



Country Brief – Thailand

Thai government policy overview

Thailand's Government, elected in July 2011, continues education reform policy, publishing nine priority projects for education reform and strengthening the linkage between education and industry. Following several ministerial reshuffles in 2012 the policy framework was recalibrated. It is now focussed principally on schools education and vocational education and training. The key aspects of the policy framework are focussed on the provision of quality education for all basic education students; ensuring access to financial resources for education; development of labour market and personal skills; and on life-long learning.

Nine National Research Universities

The Thai government has designated the following 9 universities to be National Research Universities: four universities in Bangkok – Chulalongkorn University, Mahidol University, Kasetsart University, Thammasat University; and five universities around Thailand – Khon Kaen University, Chiang Mai University, Prince of Songkhla University (Hat Yai), King Mongkut University of Technology Thonburi, and Suranaree University of Technology (Nakhon Ratchasima/Korat). Some research funding will go to other universities but the 9 National Research Universities will receive a large proportion the funding. Thai universities are keenly looking for more international engagement to raise the profile and standard of their research output.

Vocational Education and Training

In July 2012, the Ministry of Education issued a new VET policy statement called "Vocational Education Guidelines for Policymaking, Goal Setting and Development of Vocational Manpower".

The policy document lays out four policies, 10 strategies, 28 approaches and 93 flagship projects. It is intended to guide policy for the forthcoming 15 years.

The four policy objectives are as follows:

- Policy 1: To produce vocational manpower in response to labour market demands;
- Policy 2: To raise the quantity and quality of teachers, faculties and personnel in vocational education;
- Policy 3: To develop the quality of educational institutions and new learning sources;
- Policy 4: To develop management efficiency.

Regulatory Issues and Trans National Education (TNE)

Extensive regulation limits the capacity for Australian institutions to set up in Thailand. Regulations require foreign providers to partner with a Thai registered education institution with at least 51% Thai ownership and with majority Thai representation in the governance arrangements. The only Australian institution operating in Thailand currently is RMIT English Worldwide.

AEI University and Alumni Mapping

In an effort to facilitate more effective institutional collaboration and contact, AEI has mapped the names, qualifications and subject areas of all Australians working in Thai universities and all Thai-Australian alumni working as faculty in Thai Universities. This has allowed AEI to better target Endeavour scholarship promotional activities, to better target requests for cooperative activities between universities and allowed AEI to provide more effective and efficient advice to Australian and Thai stakeholders on where Australian alumni work and where Australian alumni are placed in the higher education sector in Thailand.

Science and Research Engagement

Thailand is a developing science and technology (S&T) nation, modest in terms of scientific output and research intensity by global standards. The government is the main source of S&T funding, although business investment in R&D is rising over time. In 2010, Thailand ranked 41st in the world for global published output, contributing 0.44% to global output. Thailand's top fields for publishing in English-based journals are infectious diseases; public, environmental & occupational health; pharmacology; and tropical medicine. The Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) develops and implements national S&T policies, with a strong focus on deriving socioeconomic benefits from science and innovation. National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA) is the major S&T research organisation.

The bilateral S&T relationship is underpinned by the 2004 Agreement on Bilateral Cooperation between the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand and the Government of Australia. S&T agreements between the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences & Engineering and the NSTDA and between CSIRO and the Thailand Institute of Scientific and Technological Research are also in place.

Thailand was Australia's 25th highest publication partner country in 2010 with 279 joint publications. Australia was Thailand's 4th highest publication partner country in 2008, participating in 4.69% of Thailand's joint publications.

A number of Australian funding and research agencies collaborate with Thailand including the Australian Research Council (ARC), the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), and CSIRO. Since 1998, three Australians have won the Prince Mahidol Award for public health.

AEI Study in Thailand Guide

AEI Thailand has developed an information resource, "Thailand: A Study Abroad Guide for Australian Students", to promote Thailand as a study destination for Australian students wanting an overseas study experience. This high-quality product provides details of courses taught in English at 30 Thai universities, as well as useful information on living and studying in Thailand.

Student Numbers

In 2012 there were 20,240 student enrolments from Thailand, a decline of 6.3% on the previous year. Thailand ranks sixth for international students coming to Australia behind China, India, Republic of Korea, Malaysia and Vietnam.

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