



Thailand: Vocational Education and Training



Australian Government

Department of Education, Skills and Employment



1. System and Governance

1.1. Overview

Since 2014, the Government of Thailand has been reforming the vocational education and training (VET) system to respond to the needs of industry, increase productivity, improve employment outcomes for graduates and better align skills training with labour market demand. The Office of the Vocational Education Commission (OVEC) within the Ministry of Education is responsible for setting the standards and curriculum of VET teaching and learning.

The Thai government's *National Strategy Thailand 4.0* is guiding the development of the VET structure and curriculum. Vocational education will play a significant role in contributing to high value services by educating unskilled and low-skill labour with knowledge, expertise and high skills in accordance with the government's policy.

Thailand struggles with quality in many of its VET institutions, and industry is concerned that, on the whole, graduates do not have adequate or appropriate skills. Consequently, industry, through individual employers, are taking on the responsibility for making graduates job-ready. There is recognition within OVEC of this and of the general mismatch between education supply and labour market demand, both in terms of quality and relevance, yet the sector struggles with how to respond.

1.2. Governance

Vocational Education in Thailand is largely offered by OVEC. OVEC is responsible for vocational and professional lifelong learning. The provision of technical and vocational education and training is offered through the formal school system in both the basic and vocational education streams, as well as through non-formal education opportunities.

There are around 429 public colleges and 484 private colleges providing formal VET programs nationwide. There are almost 1 million vocational students (2019 data) under OVEC's responsibility.

OVEC's main vocational education management function is to produce and develop manpower in specific skills including skilled workers, technicians, and technologists. There are nine major fields of study: industry, commerce and business administration, fine and applied arts, home economics, agriculture, fisheries, tourism and hospitality, textiles industry, and ICT.



2. Training Delivery

Formal vocational education and training (VET) is conducted at three levels:

1. Upper secondary (Lower Certificate of Vocational Education),
2. Post-secondary (Diploma or Vocational Associate Degree), and
3. University level (Bachelor Degree).

Types of courses offered in VET cover a wide range of disciplines including Industry, Commerce/Business Administration, Arts, Textile, Home Economics, Information and Communication Technology, Agriculture, Fishery, and Tourism and Hospitality.

Thai vocational public and private colleges offer the following types of qualifications:

1. Vocational certificate – a curriculum provided for those who graduate from a secondary school. This curriculum aims to produce and develop basic skills.
2. Diploma Certificate – a curriculum provided for those who graduate from vocational certificate level or high school. This curriculum aims to produce and develop professional skills.
3. Higher Diploma in Technical Education equivalent to Bachelor's degree for those who finish diploma in vocational education. This aims to produce professional teachers.
4. Bachelor's degree in technology or operation – a curriculum designed for those who finish the diploma in vocational education and continue to study further for 2 years.
5. Career development and special training – a curriculum that provides learners of all education levels with a wide range of short (5-6 hours), medium (30-120 hours) and longer (225 hours) courses at both entry and upskilling levels. Occasionally, OVEC offers short (1-4 hours) courses under a program '108 careers curriculum', which aims to equip learners with new skills to establish or improve business development.

Number of VET Institutions in Thailand

	Type of VET Institutions	No
1	Technical Colleges	113
2	Industrial and Community Colleges	141
3	Business Administration and Tourism Colleges	3
4	Commercial Colleges	5
5	Arts and Crafts Colleges	2
6	Polytechnic Colleges	52
7	Vocational Colleges	39
8	Technology and Management Colleges	10
9	Agricultural and Technological Colleges	43
10	Royal Goldsmith College	1
11	Industrial and Ship Building Technological Colleges	3
12	Fishery Colleges	4
13	Vocational Education Institutions	19*+4**

* Nineteen institutions have been established comprising 161 vocational and technical Colleges from 19 provinces clusters

** Four agricultural institutions have been established in each region comprising of 41 regional institutions nationwide.

The move towards lifelong learning and a learning society has become embodied in a credit transfer system to facilitate mobility between institutions; in the recognition of different types of qualifications from various institutions offering vocational training; and the evaluation of prior learning and work experience from within the formal, non-formal and informal sectors. Reforms are currently being implemented to remodel the system towards the Thai Vocational Qualification (TVQ) based upon industrial practices and needs.



3. Financing VET

The Thai Ministry of Education receives the largest budget out of the 19 ministries. In the Thailand fiscal year 2019, the Ministry of Education (MoE) was allocated a budget of approximately 490 billion Thai Baht. Thailand spends roughly 20 percent of the national project or 4 percent of the GDP rate in education. In comparison to other countries in the OECD group, Thailand spends more of its budget supporting education.

