



Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Manila

GUIDELINES FOR MASS MEDIA ACCREDITATION IN CONNECTION WITH THE CONDUCT OF OVERSEAS VOTING UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9189, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE OVERSEAS ABSENTEE VOTING ACT OF 2003", AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10590 FOR PURPOSES OF THE MAY 13, 2019 NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS

Chairman Sheriff M. Abas
Commissioner Al A. Parreilo
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Resolution No. **10498**

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Promulgation: February 13, 2019

WHEREAS, duly accredited mass media shall be given free access to polling places, voting centers, and canvassing centers in various Posts and authorized field voting centers for purposes of observing and reporting on election events and processes;

WHEREAS, it is expected that the 2019 National and Local Elections will generate great media attention and that a great number of requests for media accreditation will be filed by both Philippine and foreign media;

WHEREAS, there is a need to increase the efficiency in the recording and monitoring of grants of accreditation to avoid the proliferation of spurious accreditation papers or media passes;

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the powers vested in it by the Constitution, Republic Act No. 9189 as amended by Republic Act No. 10590, the Omnibus Election Code, Republic Act No. 7166, Republic Act No. 9006, and other election laws, the Commission on Elections has RESOLVED, as it hereby RESOLVES, to promulgate the following guidelines:

Section 1. Declaration of policy. - It is the policy of the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) to ensure accurate reporting about the conduct and results of the 2019 National and Local Elections by providing maximum access to all stages of the electoral process to accredited media representatives subject only to conditions essential for the protection of the COMELEC and Department of Foreign Affairs personnel, property, and privileged information.

Sec. 2. Definitions.- For purposes of this Resolution:

- (a) LOCAL MEDIA refers to those who are engaged in news reporting on a local scale in a given country or territory.
- (b) INTERNATIONAL MEDIA refers to those who are engaged in news reporting on international scale.
- (c) OTHER MEDIA refers to those engaged in other forms of journalism, including but not limited to opinion writers, public relations practitioners, creative writers, feature film and documentary film makers, and the like.
- (d) MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES refer to those who are actively engaged in the pursuit of information gathering and reporting or distribution, in any manner or form, including print journalist, playwrights, television journalists, feature film makers, photojournalists, documentary makers, on line journalists, television production, radio journalists, professional photographers, novelists, professional videographers, screenwriters, public relations contractors, and bloggers.

Freelancers in any of the above categories shall be accredited only if they qualify under either one of the following conditions:

1. They must be on assignment for a professionally recognized organization and the request for accreditation is made by that organization. A freelancer cannot request accreditation on behalf of the organization that he is representing; or
2. They have previous accomplishments that are highly visible, respected and widely recognized.

Sec. 3. *General requirements for accreditation.* - All parties requesting for accreditation shall be required to submit the following:

- a. a fully accomplished Accreditation Application Form;
- b. two (2) recently taken, 2" x 2" colored photographs; and
- c. an endorsement from the newspaper, television, radio station, or internet news agency employing the applicant.

In no case shall an application endorsed by an entity other than the applicant's direct employer be given due course; provided that the application of freelancers whose previous accomplishments are highly visible, respected and widely recognized need not be endorsed .

Sec. 4. *Application forms.*- Application forms for accreditation shall be available at the Office for Overseas Voting (OFOV) and at the Posts. Application forms may also be downloaded from the COMELEC website (<http://www.comelec.gov.ph>) and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) website.

Sec. 5. *Period for filing applications for accreditation.* - The period for filing applications for accreditation shall be from 15 February 2019 to 31 March 2019. This period shall be non-extendible. Applications filed after the last day for filing shall not be entertained.

Sec. 6. Filing and approval of applications for accreditation. - Applications for accreditation shall be personally filed at the Posts. Approval of applications for accreditation shall be granted by the Head of Post.

Sec. 7. Treatment of applications for accreditation. - Within seven (7) days from the end of the period for filing applications, the Head of Post shall immediately furnish copies of all applications, with attachments, to the OFOV.

Sec. 8. Media Card. Upon accreditation, media representatives shall be issued a Media Card duly signed by the Head of Post. The COMELEC Media Card shall be strictly non-transferable and is valid only for the purpose for which it was issued. Any abuse thereof shall result in revocation. The Media Card shall be worn prominently whenever the media representative is covering or observing a COMELEC or electoral event.

Sec. 9. Access. - Duly accredited domestic and foreign media shall be allowed maximum access to all stages of overseas voting electoral process subject only to conditions essential for the protection of the electoral boards, properties, and privileged information.

Sec. 10. Rules of conduct. -All media representatives shall observe the following rules of conduct:

- a. Not more than three (3) media representatives shall be allowed inside the polling place at any one time;
- b. Upon entry into the polling places or canvassing area, media representatives shall immediately identify themselves to the Special Ballot Reception and Custody Groups (SBRCGs), Special Board of Election Inspectors (SBEIs) or Special Board of Canvassers (SBOCs) by presenting their Media Cards;
- c. Unprofessional activities shall not be tolerated. Any media representative found to be engaging in unprofessional activities shall have their Media Cards immediately revoked by the Head of Post. Unprofessional activities include:
 1. Any behavior deemed disruptive of the conduct of voting, counting, or canvassing, such as, but not limited to, conducting interviews inside the polling place or canvassing center;
 2. Engaging in partisan political activities;
 3. Any behavior intended to unduly influence the choice of voters, such as, but not limited to, directly trying to sway the voter to speak for or against a candidate;
 4. Distributing campaign materials; and
 5. Any behavior deemed unlawful.

Sec. 11. Effectivity. - This Resolution shall take effect on the seventh (7th) day after its publication in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

Sec. 12. Dissemination and publication. - The OFOV shall furnish the Office of the President, the Office of the Press Secretary, the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Philippine Information Agency, and all mass media organizations copies of this Resolution.

The Department of Foreign Affairs shall furnish copies thereof to all foreign embassies and consulates.

The Education and Information Department shall cause the publication of this Resolution.

SO ORDERED.


SHERILYN M. ABAS
Chairperson


AL A. PARRENO
Commissioner


LUE TITO F. GUIA
Commissioner


MA. ROWENA AMELIA V. GUANZON
Commissioner


SOCORRO B. INTING
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MARLON S. CASQUEJO
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ANTONIO T. KHO, JR.
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