

**COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT**

Joint Memorandum Circular No. 01
June 23, 2016

TO : COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION (CHED)
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT (DBM)
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT (DSWD)
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT (DOLE)

SUBJECT : ENHANCED IMPLEMENTING GUIDELINES FOR THE EXPANDED
STUDENTS' GRANTS-IN-AID PROGRAM FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION
(ESGP-PA)

1.0 Rationale

In consonance with the provision in Article XIV, Section 1 of the Philippine Constitution "to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all" and Article XIV, Section 2 (3) "to establish and maintain a system of scholarship, grants, student loan programs, subsidies, and other incentives which shall be available to deserving students in both public and private schools, especially to the underprivileged", the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has been tasked to formulate guidelines to ensure that the abovementioned provisions are met.

Two Billion Five Hundred Million Pesos (2,500,000,000.00) shall be used for tertiary education of poor but deserving students belonging to indigent household under the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR) identified by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) or informal sector families. Potential student-grantees shall be enrolled in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in course offerings aligned with the priorities of the government based on current supply and demand situation in the labor market.

2.0 Program Title and Coverage

The financial assistance shall be known as the Expanded Students' Grants-In-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation (ESGP-PA).

Grantees of this program are poor but deserving students giving priority to Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries qualified to enroll in selected SUCs to take up priority programs of CHED and other course offerings aligned with the government key growth areas per CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 1, s. 2014 "CHED Priority Courses for AY 2014-2015 to AY 2017-2018", Memorandum from the CHED Chairperson dated April 23, 2014 "Addendum to CHED Priority Courses for AY 2014-2015 to AY 2017-2018" and CMO No. 31 s. 2015

“Supplement to CMO No. 13 Entitled ‘Revised Guidelines for the Implementation of Student Financial Assistance Programs (StuFAPs) Effective AY 2014-2015’ and CMO No. 16. 2014 on the ‘Addendum to CMO No. 13 s. 2014’”, as well as the current trends in the global and domestic labor market.

The ESGP-PA shall eventually be under the umbrella of Republic Act (RA) 10687 otherwise known as “Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST) Act” which covers “all existing modalities of Student Financial Assistance Programs (StuFAPs) for Tertiary Education and Special Purpose Education Assistance in both public and private institutions.” Program-specific guidelines shall be developed and adopted through a UniFAST Board Resolution.

3.0 Purpose

ESGP-PA aims to contribute to the National Government’s thrusts in effectively addressing poverty alleviation by increasing the number of graduates in higher education among poor households and to facilitate the employment in high-value added occupations and promote livelihood opportunities in order to lift their families out of poverty and contribute to national development.

ESGP-PA shall be implemented by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Department of Budget and Management (DBM), State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), as a long term instrument and commitment to break the vicious poverty cycle afflicting the poor but deserving Filipino youth and their families.

4.0 Funding

For the funding requirement of the ESGP-PA, DBM shall release directly to the SUCs the amount of Two Billion Five Hundred Million Pesos (2,500,000,000.00) for the student-grantees and activities of the program.

5.0 Financial benefits

5.1 Grant

A student-grantee shall be entitled to a maximum of Sixty Thousand Pesos (Php60,000.00) as grant per academic year or Thirty Thousand (Php30,000.00) as grant per semester. The grant is intended to cover the costs for tuition and other school fees, academic and extracurricular expenses, purchase of text books, board and lodging, transportation, clothing, admission/entrance fees, health and other valid related education expenses and support services to complete the student-grantee’s degree program.

Particulars	Unit Cost (Php)	Total Cost/Year (Php)
1. Tuition, other school fees (based on national average tuition fees of SUCs) and academic and extracurricular expenses	10,000.00/semester	20,000.00
2. Textbook/other learning materials	2,500.00/semester	5,000.00
3. Stipend (to include food, lodging, clothing, transportation, health / medical needs, basic school supplies and other related costs)	3,500.00/mos x 10mos	35,000.00
Total		60,000.00

5.2 Other school fees, academic and extracurricular expenses may include the following:

- 5.2.1 Summer classes
- 5.2.2 Bridging and remedial programs
- 5.2.3 Practice Teaching
- 5.2.4 Seminars required in the course
- 5.2.5 On-the-Job Training fees
- 5.2.6 Field trips and educational tours as required in the course
- 5.2.7 Graduation fees
- 5.2.8 Thesis, cases/project studies expenses and terminal reports
- 5.2.9 Review for PRC Board Exams
- 5.2.10 General assemblies
- 5.2.11 Attendance to youth camp, leadership training, congress as required in the course

5.3 Excess amount

Any excess amount from the Ten Thousand Pesos (Php10,000.00) semestral budget allocated for tuition, other school fees and academic and extracurricular expenses may be used for other valid related educational expenses and support services to complete the student's degree program subject to the usual government budgeting, accounting and auditing rules and regulations.

