges (SUCs), local universities and colleges (LUCs), and private institutions, to pursue strategies appropriate to their mandates;
- (e) Set governance standards and institutional arrangements for internationalization at the sector level, including guidance on leadership roles internal coordination structures,

- professionalization of international offices, partnership development and management, and transparent decision-making processes;
- (f) Articulate risk management principles and safeguards for cross-border education and education export, including consumer protection, academic integrity, data privacy, financial sustainability, reputational risk management, and compliance with applicable law;
 - (g) Ensure coherence with quality assurance and accreditation systems, including outcomes-based education frameworks, program accreditation, and institutional quality assurance mechanisms, so that internationalization activities directly contribute to quality enhancement and learner outcomes; and
 - (h) Establish mechanisms for periodic review and structured stakeholder consultation, involving HEIs, faculty, students, industry, relevant government agencies, and international education experts, to ensure the Framework remains evidence-based, responsive, and aligned with national and global development CHED shall review and update the Framework at least once every five (5) years, or earlier as warranted by significant changes in the national or global higher education environment. The results of each review shall be publicly disclosed.

SEC. 5. *Internationalization at Home.* - CHED shall promote and support Internationalization at Home as a core, inclusive, and sustainable pillar of higher education internationalization. Recognizing that meaningful global and intercultural learning should not be contingent on physical mobility, CHED shall ensure that all learners, regardless of capacity or opportunity for travel abroad, benefit from internationally oriented learning experiences within domestic educational environments.

For this purpose, Internationalization at Home initiatives shall include:

- (a) Internationalization of Curriculum - This includes the integration of international, comparative, and intercultural perspectives into program outcomes, course content, teaching methods, assessment, and learning materials, consistent with quality assurance standards;
- (b) Digital and Technological Engagement - This includes establishing a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) system, as well as other forms of virtual or digital international exchange with partner institutions abroad, enabling cross-border learning without requiring physical travel;
- (c) Degree Classification and Development - This refers to determining the expanse of degree programs to be offered, including joint, dual, and collaborative degree programs implemented within the Philippines in partnership with foreign higher education institutions, subject to applicable quality assurance, accreditation, and regulatory requirements;
- (d) Personnel Recruitment and Management - This includes engagement of international scholars, visiting professors, researchers, and practitioners in teaching, research, mentoring, curriculum development, and academic discourse, in accordance with applicable immigration, labor, and professional regulatory laws;
- (e) Campus Development - This refers to establishing a foundation of developing multicultural and intercultural campus communities, including globally oriented student organizations, cross-cultural programs, international student integration and support services, and campus activities that foster mutual understanding and global citizenship; and
- (f) Personnel Development Programs - This refers to faculty and staff capacity development for internationalized teaching, learning, and institutional management, including training on intercultural pedagogy, global curriculum design, digital collaboration, and international partnership management.

CHED shall ensure that Internationalization at Home initiatives are inclusive, academically rigorous, quality-driven, and complementary to, and not a substitute for, physical academic mobility and other forms of international engagement.

SEC. 6. *Institutional Internationalization Plans.* - Each HEI shall develop, adopt, and implement an Institutional Internationalization Plan (IIP) as an integral component of its institutional development planning and quality assurance processes. The IIP shall articulate the institution's vision, goals, and priorities for internationalization; identify the resources, governance arrangements, and staffing necessary for implementation; define measurable targets and accountability mechanisms; and include provisions for annual self-assessment, stakeholder participation, and alignment with the HEI's quality assurance and accreditation obligations. CHED shall issue guidelines prescribing minimum standards for IIPs, calibrated to institutional typology, size, and mission. CHED shall provide technical assistance, particularly to SUCs and LUCs, in the development and implementation of their respective Plans. Nothing in this section shall be construed as limiting institutional autonomy or academic freedom in determining the substance and strategic direction of an institution's internationalization priorities.

SEC. 7. *Quality Assurance and Local Professional Protection.* - CHED shall integrate internationalization performance as an explicit component of its quality assurance, accreditation, and institutional monitoring systems. CHED shall also prescribe quality standards for joint, dual, transnational, and other cross-border academic programs offered by Philippine HEIs, consistent with international best practices, applicable Philippine law, and relevant regional and global quality assurance frameworks.

Minimum standards prescribed by CHED shall address:

- (a) Program design, academic content, learning outcomes, and credit transfer and recognition arrangements;
- (b) Student protection, including transparent disclosure of fees, program terms, graduation requirements, and applicable laws and regulations, as well as minimum standards for insurance and health coverage for outbound students participating in academic mobility programs;
- (c) Partner institution due diligence, institutional accountability, and I and cross-border governance requirements for transnational arrangements;
- (d) Data privacy and cross-border data protection, governing the transfer of student and institutional data to foreign partner institutions and platforms; and
- (e) Compliance with immigration, labor, data privacy, consumer protection, and other applicable laws.

CHED shall coordinate with the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) to ensure that academic programs offered through joint, dual, and transnational arrangements are aligned with applicable professional licensure examination prerequisites, and that Filipino graduates of such programs are not prejudiced in their access to professional practice.

