



MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 2021 - 003

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PROFESSIONAL TOUR GUIDES QUALIFICATION EXAMINATION (PTGQUALEX)

WHEREAS, pursuant to Republic Act (R.A.) No. 9593 or the *Tourism Act of 2009*, the Department of Tourism (DOT) is the primary planning, programming, coordinating, implementing, and regulatory government agency in the development and promotion of the tourism industry, both domestic and international, in coordination with attached agencies and other government instrumentalities;

WHEREAS, R.A. No. 9593 also provides that the DOT is mandated to formulate and promulgate rules, and regulations governing the operation and activities of all tourism enterprises, including but not limited to a national standard for licensing, accreditation, and classification of tourism enterprises, prescribing therein minimum levels of operating quality and efficiency for their operation in accordance with recognized international standards;

WHEREAS, under R.A. No. 9593, tourism enterprises refer to facilities, services, and attractions involved in tourism, including Tour Guide services;

WHEREAS, after consultation with various tourism stakeholders, it was determined that there is a need to establish a national qualification examination to ensure the excellence and quality of service provided by DOT-Accredited Tour Guides;

NOW, THEREFORE, based on the foregoing, the establishment of the Professional Tour Guide Qualification Examination (PTGQualEx) as a requirement for Tour Guide Accreditation under the *Rules and Regulations Governing the Accreditation of Tour Guides* is hereby adopted:

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Definition of Terms. For purposes of this Circular, the term:

- (a) **“Accreditation”** shall refer to a certification issued by the Department to a tourism enterprise that officially recognizes it as having complied with the minimum standards for the operation of tourism facilities and services.
- (b) **“Department”** refers to the Department of Tourism.
- (c) **“Industry Experts”** refers to practitioners of good standing from any of the following sectors:
 - 1. Academe (e.g. Tourism, Philippine History & Heritage, Arts & Culture, Environmental Science Department)
 - 2. Any of the operating sectors of the tourism industry:
 - i. Transportation Sector (e.g. Land, Air, Water)
 - ii. Accommodation Sector (e.g. Hotels, Resorts, Mabuhay Accommodations and other similar accommodation establishments)
 - iii. Food and Beverage Sector (e.g. Restaurant, Kulinarya)
 - iv. Travel and Tours Sector (e.g. Travel Agencies, Tour Operators)
 - v. Tour Guiding Sector
 - vi. Government

- (d) **“Master Regional Tour Guide”** refers to a Regional Tour Guide who has rendered at least ten (10) consecutive years as DOT-accredited Regional Tour Guide and has proven his/her expertise and experience in conducting tours, making him/her eligible as a resource person or lecturer for tour guiding trainings
- (e) **“Mock Tour”** refers to a graded simulation activity that evaluates PTGQualEx candidates on actual guiding that includes On-Board Tours and Walking Tours.
- (f) **“On-board Tour”** refers to a mock tour that focuses on the evaluation of PTGQualEx candidates undergoing tour guiding simulation while inside a moving vehicle.
- (g) **“Panel Interview”** refers to the graded manner of screening the applicants by determining their personal qualities, aptitude, and knowledge on tour guiding.
- (h) **“Professional Tour Guide Qualification Examination or PTGQualEx”** shall refer to the national qualification examination for aspiring professional Tour Guides which consists of a three-part assessment to be administered by the DOT, namely:
 - 1. Panel interview;
 - 2. Written examination; and
 - 3. Mock tour.
- (i) **“Regional Tour Guide”** refers to an individual guiding within a region where s/he has been issued a DOT accreditation.
- (j) **“Regular Regional Tour Guide”** refers to an entry-level Regional Tour Guide who has met the minimum requirements for DOT accreditation, including passing the PTGQualEx, or an accredited Tour Guide prior to the implementation of the 2021 Rules and Regulations Governing the Accreditation of Tour Guides.
- (k) **“Specialist Tour Guide”** refers to an individual who exhibits technical expertise and knowledge in a specific field of interest or activity, as certified by a tourism association, government or private institutions, and who is allowed to guide or lead tour groups in any part of the Philippines within his/her scope of expertise.
- (l) **“Tour Guide”** refers to an individual with specific area qualification who leads tour groups or individual visitors through a particular attraction, activity, site, or destination and provides interesting or enlightening facts and information or interpretation, for a fee, commission, or any other form of lawful remuneration.
- (m) **“Tour Guide Level”** refers to the level and/or rank of an accredited Tour Guide determined after evaluation of his/her skills and professional credentials which shall serve as an indicator of the Tour Guide’s expertise and experience in the industry.
- (n) **“Walking Tour”** refers to a mock tour that focuses on the evaluation of PTGQualEx candidates undergoing tour guiding simulation leading to or within a tourist destination while walking

