

UniFAST FAQs

What is UniFAST and why was it established?

The Unified Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education, or UniFAST -- also known as Republic Act No. 10687 -- was passed into law on 15 October 2015.

UniFAST reconciles, improves, strengthens, expands, and puts under one body all government-funded modalities of Student Financial Assistance Programs (StuFAPs) for tertiary education – and special purpose education assistance – in both public and private institutions. These modalities include scholarships, grants-in-aid, student loans and other specialized forms of StuFAPs formulated by the UniFAST Board.

The UniFAST law – and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) – are intended to make the implementation of StuFAPs in the tertiary level more effective, efficient, and politically-neutral or free of political labeling.

What is Tertiary Education?

“Tertiary Education” follows secondary education or high school. It includes college, post-secondary non-degree diploma, Technical-Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and higher education programs like baccalaureate degrees (college) graduate education (master’s, Ph.D., etc.).

What is Special Purpose Education Assistance?

“Special Purpose Education Assistance” refers to research and scientific studies in the college and masteral/doctoral level funded by StuFAPs. It includes funding assistance for the following:

- Writing and publication of books, manuscripts, theses, dissertations, scientific and technical journals

- Production, filming and documentation (through digital technology) of research and studies
- Development of instructional and academic materials, and science models

Who are part of the UniFAST Board?

The UniFAST Board consists of the Chair of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as UniFAST Chair; the Director-General of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and the Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) as Co-Chairs; the Secretary of the Department of Education (DepEd), representatives from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), and the National Youth Commission (NYC) as members. The chair, co-chairs and members are with the UniFAST Board by virtue of their permanent positions in their respective offices/ departments.

The various StuFAP operationalizations which UniFAST coordinates are implemented by CHED, TESDA and the following departments: Department of Science and Technology (DOST), DOLE, Department of Social Work and Development (DSWD), Department of National Defense (DND), Department of Agriculture (DA), the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR); the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP); both Houses of Congress, and other government instrumentalities such as the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), among others.

The government financial institutions (GFIs) implementing the StuFAPs include Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), and the Social Security System (SSS).

What does the UniFAST Board do?

The UniFAST Board does the following:

- Makes and approves policies and strategies for UniFAST; reviews

existing rules to make sure it follows the guidelines of the UniFAST Law

- Coordinates with the implementing agencies of StuFAPs; makes, approves, and issues guidelines for UniFAST
- Supports implementing agencies to make sure that the UniFAST law is implemented effectively
- Prepares, approves, and submits to CHED its own budget proposal; checks, adjusts, and puts together all requests for government funding of tertiary education StuFAPs
- Spreads information to the public about the minimum guidelines, rules, and regulations of StuFAPs for tertiary education
- Provides general guidelines for contracts with student beneficiaries
- Monitors, reviews, and evaluates StuFAPs and projects
- Adopts a Qualifying Exam System for Scoring Students (QESS) for merit- and talent-based StuFAPs and decides on requirements for grants-in-aid and other StuFAP modalities
- Provides a supportive environment for the growth and development of private sector participation for StuFAPs
- Keeps a database with information on the StuFAPs, and accredited public and private tertiary education programs and institutions
- Spreads information on the database and encourages its use by interested parties; ensures that beneficiaries are able to maximize UniFAST benefits
- Designs a program to generate funds for UniFAST
- Facilitates/ taps donations, legacies, gifts and other forms of contributions in cash or kind
- Appoints members of the UniFAST Secretariat upon the recommendation of the Executive Director-General
- Appoints one or more legal officers with authority to file cases
- Sets up, maintains, and updates an official record of academic and research programs and tertiary education institutions
- Develops an efficient system of tracking student borrowers, and of a system of releasing, and collecting of payments. This includes entering into agreements with private and public banks, credit information bureaus and other government financial institutions

(GFIs) in tracking delinquent borrowers

What are StuFAPs?

There's more to Student Financial Assistance Programs (StuFAPs) than just scholarships. StuFAPs consist of government-funded scholarships, grants-in-aid, student loans, subsidies, and other incentives for qualified students.

