Thailand Study Abroad Education Market Update 2020

Internationalization has taken a flight in Thailand. More and more Anglo-Saxon universities are opening branches in Thailand and in Bangkok in particular. Collaborative degree programs (joint or shared degrees) is a another development that has gained a lot of ground. UK universities alone have initiated 128 collaborative programs with Thai universities. Other countries that have initiated similar partnerships are China, USA, Germany, Australia and Canada.

On a policy level, the ASEAN International Mobility for Students project has lead to an increase of outward student mobility (semester programs) to countries like Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. This program is comparable to the European Erasmus program. Another regional developments that aid the mobility of students is the introduction of a regional credit transfer system (ASEAN countries).

In 2011, the Thai Higher Education Commission identified nine institutions that were to be upgraded to national research universities. The aim of this measure was to improve research standards and output. Also, it was meant to increase research funding. These nine universities are: Chulalongkorn University, Kasetsart University, Chiang Mai University, Khon Kaen University, Thammasat University, Mahidol University, Prince of Songkla University, Suranaree University of Technology and the King Mongkut’s University of Technology Thonburi.

Education quick facts

Secondary education
- Starting age: 13
- Duration: 6 years
- Enrolment numbers: 6,3 million (2019)

Higher education
- Duration: 4 – 6 years
- Enrolment numbers: 2.4 million (2019)
- Access to higher education: 49% (2019). This is a 10% increase since 2013.
- Universities/ Institutions: 80 (public); 71 (private)
- Academic Year: June - March

Thailand Education System
A Certificate of Secondary Education or a Certificate in Vocational Education is required to be admitted into higher education. Candidates may apply to 5 faculties at either one or several universities. Admission depends on whether the applicant’s results comply with the chosen university’s standard requirements. The Central University Admission System (CUAS) has been in force since 2006. To be admitted to university, students need to take an entrance examination.

Higher education in Thailand is provided at universities, technical institutes, professional and technical colleges, and teachers' colleges. Higher education in Thailand is divided between 2 types of institutions. Firstly, institutions which fall under the Ministry of Education, such as state universities and private institutions for higher education, technical/professional and agricultural institutions, and teacher training colleges. Secondly, specialised training institutions which fall under various ministries or government organizations.
Thai students studying abroad
- Number: 32,119 (2019)
- Thai students mostly go abroad for language courses, exchange programs (semester), Graduate and PhD programs. Relatively few students do a 4 year Bachelor abroad.
- Business programs (Economics, Business Admin etc) are by far the most popular study abroad programs among Thai students. Language programs too are popular.
- According to a recent World Education News Review, 16,000 very Thai students are self-funded. This is 65% of all Thai students abroad.
- Top 5 study destinations: US (28%), UK (23%), Australia, (12%), Japan (9%), Egypt (7%)

Thailand higher education study abroad data 2020

• Australia - 7,427
• USA 6,406
• UK - 6,103
• Japan - 3,054
• Egypt - 2,091
• Malaysia - 1,516
• Indonesia - 996
• Germany - 544
• Canada - 462
• New Zealand - 442
• France - 440
• Jordan - 398
• Korea - 317

Your competitors in Thailand
- The US and UK dominate the study abroad market in Thailand. They take over half of all study abroad students.
- Australia is in third place and has been losing some ground over the years. That shows that proximity is not everything.
- Despite the domestic troubles of recent years, Egypt remains a popular study destination.
- Of the smaller players, Korea is making interesting moves on the Thai market. With TV commercials and a smart online marketing strategy, mobility to Korea has taken a flight. Korean lifestyle is very popular in Thailand nowadays. Higher Education is benifiting from this.
- Of the European countries, Germany and France are the most popular study abroad destinations. Germany’s favourable study fees play an important role. France has many regional ties and a very active CampusFrance organisation that operates locally.

Online behaviour of Thai students
When devising a marketing strategy for Thailand, please make sure to devote some chapters to the real decision makers. Thai students are very much influenced by their parents and their professors. It is crucial to include these groups in your promotional strategies.

Thailand, education and the Internet
Needless to say, social media sites are the most important sources of information for Thai students, especially in Bangkok. Facebook is the most important platform, followed by Instagram and Twitter.
With around 30 million Facebook users, Thailand has the 3rd largest contingent of users in the world. Most users live in the larger urban areas of Bangkok (16 million users) and Chiang Mai (1.5 million users).

**Most popular study abroad websites**
By far the most popular website is educatepark.com with around 10,000 visits per day. This website is mainly about studying in the US and the UK. Study in China and study in Japan and scholarship websites are pretty well visited.

A website that promotes studying in Europe as well as the US, UK and Australia is apexeducate.com. Although bannering is not possible, apex does allow for branded content and advertorials.

**Online marketing in Thailand**
Google is the most used search engine. Facebook is the most popular social media channel. Spending your marketing budget on Google Adwords and Facebook Ads therefore seems a safe bet to promote your school in Thailand.

Universities with a well though thru marketing strategy will not overlook popular domestic websites such as sanook.com, dek-d.com and mthai.com. These websites have around 1 million views a day. Ideal sites to post branded content.

**Social Media Penetration in Thailand (December 2018: source statista.com)**
The following are the most popular social media platforms in Thailand.
Internet user penetration in Thailand (December 2018: source statista.com)
Due to the predominantly rural population, internet penetration in Thailand is still low at just under 60%.

Scholarships for Thai Students

**Anandamahidol Scholarship**
The Ananda Mahidol scholarship is funded by His Royal Highness King Bhumibol Adulyadej. The aim of this scholarship is to support academic excellence among Thai students looking to study abroad. Students looking to participate in a bachelor, master or PhD program will be considered.

More info on https://www.educationfair.nl/scholarship/show/anandamahidol-scholarship/4

**ASEM -DUO Fellowship**
Approved in 2000 from ASEM III Summit and commenced in 2001, ASEM-DUO Fellowship Programme has supported exchanges of professors and students in tertiary education field between Asia and Europe under ASEM domain.

More info on http://www.asemduo.org/
Thai Government Scholarship
Thai government scholarship is intended for Thai students in their final year of the bachelor or master degree program. The scholarship aims to sponsoring excellent students in their pursuit of studying abroad at a recognized university.


The Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs scholarship
This scholarship is intended for Thai students in their final year of the bachelor or master degree program. The scholarship aims to sponsoring excellent students in their pursuit of studying abroad at a recognized university.

More info on https://www.educationfair.nl/scholarship/show/thai-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-scholarship/68

More scholarship info on https://www.educationfair.nl/scholarship/search