Section 2. Coverage. This Memorandum Circular shall cover:

- A. Applicants for Regular Regional Tour Guide who have complied with the training requirements under Section 9 hereof;
- B. Applicants for Specialist Tour Guide who have complied with the training requirements under Section 9 hereof;

- C. Previously Accredited Tour Guides whose accreditation expired on or after 30 June 2018 and failed to renew their accreditation within the grace period as provided under Section 27 (A) of the *Rules and Regulations Governing the Accreditation of Tour Guides*;
- D. Previously Accredited Tour Guides whose last accreditation expired prior to June 30, 2018, in accordance with Section 27 (B) of the *Rules and Regulations Governing the Accreditation of Tour Guides*;
- E. Tour Guides who passed the PTGQualEx but failed to apply for initial accreditation within a one (1) year grace period, reckoned from the date of the official release or publication of the PTGQualEx result; and
- F. Tour Guides who have already taken their PTGQualEx but failed to renew their accreditation in accordance with Section 18 of the *Rules and Regulations Governing the Accreditation of Tour Guides*, as shown on the table below

Tour Guide Classification	Period of Non-Renewal
Specialist Tour Guide Master Regional Tour Guide	6 years and 1 day or more after expiry
Regular Regional Tour Guide	4 years and 1 day or more after expiry

II. PTGQALEX COMMITTEES AND BODIES

Section 3. PTGQualEx Steering Committee. The PTGQualEx Steering Committee shall be organized by the DOT and shall be composed of the following:

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| Chairperson | Undersecretary
<i>Tourism Regulation, Coordination and Resource Generation</i> |
| Vice-Chairperson | Assistant Secretary
<i>Tourism Regulation, Coordination and Resource Generation</i> |
| Members | <p>One (1) Representative
<i>Tourism Industry Board Foundation (TIBFI)</i></p> <p>One (1) Representative
<i>Philippine Federation of Professional Tour Guide Association Inc., (TGFED)</i></p> <p>Two (2) Representatives
<i>Travel and Tour Sector of the Tourism Congress of the Philippines (TCP)</i></p> <p>One (1) Representative
<i>Pool of DOT-Accredited Trainers</i></p> <p>Four (4) Regional Cluster Heads</p> |

Section 4. PTGQualEx Regional Clusters. The PTGQualEx Regional Clusters shall be composed of the DOT Regional Directors based on the following geographical groupings:

- A. Northern Luzon Cluster shall include DOT Regional Office I, II, III, and the Cordillera Administrative Region;
- B. Southern Luzon Cluster shall include DOT Regional Office IV-A, IV-B, V, and the National Capital Region;
- C. Visayas Cluster shall include DOT Regional Office VI, VII, and VIII; and
- D. Mindanao Cluster shall include DOT Regional Office IX, X, XI, XII, and XIII.

The PTGQualEx Steering Committee Chairperson shall designate the Regional Cluster Heads among the Regional Directors. The Heads of Accreditation Division of each Regional Office shall serve as Alternate of the Regional Directors.

Section 5. Functions of the PTGQualEx Steering Committee. The PTGQualEx Steering Committee shall:

- A. Oversee the policy direction and implementation of the PTGQualEx;
- B. Supervise the operation of the PTGQualEx Technical Working Group;
- C. Convene twice a year, or as the need arises; and
- D. Perform other duties as may be necessary.

The non-government members of the PTGQualEx Steering Committee may be provided Honorarium for services rendered subject to relevant government auditing and accounting rules and regulations.

