



Republic of the Philippines
Office of the President
COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**STATEMENT OF THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
ON FILIPINO AND THE REVISED GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM
(CMO NO. 20, SERIES OF 2013)**

BACKGROUND

CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 20, series of 2013 otherwise known as the “*General Education Curriculum: Holistic Understandings, Intellectual and Civic Competencies*” is the policy cover for the revised General Education Curriculum (GEC), which offers greater flexibility than the current curriculum. The passage of the K to 12 Law enables such flexibility by freeing the GEC from Science, Mathematics, English, Filipino, Literature, Humanities and Social Studies subjects that are more appropriately taught in Senior High School. In so doing, the Law paves the way for the exposure of undergraduate students to various dimensions of knowledge and ways of comprehending social and natural realities “that promise to develop in the process, intellectual competencies—critical, analytical and creative thinking and multiple forms of expression—and civic capacities demanded of members of community, country and the world”.

The interdisciplinary approach underlying the revised GEC hews closely to the higher education mission of “producing thoughtful graduates imbued with values reflective of a humanist orientation (e.g., fundamental respect for others as human beings with intrinsic rights, cultural rootedness, a vocation to serve); analytical and problem solving skills; the ability to think through the ethical and social implications of a given course of action; and the competency to learn continuously throughout life—that will enable them to live meaningfully in a complex, rapidly changing and globalized world while engaging their community and the nation’s development issues and concerns”.

Although the philosophy of liberal education underpins the GEC, the CMO nevertheless aims to produce students “secure in their identity as individuals and Filipinos”, “aware and proud of... [their] collective identity and able to contribute meaningfully to the development of Filipino society at local and national levels.” And even while General Education (GE) courses such as the Contemporary World will focus on global conditions, they are expected to do so primarily from a Filipino perspective.

The crafting of the revised GEC started in 2012 and took almost a year of public consultations and public hearings before the CHED Commission En Banc (CEB) finally approved it in March 2013.

A year later, however, college teachers of Filipino courses protested the exclusion of Filipino, raising larger philosophical questions of language and its role in the higher education curriculum vis-à-vis the goals of the revised GEC. The protest coincided with public discussion of real concerns with the potentially adverse impact of K to 12 on the employment of teaching and non-teaching personnel.

In response to the petitions and position papers of teachers of Filipino, the CEB referred the matter to the Technical Panel on General Education (TPGE) for careful review and recommendation.

The TPGE conducted a series of zonal consultations in NCR, Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Participants in the public hearings were asked for their views on proposals received by the CHED that were clustered under two general headings:

On the medium of instruction

1. Teach at least nine (9) GE units in Filipino.
2. In addition to the Rizal course, teach at least 12 units of GE core courses in Filipino (therefore, 15 units).
3. Leave the decision to teach in English/Filipino/any other Philippine language entirely to the HEI.
4. Leave the decision to teach in English/Filipino/any other Philippine language entirely to the individual teacher.

On the addition of Filipino subject(s) to the core courses

1. Add three (3) units of a Filipino subject on language, culture, and Filipino identity as a GE core course.
2. Add nine (9) units of Filipino subjects as GE core courses.
3. Do not add Filipino subjects to the GE core courses.

In addition to the public hearings, the TPGE met with leaders of various Filipino teacher organizations on 11 July 2014. Representatives from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), teacher organizations, and other concerned individuals and groups were asked to submit their position papers on or before 30 July 2014.

The TPGE carefully considered and discussed at length all the positions taken by various individuals and groups, presented their recommendation to the CEB in October 2014 and submitted their report on 17 November 2014.

THE CHED POSITION

After long deliberations, the Commission En Banc asserts the following position on the issue:

At its most basic, CHED believes in the fundamental role played by language in education, as manifested in the reforms it has staunchly supported through K to 12, but also of the role of education in the development of language—i.e., the “intellectualization” of a language, in this case Filipino, through its use in academic discourse. To be properly cultivated, Filipino cannot merely be taught as a subject, but must be used in oral and written forms, across academic domains. For this reason, the Commission urges the GE faculty as well as those teaching major courses—since the GEC constitutes only 15% of the units taken by the typical college student—to contribute to the intellectualization of our national language by using it.

But while the use of Filipino across academic domains is desirable, the Commission nevertheless recognizes that the process necessitates a broader effort encompassing different domains and can only be taken gradually, considering the array of socio-cultural, economic and financial constraints related to a shift to the language as medium of instruction. These include: the availability of experts with strong mastery in *both* the Filipino language and specific domains, the wide use of English in academe and industry, and the possible impact of such move on our students' access to global knowledge and conversations.

To balance the constitutional provisions on developing the national language vis-à-vis the academic freedom granted by the Philippine Constitution to institutions of higher learning, the Commission proposes a two-pronged approach that will ensure the availability of course descriptions and syllabi in Filipino, and more importantly, of instructional materials and of faculty capacity in the teaching of core GE courses in the Filipino language, while at the same time, provide higher education institutions the freedom to respond freely to the needs of their students.

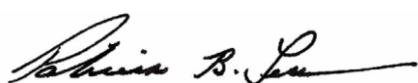
Without changing the provisions of CMO 20, the Commission shall support such aims by providing incentives to HEIs that opt to use Filipino in the GE courses or offer several sections of a given course in Filipino and other Philippine languages. It shall also begin discussions with the Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino (KWF) towards a partnership in developing a long-term plan that integrates said effort with the wider higher education reform agenda. This includes, but is not limited to, the provision of support and financial incentives for the development of materials in Filipino.

Finally, the Commission recognizes that the current issue on intellectualization of the Filipino language is closely linked with the very valid concern of Filipino professors regarding possible displacement, a fear equally shared by many faculty members in other disciplines, and by the Commission itself, in light of the upcoming K to 12 transition.

Apart from the support and incentives to be provided for the development of the Filipino language, the Commission assures stakeholders concerned that a K to 12 Transition Plan for Higher Education Institutions is currently being prepared by the Commission, in close coordination with DepEd, TESDA, DOLE and PRC, to mitigate its possible negative impacts, foremost on faculty, while also leveraging this period of transition to upgrade the quality of higher education.

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For the Commission:



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