

Becoming a College

A Guide to International Standards

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- Assumption (ABAC) University, Bangkok, Thailand.



1. Colleges and Universities

This resource aims to provide a basic overview of how post-secondary schools in and from Myanmar can align with international college standards. It includes some central topics to consider, but it is not a comprehensive analysis of all aspects of a college.

The standards referenced here are from Thailand and the United States of America (US). Other countries have different standards. For example, in the United Kingdom, a bachelor's degree is usually completed in three years, while in the US and Thailand, it usually takes four years. A school should decide which country they would like to mostly closely align their standards with before they begin making changes to their structure.

For the purposes of this resource, a college is an institution of higher education (post-high school) that usually offers an undergraduate degree. It focuses on preparing students for careers and/or further education.

College and university can mean different things in different contexts or countries. In the US, “college” often means any post-secondary institution (two- or four-year). In Thailand, “college” (วิทยาลัย, *witthayalai*) usually refers to smaller specialized schools (e.g., nursing colleges, police cadet colleges) or subdivisions of a university.

The table on the next page presents several kinds of college and university, with relevant examples from Thailand and/or the US.

Technical/Vocational Colleges

- Technical/vocational colleges train students for immediate employment in skilled trades or service industries. They are usually one-three year programs and focus on hands-on, technical training. Students leave with a certificate or diploma (but not a bachelor's degree). Example programs include: automotive repair, hospitality, and agriculture.
- In Thailand, vocational colleges are referred to as **วิทยาลัยอาชีวศึกษา** – *witthayalai achiwa sueksa*. There are two different types:
 - Certificate (ปวช. *por wor chor*): a three-year program after grade 9, and;
 - Diploma (ปวส. *por wor sor*): a two-year program after completing high school or a certificate program.

Community Colleges

- Community colleges offer two-year programs resulting in an "associate's degree". Students can use their associate's degree or transfer to a four-year college to earn their bachelor's degree. Community colleges often offer additional educational opportunities to their communities, including:
 - Alternative pathways to finish high school.
 - Language lessons (like English!).
 - Certificate programs (careers not requiring degrees), like:
 - ▶ Dental Assisting.
 - ▶ Web Design.
 - ▶ Early Childhood Education.

Professional Colleges

- Professional colleges focus on preparing students for a specific profession. They may or may not offer a four-year degree; it depends on what is required to enter a particular profession in their location. Examples include: teacher training colleges, engineering colleges, or nursing colleges.
 - Rajabhat universities in Thailand, for example, were originally teacher training colleges, but they have since developed into regional universities offering a variety of both undergraduate and postgraduate programs.

Liberal Arts Colleges

- Liberal arts colleges offer four-year programs resulting in bachelor's degrees (BA or BSc). Their degree programs usually focus on humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and arts. The goal of a liberal arts college is to create individuals who think critically across disciplines, and they may include an emphasis on experiential learning.
 - Bard College (Parami University's partner college in the USA) is a liberal arts college.

Universities

- Universities offer undergraduate (bachelor's) programs and graduate (master's and/or PhD) programs. Bachelor's degrees outside of the US vary in how many years they take to complete. In the UK, they generally take three years, but in Scotland they can take up to six for certain majors. In Thailand, certain majors, like engineering, take five years. Publishing research is a key component of universities (usually done by postgraduate students and professors¹).
 - Many universities have colleges within them (e.g., the College of Environmental Design at the University of California). These are subdivisions of a university based on specific academic disciplines.

Colleges and universities are either public or private.

Public Universities

- Public universities are primarily funded and operated by the government (national, state, or provincial). They usually have lower-cost tuition compared to private universities. Public universities exist to provide broad higher education access to citizens and prepare a workforce.

- Examples of public universities:

- US Examples:

- ▶ University of California.
 - ▶ Purdue University, Fort Wayne.

- Thai Examples:

- ▶ Chiang Mai University.
 - ▶ Chulalongkorn University.
 - ▶ Thammasat University.

Private Universities

- Private universities operate independently from the government, with their own governing boards. They are usually funded by endowments, private donations, and student tuition. Because of this, tuition costs are usually higher at private universities. They can be either not-for-profit (most common) or for-profit (less common). Private universities are sometimes mission-driven (religious, cultural, or specialized²).

- Examples of private universities:

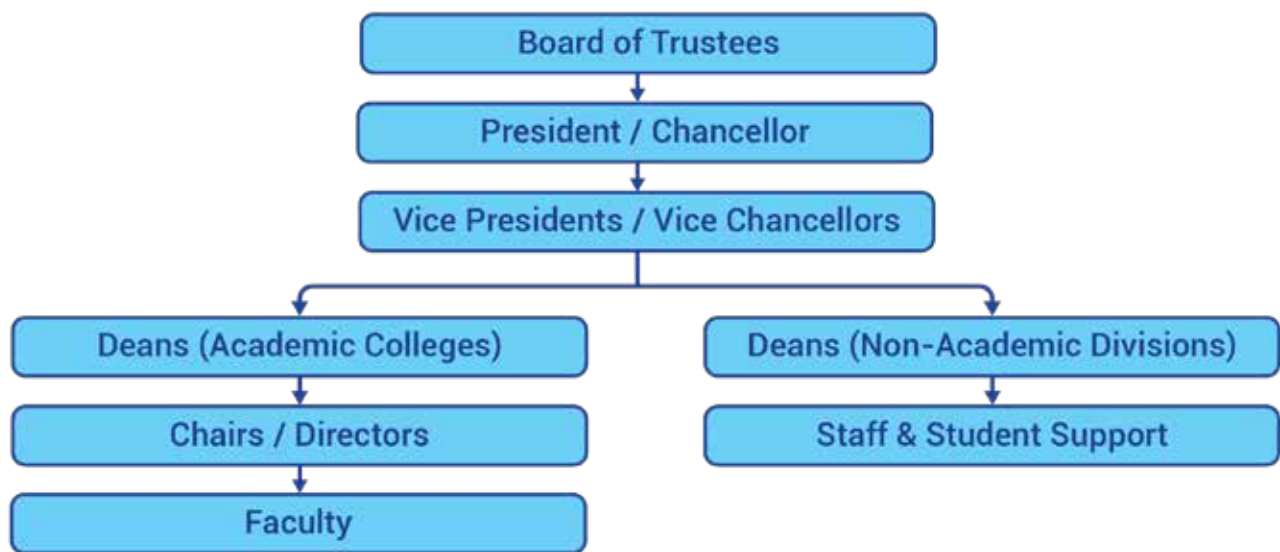
- US Examples:

- ▶ Harvard University: elite, not-for-profit, endowment-funded.
 - ▶ Georgetown University: the oldest Catholic, Jesuit university in the US, known for its emphasis on ethics, social justice, and international engagement.
 - ▶ University of Phoenix: a for-profit university with open admission (no test scores required); less prestigious than other universities.

- Thai Examples:

- ▶ Payap University: the first accredited private university in Thailand, known for its International programs, which are taught in English.
 - ▶ Assumption University (ABAC): a Catholic university, one of the first universities in Thailand to offer programs entirely in English, has students from more than 80 countries.
 - ▶ Bangkok University: a university for students interested in media, arts, and creative entrepreneurship, known for its modern campus, innovation labs, and pop culture engagement.

Organizational Structure of U.S. Colleges & Universities



2. How Do Colleges Function?

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Governance

Colleges and universities are usually headed by a governing board, often called the Board of Trustees. Reporting directly to the board is the highest office – the president or chancellor (the term “principal” is only used for primary and secondary institutions). There are vice presidents/ vice chancellors who help share governance responsibility.

Colleges and universities are usually organized into academic departments, often referred to as “colleges.” (For example, the “college of social sciences” or “the college of business”). Each college is headed by a dean. A dean is a senior academic (or administrative) leader responsible for their college, serving as a bridge between faculty, students, and management. The dean reports to the vice chancellor.

Under the dean is a chair or director, who reports to the dean. The chair is responsible for their department (for example, the history department or the anthropology department in the College of Social Sciences). They are responsible for the day-to-day affairs of the entire department.

Each department has faculty (professors, assistant professors, etc.) who report to the chair of their department.

Deans also head non-academic departments. These departments may include Student Affairs, Admissions, Finance, and other relevant administrative units. These deans will also report to the vice chancellor.

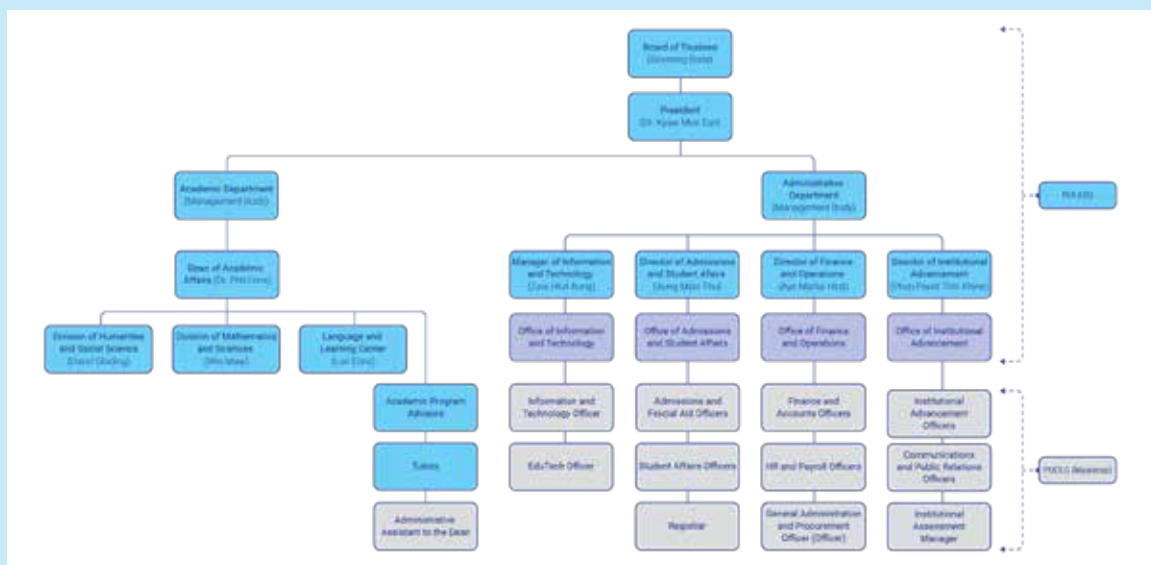
Case Study: Parami

Under the President are two departments: the Academic Department and the Administrative Department.