UniFAST was established to promote the development of talented students who will serve the public good, widen the pool of world-class Filipino researchers, artists, innovators, thinkers and leaders.

What are the different kinds of StuFAPs?

Scholarship is a form of financial support given to qualified students based on merit or talent: extraordinary academic performance, special technical capability, and skills in the field of research and development (R&D), innovation and other creative work.

Grant-in-Aid requires a minimum level of capacity from poor but qualified students so they could finish tertiary education.

Student loan consists of short- or long-term loans to students who are short of cash, regardless of their economic status during the time of enrolment. The student is (or his parents, guardians or co-makers are) expected to pay the loan when they become gainfully employed.

Who may avail of the StuFAPs? What are the minimum qualifications?

Students enrolling or are continuing a first-time Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), associate, undergraduate (college), master's or doctoral degree -- whether taken in public or private, local or national educational institution -- could avail of StuFAPs.

Those who wish to pursue an undergraduate course (college), must be

graduates of Senior High School (SHS, or its equivalent) from authorized schools or educational institutions implementing the K-12 program.

Applicants who wish to pursue TVET must have at least ten (10) years of basic education or its equivalent, and must pass the initial TESDA screening/ profiling or assessment procedure, trade test, or skills competency evaluation.

Applicants must possess good moral character with no criminal record (based on conviction by final judgment). This will however not be required of target learners who were in conflict with the law or are undergoing or have undergone rehabilitation.

The applicants must be Filipino citizens. But the UniFAST Board is mandated by law to provide appropriate StuFAPs to foreign students based on reciprocal programs of countries that provide similar benefits to Filipino students (such as student exchange programs, international reciprocal scholarships, and other mutually-beneficial programs).

Applicants must declare if they are already benefiting from other government StuFAPs. They may still avail of another StuFAP for the remaining portion -- if at the time of the application -- the amount of the other existing grant did not cover the full cost of tertiary education at the Higher Education Institution (HEI,) or the Technological Vocational Institution (TVI).

What are HEIs and TVIs?

HEI is the acronym of “higher education institution,” an institution of higher learning which offers bachelor and advanced degrees, including associate degrees.

TVIs or Technological Vocational Institutions are public or private institutions that are recognized and authorized by TESDA to implement the Dualized Training Program (DTP) together with a partner establishment.

What do StuFAPs cover?

Depending on the kind or modality, an StuFAP may (or may not) cover any or all of the following:

- Tuition fees
- Miscellaneous and other school fees
- Educational expenses
- Cost-of-living allowance (COLA)

The top 10 graduates of all public high schools are given priority in making student loans. The loans however should be repaid in installment basis the student graduates or leaves the school/ college/ university.

What are the parties/ agencies implementing StuFAPs?

The UniFAST Board coordinates StuFAPs with CHED, TESDA, and the following government agencies and instrumentalities:

Departments:

1. Department of Science and Technology (DOST)
2. Department of Social Work and Development (DSWD)
3. Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)
4. Department of National Defense (DND)
5. Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)
6. Department of Agriculture (DA)
7. Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)

Other government offices:

1. National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP)
2. Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP)
3. Both Houses of Congress

Government Financing Institutions (GFIs):

1. Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP)
2. Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP)

3. Government Service Insurance System (GSIS)
4. Social Security System (SSS)

Where can one apply for StuFAPs?

One could apply for scholarships, grants and/or loans at CHED, TESDA, DOST, DOLE, DND, DA, DENR, DSWD, DILG, OPAPP, NCIP, among StuFAP-granting institutions. Loans are provided only by CHED and the GFIs.

How could I get in touch with the UniFAST Secretariat?

To get in touch with the UniFAST Secretariat, please e-mail <unifastsecretariat@gmail.com>

SIDEBAR:

What are Priority Courses?

CHED encourages incoming freshman students – especially qualified beneficiaries of its StuFAPs such as scholarships, grants-in-aid and loans – to enroll in priority courses.

