

**IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS (IRR) OF THE
LADDERIZED EDUCATION ACT OF 2014
(Republic Act No. 10647)**

Pursuant to Section 12 of Republic Act No. 10647, entitled “*An Act Strengthening the Ladderized Interface Between Technical-Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education*,” otherwise known as the “Ladderized Education Act of 2014,” approved on November 21, 2014, and which took effect on December 11, 2014, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and the Department of Education (DepEd), hereby issue the following rules and regulations to implement the provisions of the Act.

RULE I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Title. These rules and regulations shall be referred to as the *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the “Ladderized Education Act of 2014” (Republic Act No. 10647)*.

Section 2. Declaration of Policy. This IRR shall be interpreted in light of the Declaration of Policy found in Section 2 of the Act.

Section 3. Scope and Application. The provisions of this IRR shall primarily apply to all public and private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Technical-Vocational Institutions (TVIs), and basic educational institutions and learning centers. Likewise, these Rules shall apply to institutions and systems which provide educational programs, trainings, specializations, skills and competencies, professional experience or through life-long learning.

Section 4. Definition of Terms. For purposes of this IRR, the following terms shall mean or be understood as follows:

(a) **Articulation** refers to a process which allows students to make the smooth transition from one (1) course, program or educational level to the next without experiencing duplication of learning. The guiding principle of articulation is that no student should repeat the same course content for which credit has already been received, even if obtained elsewhere or from another institution. In general, articulated programs provide multiple entry and exit points and ladders of learning opportunities and allows a student to move from a technical-vocational course to a college degree program, using the principle of credit transfer;

(b) **Credit** refers to the value given to a particular course or subject, based on competencies and learning outcomes;

(c) **Credit transfer** refers to a credit conversion established to promote student mobility by ensuring that units earned from different modalities are credited by the institutions;

(d) **Embedded TVET Qualification in a Ladderized Degree Program** refers to the process of determining the TVET competencies or qualifications that lead to job platforms in the relevant higher education or bachelor's degree program. Full TVET qualification can still be earned even if a student of a ladderized degree program chooses to exit from the program and get a job;

(e) **Equivalency** refers to a process that involves assigning equivalent academic credits to the competencies demonstrated by a student through assessment tests, thereby providing entry points to the next higher level qualification, the purpose of which is to provide opportunities to the student to continue to learn and to re-enter the educational program at a higher level without having to unnecessarily retake courses on which a student has already demonstrated competence and knowledge;

(f) **Job platform** refers to the gateway in the ladderized curriculum which one reaches upon acquiring enough skills and knowledge to seek and find employment;

(g) **Ladderized education** refers to the harmonization of all education and training mechanisms that allow students and workers to progress between technical-vocational and higher education programs, or vice-versa. It opens opportunities for career and educational advancement to students and workers. It creates a seamless and borderless education and training system that will allow transfers in terms of flexible entry and exit between technical-vocational and higher education programs in the post-secondary school educational system;

(h) **Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF)** is a national policy which describes the levels of educational qualifications and sets the standards for qualifications outcomes. It is a quality assured national system for the development, recognition and award of qualifications based on standards of knowledge, skills and values acquired in different ways and methods by learners and workers of a certain country;

(i) **Qualification** refers to a formal certification that a person has successfully achieved specific learning outcomes relevant to the identified academic, industry or community requirements; and

(j) **Recognition of prior learning** refers to the acknowledgment of a person's skills and knowledge through previous training, work or life experience, which may be used to grant status or credit for acquired competencies.

(k) **Pathways** refers to mechanisms or access ramps which provide access to qualifications and assist people to move easily and readily between the different education and training sectors and between these sectors and the labor market;

RULE II. THE PHILIPPINE QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

Section 5. The Philippine Qualifications Framework. Pursuant to Section 4 of the Act, the PQF has the following objectives:

(a) Adoption of national standards and levels for outcomes of education.