6.0 Administrative and Miscellaneous Cost

Three percent (3%) Administrative and Miscellaneous Cost (AMC) for SUCs shall cover activities such as: monitoring, office supplies and materials, hiring of project technical staff/s or job order, communication, transportation/travel, Information Technology (IT) equipment, remedial/mentoring program and meetings/orientations/general assembly.

7.0 Timelines to be Observed

No.	Activities	Responsible Agency/ies	Schedule
1.	Validate potential grantees and confirm for eligibility, willingness and interest to pursue higher education under the ESGP-PA	DSWD	Oct. - Nov.
2.	Submit the list of names of validated potential student-grantees broken down according to the agreed regional allocation to SUCs for admission process copy furnish the Regional ESGP-PA Steering Committee (RSC) and National ESGP-PA Steering Committee-Technical Working Group (NSC-TWG)	DSWD and SUCs	Dec.
3.	Administer admission examination	SUC	Jan.
4.	Releases the allotment comprehensively direct to the SUCs	DBM	1 st working day of Jan.
5.	Orient ESGP-PA student-grantees and their parents/guardians on the policies and guidelines and other requirements of the program	SUC	Feb.
6.	Organize and/or enhance values formation, and career guidance to student-grantees and their families or parents	SUC	Feb.
7.	Conduct of bridging program to provide remedial/mentoring program to cater to the special needs of the student-grantees (as applicable)	SUC	Apr. - May
8.	Release the Notice of Cash Allocation (NCA) directly to the SUCs based on the Monthly Disbursement Program (MDP)	DBM	

8.0 Operational Processes

8.1 Student-grantee

8.1.1 Identification

- The validation and endorsement shall be conducted by DSWD. Results of the validation shall be submitted by DSWD to RSC copy furnish the SUCs;
- The potential student-grantees validated and endorsed by DSWD shall be ranked by the SUC for pre-admission;
- SUCs and DSWD shall jointly identify and recommend the potential student-grantees to be admitted;
- SUCs shall implement a flexible admission requirement as applicable; and
- SUCs and DSWD shall jointly make a formal endorsement of final admission list to the RSC for confirmation.

8.1.2 Retention

- a. SUCs shall inform the DSWD regarding student-grantees who are showing signs for possible case management i.e. unexcused absences, health-related concerns, difficulty in coping with academic requirements, inappropriate behavior;
- b. SUCs and DSWD, with the assistance of the RSC shall lead in the intensive case management including the potential dropping from the program; and
- c. After exhausting all possible DSWD case management and institutional efforts, SUC policies on retention shall apply.

8.1.3 Replacement

- a. SUCs shall issue a formal request to City/Municipal Links (C/ML) to profile potential student-grantees for replacement at least a month before the end of current semester. Criteria to be used are as follows:
 1. Currently a member of a registered clean and active household of Pantawid Pamilya;
 2. For potential grantees who are already in college, he/she should be taking up a CHED-priority course;
 3. The only household member availing or to avail of ESGP-PA; and
- b. C/MLs shall submit the list of potential replacements from their respective areas before end of enrollment of the succeeding semester.
- c. DSWD-RPMO ESGP-PA focal person will finalize and secure the Regional Directors's approval of the list of potential ESGP-PA student-grantees for replacement, for endorsement to SUCs copy furnished CHED and DBM.
- d. SUCs shall screen the potential ESGP-PA student-grantees for replacement with the following considerations:
 1. Replacement priority be given to those from the same area (i.e. City/Municipality or Province) where the dropout came from;
 2. If possible, with the same year level and taking CHED Priority Course;
 3. If not of the same level and course, replacement shall be offered a course in line with DOLE's skills registry listing, provided, it is included in the CHED priority courses; and
 4. Preferably with academic performance worthy of the program;
- e. SUCs to come up with the confirmed list of replaced slots and submit to DSWD copy furnished CHED and DBM.
- f. DSWD Regional Project Management Office (RPMO) to feedback the result to DSWD Provincial Operations Offices for C/MLs inclusion in the monitoring of ESGP-PA.

