

Republic of the Philippines
Congress of the Philippines
Metro Manila
Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

Begun and held in Metro Manila, on Monday, the twenty-eighth day of July, two thousand twenty-five.

[REPUBLIC ACT NO. **12325**]

AN ACT ENHANCING THE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO
QUALITY TERTIARY EDUCATION ACT, AMENDING
FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10931, AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Section 3 of Republic Act No. 10931 or the
“Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act” is hereby
amended to read as follows:

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

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(v) *Internship and Related Learning Experience (RLE)* refers to all teaching-learning activities required by the curriculum of various higher education programs, conducted in appropriate learning environments, that enable students to develop professional competencies by applying processes, knowledge, skills, and ethical standards in varied health situations, and which incur legitimate instructional costs directly attributable to its conduct;

(w) *Internship and RLE Subsidy* refers to the financial support provided to the TES grantee during the period of internship or RLE as required in the curriculum of various HEI programs;

(x) *Learners from Economically Disadvantaged Backgrounds* refer to learners who face systemic barriers to accessing or completing tertiary education due to socio-economic status, background, disability, and other personal circumstances, and vulnerabilities, including:

(1) Learners from Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) households pursuant to Republic Act No. 11310 or the 'Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) Act';

(2) Persons with disabilities pursuant to Republic Act No. 7277 or the 'Magna Carta for Persons with Disability', as amended, and Republic Act No. 11650 or the 'Instituting a Policy of Inclusion and Services for Learners with Disabilities in Support of Inclusive Education Act';

(3) Indigenous peoples pursuant to Republic Act No. 8371 or 'The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997';

(4) Solo parents and their dependents pursuant to Republic Act No. 11861 or the 'Expanded Solo Parents Welfare Act';

(5) First-generation tertiary education learners; and

(6) Learners from geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas."

SEC. 2. Section 4 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 4. Free Higher Education in SUCs and LUCs. – All Filipino students who are either currently enrolled at the time of the effectivity of this Act, or shall enroll at any time thereafter, in courses in pursuance of a bachelor’s degree, certificate degree, or any comparable undergraduate degree in any SUC or LUC shall be exempt from paying tuition and other school fees for units enrolled in: Provided, That they pass the entrance examination and other admission and retention requirements of the SUCs and LUCs: Provided, further, That all SUCs and LUCs shall create a mechanism to enable students with the financial capacity to pay for their education in the SUC and LUC to voluntarily opt out of the tuition and other school fees subsidy or make a contribution to the school. SUCs and LUCs shall report the tuition payments and contributions collected from these students to the CHED: Provided, further, That the amount required to implement the free tuition and other school fees in SUCs and LUCs shall be determined by the respective governing boards of SUCs and LUCs based on the projected number of enrollees for each academic year, using the most recent available data on secondary education completion rates provided by the Department of Education (DepEd), and projected enrollment data of SUCs and LUCs, which shall be reviewed and validated by the CHED prior to its use as the primary factor in computing the annual proposed budget of SUCs and, in the case of LUCs, the CHED for such purpose, and shall in turn serve as the baseline during the preparation of the annual National Expenditure Program (NEP) by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM): Provided, finally, That the UniFAST Board shall accurately project enrollment rates and the corresponding budget requirements to ensure sufficiency of allocated resources.”

SEC. 3. A new Section 5-A is hereby inserted to read as follows:

“SEC. 5-A. Equity in Participation in SUCs, LUCs, and State-Run TVIs. – To promote equity in

access to quality tertiary education, all SUCs, LUCs, and state-run TVIs shall develop, publicly disclose, and implement an equity and inclusion plan (EIP) outlining the specific targets and measures adopted to support learners from disadvantaged backgrounds in accessing and completing tertiary education.

Such measures may include, but are not limited to: (a) provision of assistive devices and technologies during the admission process; (b) priority allocation of available housing or dormitory facilities; (c) waiver of admission examination fees; and (d) consideration of an applicant's contextual factors in admission evaluation, which shall be documented and without prejudice to institutional academic freedom, merit-based admission standards, and program-specific requirements.