Section 6. PTGQualEx Technical Working Group. The PTGQualEx Steering Committee shall be supported by a Technical Working Group (TWG) who shall provide technical assistance to aid the Steering Committee in policy-making. The PTGQualEx TWG shall be composed of the following:

Chairperson	Director <i>Office of Tourism Standards and Regulation</i>
Vice-Chairperson	Director <i>Office of Industry Manpower Development</i>
Members	Chief <i>Standards Development Division</i>
	Chief <i>Standards Monitoring and Enforcement Division</i>
	Chief <i>Manpower Planning and Monitoring Division</i>
	Chief <i>Manpower Training Division</i>

The PTGQualEx TWG shall:

- A. Direct and oversee the conduct and implementation of the PTGQualEx;
- B. Engage Industry Experts as may be necessary;
- C. Report and coordinate with the PTGQualEx Steering Committee as to the progress of the PTGQualEx;
- D. Convene as may be necessary in order to implement the provisions of these Rules;
- E. Serve as the keeper of the Master Key; and

F. Perform other functions that may be assigned to it by the PTGQualEx Steering Committee.

Section 7. PTGQualEx Secretariat. There shall be a PTGQualEx Secretariat to perform clerical and administrative functions in support of the Steering Committee and TWG. It shall be composed of members from the Tourism Regulation, Coordination and Resource Generation, and shall be headed by the Chief of the Standards Development Division.

Head	Chief <i>Standards Development Division</i>
Members	Representative <i>Standards Development Division</i>
	Representative <i>Standards Monitoring and Enforcement Division</i>
	Representative <i>Manpower Planning and Monitoring Division</i>
	Representative <i>Manpower Training Division</i>
	Representative <i>Office of the TRCRG Undersecretary</i>
	Representative <i>Office of the TRCRG Assistant Secretary</i>

The PTGQualEx Secretariat shall:

- A. Issue and cause the publication of the PTGQualEx results upon approval of the PTGQualEx Steering Committee Chairperson;
- B. Maintain a registry of PTGQualEx passers;
- C. Serve as communications intermediary between the TWG and Regional Offices on PTGQualEx;
- D. Prepare and keep a record of the minutes of the meeting whenever the Steering Committee and / or TWG convene(s);
- E. Submit to the TWG Chairperson the collated PTGQualEx-related documents from the Regional Offices;
- F. Perform other functions as may be delegated by PTGQualEx Steering Committee and TWG.

Section 8. Regional Offices. The DOT Regional Offices, headed by the respective Regional Directors, shall take charge of the regional operations of the PTGQualEx.

The Regional Offices shall:

- A. Collect PTGQualEx application forms and fees;
- B. Perform clerical and administrative functions in relation to PTGQualEx;
- C. Submit to the TWG the initial results of the PTGQualEx upon the approval of the Regional Director; and
- D. Coordinate with and engage the services of the following:

1. **Regional Board of Examiners.** Each region shall have a Regional Board of Examiners composed of three (3) Industry Experts - one (1) from the Academe (e.g. Tourism, Philippine History & Heritage, Arts & Culture, Environmental Science Department), and two (2) from any of the operating sectors of the tourism industry, except the tour guiding sector, the composition of which shall be recommended by the DOT Regional Director concerned and approved by the PTGQualEx TWG Chairperson.

The Regional Board of Examiners shall perform the following functions:

- i. Prepare a pool of questions that will be included in the PTGQualEx, which questions shall be local in nature, including but not limited to local culture, attractions, history, and traditions;
 - ii. Participate in the Panel Interview; and
 - iii. Coordinate with and report to the DOT Regional Office concerned.
2. **Mock Tour Evaluators.** The Mock Tour Evaluators shall be composed of one (1) DOT Regional Representative from either the DOT Accreditation or Training Division; and two (2) Industry Experts, one of whom must be from the Travel and Tours Sector, and the other from any of the operating sectors. The Mock Tour Evaluators shall be recommended by the DOT Regional Directors and approved by the PTGQualEx TWG Chairperson.

The Mock Tour Evaluators shall:

- i. Serve as raters in evaluating the applicants during the Mock Tour examination;
- ii. Coordinate with and report to the Regional Office concerned.

The non-government members of the Regional Board of Examiners and Mock Tour Evaluators shall be provided honorarium for services rendered subject to relevant government auditing and accounting rules and regulations.

III. PTGQUALEX PROCESS

Section 9. Requirements. Applicants, who must be eighteen (18) years of age at the time of application, shall submit to the DOT Regional Office an application form, with a certified true copy of the proof of completion corresponding to the training completed, as follows:

Institution	Training Completed	Proof of Completion
TESDA Accredited Institution	At least NC-II Tour Guiding	Applicable TESDA National Certification
CHED Accredited Higher Education Institution (CHED-HEI)	At least three (3) Units of Tour Guiding Subject	Transcript of Record ¹
DEPED Accredited School	Technical Vocational (Tour Guiding Subject)	Transcript of Record (Form 137a)
DOT-Accredited Training Center / Institution	Regional Tour Guiding Course	Certificate of Training

¹ The DOT shall not consider the CHED HEI-issued Transcript of Record if the completed Tour Guiding Course by the applicant is integrated with a travel and tours subject or any other subject.

