

Institution: Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU)		
Unit of Assessment: 23 – Education		
Title of case study: Initial Teacher Education reform in the Kingdom of Thailand		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2016-2018		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Prof Kate Adams	Professor of Education & Childhood	01/09/05 - 20/10/17
Prof Chris Atkin	Professor of Higher Education	01/09/12 to date
Dr Yvonne Hill	Senior Lecturer	01/09/12 - 31/07/19
Dr Emma Pearson	Reader in Education Studies	01/08/15 - 31/08/18
Dr Anthea Rose	Research Associate	02/03/15 - 26/06/15
Dr Ruth Sayers	Executive Dean – Learning, Teaching & Student Engagement	01/09/98 - 31/08/17
Prof John Sharp	Professor of Higher Education	01/09/04 - 31/03/16
Dr Shaun Thompson	Senior Lecturer	01/09/15 to date
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
Section B		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>A research study examining Initial Teacher Education (ITE) has led to far-reaching impact on policy and professional practice across Thailand. Impact was reflected in major changes to guidelines, expectations and standards. The most significant dimension was the reduction in the length of undergraduate ITE programmes, a key recommendation of the research. Beneficiaries have been, and will continue to be, policymakers, educators and students. The change in the curriculum will affect all of Thailand's undergraduate trainee teachers, as well as the country's 130 universities that offer the Government/Teachers' Council of Thailand accredited ITE programmes leading to 'licence to teach' status.</p>		
2. Underpinning research – References in section 3 are indicated by number (e.g., R1)		
<p>The underpinning research into ITE in Thailand's Rajabhat universities was funded by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (British Embassy Bangkok) in partnership with Thailand's Ministry of Education (see Additional Contextual Data).</p> <p>This research related to innovations developed by the Thai government that focused on economic development through a project called Thailand 4.0 (R1). This project aims to accelerate the development of hi-tech elements of the Thai economy, but in part rests on the development of a world-class education system, which in turn is based on the quality of teacher education. The research underpinning this case study was focused on understanding the current state of teacher education in Thailand pre-2016, leading to recommendations and changes in national practice as a result of the research insights.</p> <p>The initial research relating to the project (R2, R3) was the basis for the creation of</p>		

recommendations proposed to the Thai government as a framework for ITE reform. The research uncovered the need for action with the following recommendations for policy and practice:

- **Quality/quantity of ITE students:** Ensure that any reductions in the number of undergraduate ITE students are consistent across institutions and are associated with raising the academic entry level requirements.
- **Undergraduate ITE course length/structure:** Consider reducing the length of course from five years to four years' full-time study (with teacher candidates choosing to enter either early childhood / primary or secondary programmes, and teaching practice beginning in year 1 or 2, building year on year throughout the four years).
- **Timing of the teaching practicum/internship:** Introduce student teachers to the school environment from an earlier point in their programme of study.
- **Discipline knowledge:** Review the ITE curriculum, so that increased time for focus on academic disciplines is provided, particularly for secondary school programmes and establish more robust academic pathways into teaching to ensure secondary school teachers have a solid discipline/curriculum base.
- **Standards:** Bring together the standards influencing the ITE curriculum together in a new, simplified set of standards endorsed by a relaunched Teachers' Council of Thailand or similar.
- **Curriculum alignment:** Ensure teacher educator reforms are aligned with reforms in schools through a system of accredited annual training (a predetermined minimum engagement with continuing professional development).
- **Faculty organisation:** Ensure that students studying for a bachelor's ITE-type degree have access to academic staff from educational backgrounds throughout their programme, so as the focus on pedagogical approaches within disciplines is clear and linked to the school curriculum they will be teaching.

The research also contextualised the development of a reformed ITE system in the wider Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) area, including the adoption of the Southeast Asia Teacher Competence Framework. In respect of this adoption, the research (R3) also highlights the need to be mindful of issues around policy borrowing (R1, R4), in order to ensure that local need, systems, and professional cultures are considered alongside wider curriculum drivers (R5) when developing policy aims and objectives.

3. References to the research

1. **Atkin, C.** (2020) 'Ongoing policy reform in Thailand's Initial Teacher Education Curriculum: Incomplete policy borrow', *Asian Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Studies*, 3, 2, 19-27.
2. **Atkin, C., Pearson, E., Thompson, S. & Sharp, J.** (2016) *The future of Thailand's Rajabhat based Initial Teacher Training: Report on Fieldwork* (British Embassy Thailand, Foreign & Commonwealth Office: Bangkok, Thailand; and Bishop Grosseteste University: Lincoln), 12.
3. **Atkin, C., Pearson, E., Thompson, S. & Sharp, J.** (2018) *Thailand Rajabhat Initial Teacher Education project* (The British Embassy, Bangkok: Department for International Trade),
[Available at:
https://bgro.repository.guildhe.ac.uk/id/eprint/260/6/Atkin_ThailandRajabhatInitial_2018.pdf]
4. Chung, J., **Atkin, C.** and Moore, J. (2012) 'The rise and fall of the MTL: an example of European policy borrowing', *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 35, 3, 259-74.
5. **Atkin, C., Rose, A., Sharp, J., Hill, Y., Adams, K. & Sayers, R.** (2015) *Internationalising the curriculum: a developmental resource for initiating transformational change* (York: Higher Education Academy).