The Academic Department is headed by a dean, under whom are two divisions (the Division of Social Science and Humanities and the Division of Mathematics and Science), which are headed

by chairs. All professors report to one of the two chairs, dependent upon their respective department.

Information Technology, Admissions and Student Affairs, Finance and Operations, and Institutional Advancement all fall under the Administrative Departments.



Staffing

Academic Faculty: Each institution will have different guidelines for faculty and staff qualifications. Generally speaking, a master's degree is required for teaching associate or bachelor's degree-seeking students. The exception to this is graduate students (students in current PhD or master's programs) who may have teaching roles under the oversight of a faculty member. Most institutions require full-time professors to have doctorates.

Non-academic staff: Non-academic staff. Colleges also employ professional staff across non-

academic divisions – administration (HR, finance, legal), student-facing services (admissions, registrar, financial aid, student affairs), information & learning resources (IT, library), facilities & operations, marketing/advancement, community engagement, safety/security, and more. Minimum qualifications vary by role and local regulations; job descriptions should specify degree level, years of experience, and any required certifications/licensure.

Colleges also employ numerous program managers, inside and outside academic departments, who focus on coordination, logistics, and administration.

Case Study: Shan Community College

Like many post-secondary institutions in Myanmar, Shan State Community College initially lacked the human resources it needed to operate as a college. However, in less than two decades, their team has built a system that has grown the human capital they need.

Kaw Dai was started in 1999 as a youth empowerment program. Just ten years later, the program became a college. Today, it is an elementary school, high school, and college with almost 1,000 students total. How did they achieve this goal? Initially, Kaw Dai only accepted students who had passed matriculation. (Now, they accept many kinds of students and run a GED program.) Once a student entered the program, Kaw Dai staff did everything possible to support them. The program was free and included tuition, accommodation, food, and medical care. Once

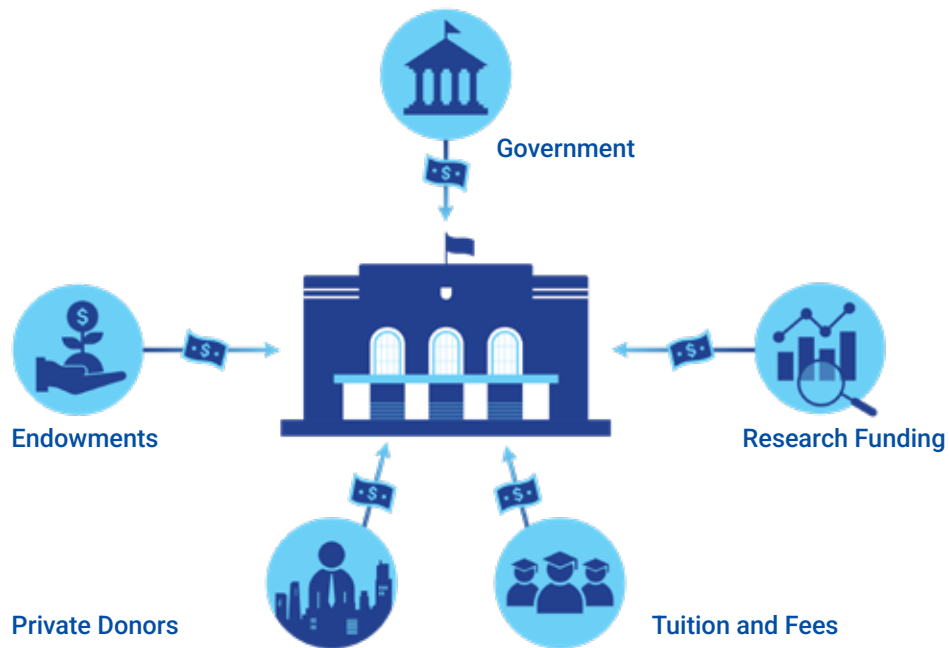
a student passed the program, Kaw Dai helped students apply to college and scholarships. They did everything possible to help students attend college abroad. In return, students were asked to come back and serve for five years. After just ten years, more than 50 students have returned to serve students at Kaw Dai as staff. The school (elementary, high school, and college) continues to grow. Now, students who have returned and worked for two years can pursue master's degrees, with the agreement that it adds another five years to their "contract". These studies can continue through the PhD level. At every level, the organization takes responsibility for supporting the student/staff (including helping with applications, scholarships, finding additional resources, supporting for TOEFL and GMAT, etc.) Today, the organization has over 100 paid staff.

