



Reinventing University – a step towards the future of Thai Higher Education

In November 2020, Thailand's Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESI) launched the Reinventing University initiative. The initiative's objective is to enhance Thai universities' excellence and produce highly skilled workers with the capacity to respond to Thailand's industry needs. It supports and encourages Thai universities to be more globally competitive, increase their competency and lift their quality, which is a significant component of the Thai Government's development plan and economic model – Thailand 4.0 (read more about the Thailand 4.0 development plan in the [Thailand Education Policy Update - Higher Education Sector](#))

In November 2021, MHESI released the first set of universities that have been categorised under this initiative. This is the first time Thailand has categorised its universities into different groups based on their areas of expertise. The Reinventing University initiative will reform the administrative system of Thai universities, improve the curriculum to match industry skills needs and increase the universities' quality to improve international competitiveness.

The initiative has a particular focus on producing highly skilled workers based in 10 key industries identified in Thailand 4.0:

- **5 New S-Curve:** biofuels and biochemicals; digital economy; medical hub; automation and robotics; and aviation and logistics.
- **5 First S-Curve:** agricultural and biotechnology; smart electronics; affluent medical and wellness tourism; next-generation automotive; food for the future.

Strategic groups and funding

Thai universities participating in the first round of the initiative were asked by MHESI to submit a 5-year development plan by 30 September 2021. A MHESI sub-committee then assessed, approved, and announced the outcomes of this process in November 2021. Funding is in addition to the university's annual funding¹ and will be assessed yearly, commencing in the next fiscal year (October 2022 – September 2023). The different strategic groups will receive different levels of additional funding based on their requirements (i.e. Technology and Innovation universities may need more funding for new infrastructure).

Out of 155 universities in Thailand, 82 were classified into 5 strategic groups – with the remaining 73 universities currently not participating in the initiative. These universities may choose to apply in future rounds of the initiative.

¹ Thailand spends approximately AUD\$4.6 billion annually on the management of over 80 public universities. Currently, private universities in Thailand do not receive annual funding from the government.

The 5 strategic groups are:

1. **Global and Frontier Research** (16 universities) – producing world-class research and building highly-skilled human resources to develop high-quality research that meets global demands. Universities in this category must be globally competitive and produce graduates that are capable to work internationally.
2. **Technology and Innovation** (18 universities) – developing new technology and innovation to respond to Thailand's demands, especially in agricultural, industrial and services areas. Universities in this category must focus on inventing start-up groups and working with industry to develop new technology that will lead to Thailand's social, economic, and industrial development.
3. **Area-Based & Community** (41 universities) – transferring knowledge and technology to strengthen the development of local Thai communities. It also aims to create more jobs and generate domestic income, particularly in the farming sector.
4. **Moral & Intellectual Cultivation** (0 universities) – incorporating religious teachings into university curriculum.
5. **Specialised & Professional** (7 universities) – building Thai students with specific skills to respond to Thailand's 4.0 development plan. Universities under this platform include those that specialise in sport, music, drama etc.

See [Appendix](#) for full list of universities in each strategic group.

Themes of activities

Under the Reinventing Universities initiative, participating universities will have to focus on activities to achieve their implementation plan. Each participating university must choose which activity themes they want to focus on – with most universities choosing 3-4 out of the 5 themes. The activity themes they choose will be related to the strategic group they are in (i.e Global and Frontier Research universities will likely want to focus on 'Global perspective' and 'Engagement' activities)

The 5 themes include:

1. Manpower – enhancing teaching and learning quality.
2. Brainpower – reskilling, upskilling and lifelong learning.
3. Global perspective – working collaboratively with international partners.
4. Research and Innovation – managing research and innovation efficiently.
5. Engagement – creating a platform for universities to increase domestic and international collaboration with both the government and private sector.

Opportunities for Australian universities

There are significant opportunities for Australian universities to deepen engagement with existing Thai university partners by collaborating under this initiative.

Thai universities under the "Global and Frontier Research" and "Technology and Innovation" groups in particular, will be seeking to collaborate with overseas partners in a range of areas including research, research commercialisation, professional development, and technology and innovation.