The VET system in Thailand is mainly financed by the MoE, with OVEC defining the criteria and allocation of the budget and other necessary resources.



4. Policy update

Thailand 4.0

o Thailand 4.0 is an economic model that aims to unlock the country from several economic challenges resulting from past economic development models which place emphasis on agriculture (Thailand 1.0), light industry (Thailand 2.0), and advanced industry (Thailand 3.0). These challenges include “a middle income trap”, “an inequality trap”, and “an imbalanced trap”.

o Under the “Thailand 4.0” model, the nation’s economy will be innovation driven by upgrading technology, improving creativity, innovation, and research and development capacity.

o One of the focus of the policy concerning education is to improve human resources by strengthening vocational training and education system

o The target sectors for Thailand 4.0 are as follows:

o The “First S-curve” sectors including next-generation automotive; smart electronics; affluent medical and wellness tourism; agriculture and biotechnology; and future-oriented foods,

o The “New S-curve” sectors including robotics; aviation and logistics; biofuels and biochemicals; digital industries; and a medical hub.

o These development strategies are in line with the government’s policy to upgrade Thailand from a middle income to a highly developed country by 2036.

o Vocational education will play a significant role in contributing to high value services by educating unskilled and low-skilled labour with knowledge, expertise and high skills in accordance to the government policy.

o The Thai government is still aiming to improve its education system and to boost highly educated worker technological skills to serve target industry sectors in the first and new S-Curve.

7 Strategies to drive vocational education management in Thailand in 2020

OVEC has released seven main strategies to drive vocational education management and improve Thailand's quality in vocational education in 2020. These are:

1. Dual vocational system

- Strengthen dual vocational education system across all VET institutions
- Strengthen industry engagement

2. English proficiency

- Increase English proficiency for VET students and teachers
- Work collaboratively with international partners to upgrade Thailand's VET to international standard

3. Digital learning

- Focus on increasing the use of digital learning including platform, internet access, big data and video conference

4. VET coordinating centres

- Establish VET coordinating centres in six regional areas across Thailand, including at provinces in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), Southern Economic Corridor (SEC), and at Special Economic Zones (SEZs)

5. Centres of Excellence (CoE)

- Establish over 10 Centres of Excellence at VET institutions in different locations. Areas of Centres of Excellence include tourism and hospitality, aviation, marine, railway, and robotics which will be in line with the Thailand 4.0 model
- Focus on re-skills, up-skills, new skills
 - Prepare skilled workforce to support aging society
 - Increase skilled workforce needed for Thailand 4.0 model
 - Increase more short course training
 - Develop Education to Employment curriculum
 - Support start-up and online business

6. Upgrade the quality of VET teachers and personnel

- Improve English Proficiency
- Improve digital literacy
- Increase the number of VET teachers with direct work experience
- Employ teachers with special skills

7. Increase OVEC management efficiency

- Focus on the use of budget
- Budget will be used mainly for improving skills of teachers and students
- Increase salaries and incentives for VET teachers and staff



5. Highlights from the VET Law

In July 2012, MoE issued a new VET policy statement called “Vocational Education Guidelines for Policymaking, Goal Setting and Development of Vocational Manpower”. The policy document is intended to guide policy for the forthcoming 15 years. It lays out four policies, 10 strategies, 28 approaches and 93 flagship projects with an emphasis on multi-dimensional development in areas such as academics, instructorship, teaching capabilities, research competency, and professional capabilities relevant to fields of study at every working phase. In addition, there are procedures for monitoring, teaching orientation by experienced experts emphasising on-the-job training in real sector, society and professional associations in response to changes, and ASEAN labour competition.

The document was developed by the MoE’s Vocational Education Sub-Committee (VESC) after consultation with stakeholders in the public and private sectors, three working groups, and additional relevant parties to ensure that the proposed policies and strategies will produce the desired qualitative production and improvement of skilled workers in Thailand. The four key policy objectives are as follows:

15. Policy 1: To produce vocational workforce
16. Policy 2: To raise the quantity and quality of teachers, faculties and personnel in vocational education.
17. Policy 3: To develop the quality of educational institutions and new learning sources.
18. Policy 4: To develop management efficiency.



Photo ©The Office of the Vocational Education Commission,
Ministry of Education, Thailand

Since 2014, the Government of Thailand has been undertaking reform of its VET system to improve responsiveness to the needs of industry, productivity and employment outcomes for graduates and its connections with industry to align training with labour market demand.

