



Republic of the Philippines  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
**COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

**CHED MEMORANDUM ORDER**

No. \_\_\_\_  
Series of 2020

**SUBJECT: GUIDELINES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FLEXIBLE LEARNING**

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In accordance with the pertinent provisions of Republic Act (RA) No.7722, otherwise known as the “*Higher Education Act of 1994*,” and; Republic Act No. 11469, otherwise known as the “*Bayanihan to Heal as One Act*”; and, by virtue of Commission en banc Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_, series of \_\_\_\_\_, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) hereby adopts and promulgates the following guidelines on Flexible Learning to be implemented by public and private Higher Education Institutions.

**I. RATIONALE FOR FLEXIBLE LEARNING**

The emergence of COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented disruptions in the lives of people all over the world. It came so unexpectedly where no one was ready enough to brace its impact to society.

The Philippines, in particular, faced a critical situation due to the rise of said health crisis. For higher education institutions, avoiding and limiting the risks of infection of the academic community has become a primordial concern. Hence, with the implementation of community quarantine, conduct of classes needed to be immediately suspended. The herculean challenge then was how to continue teaching and learning beyond the usual face to face instruction.

Thus, it has become an urgent need to explore other innovative learning modalities that will facilitate migration from traditional to flexible teaching and learning options. As learners are differently situated in terms of time, pace and place, these options allow customization of delivery modes responsive to students’ need for access to quality education. This shall also give students the option to choose the delivery mode most convenient to them as early as the time of their enrollment.

The paradigm shift therefore in the teaching and learning process in Philippine higher education necessitates collaboration among stakeholders and strengthening the culture of sharing of knowledge, resources, and best practices. Everyone is called to be part of this transition / transformation towards new normal. To achieve this, “humanity needs leadership and solidarity to defeat the coronavirus.” (<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/coronavirus.html>)

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**DRAFT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

## II. SCOPE AND COVERAGE

This contains the general guidelines on the implementation of flexible learning and teaching options, approaches, strategies, systems, pedagogies and modalities in the higher education environment, which may be adopted by all public and private HEIs in the country for Academic Year 2020-2021 only. It covers all on-going students of the HEIs, including the incoming first year students of the said academic year.

However, HEIs adopting these guidelines which were not previously included in the list of HEIs offering Distance Education programs, but will opt to become Distance Education providers in the ensuing academic years shall be evaluated based on the requirements, laws, policies, and procedures of the Commission and that of the State.

Further, this guideline on FL should not be construed as an authority to operate Transnational Education as provided in RA 11448, Transnational Higher Education Act and CMO No. 62, s. 2016, Policies, Standards and Guidelines for Transnational Education (TNE) Programs.

## III. DEFINITION

**Flexible Learning** is the design and delivery of programs, courses, and learning interventions that address learners' unique needs in terms of place, pace, process, and products of learning. It involves the use of digital and non-digital technology, and covers both face-to-face/in-person learning and out-of-classroom learning modes of delivery or a combination of modes of delivery. It ensures the continuity of inclusive and accessible education when the use of traditional modes of teaching is not feasible, as in the occurrence of national emergencies.

*Flexible Learning is a pedagogical approach allowing flexibility of time, place and audience including, but not solely focused on, the use of technology. Although it commonly uses the delivery methods of distance education and facilities of education technology, this may vary depending on the levels of technology, availability of devices, internet connectivity, level of digital literacy and approaches. (SEAMEO)*

## IV. GENERAL GUIDELINES

In the implementation of flexible learning, HEIs shall be guided by the following:

1. Considering that a flexible learning teaching and learning design perspective is deeply rooted in the needs of the students, the main objective should be to provide learners with the most flexibility on the learning content, schedules, access, and innovative assessment, making use of digital and non-digital tools.
2. HEIs shall continue to exercise their judgment/academic freedom in the deployment of available flexible learning and other alternative modes of delivery in lieu of in-campus learning/face-to-face modality. The exercise of discretion by the HEIs and

their faculty must be reasonable, transparent, and outcomes-based validated. (Ref: CHED COVID Advisory No. 6)