8.2 Funding

8.2.1 Release of funds to SUCs

- a. The basis for the release of NCA by DBM will be the MDP of SUCs;
- b. SUCs with satellite campuses situated in other regions shall request validation/approval from the DSWD Field Office or Provincial link which ever is nearest or convenient to the satellite campus in order for concerned DBM Regional Office where the SUC Main campus is located to release NCA; and
- c. The release of fund for first and second semester will be on the month of May and September respectively.

8.2.2 Requirements and processes for the release of funds by SUCs to students

- a. All enrolled student-grantees shall be given the full financial benefits accorded to them by the Program;
- b. Stipend shall be released by the SUC to the student-grantees on a monthly basis.
- c. Book allowance shall be released on a semestral basis.
- d. The SUCs uses the amount allotted for tuition, other school fees and academic and extracurricular expenses to pay for the grantee's dues for the said purposes. The SUCs shall in no case released the said fund or the excess amount to the student-grantees as stipend.

8.3 Program Management

8.3.1 Responsibilities of Implementers

a. CHED

1. Monitors the implementation of the program in coordination with the DSWD;
2. Convenes regular meetings of the NSC-TWG;
3. Organizes cluster re-orientation, general assembly and other related activities for implementers and selected student-grantees;
4. Provides program advocacy and other relevant activities for the student-grantees in coordination with DSWD and SUCs;
5. Decides on operational and administrative concerns which need immediate actions whenever necessary;
6. Maintains a database of ESGP-PA student-grantees; and
7. Ensures that the consolidated lists of ESGP-PA student-grantees and graduates is posted in the official website of the CHED.

b. DSWD

1. Identifies potential student-grantees using the DSWD approved recommended guidelines;
2. Validates potential student-grantees and confirm for eligibility, willingness and interest to pursue Higher Education under the ESGP-PA;
3. Submits the list of names of validated potential student-grantees to SUCs for admission process and to RSC and NSC-TWG for reference;
4. Lead in the intensive case management in partnership with SUCs and with the assistance of RSC;
5. Coordinates the provision of the necessary interventions for the student-grantee and family at the local level;
6. Co-monitors the implementation of the program; and
7. Refer to RSC organizations (i.e. College/ Alumni / Student orgs, Private individuals / external partners, DSWD E-AICs etc.) which are willing to provide support to student-grantees.

c. DBM

1. Releases the allotment comprehensively direct to the SUCs;
2. Release NCA based on the submitted MDP by SUC. Provided, that the list of actual student grantees shall be required prior to inclusion to the program and confirmed by RSC; and
3. Provide technical assistance to the both RSC and SUCs in matters of financial management and slot allocation.

d. SUCs

1. Create a Project Management Office (PMO) who will oversee the operation and implementation of the program for the school. The PMO shall be composed of:
 - Vice President for Academic Affairs - Chair
 - Guidance Counselor - Member
 - ESGP-PA Coordinator (a school personnel with permanent employment status) - Member
 - Project Technical Staff (contractual personnel who will assist on a full-time basis in the technical and administrative functions of the program) - Member
2. Provide timely feedback to the RSC regarding all policies, issues of implementation and funding allocation/availment by students;
3. Assist the DSWD in the validation of potential student-grantees;
4. Administer flexible admission policies at no cost to students;
5. Orient ESGP-PA student-grantees and their parents/guardians on the policies and guidelines and other requirements of the program;
6. Provide for appropriate accommodation such as dormitories or accredited boarding houses and ensure the affordability level;