Case Study: Mon National College

Mon National College has used creativity and technology to meet its human resource needs. Mon National College is located in the jungle of the *Yechaungpya* district in Mon State. Most of the college's professors are from the diaspora who live

abroad and teach students online. In these cases, there are assistant faculty on site who help to facilitate classes, tutor students, and ensure day-to-day operations.

Sources of Funding for Colleges and Universities



Funding

Institutions must maintain financial sustainability sufficient to ensure every student can complete their program. They should demonstrate the capacity to operate for the duration of each cohort's program (and beyond) and to recruit and retain qualified faculty and staff on whom program quality depends

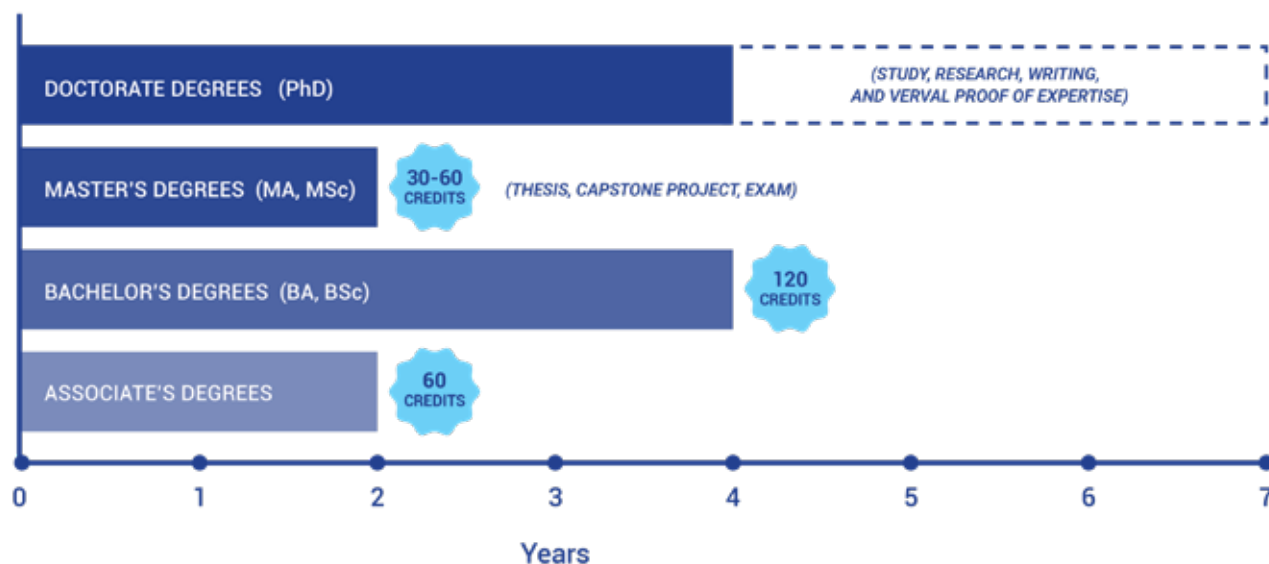
Institutional funding sources usually include:

- **Government funding** – Public universities are usually supported by the government. In the U.S., states cover annual operating expenses for their respective state colleges. In Thailand, the government also provides public universities' annual funding for operating expenses.
- **Endowments** – Endowments are sums of money invested to support the college through annual gains.
- **Private donors** – Alumni, corporations, and foundations often contribute financial gifts to colleges, usually to support a specific program or project.

- **Tuition and Fees** – Colleges earn money from the tuition and fees paid for each student.
- **Research Funding** – Colleges are often given money to carry out research. At research-intensive colleges, this can be a significant revenue stream.

For example:

- **Payap University** is funded by:
 - **Tuition and Fees** from students
 - **External Grants** (formerly USAID, currently United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, the ASEAN Foundation, and the Henry Luce Foundation)
 - **Endowments** (such as the PYU Endowment Fund, which helps cover about 80% of campus maintenance and utilities, with the remainder saved as future income)
 - **Scholarships and Donor Funds**
- **Parami University** is funded almost entirely by private donors.
- **Shan Community College** is funded primarily by student tuition.



3. Degrees

Different Kinds of Degrees

Associate's degrees – Associate's degrees are usually earned from community colleges. The program takes two years to complete, broken down into 60 credits, if the student is studying full-time. This degree can give access to some careers. However, most often, students with associate's degrees transfer to a four-year college to complete their bachelor's degree.

Bachelor's degrees – Bachelor's degrees can be earned at colleges or universities. They take four years (US system) to complete, broken down into 120 credits, if a student is studying full-time. An associate's degree usually counts towards some or all of these 120 credits. Bachelor's degrees are usually the standard qualification for most careers. In both the U.S. and Thailand, however,

some fields require a post-degree certification or licensure obtained from the government and/or professional body. For example, in both countries, teachers, nurses, and architects must all test for and apply for government licensure after they have obtained their degree. Finally, some careers require master's degrees or advanced study.