3. HEIs shall decide on the most viable form of flexible learning and teaching that they will utilize based on their capability, existing condition, national government agency guidelines and local government unit advisories.
4. HEIs shall develop their learning continuity plan which shall reflect the framework and system for the transition and integration of flexible learning approaches anchored on the existing tools and resources of the institution, capability of staff and faculty members, and capacity of students to be submitted to CHED thru the respective Regional Offices. The Basic Description of the Learning Continuity Plan Implementation, may include, among others, the following:
  - a. executive summary
  - b. systems and procedures for the transition to Flexible Learning
  - c. project implementation description (including key people such as the project director/coordinator, what modality of flexible learning options to use, and objectives amongst others)
  - d. curricular modifications reflecting flexible learning strategies on content and use of learning materials and objects, teaching and learning activities and requirements, evaluation/assessment, including that for OJT and practicum
  - e. resources and support services for students and faculty
  - f. policies on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), OER plagiarism, attendance, reporting and updating, teaching complement
  - g. Constant dialogue with the LGU, Regional IATF and other relevant stakeholders to be updated and a possible partner in the preparation during the COVID crisis situation considering the different situation of the Regions in the Philippines.
  - h. health and safety protocols in accordance with the Inter-Agency Task Force and Local Government Unit advisories
  - i. overview and orientation Guide for Students and Teachers
  - j. mechanisms for continuous quality improvement
5. Flexible Learning should complement outcomes-based education approach which allows flexibility for the HEIs to employ various means of delivery and assessment as long as they can show the achievement of the set learning outcomes for each course/subject for the program.
6. In terms of Learning Content, HEIs shall review all their curricular offerings and make the necessary adjustments or modifications in the course contents/requirements, determine alternative options in the design, delivery, pedagogy, and assessment mechanisms that can be delivered to the students through various modalities.
7. On the management of learners, HEIs shall provide mechanisms to inform and orient learners on the learning system to be implemented, which may be in a form of course packages for students and are accessible through off-line and online modes. Course packages may include course syllabi, study guides, learning activities, available repository of learning resources, schedule of lessons/ consultations, assessments, monitoring of students engagement, schedule and mechanics of submission of

requirements, grading system, feedback portals, student support systems, etc., to assist students in managing their study time and maximizing their learning.

The systems and procedures for the transition to Flexible Learning should be disseminated to all students, officials, teaching and non-teaching staff which may be in the form of a policy document such as a guidebook/manual/briefer, etc. or may be incorporated in the institution’s student handbook. HEIs should implement mechanisms for students to receive/access printed or digital course packages/instructional materials through courier, designated pick up points or through digital platforms.

8. HEIs shall establish means for student and teacher engagement/ communication which may include Short Message Service (SMS), electronic mail (email), chat, instant messaging, and other means whichever is convenient, appropriate, and available in order to ensure personalized, effective, efficient, and timely mentoring and feedback mechanisms.
9. HEIs shall explore partnerships with relevant agencies and organizations to strengthen and/or complement existing resources, infrastructure or connectivity to ensure uninterrupted learning of the students.
10. HEIs are encouraged to maximize the use of technology to support learning and teaching, which may include the following:
  - a. Determination of the level of technology to be used for the delivery of programs based on connectivity of students. Example:

CATEGORIES	AVAILABILITY OF DEVICES	INTERNET CONNECTIVITY	LEVEL OF DIGITAL LITERACY	APPROACHES
High Level Technology	laptops, mobile phones, tablets, desktops	Fast	Proficient	Online learning or Blended learning technology
Medium Level Technology	mostly available phones	Slow	Advanced	Macro and micro learning approach (a mix of online and offline activities)
Low Level Technology	some mobile phones or no technology	Poor or no Internet connection	Beginner	Self-instructional modules /mostly offline activities

*(Source: SEAMEO Innotech Flexible Learning Management Systems, Dr. Juan Robertino Macalde, SEAMEO Innotech)*

- b. Establishment of a multi-media or learning resource center to provide technical support to faculty members in the development of IT-enabled and IT-mediated instructional materials.

