



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education

11 MAR 2014

DepEd MEMORANDUM
No. **29**, s. 2014

POLICY FOR THE USAGE AND COINING OF ABBREVIATIONS

To: Undersecretaries
Assistant Secretaries
Bureau Directors
Directors of Services, Centers and Heads of Units
Regional Directors
Schools Division Superintendents
Heads, Public Elementary and Secondary Schools
All Others Concerned

1. For the information and guidance of all concerned, enclosed is a copy of the Memorandum from Undersecretary Manuel L. Quezon III of the Presidential Communications Development and Strategic Planning Office (PCDSPO), Office of the President dated February 13, 2014 entitled **Policy for the Usage and Coining of Abbreviations** which is self-explanatory.
2. Immediate dissemination of this Memorandum is desired.


BR. ARMIN A. LUISTRO FSC
Secretary

Encl.:
As stated

Reference:
None

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

BUREAUS AND OFFICES
COMMUNICATIONS

LEGISLATIONS
REPORTS

Model: Dissemination of Memorandum of Manuel L. Quezon
0187-March 4, 2014

Office of the President of the Philippines
In Reply, Please Cite OP013340
Received On 7-15-13 Time 3:29 pm
By *SN*

Office of the President
of the Philippines


MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

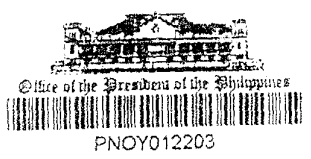
FROM : MANUEL L. QUEZON III *[Signature]*
Undersecretary of Presidential Communications
Development and Strategic Planning
RE : Policy for the usage and coining of abbreviations
DATE : July 15, 2013

This is to submit a draft policy for the coining and usage of abbreviations in reports and other documents in use by government agencies, departments and instrumentalities.

This policy was also sent to Presidential Management Staff through Secretary Julia Abad.

Thank you.

[Signature]

APPROVED / DISAPPROVED
JUL 16 2013



POLICY FOR THE USAGE AND COINING OF ABBREVIATIONS IN REPORTS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS PREPARED BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, DEPARTMENTS, AND INSTRUMENTALITIES

(As Approved by the President on 6 September 2013)

Definition of terms

Initialism: Terms formed from the first letter or letters of a series of words (e.g., DENR, OP, PNP etc.)

Acronym: Terms based on the first letters of a series of words and read or pronounced as single words (e.g., NEDA, PAGASA).

For purposes of simplification, the term *abbreviation* will be used to refer to both initialisms and acronyms in this document.

Introduction

The names of organizations and policies, especially in standard government, and academic practice, tend to be long and cumbersome; we therefore abbreviate to save space and to allow for smoother reading. However, the usage of abbreviations creates a jargon that if unchecked can make it difficult for outsiders to understand. It is common for readers to drown in what has come to be known as “alphabet soup”: a linguistic metaphor for an overabundance of abbreviations, coined to make fun of the U.S. government’s usage of a hodgepodge of initials for its many agencies—a practice that the Philippine government has adopted.

Writers and editors of reports, documents, media releases, and the like should assume that the reader, regardless of whom he or she may be, is not familiar with abbreviations that would require knowledge specialized to the topic at hand. Also, it is best to avoid overwhelming a reader with too many abbreviations, which may cause confusion during the process of digesting the text. The following are recommended:

1. Spell out and define at first mention

With the exception of common-use abbreviations (e.g., HTML, DNA, IQ, JPEG, laser), spell out the first mention of an abbreviated term, with the abbreviation following within parenthesis. An exception to parentheses would

be when both the spelled-out term and the abbreviation figure into the text in a way that is self-explanatory.

Examples:

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) was founded in 1935.

Yesterday the government announced one of its major flagship projects under its Public-Private Partnership, or PPP, program.

Do not abbreviate terms that are only mentioned once in a document. Rare exceptions would be organizations more publicly known by their abbreviated name (e.g., UNESCO and PAGASA—both may be spelled out *and* abbreviated, even when used only once in text).

For particularly long or multi-chaptered, abbreviation-heavy documents, it would be prudent to reorient the reader by repeating the process of spelling out and defining words that are less commonly used at the beginning of succeeding chapters or major sections.

Furthermore, tables and figures must be treated as stand-alone entities. All non-self-explanatory and/or uncommon abbreviations within a table or figure must be spelled out, or defined either inside the table/figure or in the captions/footnotes.

2. Include a glossary of terms

For abbreviation-heavy reports and large documents in general, include a glossary of terms. The abbreviations must be arranged in alphabetical order, with the spelled-out terms listed to the right, as would be definitions.

This is highly recommended for any long-form document for public or internal use among agencies, and must be considered *a requirement for reports submitted to the President*.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the glossary be laid out at the beginning of a document; this would serve two purposes: 1) immediately alert the reader to its existence, and 2) give the reader an idea of what to expect.

3. Limit the use of abbreviations

Try to reduce the number of non-self-explanatory and/or uncommon abbreviations in a text to a minimum. If possible, limit them only to the following:

- Major organizations (e.g., DENR, DepEd, BIR); and
- Long terms that would make repetition unwieldy (e.g., GGAC [which refers to the Cabinet Cluster for Good Governance and Anti-Corruption], and CLAMP [Center for Land Administration and Management-Philippines]).

4. Short names vs. abbreviations

One way to avoid the overuse of abbreviations in text is to use shortened names instead.

For example, instead of using “BI” to refer to the Bureau of Immigration, one may simply say, “Immigration” as a modifier (e.g., “Immigration officials caught a Chinese fugitive.”), or “the Bureau,” for further mentions.

5. Keep it simple

If you have to coin an abbreviation, keep it simple and easy to follow.

Although it would be natural to attempt to create a catchy acronym for name recall, not everyone can be so definitive as PAGASA (Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration).

It is not recommended to force acronyms (e.g., BaR-SPOrt [BALloon-borne Radiometers for Sky Polarization ObseRvaTions]).