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Republika ng Pilipinas
(Republic of the Philippines)
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON, KULTURA AT ISPORTS
(DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORTS)
III Complex, Pasig, Metro Manila

November 18, 1991

DECS ORDER
No. 129, s. 1991

POLICIES AND STANDARDS FOR GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

For: Bureau Directors
Regional Directors
Heads of Private Schools, Colleges and Universities
Heads of Seminaries, Bible Colleges and Theological
Schools

1. The inclosed set of policies and standards approved by this Office upon the recommendation of the Bureau of Higher Education and the Technical Committee on Theological Education embodies the general principles and guidelines for the establishment and operation of graduate theological programs. The standards have been developed after a series of national consultation meetings joined by the members of the technical committee, school heads, and deans of theological schools.
2. Each school of theological education, in order to align its programs to the goals and mission of the institution and the nation and to make graduate theological education responsive to the demands of societal transition and the search for a national identity, should have:
 - a. the built-in mechanism for a continuous self-assessment of its instructional, research, and extension service capabilities and program thrusts and
 - b. the necessary flexibility and adaptability to improve its internal operation and curriculum programs towards meeting the diverse needs of the students, the community, and the nation.
3. As approved by this Office and as part of the approved Policies and Standards for Graduate Theological Programs are the following components: (a) equivalencies for catholic theological schools (Appendix A) and (b) equivalencies for protestant theological schools (Appendix B).
4. All concerned are required to prepare and make the necessary adjustments of their theological programs and facilities based on the inclosed guidelines and standards.

5. Wide dissemination of the contents of this Order is desired of all theological institutions offering graduate programs.

6. This Order supersedes MECB Order No. 7, s. 1982 and shall take effect beginning school year 1992-1993.

7. Compliance with this Order by all concerned is enjoined.

(SIGNED) DAVID D. CARINA
Secretary

Incl.:

As stated

Reference:

MECB Order: (No. 7, s. 1982)

Allotment: 1-3-4--(M.U. 1-87)

To be indicated in the Perpetual Index
under the following subjects:

- ✓ COMMITTEES
- ✓ COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT
- ✓ Course of Study, COLLEGIATE
- ✓ CURRICULUM
- ✓ POLICY
- ✓ RULES & REGULATIONS

POLICIES AND STANDARDS FOR GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The following policies and standards shall govern the operation of graduate theological education for seminaries, bible colleges and theological schools in the Philippines:

ARTICLE I

MISSION STATEMENT

Section 1. Graduate programs in theological education shall seek to:

- 1.1 Promote the spiritual, moral and intellectual formation of the students;
- 1.2 Provide a basic and integrated knowledge of biblical revelation and christian doctrine, considered in the light of problems and issues of the times, in a manner adapted to the local culture; and
- 1.3 Enable the students to acquire skills to carry out the work of evangelization, the nurture and equipping of believers, the communication of the truth of Scripture in the educational, prophetic and missionary dimensions, within the context of culture and human society.

ARTICLE II

AUTHORIZATION

Section 1. Only seminaries, theological schools, colleges and universities duly authorized by the Department of Education, Culture and Sports shall operate Graduate Programs in Theological Education.

Section 2. All graduate curricular programs in theological education must have prior authorization from the Department of Education, Culture and Sports.

ARTICLE III

ADMINISTRATION

Section 1. Every graduate school for theological education shall be administered by a qualified full-time dean.

Section 2. A qualified dean shall:

- 2.1 be a holder of an appropriate earned doctoral degree;
- 2.2 have at least three (3) years of successful administrative, supervisory and/or teaching experience;

- 2.3 have distinguished himself/herself in the discipline; and
2.4 preferably a Filipino citizen.

ARTICLE IV

FACULTY

Section 1. As a general rule, a majority of the faculty members in the master's degree program and all the faculty members in the doctoral program shall be holders of earned doctor's degree in each of the discipline offered. In specific fields of study which require related special training, a faculty member without the appropriate graduate degree may be allowed to teach provided he/she has demonstrated competence and recognized scholarship in his/her field of endeavor.

Section 2. Every graduate school for theological education shall have faculty members who must devote full-time service to the institution/seminary.

Section 3. Faculty members shall teach largely in their respective majors or fields of concentration.