Master's degrees – Master's degrees can only be earned from a university. They take one-two years, depending on the country and program, broken down into 30–60 credits in the U.S. and 36–48 credits in Thailand. They usually also require a thesis, capstone project, or comprehensive exam. Undergraduate (bachelor's degree) credits do not apply.

Doctorate degrees – The goal of a doctorate (PhD) is not just to learn, but to contribute new

Comparison of US and Thai Doctorates

U.S.:	Thailand:	Both:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four-seven years (full-time) 30-60 credits beyond a master's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three-five years (can be coursework + research) Minimal coursework (no/few required credits) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coursework Comprehensive Exams Dissertation research Dissertation defense

knowledge to the field. For this reason, a doctorate is usually a combination of study, research, writing, and verbal proof of expertise. In the US, a doctorate usually takes four-seven years of full-time study. In Thailand, a doctorate usually takes three-five years.

What Makes a Degree?

Degrees are made up of general education courses, which are required for all graduating students, and major courses, which students select according to their major and preference. Students must meet both general education requirements and major requirements to graduate from the institution with a particular major.

- **General education courses** are those that the institution perceives as important but not directly related to the student's major. For example, institutions may require students to take courses in math, science, history, art, writing, and literature, regardless of the student's major. English language and writing courses (for a non-English major) are an example of this. These are classes that help students to have a well-rounded understanding of the world around them. The idea that students should take these courses in addition to their major courses

is sometimes called "liberal arts education."

All students must have a major to graduate; students cannot take only general education courses.

- **Major courses** are those that pertain specifically to the student's major. The courses become more advanced or specific each year, as the student progresses in their learning. For example, a Year One science major student might take an Introduction to Biology class. A Year Three science major student might take an Organic Chemistry class. Students may choose from a range of courses offered in their major, for example, specializing in biology or chemistry.

Important Note: Students must complete a basic course requirement before progressing to more advanced courses. Prerequisites are courses that must be completed before another course. For example, a student must pass Algebra I before enrolling in Algebra II. Another example is requiring students to take "Introduction to Community Development" before they can enroll in "Theories of Community Development." Students cannot, however, only take introductory or more basic courses in their major; they are required to progress and take more advanced courses to earn their degree.



4. How Are College Courses Organized?

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Learning Outcomes and Objectives

Curricula are based on learning objectives (sometimes called institutional learning objectives) and student learning outcomes. Learning objectives describe the kind of graduate that a college hopes to produce. Learning outcomes describe what graduates should be able to do at the end of a course.

Learning objectives should be decided when a college is formed so that they can guide all programs. Curricula can then be written to produce the aligned learning outcomes.

Content and activities will be different across different programs and courses, and each will have different learning objectives, but the learning outcomes will stay the same for all students.

Learning Objectives

A learning objective is a concise, measurable statement of the knowledge, skills, or dispositions the college intends for students to develop – framed as what students will be able to do – that guides curriculum design, assessment, and resource planning at the institutional level.

For example:

- Graduates will communicate effectively across cultures.
- Graduates will apply critical and creative thinking to real-world problems.

Learning Objectives

- Student-centred, observable.
- Demonstrable, measurable skills and attributes at the college level.
- Show the skills and attributes that college graduates should have.
- Measurable with clear rubrics and assessment criteria.
- Aligned to the college's mission.
- Linked to accreditation standards.

Learning Outcomes

- Student-centred, observable.
- Demonstrable, measurable skills and attributes at the program or course level.
- Show the skills and attributes that course completers should have.
- Measurable with clear rubrics and assessment criteria.
- Aligned to program/course goals.
- Linked to accreditation standards.

What Makes a Good Objective?

- Student-centered and observable (uses action verbs – apply, analyze, create – rather than “understand”).
- Focused on demonstrable skills and attributes, beginning, for example: “Students will analyze...”
- Measurable with clear criteria (rubrics, benchmarks, shared measures).
- Aligned to the college's mission, and accreditation standards.
- Transferable across contexts (not tied to one course's content or an activity).
- Time-bounded to a milestone (e.g., “by graduation,” “by end of the major”).

For example:

- Students will be able to apply basic psychological theories to analyze human behavior.
- Students will be able to construct a clear, evidence-based argument in written form.

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Learning Outcomes

A learning outcome is a clear, measurable statement of the knowledge, skills, or dispositions students actually demonstrate at the end of a learning experience (course, program, or institution) – evidence used to judge whether learning has occurred and to improve the curriculum.

What Makes Strong Outcomes?