Section 10. The PTGQualEx Panel Interview (First Level).

Location : One key city per region as identified by the DOT Regional Office
Frequency : At least once a year, depending on the targeted number of examinees

The Panel Interview shall be conducted by the Regional Board of Examiners and a representative from the DOT Regional Office. The results of the panel interview shall be reviewed by the Regional Office concerned and submitted to the PTGQualEx TWG Chairperson for approval. The PTGQualEx TWG shall formulate the criteria that shall be used by the panel, designed to determine an applicant's personal qualities, aptitude, and knowledge on tour guiding.

Only applicants with a score of at least 80% from all the members of the panel shall be allowed to proceed to the second level of the PTGQualEx.

Section 11. The PTGQualEx Qualifying Examination (Second Level).

Location : One (1) key city per region as identified by the DOT Regional Office
Frequency : At least once a year
Exam Type : Written / Online

The written examination shall be composed of 60% general questions and 40% local questions. The general questions shall be prepared by the PTGQualEx TWG and the local questions shall be prepared by the Regional Board of Examiners. There shall be three (3) sets of questions and answers for the examination per region. The written examination shall be conducted simultaneously across regions to avoid leakages.

Only applicants with a grade of at least 80% in the written exam shall be allowed to proceed to the third level of the PTGQualEx.

Section 12. Master Key. There shall be a Master Key consisting of three (3) approved examination sets per region which shall be kept confidential at all times. The TWG Chairperson shall act as its safekeeper and copies of which shall only be endorsed to the PTGQualEx Examiners, composed of representatives from the DOT Tourism Regulation, Coordination and. Resource Generation (TRCRG) who shall be tasked to oversee the conduct of the PTGQualEx in each region.

Section 13. The PTGQualEx Mock Tour Examination (Third Level).

Location : One key city per region as identified by the DOT Regional Office
Frequency : At least once a year
Exam Type : Walking Tour and On-board Tour of Key Tourism Destinations

The Mock Tour examination shall be conducted by the DOT in coordination with the Mock Tour Evaluators who shall serve as raters during the mock tour. The Mock Tour shall consist of an Onboard Tour and a Walking Tour which shall be different in nature.

Only applicants with a rating of at least 80% from the Mock Tour examination shall be considered to have passed the PTGQualEx.

Section 14. Results. The initial results of the PTGQualEx shall be approved by the Regional Director and submitted to the TWG. It shall then be endorsed by the TWG Chairperson to the Steering Committee Chairperson for final approval. The Regional Offices are prohibited from disclosing the results prior to its official publication either in a newspaper

of general circulation or the DOT official website and social media pages, within thirty (30) days from the conduct of the Mock Tour Examination.

Section 15. Validation Interview for Specialist Tour Guides. Upon completion of the PTGQualEx, aspiring Specialist Tour Guides shall undergo a validation interview for Specialist Tour Guide Accreditation. The validation interview shall be scheduled by the PTGQualEx TWG and conducted by a panel composed of one (1) industry representative, one (1) specialization expert, and one (1) DOT representative. The PTGQualEx Secretariat shall facilitate the conduct of the validation interview.

Specialist Tour Guides Examinees who passed the PTGQualEx but failed in the validation interview may still apply as Regular Regional Tour Guides.

Section 16. Examination Fee. A non-refundable examination fee in the amount of PhP1,000.00 shall be paid to the respective regional offices upon the filing of application.

IV. OTHER PROVISIONS

Section 17. Separability Clause. If any portion or provision of this Circular is declared null and void or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in force and effect.

Section 18. Repealing Clause. All previous rules and regulations, circulars, orders, and other issuances issued by the Department which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Circular are hereby repealed and modified accordingly.

Section 19. Effectivity. This Circular shall take effect immediately after fifteen (15) days following the completion of its publication in a newspaper of general circulation or the Official Gazette. Let three (3) copies hereof be filed with the University of the Philippines – Office of the National Administrative Register (UP-ONAR).

For guidance and strict compliance.

12 March 2021.


BERNADETTE ROMULO-PUYAT
Secretary 