The PQF shall incorporate an 8-level Qualifications Descriptors defined in terms of the following: knowledge, skills and values, application, and degree of independence. The Philippine Qualifications Framework-National Coordinating Committee (PQF-NCC) shall make detailed descriptors for each qualification level based on learning standards in basic education, competency standards of training regulations, and the policies and standards of higher education academic programs. They shall jointly implement national pilot programs to determine its relevance and applicability in all levels of education.

(b) Supporting the development and maintenance of pathways and equivalencies, which provide access to qualifications and assist people to move easily and readily between the different education and training sectors and between these sectors and the labor market.

The PQF-NCC is tasked to undertake the development and maintenance of pathways and equivalencies system.

(c) Alignment with international qualifications framework to support the national and international mobility of workers through increased recognition of the value and comparability of Philippine qualifications.

The PQF-NCC is tasked to ensure alignment with international qualifications framework to support mobility of workers in recognition of the value and comparability of Philippine qualifications.

Section 6. Composition of the Philippine Qualifications-National Coordinating Committee (PQF-NCC). The PQF-NCC is composed of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the Department of Education (DepEd), the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC). The Committee shall be chaired by the DepEd.

The following are the powers and functions of the PQF-NCC:

1. Creates technical working groups in support of the detailing and implementation of the PQF;
2. Harmonizes the levels of qualifications with all levels of education;
3. Aligns education standards and learning outcomes to the level descriptors contained herein;
4. Develops and recognizes pathways and equivalencies;

5. Discuss and agree on the elements of the PQF including but not limited to their principles, key features, definitions or terminologies, structure and governance arrangements;
6. Reviews and updates the PQF;
7. Provides information and guidelines in the implementation of the PQF;
8. Establishes a quality assurance mechanism;
9. Maintains the national registry of qualified manpower;
10. Ensures the international alignment of the PQF with the qualification frameworks of other countries;
11. Represents the country in international fora or negotiations on qualification agreements/arrangements;
12. Provides regular feedback on the progress and accomplishments to the Office of the President with respect to the implementation of the PQF; and
13. Performs such other functions that may be related to the implementation of the PQF.

Section 7. Implementation Mechanisms. Pursuant to Section 4 of the Act, the following are specifically provided:

In the development of ladderized education, the CHED, TESDA and DepED are hereby mandated to closely coordinate and effectively implement a unified PQF that establishes equivalency pathways and access ramps allowing for easier transitions and progressions between TVET and higher education. The framework shall include qualifications and articulation mechanisms, such as, but not necessarily limited to the following: credit transfer, embedded TVET qualification in ladderized degree programs, post-TVET bridging programs, enhanced equivalency, adoption of ladderized curricula/programs, and accreditation and/or recognition of prior learning.

For this purpose, the CHED, TESDA and DepED shall design harmonized guidelines and equivalency competency courses to enhance the delivery of high-quality technical-vocational and higher education courses, synchronize standards and upgrade curriculum design per discipline and adopt a strategic implementation scheme, including a massive consultation and information dissemination scheme. In so doing, the CHED, TESDA and DepED shall continue exploring and developing other mechanisms and systems that will allow the interface between TVET and higher education with the end in view of creating a seamless and borderless education system.

Consistent with the PQF, the CHED, TESDA and DepEd shall issue guidelines to effectively implement the above preceding provisions.

RULE III. PRIORITY DISCIPLINES

Section 8. Priority Disciplines. Pursuant to Section 5 of the Act, the CHED, TESDA and DepEd are directed to identify priority disciplines and programs for ladderization, taking into account labor market realities in consultation with the industry, the DOLE, the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) and other related agencies. The CHED, TESDA and DepEd shall implement the ladderization of other disciplines, other than those presently being implemented, should these be found necessary and beneficial based on a comprehensive study of their viability.

