



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

CHED MEMORANDUM ORDER

No. 55

Series of 2006

SUBJECT : REVISED POLICIES AND STANDARDS ON THE CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE PROJECT

In accordance with the pertinent provisions of Republic Act (RA) No. 7722, otherwise known as the "Higher Education Act of 1994", and for the purpose of establishing Centers of Excellence and Centers of Development that serve as potent catalysts in specific program areas needed for the development of world-class scholarships, nation building and national development, the following policies and standards are hereby adopted and promulgated by the Commission, thus:

I. RATIONALE

The Centers of Excellence (COE) project is an inherent mandate of the Commission on Higher Education as outlined in Republic Act 7722. The EDCOM report of 1991 recommended the creation of the "Centers of Excellence and Centers of Development" to strengthen and further improve the quality of the COE/CODs to the level of our ASEAN neighbors and also for these COE/CODs to become a resource to strengthen other schools in their localities. The COE/CODs are also envisioned to become centers of graduate education and research in their fields of strength.

Since its inception in 1996, the Commission on Higher Education has vigorously pursued the implementation of the COE project on a per discipline basis. Each Technical Panel was assigned to identify COE/CODs based on the criteria set by each panel. The identified COE/CODs were given grants by the Commission through the Higher Education Development Fund (HEDF). The grants given to the COE/CODs were allocated for instructional and research capability building, research projects and networking, extension and linkage activities.

In return, these COE/CODs are expected to take the lead in uplifting the quality of education in their respective disciplines and in their areas of responsibility. The COEs are expected to offer quality graduate degree programs, initiate linkage and networking projects focusing on faculty development and

industry-academe collaborations, enable sharing of equipment and library resources, and joint research activities.

II. COE / COD FUND RATIONALIZATION

The COE project has accomplished modest gains during its initial implementation. The objectives of the project have been adequately addressed. However, limited funding constraints have forced the Commission to re-think the implementation of the next batch of COE/CODs. Due to funding limitations, the Commission has decided to take a different approach in the identification and implementation of the next batch of COE/CODs. The COE project would now be more efficiently implemented by channeling limited resources on certain program areas that are needed to boost the country's competitiveness in emerging cutting edge technologies and to further improve and sustain the quality of teacher education.

The Commission through active deliberations has apportioned funds for the continuing financial support of the COE/CODs in the following areas:

1. **Agriculture** – applied biotechnology, medicinal plants research and plant breeding.
2. **Engineering** – microelectronics and semiconductor research.
3. **Information and Communications Technology** – software development, multimedia technologies and online learning and advanced communications technologies.
4. **Science and Mathematics** – genetics, materials science, biotechnology and marine science.
5. **Teacher Education**

COEs and CODs in other disciplines would still be identified however these COE/CODs would not be given financial assistance but instead would receive non-monetary benefits and privileges as may be identified by the Commission.

III. SELECTION CRITERIA

The COEs and CODs will be identified based on a general criteria developed by the Office of Programs and Standards. The criterion takes into consideration the program quality, research and extension activities of the HEI. The general criteria will then be forwarded to the respective Technical Panels for their specific requirements in selecting Centers of Excellence and Centers of Development in their discipline.

The general selection criteria are as follows:

A. Instructional Quality (45%)

- COEs and CODs must provide excellent human resources and facilities to attain its academic objectives. The instruction offered by COEs and CODs are based on good program administration, a faculty roster that

strikes a balance between higher academic studies and professional experience, a flexible and dynamic curriculum, and student facilities that are sufficient to meet the demands of the academic community it serves.

- a. Administration
- b. Faculty
- c. Curriculum
- d. Laboratories, Facilities and Equipment
- e. Library
- f. Information Technology capability
- g. Student Support System
- h. Performance in Licensure Examinations
- i. Graduate Profile
- j. Graduate Tracer Study / Employment of graduates

B. Research and Publication (30%)

- A COE or COD must exhibit a strong commitment to undertake research activities and an environment that encourages the conduct of such activities. Faculty and students must be given the opportunity to undertake research and must be able to access documents, references and equipment necessary for undertaking research work.

C. Extension and Linkages (20%)

- COEs and CODs have a good background in undertaking joint activities beyond their institutions in order to develop the quality of their programs. COEs and CODs must also be able to tap into the expertise and insights of private industries, government agencies and NGOs in enhancing their program offerings.

D. Institutional Qualifications (5%)

- A good academic program stems from a clear and achievable institutional vision for excellence and quality. The institution's policies, strategies and principles coupled with excellent student support services and facilities must all be geared towards this vision.