7. Organize and/or enhance values formation, and career guidance to student-grantees and their families or parents;
8. Provide guidance counseling services;
9. Institute as needed a bridging program to provide remedial/mentoring program to cater to the special needs of the student-grantees. Bridging program should be planned and carried to cater the needs of the student-grantees;
10. Monitor and report the academic performance of the student-grantees at the end of each Academic Year until graduation;
11. Ensure that all grantees should be registered in the DOLE skills registry;
12. Lead in the intensive case management, including the potential dropping of student-grantees from the program, in partnership with DSWD and with the assistance of RSC;
13. Refer to RSC organizations (i.e. College/ Alumni / Student orgs, Private individuals / external partners, DSWD E-AICs etc.) which are willing to provide support to student-grantees;
14. Ensure that student-grantees follow rules of discipline by the school (for cases where rallies become violent or destructive of school policies;
15. Inform the RSC about any student-grantee who drops out due to meritorious reason/s and of possible replacement who may avail of the program, on a case to case basis as may be determined by RSC but in no case shall be not longer than a semester copy furnished the NSC;
16. Submit to RSC the actual qualified grantees as basis for the release of NCA;
17. Receive the financial benefits from the DBM for disbursement to the student-grantees based on their entitlements under this program;
18. Encourage each student-grantee to open an Automated Teller Machine (ATM) Savings Account with the LBP or DBP;
19. Maintain a separate book of account for the program;
20. Facilitate the timely monthly release of financial benefits to the student-grantees;
21. Provide financial management sessions;
22. Establish and maintain an updated electronic database for monitoring and reporting of status of ESGP-PA student-grantees;
23. Establish program-specific mechanism for appeals, grievances, complaints of student-grantees;
24. Submit quarterly reports in printed form and electronic copy of the document, to the RSC and DBM, copy furnished the House Committee on Appropriations, Senate Committee on Finance and on the financial and physical accomplishments of the program, including the list of student-grantees. Ensure that the said quarterly reports and list of student-grantees are likewise posted in the official website of the SUC; and
25. Device internal financial arrangement to cover the legitimate excess expenses relative to teaching-learning and support services;

e. DOLE

1. Informs and regularly updates the partner agencies and orient recipients on the development and availability of high-value added jobs;
2. Provides support livelihood opportunities which subsume financial literacy;
3. Livelihood intervention shall be during (with the intent of protecting the grantees' stipend) and after graduation;
4. Coordinates job placement in partnership with the industries, LGUs and civil societies in preparing recipients for placement assistance towards high-value added jobs; and
5. Reports to the NSC interventions on family support livelihood programs.

8.3.2 Implementing Committees

- a. The National ESGP-PA Steering Committee (NSC) is hereby created. The composition of the NSC is as follows:

Chair	-	Chairperson, CHED
Members	-	Secretary, DBM
		Secretary, DSWD
		Secretary, DOLE
		Authorized representative, SUCs

The Role of the NSC are as follows:

1. Convenes regular meeting at least once a semester;
2. Oversees the operation and implementation of the program;
3. Enhances the policies that will ensure that the services provided for by the program shall serve the target student-grantees;
4. Decides on appeals, grievances, complaints, request for additional slots as maybe recommended by the TWG;
5. Approves slot allocation

Pursuant to RA 10687 otherwise known as "Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST) Act" the UniFAST Board shall assume the powers and functions of the National ESGP-PA Steering Committee (NSC) once the program-specific guidelines has been developed and adopted through a UniFAST Board Resolution.

- b. National ESGP-PA Steering Committee (NSC)-Technical Working Group (TWG)

Chair	-	Director, OSDS-CHED or representative
Members	-	Director, AFMS, CHED or representative
		Director, DBM, BMB-HDS or representative
		Director, DSWD, NPMO or representative
		Director, DOLE, BWSC and BLE or representatives
		Authorized representative, SUCs

The Role of the NSC-TWG are as follows:

1. Oversees the operation and implementation of the program;
2. Recommends to the NSC/UniFAST Board policies, programs, guidelines procedures in the effective and efficient implementation of the program;
3. Provides the NSC/UniFAST Board feedback of implementation problems and issues from the RSC;
4. Recommends the reallocation of unfilled slots;
5. Conducts zonal assemblies, orientation and other major monitoring and evaluation activities;
6. Decides on appeals, grievances, complaints;
7. Provides technical assistance to the RSCs and SUCs;
8. Monitors and evaluate the administration and implementation of the program; and
9. Submits periodic report to the ESGP-PA partner agencies and the NSC/UniFAST Board.