RULE IV. ENHANCEMENT OF THE LADDERIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (LEP)

Section 9. Enhancement of the Ladderized Education Program (LEP). Pursuant to Section 6 of the Act, the CHED, TESDA and DepEd, in consultation with the PRC and the industries, as applicable, are directed to jointly devise systems, procedures, and mechanisms, as well as to issue, amend and update existing implementing guidelines, as necessary, for the efficient and effective implementation of the LEP and to ensure that the objectives of the program are met. Incentives may be given to HEIs and technical-vocational institutions to further encourage wider participation in the LEP.

The CHED and TESDA shall designate personnel at the regional and provincial level, whichever is applicable, for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the LEP nationwide.

RULE V. SUPPORT FROM OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Section 10. Support from Other Government Agencies. Pursuant to Section 7 of the Act, the PRC, DOLE, DA, DOST, DTI, NEDA, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and other related agencies are hereby mandated to extend the necessary support and provide relevant inputs towards the effective implementation of the ladderized system of education.

RULE VI. SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS AND LOANS

Section 11. Scholarships, Grants and Loans. Pursuant to Section 8 of the Act, to ensure the effective implementation and greater nationwide impact of the program and its accessibility to the students and workers, the CHED, TESDA and DepEd shall include in their respective budgets the provision of scholarships, grants and loans to deserving students and workers availing themselves of the ladderized system of education, in addition to the present scholarship programs being implemented by the CHED and TESDA.

RULE VII. ENABLING CLAUSE FOR HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (HEIs)

Section 12. Enabling Clause for HEIs. Pursuant to Section 9 of the Act, the following are specifically provided:

To encourage the widest enjoyment of the benefit of ladderized education, HEIs whose curricula have been recognized by the CHED may avail of the ladderization program: *Provided*, That the minimum curricular requirements under the joint guidelines of the CHED, TESDA and DepED are complied with and duly certified by these agencies prior to the formal offering of the ladderized education programs.

For this purpose, the HEI shall be required to submit to the CHED Regional Office a copy of the curriculum for the proposed ladderized program for monitoring, compliance and for potential objective inputs from their technical experts. The CHED shall be responsible for transmitting the curricula submitted by the HEIs to the PQF-NCC for their reference. Failure of the HEIs to submit this requirement shall be subject to administrative sanctions to be imposed by the CHED.

RULE VIII. ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Section 13. Academic Freedom. Pursuant to Section 10 of the Act, nothing in this Act shall be construed as restricting the HEI in the exercise of its academic freedom. The HEI shall retain the right to assess the level and standard of previously completed TVET programs by an applicant-student in a manner that is transparent and objective, incorporating therein its own admission requirements. The applicant-student must gain admission to the HEI's undergraduate program by meeting the prescribed criteria and program requisites and such other requirements by the HEI.

RULE IX. FINAL PROVISIONS

Section 14. Appropriations. Pursuant to Section 11 of the Act, the amount necessary for the initial implementation and strengthening the Ladderized Interface Between Technical-Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education shall be charged against the current budgets and development funds of the CHED, TESDA and DepED. Thereafter, the funds necessary for the continuous implementation of the Ladderized Education Act of 2014 in the ensuing years shall be included in the respective annual appropriations of the CHED, TESDA and DepED in the General Appropriations Act.

Section 15. Implementing Details. The CHED, TESDA and DepEd may issue such policies and guidelines as may be necessary to further implement this IRR.

Section 16. Amendment. Amendments to this IRR if necessary, shall be jointly promulgated by the CHED Chairperson, TESDA Director-General, and DepEd Secretary.

Section 16. Separability Clause. Should any provision or any part of this IRR be subsequently declared unconstitutional or invalid, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other provisions.

Section 17. Repealing Clause. Pursuant to Section 14 of the Act, all laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of the Act are deemed repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

Section 18. Effectivity. This IRR shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

This IRR shall be registered with the Office of the National Administrative Register at the University of the Philippines Law Center, UP Diliman, Quezon City.

Done this ____ day of February 2015.

PATRICIA B. LICUANAN
Chairperson
Commission on Higher Education

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