The detailed criteria developed by the Technical Panels will be forwarded to the Commission for approval and then to the Office of Programs and Standards for the start of the identification process.

IV. PROCESS OF SELECTION

The process of selection of COEs and CODs are as follows:

1. Application Phase

- There are two ways that an institution can apply to be a Center of Excellence
 - a. The Technical Panels shortlists the potential COEs. These shortlisted institutions would be invited to apply by the CHED-OPS.
 - b. A CMO is issued by the Commission informing all schools that a certain cluster or discipline is accepting applications for potential COEs and CODs.
 - The HEI then signifies its intention of becoming a Center of Excellence and submits pertinent documents to support the application. The supporting documents must exhibit evidence of the schools compliance with the selection criteria.
2. Initial Paper Evaluation
 - The application documents are submitted to the CHED Regional Offices and forwarded to the different Technical Panels through the CHED-OPS. The Technical Panels undertake the initial paper evaluation of the applications. The list of potential COEs are finalized and are scheduled for ocular inspection.
 3. Ocular Inspection
 - The CHED-OPS with the corresponding Technical Panel members composes a team of ocular inspectors to visit the shortlisted schools. The ocular inspection is conducted to validate the documents submitted and the schools in evaluated based on the set of selection criteria.
 4. Identification
 - Once the ocular inspections of all shortlisted HEIs are completed the Technical Panel concerned recommends the list of COEs and CODs to the Commission for approval.

Existing COEs/CODs may apply for an extension of their COE/COD status or in the case of CODs may apply for upgrading to a COE status provided that they meet the COE selection criteria.

If there is any region in the country where no COE is identified, a COD will be chosen instead. The same criteria will be used in identifying the COD while taking into consideration the special needs of the region.

V. GRANTS AND BENEFITS

The benefits of being identified as COEs / CODs are the following:

1. Priority in the selection of CHED institutional partners with regards to other CHED developmental projects;

2. Entitlement to other non-monetary subsidies and awards such as graduate scholarships for faculty members, priority for CHED research grants, consideration for conversion to University Status and identification as autonomous and deregulated HEIs;
- *COEs and CODs that would like to avail of financial assistance can submit project proposals. The Commission en banc would decide if the COE / COD would receive financial assistance based on the merits of their proposal.*

VI. COE / COD RESPONSIBILITIES AND MINIMUM EXPECTATIONS

For all COEs with or without funding

- Act as role models/ leaders in the local, regional and national community;
- Sustain and enhance research capabilities and upgrade professional or research graduate programs in the discipline;
- Provide assistance to agencies/institutions within its geographical area of coverage;
- Undertake other activities/projects necessary in developing quality education in the specific discipline.

Disciplines that will not be given financial assistance by the Commission have the discretion to identify or not to identify Centers of Development (CODs).

For COEs and CODs with funding assistance

- Accelerate the development of the discipline through strategic developmental programs and projects;
- Develop instructional program quality through faculty development activities and upgrading of facilities and library holdings;
- Undertake basic and applied research activities on emerging trends and advancements in their field;
- Undertake extension and linkage projects through regional or national consortia agreements, internationalization activities and industry – academe collaborations.

COD responsibilities and minimum expectations

- Develop their instructional programs through faculty development activities and upgrading of facilities and library holdings;
- Establish linkages with COEs in the same discipline to further improve their capability to undertake research in the field.

VII. USE OF FUNDS

COEs and CODs that would like to avail of funding assistance should submit project proposals that are geared towards improving the following areas:

1. Instruction
 - a. Faculty Development for Academic Staff (degree and non-degree)
 - b. Upgrading of Library resources
 - c. Upgrading of Facilities
 - d. Program and Instructional Materials Development
2. Research and Publication
 - a. Research Grants – relative to the needs of the discipline
 - b. Publication Fee Award
 - c. Innovation and Commercialization Projects
3. Extension and Linkages
 - a. Academe – Industry Projects
 - b. Faculty Development – for other institutions within their area of responsibility (Seminars, Workshops etc.)
 - c. Consortia Agreements
 - d. Internationalization activities

VIII. PERIOD OF VALIDITY

The designation of COEs and CODs shall be for three (3) years subject to regular monitoring by CHED. If at any point the CHED assesses the COE/COD as being incapable of fulfilling its functions, the designation shall be revoked.

IX. EFFECTIVITY CLAUSE

These policies and standards shall apply immediately to disciplines that are intending to identify COEs/CODs for CY 2006.



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