

SENATE

23 FEB 21 P 3:24

S. No. 1908

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator MARK A. VILLAR

AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE EXPANDED TERTIARY EDUCATION
EQUIVALENCY AND ACCREDITATION PROGRAM (ETEEAP) AND
PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Poverty remains to be a hindrance to achieve a student's dream to graduate. According to a report dated November 2022, there are over 5.6 million Filipino families living in poverty according to findings of the "Listahanan survey" released by the Department of Social Welfare and Development. Living below the poverty line normally causes students to surrender their dream careers and immediately seek for jobs to help for family expenses.

This is very true especially during the COVID-19 pandemic where the poor chose their family's survival at the expense of the dreams of their children. While they were able to gain immediate income due to their employment, it cannot be denied that they need to continue their education for them to qualify for promotion and salary increase as it entails educational qualification despite vast knowledge and experience.

The government is aware of this situation and had been helping Filipinos to continue their education while they were working. This is the objective of the Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program (ETEEAP) - an alternative education program in the Philippines that allows working professionals, but were either unable to finish their college education or were completely unable to step into college for different reasons, to earn a bachelor's degree without going through traditional schooling methods.

Under ETEEAP, work experience is evaluated and converted to creditable educational units to reduce the number of subjects that a working professional has to earn to obtain a degree. With this program, only the remaining courses or subjects that did not have any equivalent in the evaluation process will be enrolled and should be completed in the traditional way.

This bill seeks to institutionalize ETEEAP as an integral part of the educational system in the Philippines. Through this bill, the existing ETEEAP shall be

strengthened and the criteria for basic qualifications thereof shall be laid down by the law to make it more accessible to Filipinos who wants to earn a degree while working. The law shall also create a consultative body headed by the Commission on Higher Education to provide a broad based inter-agency consultation to ascertain that the objective and reach of this program is being met by the government.

This is consistent with Section 2, Article XIV of the Constitution which provides that the State shall establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society and, that the State shall encourage non-formal, informal, and indigenous learning systems, all well as self-learning, and out of school study programs particularly those that respond to community needs.

For this purpose, immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.




MARK A. VILLAR

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Expanded Tertiary*
2 *Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program (ETEEAP) Act*”.

3 Sec 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
4 protect and promote the right of all citizens to qualify education at all levels and
5 shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.

6 Further, Section 2, Article XIV of the Constitution provides that the State shall
7 establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of
8 education relevant to the needs of the people and society and, that the State shall
9 encourage non-formal, informal, and indigenous learning systems, all well as self-
10 learning, and out of school study programs particularly those that respond to
11 community needs.

12 In line with this, it is the goal of the Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency
13 and Accreditation Program (ETEEAP) to strengthen the system of academic
14 equivalency and validation of the knowledge and expertise derived by individuals

1 from relevant work experience and high-level, non-formal training in order to
2 harness their full potentials.

3 *Sec. 3. Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms
4 shall mean:

- 5 a. *Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program* refers
6 to the alternate education program in the Philippines that allows working
7 professionals but were either unable to finish their college education or
8 were completely unable to step into college for different reasons, to earn
9 bachelor’s degree without going through traditional schooling methods;
10 b. *Higher Education Institution* refers to an institution of higher learning
11 which primarily offers degree-granting programs duly recognized by the
12 Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and leading to the conferment of
13 a diploma; and
14 c. *Tertiary Education* refers to higher education degree programs and post-
15 secondary technical-vocational programs.

16 *Sec. 4. Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program.*
17 – Under this program, professionals with an aggregate of five (5) or more years of
18 work experience can use the knowledge, experiences, achievements, and skills and
19 obtained through their jobs to earn school credits that are then deducted from the
20 total number of units or credits that they are required to earn before they graduate.

21 The following are the requirements to qualify for the program:

- 22 a) Filipino citizens, whether in the Philippines or abroad;
23 b) Has at least five (5) years of working experiences;
24 c) Birth Certificate issued by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA);
25 d) 23 years of age or above;
26 e) Resume/Curriculum Vitae/Personal Data Sheet;
27 f) Duly accomplished ETEEAP application form;
28 g) Service Record or Employment Certificate signed by the Employer;
29 h) Job Description signed by the Employer; and
30 i) Transcript of Records.