[Available at:
<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/internationalising-curriculum-developmental-resource-initiating-transformational>]

4. Details of the impact – Sources in section 5 are indicated by number (e.g., **S1**)

This study reflects significant and far-reaching impact in an important area of public policy: the national ITE system across Thailand. Underpinning research has led to a major change in policy direction, bringing modifications to regulations, guidelines and delivery of Thai professional programmes in ITE.

The principal beneficiaries will be:

- The Thai education and other relevant government departments;
- The 130 universities offering Government/ Teachers' Council of Thailand accredited ITE programmes leading to 'licence to teach' status;
- The 32,000 students who typically graduate from Thai ITE programmes.

The underpinning research generated to a series of key recommendations (see section 2), which translated into a series of areas of specific impact on the Thai initial teacher education system. The most prominent was the reduction in the length of ITE programmes from five to four years (recommendation 2).

The final research report was launched in February 2018, and was positively accepted by the Thai Education Minister:

- 'Professor Atkin's report into initial teacher education at our Rajabhat universities was one of the first external reports I received when I took up my post as Minister of Education. It presented me with a series of policy recommendations and challenges which I have discussed with my officials as we look at operationalise our plans to improve the performance of Thailand's young people in realising our plans to move Thailand from a middle to high income country through our Thailand 4.0 development policy' (**S1**).

The report was immediately used by the General Teachers' Council of Thailand as a reference in developing the Southeast Asia Teachers Competency Framework (**S2, S3**), an overarching teacher development framework used across 10 countries in SE Asia.

The use of the research in deliberations concerning national policy shift had reached fruition by March 2019, when there was a ministerial announcement initialising a national curriculum reform in the length of the undergraduate ITE programme from five years to four, in line with the recommendations made in the research report (**S4**).

This led to immediate reform of undergraduate programmes across the country, resulting in a national change of programme structure for trainee teachers per year across the universities offering government and Teachers' Council of Thailand accredited programmes. As was stated by a vice-president of one university:

- 'Today we will have a meeting for transferring the Ministry of Education policy regarding 4 years curricular to our colleagues. It will be useful if I mention about your report to them. I am wondering if I can reprint your report to the meeting. I am not sure if you got my previous mail but it is clear that the Deputy Minister has been supporting to reduce years of teacher education. I myself believe that this is your report impact' (**S5**).

Some of the university providers of ITE have also taken the opportunity of large-scale reform to develop school placements earlier in the new four-year programme (**S6**). This is in line with the new Southeast Asia Teachers Competency Framework, which the research has also had a role in informing as stated above. Even in those universities which have not chosen to

move full school experiences to earlier elements of their programmes, they have nevertheless developed short placements in demonstration schools to ensure that student teachers have greater opportunity for classroom experience (**S6**).

As a consequence of the research into the ITE system:

- Two cohorts of 32,000 student teachers per year have already begun to work their way through a reformed ITE system.
- Government has relaxed the timing of the teaching practicum (recommendation 3) across the Thai sector with many universities embracing the opportunities presented by introducing time in schools earlier in the course.
- The expansion of a shortened ITE course (recommendation 4) for graduates wishing to enter the teaching workforce has been taken up by government.
- The Teachers' Council of Thailand has been relaunched with new guidance in February 2018 (**S7**) at a workshop held at the British Ambassador's Residence, British Embassy Bangkok. The workshop was entitled Teachers' Professional Development: Competency Framework and was opened by the Minister of Education followed by Chris Atkin as the keynote speaker.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. Statement by His Excellency Dr Teerakiat Jareonsettasin (Thailand's Education Minister), Open Remarks, Teachers' Professional Development: Competency Framework Conference, British Ambassador's Residence, The British Embassy, Bangkok.
2. Communication by Dr Tinsiri Siribodhi, Deputy Secretary General Teachers' Council of Thailand.
3. Communication by Dr Wipada Wanich Personal Assistant to the Thai Minister of Education.
4. Government Gazette, Volume 139, Special Episode 59, 6th March 2019.
5. Communication by Dr Suwamarb Mounprasert, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Suan Dusit University.
6. Atkin, C. (2020) 'Ongoing policy reform in Thailand's Initial Teacher Education Curriculum: Incomplete policy borrow', *Asian Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Studies*, 3, 2, 19-27.
7. Atkin, C. (2018) 'A review of initial teacher training in Thailand (2016/17)' Teachers' Professional Development: Competency Framework Workshop, The British Ambassador's Residence, British Embassy Bangkok.

Additional contextual data

Name(s) of funder(s): UK Government: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Global Research Identifier of funder(s) (<https://www.grid.ac/>)

Name(s) of funding programme(s): UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (2016) and UK Prosperity Fund (February 2018)

Grant number(s): BPB/2016/2017 - 120280432

Amount of grant (in GBP):

Initial grant: 2016 - UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office £18,920

Secondary funding: February 2018 - UK Prosperity Fund £20,000

ORCID for each named researcher, where held:

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Name(s) of formal partner(s):

Asa Chotchakornpant, Trade & Investment Manager, Department for International Trade, British Embassy Bangkok

Dr Wipada Wanich, PA to the Minister of Education, Ministry of Education, Dusit, Bangkok

Country/countries where the impact occurred:** Kingdom of Thailand