- Student-centered and observable (uses action verbs – apply, analyze, create – rather than “understand”).
- Performance focused, beginning, for example: “Students will be able to...”
- Measurable with shared criteria: linked to rubrics, benchmarks, and data collection cycles.
- Aligned to program/course goals, and to accreditation standards.
- Specific to a program or course.
- Culminating: represent end-of-course or end-of-program capabilities

Case Study: Mon National College

Mon National College has the following **learning objectives** for every student who attends:

- **Acquisition of Knowledge and Application:** Students will demonstrate both the breadth and depth of knowledge, skills, and attitudes developed from the study of education.
- **Critical and Innovative Thinking:** Students will demonstrate creativity, innovation, analytical, critical thinking, reflection, and problem-solving skills to navigate the complexities of education, engage learners and stakeholders effectively, and adapt to the ever-evolving demands of the learning environment and diverse educational settings.
- **Communicative Competence:** Students will demonstrate the ability to articulate, discuss, and explain educational policies and practices across different settings in writing, oral presentations, and through the use of multimedia in academic, professional, and social contexts.
- **Community Mindset and Belonging:** Students will demonstrate civic engagement,

The following **learning outcomes** relate to specific degree programs at Mon National College:

Learning Outcomes Aligned with Institutional Learning Objectives in Social Science

- **Acquisition of Knowledge and Application:** The students will understand the fundamental and contemporary theories and concepts in social sciences and apply the acquired knowledge to enrich their lives and serve the community.
- **Critical and Innovative Thinking:** Students will analyze social phenomena through different perspectives and paradigms to make sense of the social world and emerging social realities.
- **Community Competence:** Students will communicate social science-related ideas and issues to both scholars and the general population while leveraging multiple media platforms and new technology.
- **Community Mindset and Belonging:** Students will bring both human and more-than-human affairs into the center of their thinking, which will contribute to the understanding of emerging social realities while facilitating and encouraging multidisciplinary approaches toward solutions to community issues.
- **Professionalism, Professional Ethics, and Code of Conduct:** Students will demonstrate their scholarship and academic skills through their acquired knowledge and wisdom while ethically practicing their profession and participating in social development. Students will demonstrate strong moral guidance in their fields to contribute their work to the community.
- **Linguistic and Cultural Diversity:** Students will interpret and translate the sociological imagination to the common languages for the public. Students will cultivate and utilize their cultural and linguistic knowledge and local wisdom to benefit in the field of social sciences globally.

collaboration, leadership, intercultural understanding, sense of community, and solidarity to contribute to the development of a democratic, inclusive, and peaceful society that flourishes human rights and dignity.

- **Professionalism, Professional Ethics, and Code of Conduct:** Students will demonstrate standards and ethics as professional teachers and educators across diverse academic and professional settings.

- **Linguistic & Cultural Diversity:** Students will demonstrate awareness of and appreciation for diverse social, linguistic, and cultural identities and expressions.

Note: This looks different in each department. Below, you can see the learning outcomes for the BA in Social Science and the BA in Nursing.

Learning Outcomes Aligned with Institutional Learning Objectives in Nursing:

- **Acquisition of Knowledge and Application of Knowledge:** Students will show a comprehensive knowledge of nursing science and its application.
- **Critical and Innovative Thinking:** Students will reveal evidence-based practice by creatively and objectively analyzing and evaluating information.
- **Communicative Competence:** Students will demonstrate transcultural knowledge and be efficient communicators with patients, colleagues, and other health sector members.
- **Community Mindset and Belonging:** Students will be able to regard themselves as part of the professional community and the community they serve, be positively present, and work with them.
- **Professionalism, Professional Ethics, and Code of Conduct:** Students will demonstrate

knowledge of the nature and ethics of the nursing profession and the general principles of health and nursing.

- **Linguistic & Cultural Diversity:** Students will demonstrate multilingual health proficiency and multilingual creative expression. Students will demonstrate an appreciation for cultures and diversity.

Curriculum

A curriculum (plural: curricula) describes the total student experience across a program or major. You may have heard this called a learning road map or plan of study. Ultimately, the curriculum is the total picture of what a student will learn, which courses they will take, and in what order. It is a planned sequence of instruction that a student receives while attending an institution.

The curriculum should be designed at the department level and overseen by the dean of each department³.

Example 1, below, shows curriculum from a two-year degree from Seh Theh College. Example 2 shows a sample of Parami University's Study Plan for The Bachelor of Arts in Environmental and Sustainability Studies (ESS).

Example 1, Seh Theh Degree, Pre-college Year							
	Semester 1				Semester 2		
	Code	Course	Credit		Code	Course	Credit
ENG	91	General English I first two months	5	ENG	93	General English III	5
ENG	92	General English II second two months	5	COM	92	Computer (Excel, google tools, digital security, PowerPoint)	5
GEN	91	Karenni (Basic or Advance I)	1	ENG	94	Speaking & Listening, conversation	3
COM	91	Basic Computing (Typing, Microsoft Word)	5	LSK	91	Learning Skill	1

Example 2, The Bachelor of Arts in Environmental and Sustainability Studies	
Year 1	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Semester 1:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▫ English Composition I▫ Craft of Social Inquiry▫ Introduction to Statistics▫ Science in Daily Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Semester 2:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▫ First-Year Seminar 2: Ways of Knowing▫ English Composition II▫ Introduction to Microeconomics▫ Introduction to Climate and Environmental Science▫ Social Science and Research Skills
Year 2	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Semester 1:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▫ Second-Year Seminar 1: Dealing with Difference▫ Ecological Systems and Biodiversity▫ Sustainable Development Policy▫ Introduction to Political Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Semester 2:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▫ Second-Year Seminar 2: Human Futures▫ Introduction to Environmental Ethics▫ Programming with Python▫ The Built Environment

Syllabi

A curriculum starts with overarching learning objectives, which are then broken down to the program level. Ultimately, they produce learning outcomes in individual courses, which are guided by syllabi. A syllabus orients students to the *what*, *how*, and *why* of a course – what they will learn, how they will be evaluated, and why the course matters.

