



# European Higher Education Fair

## THE PHILIPPINES

22nd-24th February 2008  
Manila



## Country profile and market information - The Philippines

### Market environment

The Philippines has an estimated population of 85.2 million people, 39 per cent of whom are below 35 years old. The national population growth rate is 2.05 per cent. While there is a huge gap between the socio-economic classes, with 40 per cent of the population below the poverty line, current market research suggests that there are more than 21,000 students in the Philippines with both the intention and the financial capability to study overseas.

The Philippines' GDP for the second quarter of 2005 slowed down compared to the previous year, owing to the increase in oil prices and the political situation in the country. 39 per cent of the population resides in Metro Manila and the two most populated outlying regions. Metro Manila is one of Asia's largest cities and is at the heart of the commercial, industrial and political life of the country. This area registers the highest level of family income in the country. The most affluent families in the provinces tend to send their children to Manila for both high school and university education.

The country is dependent on low wage employment in agriculture, but has become more dependent on the electronics industry, which has expanded greatly over the last decade. Most of the products of the electronics industry are shipped outside Asia, rather than within it, which is why the Philippines' exports grew very strongly in spite of the Asian financial crisis. Its major trading partners are the United States, China, the United Kingdom, Japan and many other European countries.

A large part of the national revenue is derived from the remittances from overseas workers. Filipinos remain in demand in the international labour market because of their ability to speak English. In the United Kingdom, there are an estimated 45,000 Filipino nurses working in hospitals and the number is expected to increase in the coming years. An estimated eight million Filipinos work overseas.

The Philippines has over 100 ethno-linguistic groups speaking at least 70 languages. Tagalog and English are the official languages of the Philippines. Tagalog is related to Malay and is the basis of the national language, Filipino. Approximately fifty-five per cent of the population speak Filipino either as a first or second language. English is the main medium of communication in business and higher education. Spanish now tends to be confined to a small elite of Spanish descent.

The Philippines is considered part of the English speaking-world. The high number of English speakers has prompted the Department of Tourism to come up with an advertising campaign that claims the country has more English speakers than England. The medium of instruction in most universities remains English.

The democratic, presidential form of government in the Philippines is modelled on that of the United States. There is a close affiliation between the two countries politically, economically and socially.

## **Market characteristics**

The Philippine educational system is based on the American model. Children who reach six years old are required to attend six years of elementary education (Grades one to six). Children then proceed to four years of secondary school education, or high school at age 13 (Year one to four). Thus the total number of years of basic education is ten years, with most of the students graduating at age 16. Many private high schools now offer 11 years of basic education, thus graduating at age 17.

The United States has approximately 50 per cent of the international student market. Australia is a close rival with 23 per cent and the UK follows with 20 per cent of the market.

There are only a few education agents operating in the country. Recent market research suggests that most students get their information about overseas study opportunities mainly from family and friends who studied abroad. The internet also is a major source of information. Filipinos have a strong sense of family ties, and those who are abroad often encourage and may be even willing to fund their relatives' education in the foreign country.

## **Market opportunities**

Health-related courses, such as medicine, dentistry and nursing, have received a lot of interest from Filipino students, followed by business programmes, particularly in the fields of business management and marketing. Information technology is also of significant interest to Filipino students. Art, architecture, communication, education and teacher training, engineering and technology, environmental studies, hospitality and tourism courses, law, languages and literature and social sciences and humanities are among the various programs that are traditionally in demand by Filipinos interested in overseas education. Data shows that a considerable percentage of students interested in studying abroad are self funded.

The trend in local institutions offering distance learning and twinning programs from European institutions has been favourably welcomed by the market. A number of institutions have agreements with selected European universities and seek to address the credit transfer and cost issues students have.

Source: British Council, the Philippines