- c. Access/utilization of electronic library and/or available Open Educational Resources (OER) as reference in various flexible learning pedagogies and disciplinal content.
- d. Utilization of a learning management system (LMS), either proprietary or non-proprietary

11. HEIs shall implement or explore grants and/or support capacity building programs for administrators, faculty, and staff on transitioning to flexible learning.
12. HEIs shall ensure that health and safety protocols are maintained at all times. HEIs shall also establish means to remind students, teachers and other school personnel of the health and safety protocols through the display of reminders in conspicuous areas within the school premises.
13. HEIs are encouraged to form consortia/coalition/networking to facilitate capacity building programs and sharing of resources.
14. CHED Regional Offices shall monitor and evaluate the implementation of their Learning Continuity Plan (found in No. 4 for Flexible Learning).

**V. VARIOUS MODALITIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FLEXIBLE LEARNING AND TEACHING**

The table below describes the components of the various learning modalities which HEIs may consider in implementing Flexible Learning Strategies.

COMPONENTS	OFF-LINE	BLENDED	ON-LINE
1. Technology	<p>printed modules, audio tapes, video tapes, CDs, storage devices, learning packets</p> <p>Television/radio broadcasting networks</p> <p>Learning Management System (portable/cloud)</p>	<p>Desktop computer, laptop, smartphone, apps</p> <p>if virtual or collaborative learning is to be implemented, LMS must be set-up</p> <p>printed modules, audio tapes, video tapes, CDs, storage devices, learning packets</p> <p>Television/radio broadcasting networks</p> <p>Learning Management System (portable/cloud)</p>	<p>computer, laptop, smartphone, apps</p> <p>learning packets</p> <p>Learning Management System</p>

<p>2. Content/learning materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Learning Objects (LOs)</li> </ul>	<p>printed or electronic modules, video, audio, podcasts, webcasts, OERs stored in storage devices</p> <p>OERs, learning modules/materials</p>	<p>printed or electronic modules, video, audio, podcasts, webcasts, OERs</p> <p>The use of digital platform or the HEIs' LMS</p>	<p>electronic modules, video, audio, podcasts, webcasts, OERs</p> <p>Mainly the use of internet-based technology, modules, and the like.</p> <p>The use of digital platform or the HEIs' LMS</p>
<p>3. Evaluation/ assessment (both formative and summative assessment)</p>	<p>proctored non-conventional assessment</p> <p>performance-based assessment (e.g. portfolio, research papers, video recorded student reports/laboratory)</p> <p>project-based or task-based assessment</p> <p>use of assessment rubrics</p>	<p>performance-based assessment (e.g. portfolio, research papers, automated exams with pool/bank of questions, video recorded student reports/laboratory)</p> <p>project-based or task-based assessment</p> <p>use of assessment rubrics</p>	<p>performance-based assessment (e.g., portfolio, research papers, automated exams with pool/bank of questions, video recorded student reports/laboratory)</p> <p>use of assessment rubrics</p>
<p>4. Support services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● library</li> <li>● guidance and counselling</li> <li>● student support (health, psychological)</li> <li>● technical support for faculty</li> <li>● enrollment</li> <li>● assessments and grade</li> <li>● payment system (tuition and salary)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● use of other delivery options for student services (digital or non-digital), when necessary and appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>If 50% of program is online then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● online library and subscriptions</li> <li>● online enrollment</li> <li>● guidance and counselling</li> <li>● online technical support staff/ help desk</li> <li>● online assessment and grades monitoring</li> <li>● online payment (tuition and salary)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● online library and subscription</li> <li>● online enrollment</li> <li>● guidance and</li> <li>● technical support/ support staff, help desk</li> <li>● online assessment and grades monitoring</li> <li>● online payment (tuition and salary)</li> </ul>
<p>5. Policies on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)</li> <li>● Open Educational Resources (OER)</li> <li>● plagiarism,</li> </ul>	<p>must be available</p>	<p>must be available</p>	<p>must be available</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attendance, reporting and updating of students</li> <li>• teaching complement attendance, reporting and updating</li> </ul>			
6. Overview and Orientation Guide for Students and Teachers	must be available	must be available	must be available

