



26 September 2022

**Dr. Anabella B. Tulin**

Dean of the Graduate School  
VSU, Baybay City

Dear Dean Tulin,

This is with reference to the OGS letter dated September 14, 2022 regarding the Plan of Coursework of students taking the Master of Science in Development Sociology.

The letter quoted the approved Proposal to offer Rural Sociology as a Major Field in the Master of Science Program of the Leyte State University, Section VIII under Summary of Proposed Graduate Courses, number 5. Minor Courses: **"the student selects his/her minor field from an array of MS courses offered by the other Colleges in LSU"**.

The letter concludes that **"Therefore, only degree programs under Master of Science should be allowed to be the minor/cognate of MS DevSoc students. For continuing students having MM as their minor/cognate course with only thesis units remaining, they may be considered to continue their degree program"**.

We would like to request for a reconsideration of this pronouncement as it affects an MS Dev Soc student, Ms. Reina A. Silao, for the following reasons:

1. The MS Rural Sociology program was approved on 2 December 2003 per Board Resolution No. 94, series of 2003. The change in program title from MS Rural Sociology to MS Development Sociology was approved on 9 March 2007. When the program was approved for offering, the Master of Management Program was still nonexistent since it was only approved under BOR Resolution No. 79, series of 2007 to be offered in the 1<sup>st</sup> Semester SY 2008-2009. As such, it could not have been included among the choices for the minor field at the time the proposal was prepared. At present, we have included this program as an option for our students, especially since this is an offering of the College of Management and Economics, where the ISRDS belongs. Likewise, it is offered on weekends which is most convenient for our students who work full-time outside of VSU. Since MM is a master's program, we can expect the same quality and substance. The only difference would be that the MS program requires a thesis and the MM program requires a special problem. Both programs are at Level VII in the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF) (CMO 15 s.2019).
2. There is already a precedent where an MS DevSoc student, Mr. Nick Ryan B. Estomata, took Management as his minor field. He has passed the comprehensive exams and is working on his thesis.
3. More importantly, Ms. Silao has expressed her desire to continue with the MM Program as she believes this is what she needs and would like to pursue. Shouldn't the student determine the courses they would want to take in the university in consultation with their major adviser/Graduate Advisory Committee?



The CMO 15 s.2019 Page 2 Section 2 par. 3 highlights that graduate programs should facilitate the “mastery of a specialized field of study, the development of original and critical thinking, and the demonstration of problem-solving skills that prepare the degree holder for advanced instruction and leadership positions in the areas of research, creative work, as well as the practice of his or her profession.” Ms. Silao is currently employed at DLABS -VSU as administrative staff and the course she enrolled in and planning to enroll in MM are related to her function.

Further, we also would like to raise some concerns on the implementation of the enrollment process following the ISO procedures outlined in the Quality Procedure for Admission and Enrollment of Graduate Students (On-Campus) (Document Reference No. PM-OGS-01 Version 01 dated December 21, 2020).

1. Section 5.3.5 states that “The GS student In-Charge issues Registration Permit and Tentative COR and instructs the student to consult with his/her academic adviser for advice on what courses to enroll.  
Academic Adviser then refers to his/her account in the Teacher’s Portal to access the academic records of his/her advisee and guides his/her advisee on the courses to enroll.  
The GS In-Charge also instructs the student to have the Tentative COR signed by the Adviser and the Registration Permit by the Dean of the Graduate School.”

Ms. Silao and her academic adviser, Prof. Tabada met on August 30, 2022, 5 PM at the GRC to discuss Ms. Silao’s enrollment. Ms. Silao was reminded that she had a four INCs and she needed to check with the Registrar the actual grades since her INCs in DSOC 221 and DSOC 224 had already lapsed. These courses were all covered during the period when the Academic Ease policy was implemented in response to COVID-19. Ms. Silao was also informed that she will likely have to retake the said courses.

Based on the flowchart on the enrollment procedure for returning students (on-campus) under B, the GS Student In-charge, after evaluating the status of the student’s academic record finds out that the student has a failing grade in any of the courses should have withheld the registration permit and tentative COR and the GS In-charge then issues a referral slip to the student’s GAC, Department head concerned and the Dean of the Graduate School. These entities, then, interview the student and evaluate the student records.

None of the of these steps were followed. Prof. Tabada had already discussed the status of Ms. Silao’s enrollment and the next steps without receiving the referral slip. Likewise, Ms. Silao was informed by Ms. Posas via messenger chat that “since she had a grade of 5 she cannot proceed with her MS”.

2. Section 2 Major Adviser and the Graduate Advisory Committee under Article VIII Academic and Other Regulations of the Graduate School Code states that “Every graduate student shall have a major adviser. The Graduate student selects his/her major adviser who shall serve as Chair of his/her GAC.”

In the ISO process under B, it is the adviser that “guides the student on subjects to enroll and signs the Tentative COR.” The GS Student In-charge instructs the student to consult the academic adviser to know what subjects to enroll. Therefore, if there

are concerns on academic matters, isn't it the responsibility of the OGS staff to inform the academic adviser and refrain from issuing statements or comments that may confuse the student? Likewise, as per the Graduate Programs Manual of Operations (2021 ed), academic advising is not part of the functions of an Education Program Specialist or Education Research Assistant.

In no instance was Prof. Tabada informed either in writing or verbally by the OGS Student In-charge regarding concerns and or lapses on her end as Adviser/GAC Chair with regards to the enrollment and/or status of Ms. Silao. I learned from Ms. Silao that she had been receiving messages from Ms. Posas on her need to file for a change of status from probationary to regular, the preparation of her Plan of Coursework, and the GAD composition. Rightly so, as this is part of her function, however, shouldn't the academic adviser be informed as well so she can follow up the advisee?

In summary, the ISRDS graduate faculty would like to suggest that:

1. The OGS reconsiders the prohibition on the taking of MM courses as a minor by MS DevSoc students, and that, Ms. Silao be allowed to continue taking MM as her minor.
2. In partnership with the OGS, the ISRDS will push through with its planned review of the MS Development Sociology curriculum within the year noting the concerns that have already been raised.
3. The ISO procedures be reviewed and the outcomes be reflected in the updates/revised ISO procedures for enrollment.
4. Steps should be taken to ensure that there will not be a repeat of a similar incident particularly involving students taking graduate programs.

It is our hope that by raising this matter, we are helping create a learning environment that puts the students' concerns and interests at the center of our service delivery. Moreover, the perception that the ISRDS faculty and students are too critical, ask too many questions and are therefore, unwelcome, may be replaced by an appreciation of what the program and its students have to offer the university.

Very truly yours,

  
**GINA A. DELIMA**  
Instructor II

  
**MARIA AURORA T.W. TABADA**  
Associate Professor IV

**LILIAN B. NUNEZ, Ph.D.**  
Director



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