A syllabus is meant to set the structure, clarify expectations, and guide students' engagement with the subject over the term. The table below shows the information that a syllabus should contain. On the next page is an excerpt from the Sustainability in Thailand course syllabus, created by the International Sustainable Development Studies Institute, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Checklist of Information to Include in a Syllabus	
1. Course Information	5. Assignments & Assessments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Course title, code, section, and semester ■ Meeting times and location ■ Instructor's name, office hours, email, and other contact details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Description of major assignments, papers, exams, presentations, or labs ■ Weighting of each component in the final grade ■ Rubrics or expectations for quality of work
2. Course Description & Objectives	6. Grading Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A short paragraph describing the course's focus ■ Learning outcomes (what students should know or be able to do by the end of the course) ■ Connection to broader program or general education goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Breakdown of percentage/points (e.g., 30% exams, 20% essays, 10% participation) ■ Scale for letter grades (A = 90–100, etc.) ■ Rules on late work, resubmissions, or extra credit
3. Required Materials	7. Course Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Textbooks, readings, software, or online platforms ■ Equipment or supplies (e.g., lab goggles, art materials) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Attendance and participation expectations ■ Classroom etiquette (discussion norms, use of technology) ■ Academic integrity/plagiarism statement ■ Accessibility and disability accommodations
4. Schedule & Topics	8. Support & Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Week-by-week outline of topics, readings, lectures, labs, and discussions ■ Dates for assignments, exams, or major projects ■ Sometimes flexible ("subject to change") vs. fixed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ University tutoring, writing center, or library services ■ Counseling or wellness resources ■ How to seek help from the instructor

Example: An excerpt from Sustainability in Thailand syllabus, International Sustainable Development Studies Institute, Chiang Mai, Thailand⁸

Credits: 4 **Contact Hours:** 56 Total (Lecture Hours 33; Directed Field Studies: 23 (46 hours at 2:1 ratio))

Course Description (Excerpt)

Thailand's rich biodiversity and natural resources are under increasing pressure from deforestation, climate change, industrial agriculture, and urban expansion. This course explores the challenges and solutions related to environmental sustainability in Thailand, with a focus on forest conservation, sustainable agriculture, water management, renewable energy, and eco-tourism.

Students will examine government policies, corporate initiatives, and grassroots environmental movements that aim to balance economic development with ecological resilience. The course will also investigate how Thailand is addressing climate change, waste management, and energy transitions, with case studies on carbon offset programs, plastic waste reduction, and sustainable urban planning.

Course Objectives (Excerpt)

The objectives for this course are to:

- Analyze Thailand's most pressing environmental challenges, including climate change, deforestation, water scarcity, and biodiversity loss.
- Examine national and regional conservation policies, including Thailand's commitments to climate action and ASEAN environmental agreements.
- Evaluate sustainable agricultural practices, such as organic farming, agroforestry, and permaculture, and their role in reducing environmental degradation.
- Investigate Thailand's approach to waste management and plastic reduction, including government and private sector initiatives.

Grading and Assessment (Excerpt)

Participation (15)

- In class participation (5): This means being an active participant in classes, contributing meaningfully to the discussions, questions, and ongoing learning.
- Field Studies (10): Participating in field studies outside of the classroom, both through asking questions in the field, engaging in activities, and being an active and engaged learner during field studies.

Writing (45)

- Seminar Notes (5): An important component of learning to observe and analyze the issues during this course is taking notes in class. Include questions and analysis as you go along.
- Observation Notes (5): Keeping an on-going journal of observations outside the classroom. This means writing daily in your journal, even if only for brief or significant observations. This is NOT a daily diary, but your field observations, questions, and analysis.
- Field Study Assignments (15): Each course will assign work to do during some of the field studies. You need to take notes and answer questions that you are assigned to observe and answer.
- Essays (20): For this course essays are longer reflections and analysis. There are four essays during the course. Essays should be 2-3 A4 pages, and cover the following points:
 - How this issue or topic links to the overall topic of the course.
 - Why you are interested in this specific issue or topic?
 - An analysis of a specific issue observed or learned about during that week – describe this and why it is important.
 - Reference to a reading either from the course readings or outside sources.
 - Other questions that this issue raises for you to explore further.

Course Topics and Schedule

Seminar Schedule: Tuesday 1-4

Please note: An important part of this course happens outside of seminars, including field studies, extended field studies, and other experiential learning opportunities. Each of these field studies are an integral part of the course, and will include assignments for the course.