## VI. CREATION/DEVELOPMENT OF CONSORTIUM

### Principles

Given the onset of global COVID pandemic, it is very relevant to address the challenges it brought to higher education by **mobilizing HEIs as one team**, for the purpose of sustaining learning and teaching . This will generate **synergies of action** from among them, despite being differently situated, to co-create and innovate in order to align with demands of the new normal.

The establishment of a consortium is bounded by a common vision and mission to ensure quality and excellence in the delivery of the various academic programs. This engagement of the HEIs is anchored on the **spirit of bayanihan** and **culture of cooperation** as a way of achieving goals. It entails **strengthening partnership, co-production** and **sharing of resources, and building capacities** while maintaining a **sense of ownership to outcomes and accountability** to the processes and impact to stakeholders.

Consequently, the consortium will contribute to the building of an **agile, resilient** and **transformative** higher education system. The community of practice for collective knowledge and good practices will be institutionalized, thus ensuring responsiveness and inclusivity in higher education at all times.

### Guidelines

In order to achieve mutually beneficial goals of transitioning into flexible learning, HEIs may create consortia/partnerships/coalition/networking.

1. Consortium refers to a collaboration or agreement of three or more HEIs to share human and physical resources, funding for program development, production and delivery. To operationalize this, there may be lead and member HEIs, and/or delivering HEIs (DHEIs) and sending HEIs (SHEIs), as may be appropriate. The lead or delivering HEIs, which may be autonomous, deregulated HEIs, and/or those with identified CHED Center of Excellence

and/or CHED Center of Development, will spearhead/serve as proponent/s of the consortium. On the other hand, the member or sending HEIs will be part of the consortium.

2. All CHED-recognized Philippine Higher Education Institutions, including state universities and colleges, local universities and colleges, and private higher education institutions offering tertiary education programs, that are willing to collaborate with each other and commit and obligate counterpart appropriation of human and/or physical resources for institutional capacity building in the use of flexible teaching and learning may be part of a Consortium/Consortia.
3. HEIs may form consortia/partnerships/coalition among each other on various areas, including, but not limited to the following:
  - a. Development and production of Open Educational Resources and Massive Open Online Courses, Open Online Courses, course materials, or lecture videos on different disciplines that can be shared with other HEIs for flexible teaching
  - b. Development of websites and/or LMS for delivering flexible learning through sharing of curricula, syllabus, study guides, and learning resources
  - c. Sharing of flexible learning strategies, learning resources and modes of delivery for all types of learners, including the most disadvantaged ones
  - d. Development of ICT-based assessment tools
  - e. Research on best practices on Flexible Learning Strategies per discipline or program.
  - f. Other areas which the HEIs will find beneficial to its members.
4. To effect the above premises, there has to be a binding agreement to be carried out through a Memorandum of Agreement between the parties to provide a common understanding, stipulating the roles and responsibilities of the parties entering into the consortia, areas for collaboration, implementation mechanisms, guidelines and procedures, among others.

## VII. EFFECTIVITY

This Guideline shall take effect immediately.

Quezon City, Philippines, \_\_\_\_\_ 2020.

For the Commission:

**J. PROSPERO E. DE VERA III, DPA**  
Chairman