Section 4. Every faculty member shall undertake research and other related developmental activities for purposes of professional growth.

Section 5. Faculty members both at the master's and doctoral levels shall be given remuneration commensurate to the professional qualification and standing in order to maintain the dignity of their profession.

Section 6. As a general rule, 60% of the regular faculty members shall be Filipino citizens.

ARTICLE V

CURRICULUM

Section 1. There are two categories of graduate theological programs, namely, academic and professional:

1.1 Academic graduate programs are devoted to a specialized study of one particular discipline, e.g. an M.A. in Dogmatics, Church History, etc.

1.2 Professional graduate programs embrace a variety of disciplines in order to equip the student for a ministerial profession e.g. as a priest, pastor, missionary etc.

Section 2. The curriculum for the academic master's degree shall contain a minimum total of 36 units distributed as follows:

	Minimum
2.1 Basic Courses	9 units
Research Methodology I	3 units
Statistics/Research Methodology II/Thesis Seminar	3 units
Foundation Courses (Any foundation course in the discipline)	3 units
2.2 Major Field of Concentration	15 units
2.3 Cognates	6 units
2.4 Thesis or Project Paper	6 units
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Total	36 units

Section 3. The curriculum for the professional master's degree shall contain a minimum total of 40 units distributed as follows:

	Minimum
3.1 Bible/Theology	13 units
3.2 Professional	15 units
3.3 Electives/Practicum	12 units
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Total	40 units

Section 4. The doctoral program shall include a minimum of 40 academic units, excluding the dissertation and the master's units, distributed as follows:

	Minimum
4.1 Philosophy Courses	9 units
4.2 Major Field of Concentration	30 units
4.3 Cognates	7 units
4.4 Dissertation	12 units
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Total	60 units

Section 5. As a general rule, all curricular subjects shall be offered as three-unit semestrial courses or its equivalent in the quarterly/trimester system.

Section 6. Each graduate school offering the master's and doctoral programs shall generally operate and maintain separate curricular programs for each level.

Section 7. The course description of each curricular subject shall be supported by an updated syllabus containing a detailed statement of its philosophy and objectives, the units covered, textbooks to be used, and references available in the library.

Section 8. Each graduate student shall have a program plan based on his/her major or field of concentration and/or experiences.

Section 9. Proposed curricular revisions of an existing approved graduate program shall take effect only upon approval by the Department of Education, Culture and Sports.

Section 10. The major field of concentration of each student in the academic master's and doctoral courses shall be indicated in his/her transcript of records and/or special order.

Section 11. A copy of the curriculum of each academic/professional graduate program including the approved curriculum of each new major field of concentration, shall be submitted to the DECS.

ARTICLE VI

INSTRUCTIONAL AND PROMOTIONAL STANDARDS

Section 1. The highest possible instructional standards shall be maintained by any theological school in both the master's and doctoral level. No credit shall be given to any student in any subject unless he/she has proven his/her competence therein.

Section 2. Graduate schools are required to adopt a selective retention policy at the master's and doctoral programs.

Section 3. Advancement to candidacy towards earning the master's or doctoral degree shall be determined by the dean or an admissions committee. The dean or the committee shall evaluate and certify the quality of performance of the student in the graduate work based on his/her performance in examinations, term papers, class discussions, seminars and the use of written and spoken language, and/or passing a written comprehensive examination.

Section 4. A written/oral comprehensive examination shall be taken by all graduate students who have completed the courses

requirements, except those in professional or non-academic degree programs.

- 4.1 The scope of the comprehensive examination shall be the totality of the whole program of the student.
- 4.2 The basic courses, field of concentration and cognates shall be so integrated that all courses taken and passed by the student shall be comprehensively encompassed in the examination which may be administered in one day.
- 4.3 A committee shall be created to supervise the development and administration of the comprehensive examination.
- 4.4 A complete list of students who have been formally admitted to graduate status and passed the comprehensive examinations shall be maintained in the office of the dean.

ARTICLE VII

LIBRARY

Section 1. Library resources shall respond to the changing and growing needs of theological studies and research, as well as to the changes in national and institutional policies.

Section 2. The school of theology shall have library books, materials and facilities which in terms of quality and quantity are reasonably adequate for effective graduate work. Depth and breadth of coverage, representativeness of authority in the various disciplines, extent of correlatives and recency of edition, depending upon the fields of concentration shall be determinative of quality.