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment is in discussions with MHESI to explore further collaboration with Thai universities under this initiative in 2022.

If you would like more information on the Reinventing Universities initiative or further education or research engagement with Thailand, email DESE's representative in Australian Embassy in Thailand, Ms Watinee Kharnwong Watinee.Kharnwong@dfat.gov.au.

Appendix - list of Thai universities under Reinventing University Initiative

1. Global and Frontier Research – 16 universities

- 1.1. Chulalongkorn University
- 1.2. Khon Kaen University
- 1.3. Kasetsart University
- 1.4. Chiang Mai University
- 1.5. King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT)
- 1.6. Suranaree University of Technology
- 1.7. Thammasat University
- 1.8. Naresuan University
- 1.9. Mahasarakham University
- 1.10. Mahidol University
- 1.11. Mae Fah Luang University
- 1.12. Walailak University
- 1.13. Silpakorn University
- 1.14. Prince of Songkla University
- 1.15. National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA)
- 1.16. Chulabhorn Graduate Institute

2. Technology and Innovation – 18 universities

- 2.1. Thaksin University
- 2.2. King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok (KMUTNB)
- 2.3. Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep
- 2.4. Rajamangala University of Technology Tawan-ok
- 2.5. Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi
- 2.6. Rajamangala University of Technology Phra Nakhon
- 2.7. Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosin
- 2.8. Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna
- 2.9. Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya
- 2.10. Rajamangala University of Technology Suvarnabhumi
- 2.11. Rajamangala University of Technology Isan
- 2.12. Princess of Naradhiwas University
- 2.13. Burapha University
- 2.14. Maejo University
- 2.15. Pibulsongkram Rajabhat University
- 2.16. Ubon Ratchathani University
- 2.17. Chitralada Technology Institute
- 2.18. King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang (KMITL)

3. Area-Based & Community – 41 universities

- 3.1. Kalasin University
- 3.2. Nakhon Phanom University
- 3.3. University of Phayao
- 3.4. Kanchanaburi Rajabhat University
- 3.5. Kamphaeng Phet Rajabhat University
- 3.6. Chandrakasem Rajabhat University
- 3.7. Chaiyaphum Rajabhat University

- 3.8. Chiang Rai Rajabhat University
- 3.9. Chiang Mai Rajabhat University
- 3.10. Thepsatri Rajabhat University
- 3.11. Dhonburi Rajabhat University
- 3.12. Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University
- 3.13. Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University
- 3.14. Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University
- 3.15. Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University
- 3.16. Buriram Rajabhat University
- 3.17. Phranakhon Rajabhat University
- 3.18. Ayutthaya Rajabhat University
- 3.19. Phetchabun Rajabhat University
- 3.20. Phuket Rajabhat University
- 3.21. Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University
- 3.22. Yala Rajabhat University
- 3.23. Roi Et Rajabhat University
- 3.24. Rajabhat Rajanagarindra University
- 3.25. Rambhai Barni Rajabhat University
- 3.26. Lampang Rajabhat University
- 3.27. Loei Rajabhat University
- 3.28. Valaya Alongkorn Rajabhat University
- 3.29. Sisaket Rajabhat University
- 3.30. Sakonnakhon Rajabhat University
- 3.31. Songkhla Rajabhat University
- 3.32. Suratthani Rajabhat University
- 3.33. Surindra Rajabhat University
- 3.34. Muban Chombueng Rajabhat University
- 3.35. Udon Thani Rajabhat University
- 3.36. Uttaradit Rajabhat University
- 3.37. Ubon Ratchathani Rajabhat University
- 3.38. Suan Dusit University
- 3.39. Srinakharinwirot University
- 3.40. Institute of Community Colleges
- 3.41. Vongchavalitkul University

4. Moral & Intellectual Cultivation – 0 universities

5. Specialized & Professional – 7 universities

- 5.1. Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University
- 5.2. Phetchaburi Rajabhat University
- 5.3. Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University
- 5.4. Ramkhamhaeng University
- 5.5. Srisavarindhira Thai Red Cross Institute of Nursing
- 5.6. Pathum Wan Institute of Technology
- 5.7. Arsorn Silp Institute of The Arts