SEC. 8. *Strengthening the CHED International Affairs Service.* - The International Affairs Service (IAS) of CHED is hereby designated as the primary office responsible for the formulation, coordination, implementation, and oversight of policies, programs, and initiatives on higher education internationalization and education export under this Act. Provided, That such designation shall be without prejudice to the authority of the Commission en banc over higher education policy and regulation.

The IAS shall:

- (a) Lead strategic policy development and planning for higher education internationalization and education export, and recommend such policies and plans to the Commission en banc for approval;
- (b) Coordinate, oversee, and support the implementation of internationalization programs, projects, and activities of CHED and HEIs, including those funded under the Internationalization Support Fund;
- (c) Provide technical assistance and capacity-building support to HEIs in developing and implementing Institutional Internationalization Plans, managing international partnerships, establishing transnational higher education arrangements, and operationalizing academic mobility programs;
- (d) Coordinate with other CHED offices and services to integrate internationalization considerations into quality assurance, policy planning, research, student services, and data management systems;
- (e) Serve as the primary inter-agency focal point for higher education internationalization and education export, maintaining operational coordination with the Department of Trade and Industry, the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Professional Regulation Commission, the Bureau of Immigration, the Department of Labor and Employment, foreign diplomatic missions, international organizations, and bilateral or multilateral education partners; and
- (f) Develop, maintain, and manage data systems, analytics, and reporting mechanisms on internationalization and education export outcomes, and submit annual reports to the Commission en banc and to Congress as required under this Act.

Sec. 9. *Internationalization Support Fund.* - There is hereby created an Internationalization Support Fund, hereinafter referred to as the Fund, which shall form part of the Higher Education Fund and be administered by CHED. The Fund shall serve as a dedicated financing mechanism for programs, projects, and activities that advance higher education internationalization and education export development, guided by the principles of equity, quality, accountability, transparency, and strategic impact.

Provided, That the Fund shall be sourced from at least ten percent (10%) of the Higher Education Fund established under Republic Act No. 7722, otherwise known as the Higher Education Act of 1994, which shall be earmarked and automatically allocated to the Fund.

Sec. 10. Use of the Fund. - The Fund shall be used to provide grants-in-aid, institutional support, technical assistance, and capacity-building for programs, projects, and activities that advance higher education internationalization and education export, including:

- (a) Leadership development and governance capacity-building for HEI presidents, deans, international relations officers, and academic leaders, including training on internationalization strategy, transnational higher education management, global partnership development, and education export governance;
- (b) Academic mobility programs, including inbound and outbound student, faculty, researcher, and academic professional mobility, short-term exchanges, visiting scholar appointments, fellowships, joint supervision arrangements, and international internships;
- (c) Development, accreditation, and implementation of joint, dual, and transnational degree programs, including curriculum co-design, credit transfer and articulation mechanisms, mutual recognition arrangements, and quality assurance alignment;
- (d) International research collaboration and knowledge exchange, including participation in international research consortia, co-funded research projects, joint publications, and engagement in regional and global innovation and research networks;
- (e) Internationalization at Home initiatives, including curriculum internationalization, virtual exchange programs, engagement of international scholars and practitioners, intercultural campus programs, and faculty and staff development;
- (f) Institutional systems development, including the establishment or enhancement of international offices, partnership and mobility management systems, digital learning and transnational delivery platforms, student and faculty support services, and compliance management systems;
- (g) Strategic promotion and international positioning of Philippine HEIs and programs, including participation in international education fairs, academic missions, and global academic networks, in coordination with relevant government agencies; and
- (h) Monitoring, evaluation, and policy research, including databases, performance indicator systems, tracer studies, impact assessments, and technical studies supporting evidence-based policymaking and continuous improvement.

In allocating and utilizing the Fund, CHED shall give priority to initiatives that demonstrably contribute capacity-building, inclusive participation, and alignment with national education export objectives, without compromising domestic higher education access, equity, or quality.

SEC. 11. Fund Allocation Framework. - CHED shall adopt and publicly disclose a prioritization and scoring framework for the allocation of resources from the Fund. The framework shall be guided by the principle that allocation shall serve quality enhancement, institutional capacity-building, and inclusive participation and shall not favor institutions solely on the basis of size, existing reputation, or prior international exposure.

The framework shall include, at minimum, the following criteria:

- (a) Alignment with the National Internationalization Framework and national development priorities;
- (b) Contribution to academic quality, teaching and learning improvement, and to academic student competencies;
- (c) Potential to strengthen institutional capacity, with priority consideration for emerging or resource-constrained institutions;
- (d) Inclusivity and equity, including the participation of SUCs, LUCs, regional and island-based institutions, and underserved academic disciplines;
- (e) Education export potential and impact on global engagement;
- (f) Sustainability, replicability, and potential for institutionalization beyond initial grant support;
- (g) Cost-effectiveness, availability of counterpart funding, and efficient use of public resources; and
- (h) Adequacy of implementation plans, performance indicators, monitoring mechanisms, and risk mitigation measures.