Section 3. The library of a theological school shall contain appropriate reading and reference materials in proportion to the enrollment, the minimum requirements of which are as follows:

ENROLMENT	NO. OF PROFESSIONALLY PREPARED LIBRARIAN	NO. OF PROFESSIONAL BOOKS (TITLES)	NO. OF CULTURAL BOOKS
50 to less	1 full time	3,000	1,000
51 to 100	1 full time	5,000	1,500
101 to 200	1 full time	7,000	2,000
201 to 300	1 full time	9,000	2,500
301 to 400	1 full time	11,000	3,000

Section 4. At least ten per cent (10%) of the professional and cultural books in the library shall be in Filipino, Orientalia and Asiana.

Section 5. In addition to books, the library resources shall include a substantial number of appropriate professional publications such as journals, bibliographies, annals, monographs, serials and bound book issues of reputable professional and cultural magazines of foreign and local publications. There shall be at least three (3) professional journals per one hundred students for the discipline.

Section 6. The library shall have:

- 6.1 A complete and adequate research system such as updated catalogues, vertical files, reader's guides and other apparatuses; and
- 6.2 Carrels for independent study and research of students and faculty members.

Section 7. The open shelf system may be adopted.

ARTICLE VIII

RESEARCH

Section 1. Each graduate school shall annually publish a journal containing primarily the results of studies and researches of the faculty, outstanding and scholarly papers or projects in each discipline and abstracts or summaries of approved theses or dissertations of students. The publication may be undertaken by each school or in cooperation with other graduate schools.

Section 2. Exchange of copies of research journals by and among graduate schools and with foreign schools, if possible, is encouraged.

ARTICLE IX

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Section 1. The admission of students for the master's and doctoral levels of theological education shall be subject to the following conditions:

- 1.1 For admission into a master's program, only those students who graduated in a baccalaureate degree program or its equivalent with at least an average rating of 80% or B, or 2.0 in the entire course shall be considered eligible. However, students with a general average lower than the prescribed admission or qualifications may initially be admitted on a probation basis upon recommendation of an admission committee and approval by the dean.
- 1.2 For admission into a doctoral program, only those students who are holders of a master's degree and whose

Weighted average is at least 89% or 84 or 1.75 shall be considered eligible. However, students with a general average lower than the prescribed weighted average may be admitted on a probationary basis to the doctoral program. After demonstrating the capacity to undertake doctoral studies, they may formally be admitted to the doctoral program upon the recommendation and approval by the dean.

1.3 A student shall be deemed formally admitted to graduate status after having successfully completed 18 units at the master's level and 24 units in the doctoral level.

ARTICLE X

THESIS OR DISSERTATION

Section 1. A thesis or an equivalent research paper/project for the master's and a dissertation for the doctoral degree shall be required for graduation for any academic degree.

Section 2. The thesis or the equivalent research work or dissertation shall contribute substantially and purposefully to the existing body of knowledge, preferably in conformity with institutional goals, thrusts and objectives, and shall manifest the student's competence in research.

Section 3. Upon approval by the DECS Regional Director, a team research may be undertaken by two or more graduate students of the same school subject to the following conditions:

3.1 The research design lends itself effectively to systematic and scholarly delineation and delineation of research tasks; and

3.2 Proper coordination, organizational structure, subject designation and delimitation of areas with specific areas contributing to the general objective, shall be defined and implemented.

Section 4. A thesis/dissertation committee shall be organized and be responsible for approving the research design and maintaining high quality of thesis or dissertation.

Section 5. In thesis or dissertation writing, any acceptable format may be adopted by the school.

Section 6. Every thesis or dissertation writer shall be assigned an adviser who shall be chosen on the basis of his/her expertise.

Section 7. Two bound copies of the thesis or dissertation shall be sent to the DECS Regional Office concerned for the special order and/or record purposes.

ARTICLE XI

ORAL DEFENSE

Section 1. The oral defense of the thesis/dissertation or its equivalent shall be scheduled by the dean only after the student shall have:

- 1.1 Completed all his/her academic program;
- 1.2 Successfully passed the written/oral comprehensive examinations; and
- 1.3 Been certified by the adviser as to his/her readiness for oral defense and recommended by the thesis/dissertation committee.