The CHED and TESDA, in consultation with the UniFAST Board, shall issue implementing guidelines for EIPs, which may be differentiated by institution type, program, and geographic context. These guidelines shall be reviewed at least every four (4) years, taking into account enrollment data, equity outcomes, and institutional capacity."

SEC. 4. Section 7 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 7. *TES for Filipino Students.* – To support the cost of tertiary education or any part or portion thereof, a TES is hereby established for poor Filipino students who enroll in the first undergraduate post-secondary tertiary education program of their choice, except those enrolled in a technical-vocational education and training course, leading toward a ladderized program, in SUCs, LUCs, private HEIs and TVIs. The TES shall be implemented by the CHED and the TESDA pursuant to the policies and guidelines issued by the UniFAST Board. The amount necessary to fund the TES shall be included in the respective budgets of the CHED and the TESDA: *Provided*, That prioritization shall be given to: (a) enrolled students in any CHED-recognized HEI or TESDA-registered TVI who are part of households included in the most updated list of the 4Ps, ranked according to estimated

household per capita income, as certified by the DSWD pursuant to Republic Act No. 11315 or the 'Community-Based Monitoring System Act'; and (b) the remaining TES slots shall be awarded to other poor students based on the ranking of their household per capita income, using the most recent available data from the official poverty assessment system adopted by the National Government, or other verifiable documentary proof of income as may be determined by the UniFAST Board.

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

(a) Tuition and other school fees (TOSF) in private HEIs, and private or LGU-operated TVIs, which shall be guided by the national average annual government expenditure per student in SUCs, LUCs, and state-run TVIs, as computed by the UniFAST Board, taking into account variations in TOSF levels and disaggregated by program cluster where appropriate;

(b) Allowances for books, school supplies, transportation to and from school, and miscellaneous personal expenses, including a reasonable allowance for the rental or purchase of a desktop or portable computer, when applicable;

(c) An allowance for room and board costs to be incurred by the student, when applicable;

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

(e) For a student enrolled in internship and RLE courses, as required by the HEI curriculum in any CHED-recognized public or private school, an internship and RLE subsidy as an additional allowance, subject to the guidelines set by the UniFAST Board;

(f) For learners from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, additional allowances to address documented barriers specific to their circumstances; and

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

Qualified beneficiaries of the TES shall continue to receive the grant for the remaining prescribed duration of the program: *Provided*, That subject to compliance with the eligibility requirements set forth in this Act, an extension of up to one (1) additional year may be granted only upon a showing of justifiable and documented circumstances resulting in delay in program completion, including, but not limited to, economic challenges, health-related conditions, *force majeure*, or other valid causes as may be determined by the UniFAST Board: *Provided, further*, That the grant of such extension shall be subject to evaluation and approval by the UniFAST Board in accordance with the guidelines to be issued for this purpose.”

SEC. 5. A new Section 7-A is hereby inserted to read as follows:

“SEC. 7-A. *Determination of TES Amounts and Periodic Review.* – In determining the appropriate amounts of TES grants under Section 7 hereof, the UniFAST Board shall be guided by the following:

(a) For students in SUCs, LUCs, and state-run TVIs, the TES may cover all subsidies and allowances, except TOSF, which are already free under this Act;

(b) For students in CHED-recognized private HEIs and TESDA-registered private TVIs, the TES

may cover all subsidies and allowances, including TOSF;

(c) Once awarded, the TES amount granted to a qualified continuing beneficiary shall not be reduced; and

(d) Higher TES amounts may be provided for students enrolled in priority programs jointly identified by the CHED, TESDA, Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev), DSWD, and DepEd.

The UniFAST Board, in coordination with the CHED and TESDA, shall prioritize the allocation of funds under the national budget for the TES over other scholarship and education assistance programs. For this purpose, the TES shall be fully funded, based on normative costing for qualified poor students, with priority given to beneficiaries of the 4Ps, to enable them to complete their tertiary education program within the prescribed period.

The UniFAST Board shall review and adjust TES amounts every two (2) years, in consultation with the CHED, TESDA, and DBM, to account for inflation and changes in education costs."

SEC. 6. A new Section 7-B is hereby inserted to read as follows:

"SEC. 7-B. *Private Education Assistance (PEA)*.
– To uphold complementarity between public and private education, and to enable disadvantaged students to enroll in priority programs in CHED-recognized private HEIs and TESDA-registered TVIs, there shall be established a private education assistance (PEA).