The OVEC within MoE is responsible for setting the standards and curriculum of VET teaching and learning. In 2017, OVEC launched the National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training 2017 – 2036 to improve VET teaching and learning quality in all aspects to increase competitiveness in the global market. This strategy is in line with the National Thailand 4.0 Strategy which focuses on improving productivity and moving away from the middle income trap.

As part of the National Strategy for VET 2017 - 2036, the Government of Thailand, through OVEC, is seeking international expertise from overseas partners such as Australia, to improve policy outcomes and program delivery for trainers and assessors. Currently, VET teachers undertake a two year program in Teacher College. However, these programs are delivered according to the subject area (e.g. ICT or Business Admin) as opposed to generic VET teaching pedagogy. OVEC is seeking to improve competency-based training and the capacity of its 35,000 VET trainers and assessors in public colleges across the country. The International Skills Training (IST) courses offer a good option as they are competency-based and outcomes-focussed.

6. VET-related challenges

- Skilled labour shortage
- VET teachers shortage
- Low English proficiency of vocational students and standards for implementation, coordination and promotion)
- Low number of students studying in vocational education sector
- VET is perceived as less prestigious than higher education



7. Engagement with Australia

For 25 years the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment has been working closely with Thai government agencies including OVEC, MoE and the Thailand Professional Qualification Institute (Public Organization) or TPQI to serve the mission of the Thai government in reforming the VET system that would also lead to the success of the Thailand 4.0 policy.

The achievement of Thailand's reforms for the VET system would lead to workforce mobility, which is in-line with the Australian Government's policy. Currently, there are two main projects that the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment works with the Thai government:

- 1) Industry Competency Board (ICB); and
- 2) International Skills Training Courses (IST)

1. The Industry Competency Board (ICB)

The Australian Government has worked with the Thailand Professional Qualification Institute (Public Organization) or TPQI to establish the Industry Competency Board (ICB). The ICB brings together government and industry to develop national competency-based VET qualifications. The ICB aims to address the skills gaps in Thai major industries by giving a platform for industry to design the competency-based curriculum driven by the real needs of the industry. The ICB will ensure future standards and competencies development in Thailand is aligned with industry needs. It will help increase productivity, the supply of skilled labour and at the end of the day give student's access to high quality nationally recognised VET qualifications and better jobs with better pay.



o Since 2018, the then Australian Government Department of Education has hosted seminars and workshops with TPQI to mentor Thailand on the necessary steps to form the first ICB in Thailand which is ICB in Logistics and Supply Chain. The first ICB in Thailand is scheduled to roll out in 2020 which will be followed with the establishment of the two new ICBs in Healthcare and Tourism.



Logistics and Supply Chain Industry Competency Board Information Session on 27 Mar 2019 ©TPQI



Logistics and Supply Chain Industry Competency Board Information Session on 27 Mar 2019 ©TPQI



Mentoring session of Australian experts and TPQI working group on setting up ICB on 26 Mar 2019



Mentoring session of Australian experts and TPQI working group on setting up ICB on 21 Aug 2019 ©TPQI

2. International Skills Training Courses (IST)

o The Australian Government worked with the industry and the training sectors to develop the IST courses: TVET Trainer, TVET Assessor and Advanced TVET Trainer and Assessor (Master trainer). The Trainer and Assessor courses provide learners with the core vocational skills to train or assess learners in their industry of expertise. The Advanced Trainer and Assessor course provides participants skills to take a leadership role within an organisation, enterprise or industry. Also, the IST course is a project that contributes to the development of competency-based training in Thailand.

o In collaboration with the Bureau of Personnel Competency Development (BPCD), Office of the Vocational Education Commission (OVEC), the IST pilot courses for TVET Trainer and TVET Assessor were successfully launched to Thai TVET teachers in early 2019. The aim of the IST training for BPCD is to improve competency based training and the capacity of its VET trainers and assessors in public colleges across the country. After the pilot courses, the Australian Government continues to work with BPCD for the possibility of an extended roll-out of the courses in Thailand, up to 3,000 trainers in the future.





Top Left: Thai public college teachers attending the first IST course in Thailand on 2 Apr 2019
 Top Right: IST course for Assessors hosted by TPQI during 22-26 Jul 2019 ©TPQI
 Center: Graduation ceremony of IST course for Trainers and Assessors hosted by OVEC on 5 Jul 2019
 Bottom: Graduation ceremony of IST for Assessors course hosted by TPQI on 7 Feb 2020 ©TPQI



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