Section 2. For the master's degree, the oral examinations for each candidate shall be conducted by a panel of a minimum of three members who shall be holders of at least a master's degree. For the doctoral degree, the panel of examiners for each candidate shall generally be composed of at least five persons who shall be holders of a doctoral degree, two of whom may come from outside the institution concerned.

- 2.1 The chairman and members of the panel shall be chosen on the basis of their expertise and area of specialization upon recommendation of the thesis committee and approval of the dean.
- 2.2 Graduate schools may invite deans and faculty members of other graduate schools and/or qualified officials of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports to sit as members of the panel in the oral examinations.
- 2.3 The Secretary of Education, Culture and Sports reserves the right to send his/her representative to sit in subsequent oral examinations whenever there is evidence of non-compliance with established procedures in the conduct of oral examinations.

Section 3. The final rating for the oral examination of each candidate shall be decided by a majority vote of the panel members.

ARTICLE XII

RESIDENCE/UNIT REQUIREMENTS

Section 1. The residence requirement for graduation from the master's or the doctoral degree, excluding the units for thesis or dissertation, shall be at least two consecutive semesters or the equivalent of 12 units and 24 units for the master's degree and doctoral degree, respectively.

Section 2. Transfer from one graduate school to another is discouraged. However, in exceptional cases where a transfer is unavoidable, all academic units earned by the student from the school last attended, excluding thesis or dissertation units, may be accepted by the school to which he/she seeks transfer subject to the following conditions:

- 2.1 The subjects taken in the school last attended are substantially the same in content in the graduate curriculum of the school he/she is seeking transfer to;
- 2.2 The residence requirement shall have been complied with; and
- 2.3 Approval of the dean upon the recommendation of the admissions committee.

Section 3. After completion of all the academic requirements, a candidate for graduation shall be given a maximum period of three years for the master's degree and five years for the doctoral degree within which to finish the requirement of thesis or dissertation.

ARTICLE XIII

EFFECTIVITY

Section 1. These policies and standards shall take effect beginning school year 1992-1993.

Section 2. Opening or establishment of schools shall be governed by the Manual of Regulations for Private Schools and other related DECS rules and regulations.

Section 3. Non-compliance with these policies and standards shall be administratively dealt with.

APPENDIX A

for

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OF THEOLOGY

Academic Admission Requirements

A.B. Philosophy or A.B. Classical (Major in Philosophy; degree or any A.B. or S.B. degree with at least 10 units of philosophy.

Graduate Degree Programs

M.A. Theology with concentrations in Dogmatic Theology, Church History, Missiology, Sacred Scriptures, Canon Law, Patrology, etc. (Academic Degree)

M.A. Pastoral Ministry (Professional Degree)

M.A. Religious Education/Studies (Professional Degree)

M.A. Catechetics (Professional Degree)

Ph.D. Theology with concentrations in Dogmatic Theology, Church History, Missiology, Sacred Scriptures, Canon Law, Patrology, etc.

Degree Equivalents

Upon effectivity of this DECS Order in the school year 1992-1993, previous studies of faculty members of Theological Schools applying for government recognition will be given the following civil degree equivalents:

M. A. Theology for Baccalaureate in Theology earned in any catholic theological school in the Philippines or outside the country.

M.A. Theology for Licentiate in Theology (STL).

Ph. D. Theology for Doctorate in Theology (STD), Licentiate in Sacred Scriptures (SSL) and Doctorate in Sacred Scriptures (SSD).

APPENDIX B

for

PROTESTANT SCHOOLS OF THEOLOGY

The following degrees of faculty members from protestant institutions are higher than the Master of Arts and Master of Divinity degrees:

- 1) Master of Theology
- 2) Master of Sacred Theology
- 3) Doctor of Ministry
- 4) Doctor of Sacred Theology
- 5) Doctor of Missiology
- 6) Doctor of Divinity
- 7) Doctor of Pastoral Studies
- 8) Doctor of Theology
- 9) Doctor of Philosophy

In protestant institutions, the M.A. programs last for a minimum of two (2) years and the Masters of Divinity program for a minimum of three (3) years. To qualify for Masters of Theology and Masters of Sacred Theology programs, the applicant must have earned his Master's in Divinity.