CHED is authorized to assign relative weights to the foregoing criteria, prescribe minimum eligibility thresholds, and adopt differentiated scoring methodologies based on institutional typology

or stage of development. The framework shall be uniformly applied and subject to periodic review. Nothing in this section shall be construed as creating any vested right, entitlement, or proprietary interest in favor of any applicant or beneficiary.

Sec. 12. *Inter-Agency Coordination on Education Export.* - CHED shall coordinate with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to advance higher education internationalization, strengthen the country's education export sector, and promote the global engagement of Philippine HEIs, consistent with the respective mandates, authorities, and institutional competencies of the concerned agencies.

Such coordination shall include:

- (a) ***Policy and Strategic Alignment.*** CHED, DTI, and DFA shall align higher education internationalization initiatives with national services export strategies, trade and investment promotion policies, and foreign policy objectives, including the identification of priority markets, regions, and modalities for education export and academic cooperation;
- (b) ***International Promotion and Market Development.*** DTI, in coordination with CHED, shall support the integration of higher education services into national export promotion programs, including the provision of market intelligence, participation in international education fairs, and facilitation of linkages with foreign partners;
- (c) ***Diplomatic and International Engagement.*** DFA, through Philippine foreign service posts and diplomatic channels, shall assist in promoting Philippine higher education institutions and programs abroad, facilitating academic government-to-government education cooperation initiatives; and
- (d) ***Facilitation of Academic Mobility and Partnerships.*** The concerned agencies shall, within their respective mandates, support the mobility of students, faculty, researchers, and academic professionals, and facilitate institutional partnerships, joint programs, and collaborative research, subject to applicable immigration, labor, and regulatory requirements.

CHED shall execute a formal inter-agency agreement with DTI and DFA, within one hundred eighty (180) days from the effectivity of the implementing rules and regulations, defining respective agency roles, deliverables, coordination mechanisms, data-sharing arrangements, and performance targets for education export promotion.

CHED may establish technical working groups, focal points, or other consultative mechanisms as necessary to ensure policy coherence, regular information exchange, and effective joint implementation. Nothing in this section shall be construed as creating a new inter-agency body, mandating automatic funding obligations, or diminishing the primary regulatory authority of any concerned agency.

SEC. 13. *Monitoring, Evaluation, and Annual Reporting.* - CHED shall establish a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework for the implementation of this Act, covering the National Internationalization Framework, the Internationalization Support Fund, and the internationalization performance of the higher education sector as a whole.

The monitoring and evaluation framework shall:

- (a) Define outcome-based performance indicators aligned with the National Internationalization Framework and consistent with this Act;
- (b) Require annual data collection and reporting from HEIs on internationalization performance, covering international student enrollment, academic mobility, joint and dual degree programs, research collaboration, and education export outcomes; and
- (c) Develop and maintain data systems, including performance databases, trace study mechanisms, and policy analytics tools, to support evidence-based policymaking, program evaluation, and continuous improvement; and provide for independent periodic evaluation of program effectiveness, Fund utilization, and institutional compliance.

CHED shall submit to the Senate, House of Representatives, and the President of the Philippines, within sixty (60) days after the end of each calendar year, an annual report on the state of higher education internationalization in the Philippines. The annual report shall cover the implementation of the National Internationalization Framework, the utilization and outcomes of the Internationalization Support Fund sector-wide progress on internationalization and education export, and assessment of institutional compliance with this Act. The annual report shall be made publicly available on the CHED website.

SEC. 14. *Sunset Review and Impact Assessment.* - Five (5) years after the effectivity of this Act, CHED shall conduct a comprehensive sunset review and impact assessment to evaluate the implementation, effectiveness, and continuing relevance of this Act. The sunset review shall assess:

- (a) The utilization, governance, and impact of the Internationalization Support Fund;
- (b) The achievement of intended outcomes in education export, global engagement, and institutional capacity-building;
- (c) The reach and effectiveness of Internationalization at Home initiatives;
- (d) The consistency with the objectives and safeguards of Republic Act No. 10931, otherwise known as the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act; and
- (e) The responsiveness of this Act to emerging global trends, regional developments, and the evolving landscape of international higher education.

CHED shall submit the findings of the sunset review to the Senate and the House of Representatives, together with recommendations for legislative action, program adjustments, or policy refinements as may be warranted. The sunset review report shall be made publicly available.

SEC. 15. *Appropriations.* - The amounts necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of CHED, subject to the availability of funds and applicable budgeting, accounting, and auditing laws and regulations. Thereafter, the amounts necessary for the continued implementation of this Act, including the operationalization, programming, and utilization of the Internationalization Support Fund, shall be sourced from the Higher Education Fund and included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 16. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, CHED shall, in consultation with relevant government agencies, higher education institutions, faculty, students, and other stakeholders, promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations for the full and effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 16. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, CHED shall, in consultation with relevant government agencies, higher education institutions, faculty, students, and other stakeholders, promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations for the full and effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 17. *Separability Clause.* - If any portion or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provisions not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

SEC. 18. *Repealing Clause.* - Any law, presidential decree, or issuance of an executive order, letter of instruction, rule, or regulation inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 19. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its complete publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,