The PEA shall be governed by the following parameters:

(a) Student Eligibility – The assistance shall be targeted toward poor and deserving students, as determined by the UniFAST Board. The PEA shall be awarded to applicants based on the ranking of

their household per capita income, using the most recent available data from the official poverty assessment system adopted by the National Government, or other verifiable proof of income as may be determined by the UniFAST Board: *Provided*, That said students are enrolled in programs identified as priority by the CHED, TESDA, and DEPDev. The UniFAST Board shall allocate funds by considering the regions with greatest need for such graduates, vis-à-vis available programs offered predominantly by private HEIs and TVIs: *Provided, further*, That the UniFAST Board shall also ensure that this assistance complements the TES under Section 7 of this Act, by addressing the eligibility of students who may not be covered by existing grants;

(b) **Qualifications of Private HEIs and TVIs** – To qualify for the PEA program, the private HEIs and TVIs shall meet the quality standards prescribed by the UniFAST Board including, but not limited to, program accreditation levels, performance in licensure examinations, school facilities, and other quality assurance mechanisms;

(c) **Amount of Assistance** – The UniFAST Board shall commission a study to determine the normative cost of learning of tertiary education in CHED-recognized private HEIs and TESDA-registered private TVIs. This study shall serve as the basis for setting the nominal value of the PEA, which shall be subject to review every two (2) years to account for inflation and changes in education costs; and

(d) **Pilot Implementation** – Upon the effectivity of this Act, the UniFAST Board, through the CHED and TESDA, shall conduct a pilot implementation of the PEA for a period of not more than three (3) years prior to full-scale implementation, subject to availability of funds.”

SEC. 7. A new Section 7-C is hereby inserted to read as follows:

“SEC. 7-C. *Monitoring, Evaluation, Assessment, Validation, and Quality Assurance of the TES.* – The UniFAST Board shall:

(a) Formulate and issue the policies, standards, and guidelines for a monitoring, assessment, evaluation, and validation system to ensure that TES grants are received by qualified beneficiaries in accordance with Section 7 hereof, including guidelines on appropriate sanctions for misappropriation of TES funds, which shall be imposed and implemented by the CHED and TESDA;

(b) In consultation with the DepEd, CHED, TESDA, DSWD, the Department of Information and Communications Technology, and other relevant stakeholders, formulate and issue the policies and minimum standards for a single learner reference code system from secondary through tertiary education to enable early identification of learners from 4Ps households and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, as well as proper and regular targeting, tracking, and monitoring of all TES beneficiaries;

(c) Formulate and issue the framework and minimum standards for an information and outreach system that proactively notifies secondary education learners from 4Ps households that they are given priority for the TES program, informs learners from economically disadvantaged backgrounds of available TES support, and provides guidance to all secondary education learners on tertiary education options, career pathways, and priority programs, consistent with the provisions of Republic Act No. 11206 or the 'Secondary School Career Guidance and Counseling Act';

(d) In consultation with the DBM, Anti-Red Tape Authority, and Commission on Audit, formulate and issue the policies and guidelines for an efficient and streamlined disbursement mechanism, including the provision of reasonable administrative support costs to educational institutions, to ensure that TES beneficiaries receive their grants without undue delay and in time to cover the expenses for which the subsidies are intended;

(e) Formulate and issue the policies and minimum standards for prioritizing beneficiaries, monitoring, and evaluating the academic progress

and retention rates of TES grantees, in coordination with the HEIs and relevant stakeholders; and

(f) Conduct or commission regular impact evaluation studies at least every four (4) years to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the TES program in achieving its objectives.

To ensure the effective implementation of the policies under this section, the UniFAST Board shall supervise the implementation of the TES by the CHED and TESDA and shall require both agencies to submit quarterly reports for this purpose.

The CHED, TESDA, and UniFAST secretariat shall determine and be provided with the additional plantilla positions and other personnel complement as may be necessary to ensure the effective administration and implementation of the programs, subject to the evaluation and approval of the DBM, and in accordance with civil service rules and regulations.”