31 *Sec. 5. Commission on Higher Education.* – The Commission on Higher
32 Education (CHED) shall be the lead agency in the implementation of the provisions

1 of this Act. It shall accredit colleges and universities that seeks to offer the ETEEAP
2 as part of their academic program.

3 *Sec. 6. Powers and Functions of the Commission.* – For purposes of this Act,
4 the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall discharge the following additional
5 powers and functions in relation of the Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and
6 Accreditation Program (ETEEAP):

- 7 a) Certify, after thorough evaluation, the pertinent work experiences and
8 knowledge of expertise acquired by individuals from high-level, non-formal
9 and informal training towards the awarding of an appropriate academic
10 degree;
- 11 b) Determine the deficiencies of an applicant/awardee that would need
12 remedial studies or academic supplementation through formal course work
13 in order to satisfy pertinent requirements of a degree applied for;
- 14 c) Develop, on a counting basis and with the assistance of technical panels
15 and other competent authorities, standards, creative methodologies, and
16 criteria for a diversified mode of assessing skills, values, knowledge, and
17 levels of competence which should include, but not limited to, instruments
18 such as written examinations, practical work and/or laboratory
19 demonstrations, and qualification portfolio assessments;
- 20 d) Deputize and/or accredit agencies, organizations and higher education
21 institutions which will conduct equivalency assessments, develop
22 assessments, and/or award degrees within their area of competence or
23 specialization;
- 24 e) Safeguard the continuing integrity and quality measures of the Expanded
25 Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program by linking and
26 cooperating with appropriate development and regulatory agencies and
27 institutions.
- 28 f) Update the Social Development Committee of the National Economic and
29 Development Authority (NEDA) Board on the implementation of the
30 program for policy coordination and monitoring purposes;
- 31 g) Set standard fees and other administrative charges for accreditation that
32 will contribute to and be part of the Special Account of the Expanded

1 Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program under the
2 Higher Education Development Fund (HEDF);

3 h) Convene a consultative or advisory body for the purpose of providing
4 broad-based inter-agency consultation, to be composed of:

- 5 1) Chairman of the CHED as the Chair;
- 6 2) Director-General of the Technical Education and Skills Development
7 Authority (TESDA) as the Vice-Chair;
- 8 3) Undersecretary for Programs of the Department of Education,
9 Culture, and Sports (DECS) as member;
- 10 4) Undersecretary of the Department of Science and Technology as
11 member;
- 12 5) Chairman of the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) as
13 member;
- 14 6) Chairman of the National Youth Commission (NYC) as member;
- 15 7) Representative of private higher educations to be designated by the
16 Coordinating Council of Private Educational Assistance (COCOPEA)
17 as member;
- 18 8) Representative of state universities and colleges to be designated
19 by the Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges
20 (PASUC) as member;
- 21 9) Representative of the business sector to be designated by the
22 Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) as member;
23 and

24 i) Such other powers and functions as may be provided by law.

25 *Sec. 7. Technical Secretariat.* – To ensure the effective implementation of the
26 Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program (ETEEAP), the
27 CHED shall organize a permanent Technical Secretariat composed of highly
28 competent individuals with recognized expertise in alternative learning systems and
29 educational assessment. The Technical Secretariat shall provide technical support to
30 and shall be provided by and be lodged with the CHED. In addition, the CHED may
31 contract the services of external experts and authorities on equivalency and
32 education measurement.

1 Sec. 8. *Funding.* – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act
2 shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. However, the Special
3 Account in the Higher Education Development Fund (HEDF) may be used by the
4 CHED as a supplemental source of funding whenever necessary and required for
5 effective implementation of the Program.

6 Sec. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from the
7 approval of this Act, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall promulgate
8 the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) to carry out the provisions of this Act.

9 Sec. 10. *Separability Clause.* – If any portion or provision of this Act is
10 declared unconstitutional or invalid, the portions or provisions which are not affected
11 shall continue to be in full force and effect.

12 Sec. 11. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, issuances, circulars,
13 rules and regulations or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of
14 this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly. Nothing in this Act shall result
15 in the diminution of the benefits and/or assistance given to overseas Filipino and
16 migrant workers as provided in other laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, and
17 issuances.

18 Sec. 12. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
19 publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspaper of general
20 circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,