- c. The Regional ESGP-PA Steering Committee (RSC) is also hereby created. The composition of the RSC is as follows:

Chair	-	Director, CHED Regional Office
Co-chair	-	Director, DSWD Regional Office
Members	-	Director, DBM Regional Office
		Director, DOLE Regional Office
		Presidents, all SUCs in the region

The Role of the RSC are as follows:

1. Convenes regular quarterly meetings to discuss such as but not limited to slot allocation and financial status, livelihood support, case management of students and their families, program interventions and database generation, etc. Special meetings may be called as the need arises;
2. Confirms the actual list of qualified grantees submitted by SUCs;
3. Discusses/threshes-out issues with the concerned SUCs and program-wide implementation concerns;
4. Monitors all aspects of program implementation;
5. Recommends to NSC whatever necessary measures to improve the efficient and effective handling of the program;
6. Submits to the NSC thru the TWG, quarterly reports including feedback on resolved issues and action taken as well as problems that requires NSC action; and
7. The concerned agencies shall appoint permanent representative/s to the NSC/RSC.

8.3.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

For monitoring purposes, CHEDROs being the Chair of the RSC shall establish, maintain and update a consolidated electronic database of the student-grantees. CHEDROs shall submit the electronic file of the following data/documents to NSC-TWG through the OSDS-CHED:

Document	Date
a. List of officially enrolled student-grantees	Two (2) months after the start of the semester
b. List of enrolled ESGP-PA student-grantees per semester using the Student Information Matrix (SIM) template;	Two (2) weeks after the end of the semester
c. Financial Status using the Financial Status (FS) template;	One (1) month after the start of the enrollment period and one (1) month after the end of the semester
d. Narrative report to include activities conducted, initiatives/strategies that contributes to an efficient and effective implementation of the program, best practices using the Activities Conducted (AC) template;	Two (2) weeks after the end of the semester
e. List of graduating students; and	Two (2) months before the end of semester
f. List of graduates.	Every semester as soon as the SUCs approved the list for graduation
g. Reports including feedback on resolve issues and actions taken as well as problems that requires NSC action	Quarterly

SUCs shall establish, maintain and update an electronic database of the student-grantees. SUCs shall submit the electronic file of the following data/documents to the concerned RSC thru the CHEDRO:

Document	Date
a. List of officially enrolled student-grantees	One (1) month after the start of the semester
b. List of enrolled ESGP-PA student-grantees per semester using the Student Information Matrix (SIM) template	One (1) week after the end of the semester
c. Financial Status using the Financial Status (FS) template	One (1) month after the start of the enrollment period and one (1) month after the end of the semester
d. Narrative report to include activities conducted, initiatives/strategies that contributes to an efficient and effective implementation of the program, best practices using the Activities Conducted (AC) template	One (1) week after the end of the semester
e. List of potential graduating student-grantees	Two (2) months before the end of semester
f. List of graduates	Every semester as soon as the SUCs approved the list for graduation

9.0 Transparency and Accountability


The agencies concerned shall adopt a strict policy on transparency and accountability in the disbursement of the funds and shall be governed by the existing laws.

10.0 Complaints and Grievance Machineries

10.1.1 For late funding, students are encourage to air grievance but to put in proper communication; and

10.1.2 Students should follow rules of discipline by the SUC. For cases where rallies become violent or destructive of school properties, student-grantees should be dealt with according to the existing policies of the SUC.

11.0 Separability Clause

If any part or provision of this joint circular is declared void or unconstitutional by operation of law, rules and regulations the same shall apply only to that specific provision and the remaining clauses/provisions shall remain valid and enforceable. 

12.0 Repealing Clause

All or other existing orders and memoranda which are contrary to, or inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Joint Circular will be deemed repealed or modified accordingly.

13.0 Effectivity

This Circular shall take effect immediately.

CORAZON JULIANO-SOLIMAN

Secretary

Department of Social Welfare and Development

By Authority of the Secretary
(Per S.O. No. 2288, s. of 2016)

(SGD)

ROSALINDA D. BALDOZ

Secretary

Department of Labor and Employment

(SGD)

MATEO G. MONTAÑO

Undersecretary

Department of Social Welfare and Development

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FLORENCIO B. ABAD

Secretary

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PATRICIA B. LICUANAN, Ph.D.

Chairperson

Commission on Higher Education