SEC. 8. A new Section 10-A is hereby inserted to read as follows:

“SEC. 10-A. *Grievance Mechanism.* – A grievance committee shall be established within the CHED and TESDA to investigate and resolve complaints or disputes raised by learners in relation to the implementation of this Act within their respective jurisdictions. Each grievance committee shall include representation from the UniFAST Board.

The UniFAST Board, in coordination with the CHED and TESDA, shall promulgate the necessary guidelines, implement the grievance mechanism, and ensure that updated information on the committees, including their procedures, timelines, and available remedies, is publicly accessible.”

SEC. 9. Section 13 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 13. *Expansion of the UniFAST Board.* –

x x x

The UniFAST Board shall exercise policy formulation, program harmonization, and monitoring and evaluation functions in relation to student financial assistance programs. The implementation and delivery of such programs shall be undertaken by the appropriate implementing agencies, including the CHED and TESDA, in accordance with their respective mandates.

The UniFAST Board is authorized to establish an enhanced organizational structure, staff development and incentives, and such other administrative measures needed for the efficient discharge of tasks and commensurate to the level and scope of its responsibilities. It may tap the expertise and management services of eligible service providers subject to the appropriate guidelines promulgated by the UniFAST Board.”

SEC. 10. Section 14 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 14. *Reporting Requirements.* – All SUCs, LUCs, and state-run TVIs shall submit to the CHED and the TESDA, respectively, within five (5) days after the last day of late registration for each semester, a report detailing the names of students eligible for the free TOSF in their institutions.

The CHED, TESDA, and the UniFAST Board shall jointly submit an annual report on the implementation of this Act to the Senate and the House of Representatives, through the Chairpersons of the Senate Committee on Higher, Technical, and Vocational Education and the House Committee on Higher and Technical Education, not later than August 1 of each year. The report shall include, but not be limited to:

(a) The number of beneficiaries of the free higher education and TES programs, the amounts utilized for each program, and the average subsidy per student, disaggregated by institution type, program, and beneficiary income classification;

(b) TES grant amounts by program cluster, including priority programs identified under Section 7-A of this Act;

(c) Learner retention and completion rates;

(d) Employment outcomes and graduate tracer study results, where available;

(e) Budget allocation, utilization, and projected funding requirements based on enrollment trends and program costs; and

(f) Recommendations for policy or program improvements and other relevant data on the implementation of this Act.”

SEC. 11. *Appropriations.* – The amounts necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act and appropriated under the SUCs, CHED, and TESDA in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 12. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) necessary for the effective and efficient enforcement of this Act shall be formulated, promulgated, and implemented by the UniFAST Board, in consultation with the CHED, TESDA, DepEd, DSWD, DBM, and other relevant stakeholders in higher and technical-vocational education: *Provided*, That the failure of the Board to promulgate the said rules and regulations shall not prevent or delay the effectivity and implementation of this Act.

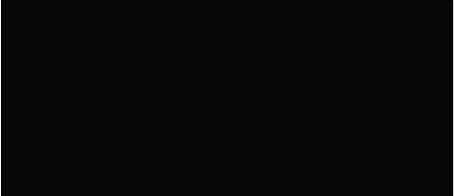
SEC. 13. *Separability Clause.* – If any portion or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder thereof or any provision not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

SEC. 14. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees or issuances, executive orders, letters of instruction, or rules and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 15. *Effectivity.* – Notwithstanding the non-issuance of the IRR, this Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its complete publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,


FAUSTINO "BOJIE" G. DY III
*Speaker of the House
 of Representatives*

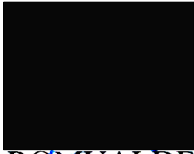

SHERWIN T. GATCHALIAN
President of the Senate

This Act, which is a consolidation of Senate Bill No. 1894 and House Bill No. 8476, was passed by the Senate of the Philippines and the House of Representatives on June 17, 2026 and June 3, 2026, respectively.


CHELOY E. VELICARIA-GARAFIL
*Secretary General
 House of Representatives*


RENATO N. BANTUG JR.
Secretary of the Senate

Approved: **SEP 04 2026**


FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.
President of the Philippines



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