



VISAYAS
STATE UNIVERSITY



**DEPARTMENT OF
ECONOMICS**

July 3, 2023

Dr. Edgardo E. Tulin
President
Visayas State University
Visca, Baybay City, Leyte

Thru: Dr. Beatriz S. Belonias
Vice President for Academic Affairs
& Chairman, VSU-SC

Dear Dr. Tulin,

Greetings!

I have the honor to request for a reinstatement from study leave effective July 3, 2023. Since June 2019, I have received the Australia Award Scholarship with the support of Visayas State University, which has been a huge aid in allowing me to continue pursuing my academic objectives. I have made an effort to perform my best work, and I am fully conscious of my obligations to uphold the University of Queensland's academic standards, fulfil the requirements of the Australia Awards and Visayas State University, and further the relationship between Australia, VSU, and the Philippines.

I successfully completed my thesis review at UQ on June 9, 2023. I have already compiled all the chapters of my thesis, with one paper already published in the Journal of Environmental Management. However, UQ also has an external evaluation, so I need time to submit my thesis and wait for the external evaluation, which UQ will organize right after the thesis submission. My extended study leave contract ended on June 23, 2023, so I need to come back and apply for an interruption of studies within UQ instead of requesting study leave without pay.

My PhD thesis integrates a multi-level approach to assessing rice cropping with a focus on inputs, yield, profit, and environmental externalities. My research explores nitrogen fertilizer use in paddy rice cropping, spanning from inter-country comparisons to comparing 33 Philippine provinces and farm-level comparisons. An essential part of my PhD thesis was to conduct face-to-face interviews with rice farmers in Eastern Visayas, Philippines. However, this has been postponed by over a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While waiting for travel restrictions to be lifted, I analysed and wrote a major chapter of my thesis using secondary data provided by the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice). Finally, once travel was possible again, I conducted my fieldwork in the Philippines, interviewing 52 conventional rice farmers, 10 mixed-organic rice farmers, and 7 organic rice farmers. The list of respondents was taken from the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), and the respondents were geographically dispersed in five towns in Leyte and four towns in southern Leyte.

I encountered difficulties while conducting the survey because of the tropical storm (Agaton) that struck the areas of my study where roads were not passable because of landslides and floods, and this time the farmers suffered significant financial losses because of catastrophic crop damage. These unfortunate occurrences caused my target research pursuits to be further postponed. I was only able to complete my field research, and I returned at the start of 2023 to Australia.