



Vietnam

English Language

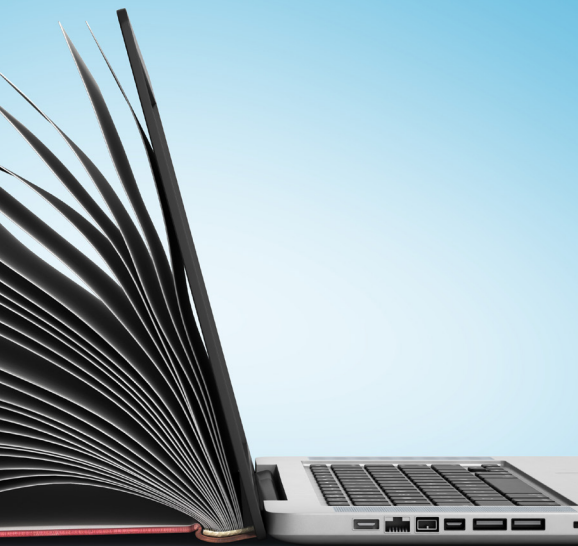
Training

Policy update

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Australian Government
Department of Education and Training



ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING & LEARNING IN VIETNAM

Contents

I. English language teaching & learning in Vietnam	2
1. Overview	2
2. Governance	3
II. National Foreign Languages 2020 Project	4



1. Overview

The Doi Moi (Renovation) Policy in 1986 and Vietnam's membership of ASEAN in 1995, are seen as two key milestones leading to market reform and an inflow of foreign investment into Vietnam. As a consequence the Government of Vietnam views English as a core skill crucial for a modern and globally connected economy. English is no doubt a tool that connects Vietnam to the world and links foreign investors with the young local labour market. Thus, teaching and learning English is an important aspect in Vietnam's education and training sector.

According to Education First, an international education company specialised in language training, Vietnam ranked 34th out of 80 countries and territories in the 2017 global English Proficiency Index (EPI).¹In 2016, Vietnam's EPI ranked 31st among that of 72 nations and territories.

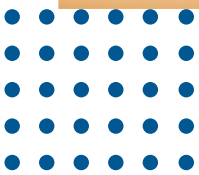
Vietnam, which has remained at the medium level of English language proficiency across Asia² with a score of 53.43 out of 100, follows Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines in ASEAN and is in eighth position out of the 21 countries in Asia.

Despite increasing attention from both the Government and individuals, teaching and learning English in Vietnam has not yet met people's expectations due to its existing limitations, such as lack of qualified English teachers, weakness in English communicative skills, or outdated textbooks. A consequence of these shortcomings has been students' poor performance in the English test of the annual national entrance exam to universities. In 2018, of the 814,779 students taking the English test to universities, 78.22% scored less than 5 out of 10 and the average score was 3.91 (up from 3.4 in 2017).

The Government of Vietnam is aware that English training, including via formal education, needs to improve to catch up with other countries in the ASEAN region. This opens opportunities for organisations working on education and development sector.

¹Education First (2017) <https://www.ef-australia.com.au/epi/regions/asia/vietnam/>

²<https://www.ef-australia.com.au/epi/regions/asia/>



2. Governance

The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) oversees the national education system, which includes formal English teaching and learning at school and university levels. MOET issued the Circular 21 dated 24 August 2018 on establishment and operation of foreign languages training centres. These centres are part of the national education system and deliver continuing education function. The circular defines English training centres into three types of ownership, public, private and foreign-invested. While MOET is responsible for national policy and regulatory aspects. The province and city Department of Education and Training (DOET) oversee the licencing and operation of the foreign language training centres.

The licencing process to establish a foreign-invested languages training centre to deliver short courses or non-qualification courses is regulated by the Vietnamese government's Decree 86/2018/ND-CP on foreign cooperation and investment in education (Decree 86) that took effect on 1st August 2018. The process consists of the following steps:

a. Investment registration certificate

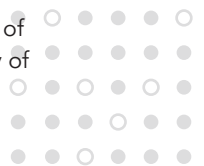
Investment registration certificates are issued in accordance with the Investment Law. Province and city Department of Planning and Investment (DPI) who is responsible for issuing investment registration certificate for institutions delivering short course or non-qualification training should seek educational appraisal from DOET in the jurisdiction.

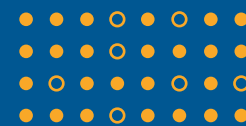
b. Establishment licence

Authority to approve the establishment is the Chairman of city/province People's Committee in the province or city of jurisdiction.

c. Operation approval

Authority to approve operation for institutions delivering short course training is the DOET Director in the province or city of jurisdiction.





NATIONAL FOREIGN LANGUAGES 2020 PROJECT

Vietnam recognises proficiency in foreign languages (primarily English) is a comparative advantage of any workforce. As a response to the need to improve the foreign language capacity of Vietnam's workforce, MOET has been implementing the National Foreign Languages 2020 Project (the 2020 Project) to strengthen the teaching and learning of foreign languages (primarily English) at all levels. The government considers the 2020 Project a breakthrough to improve the quality of English language learning and teaching across all education levels in Vietnam.

The ultimate goal of 2020 Project was that most Vietnamese students graduating from secondary and vocational schools, colleges, and universities would be able to use a foreign language in their daily communication, study and work in an integrated, multi-cultural and multi-lingual environment at IELTS level 4.5-5.

2020 Project was approved in September 2008 and started to rollout in 2010. Its ambitious objectives were:

- teaching of foreign languages (mainly English) as a compulsory subject from grade three across all schools in Vietnam by 2018–19 and piloting the teaching of maths and science subjects in English;
- enhancing foreign language training in the vocational education and higher education sectors by 2019–20; and
- achieving language level 3 (in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference

for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment – IELTS level 5) and above for 5 per cent of staff, clerks and officials from governmental agencies by the year 2015 and reaching 30 per cent by 2020.

The project has attracted considerable public attention and feedback in its nine years of implementation. The review conducted in late 2016 by MOET on the project's outcomes concluded that the government's targets for language proficiency set under the project were too ambitious. The Minister of Education and Training admitted that the National Foreign Language Scheme with an investment of more than VND4.2 trillion (AUD225.5 million) for the 2008-2016 period had failed.

Under this project, Vietnam has adopted the Common European Framework of Reference and has established its own English Language Proficiency Framework. The Project expected all university graduates not majoring in foreign languages to reach B1 in the Framework. However, according to a survey by MOET, only one in five students achieved that level in 2015. The government has therefore moved some of the objectives of the language learning and teaching plan out to 2025.

On 22 December 2017, the Vietnamese government approved Decision No. 2080/QĐ-TTg, an amendment and supplement of the project for the period 2008 – 2020. The newly amended project calls for all academic levels to continue with the new foreign language curriculum and improve English proficiency of students to adapt to

studying and working requirements, towards foreign language universalisation by 2025. The key new objectives include:

- 100 per cent of school students shall study 10-year foreign language curriculums, applied from year 3 to year 12
- 50 per cent of vocational training providers shall teach foreign language curriculums in accordance with competency/skill requirements
- 100 per cent of foreign language majors of universities must apply output criteria for students upon graduation while 80 per cent of other majors must also apply the criteria
- 100 per cent of student majoring in foreign language teaching must follow professional criteria and fulfil requirement of foreign language teachers' capacity.