Freshman students for the current school year and next (2016-2017, and 2017-2018) who are beneficiaries of government –funded Student Financial Assistance Programs (StuFAPs) such as scholarships, grants and loans managed or coordinated by the Unified Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST) are required to enroll in priority college courses.

In keeping with Republic Act No. 7722, or the Higher Education Act of 1994, the DOLE, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC), Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities (PACU) give CHED direction for determining priority courses.

Based on inter-agency meetings held in 2013, representatives of these organizations/agencies agreed that the following priority courses must be

followed within the next five years (or until next school year): Agriculture, Engineering, Science and Math, Information Technology (IT), Teacher Education, and Health Sciences. The other courses not listed here are to be determined by each regional office.

These courses are chosen based on the national development plans and manpower demands, or what are in-demand programs. But in the future, the priority programs will be based on the macro-HRD plan of UniFAST by the UniFAST Secretariat.

The priority courses from AY 2014-2015 to AY 2017-2018 (with the corresponding allocation of slots) are:

1. Agriculture and Related Fields, 15%

- Agro-Forestry
- Veterinary Medicine
- Agricultural Engineering
- Agribusiness/ Management
- Agricultural Entrepreneurship
- Agricultural Technology
- Agriculture
- Fisheries
- BS Food Technology
- Agricultural Economics

2. Engineering, 15%

- Mechanical Engineering
- Electronics Engineering
- Communication Engineering
- Metallurgical/ Mining Engineering
- Biomedical Engineering
- Chemical Engineering
- Geodetic Engineering
- Electrical Engineering
- Meteorological Engineering+

- Mining Engineering
- Geological Engineering
- Sanitary Engineering
- Chemical Engineering
- Industrial Engineering
- Civil Engineering
- Electronics and Communication Engineering
- Petroleum Engineering
- Bio Chemical Engineering

3. **Science and Math, 13%**

Bachelor of Science degrees in the following:

- Mathematics
- Physics
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Marine Biology/ Science
- Applied Physics
- Geology
- Earth Science
- Applied Mathematics
- Statistics/ Applied Statistics
- Atmospheric Science
- Environmental Science

4. **Information Technology, 10%**

- Information Technology and Computing Studies
- Multimedia
- Animation
- Programming
- Computer Science
- Information System Management
- Bachelor in Library Science and Information System, Major in System Analysis

5. Teacher Education major in, 10%

- Math
- Science
- Physics
- Chemistry
- Reading
- English
- Educational Media/ Technology
- Special Education (SPED)
- Human Kinetics
- Physical Education and Sports Science
- Bachelor of Physical Education major in School PE
- Early Childhood Education
- Environmental Planning (for teachers)
- MAPEH
- Music Education
- Art Education
- Health Education

6. Health Sciences, 10%

- Pharmacy
- Radiology Technology
- Medical Technology
- Physical Therapy
- BS Nutrition

7. Architecture, 5%

- BS Architecture
- Landscape Architecture
- Interior Design
- Environmental Planning
- Fine Arts
- Urban Planning

8. Business Administration and related courses, 5%

- BS Accountancy
- Business Data Outsourcing
- Business Process Outsourcing
- Construction Management
- Tourism

9. Social and Behavioral Sciences, 5%

- BS Psychology
- BS Social Work
- Human Development
- Guidance and Counseling

10. Arts and Humanities, 5%

- Creative and Performing Arts
- BS Religious Education
- BS Philosophy
- BS Theology

11. Maritime, 2%

- BS Marine Transportation

12. Communication, 2%

- BA Communication
- BA Journalism
- BA Broadcasting
- BS Development Communication

13. Others (to be determined by the Region), 3%

For more information, check this link: www.ched.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/CMO-01-series-of-2014-CHED-Priority-Courses-for-AY-2014-2015-to-AY-2017-2018.pdf philnews.ph/2014/03/25/ched-list-of-in-demand-college-courses-for-2014-20