Field Studies

An important part of the course are experiential field studies outside of the classroom. Field studies will have assignments based on the topics of each course, and are an important part of the academic focus of the semester. Field studies may be re-scheduled based on community and organizational availability.

Weekly Schedule (Excerpt)

Week 1: Introduction to Environmental Sustainability in Thailand: This seminar introduces Thailand's environmental landscape, providing an overview of major sustainability challenges and initiatives. We will explore key concepts of sustainability, conservation, and resource management, as well as the intersection of economic development and environmental policy in Thailand.

- What is sustainability? Definitions, frameworks, and global perspectives
- Overview of Thailand's ecosystems and biodiversity
- Major environmental challenges: Climate change, deforestation, pollution, and resource depletion
- Thailand's sustainability policies and commitments: National and ASEAN-level initiatives

Week 1 Readings (Excerpt)

Marks, D. (2011). Climate Change and Thailand: Impact and Response. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 33(2), 229–258. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41288828>

Lebel, L., & Garden, P. (2008). Deliberation, negotiation and scale in the governance of water resources in the Mekong region. In C. Pahl-Wostl, P. Kabat, & J. Möltgen (Eds.), *Adaptive and integrated water management* (pp. 173–194). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-540-75941-6_11

Forsyth, T. (2004). *Industrial pollution and social movements in Thailand*. Routledge EBooks. http://academia.edu/126539784/Industrial_pollution_and_social_movements_in_Thailand

Course Policies (Excerpt)

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes. If you are ill or otherwise need to miss a class, please inform your instructor or teaching assistant.

Grading Standards

Letter/Grade	Score/Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B	83–86	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.

Crediting System

Colleges in the US and Thailand reflect student learning by assigning each course a certain number of credits. Credits accumulate to meet the required number for graduation.

One credit hour is equal to 15 face-to-face hours of learning with the professor (15 lecture hours). It is assumed that for every one hour a student spends in class, they spend two hours outside of class on assignments/study. (This can be a helpful way for professors to gauge how much homework/ additional research is appropriate.)

A three-credit-hour course means that students have spent 45 lecture hours with the professor. A standard course is usually three credits, but five, four, two, and one-credit-hour courses can be offered.

Courses with required labs are usually four-five credit hours. For example, a biology class with a required weekly lab of two hours would be 5 credit hours. This assumes the class meets three hours per week for 15 weeks and also has a required lab that meets for two hours each week for 15 weeks.

What Are Labs?

A lab is a hands-on component of a class.

- Hands-on Application: Students apply concepts learned in lectures by performing experiments, conducting tests, and collecting data.
- Skill Development: Labs teach procedural skills, the proper use of equipment, and safety protocols relevant to the field.
- Data Analysis: Students analyze results, write reports, and interpret findings, which helps reinforce their understanding of the subject.

Many different kinds of classes have labs. For example:

- Science Courses:
 - Biology: Dissections, microscopy, and experiments on living organisms.
 - Physics: Experiments related to mechanics, electricity, or other physical phenomena.
 - Astronomy: Using telescopes and analyzing celestial data.

- Environmental Science: Field studies and data collection to understand ecosystems.

- Technology & Engineering Courses:
 - Computer Science: Writing and testing code, working with programming languages, and managing databases.
 - Engineering: Designing, testing, and prototyping solutions, often involving specialized equipment.
 - Electronics: Working with circuits, wiring, and diagnostic tools.

- Other Fields:
 - Foreign Language: Practicing listening comprehension, vocabulary, and pronunciation.
 - Nursing & Health Sciences: Learning to use medical equipment and perform procedures in a safe, simulated environment.

Naming Courses

Courses (and curriculum) are organized by codes. They are given a code according to department and difficulty. Course names should include the department's code (for example, the education department might use "EDU" as their code) and a numeral that references difficulty (for example, "101" for an introductory course). Each course should have a unique code. If Introduction to Education is assigned the code EDU 101, then other education department courses should use EDU 102, EDU 103, etc., to distinguish themselves from Introduction to Education.

Slightly more advanced courses will use numerals such as 201 for a course designed for a student's second year (although a student can take it in another year, provided they have completed the required prerequisites). Courses in the 300s and 400s indicate advanced courses. Numerals above 400 are not usually used at the undergraduate level.

For example:

- EDU 101 might be Foundations of Education
- SOC 101 might be Introduction to Social Sciences
- SOC 213 might be a course on gender in the Social Sciences

Sometimes the second number indicates a subfield within a department.

For example:

- EDU 231 might be Educational Psychology (Education + Psychology)
- EDU 232 might be Trauma-Informed Education (Education + Psychology)
- EDU 251 might be Curriculum Design (Education + Curriculum)

However, this is not always the case, and often second numbers are meaningless, especially in smaller programmes offering fewer courses.

A curriculum is designed so that students advance through their major by taking increasingly more advanced courses. A student should not be able to graduate by taking only courses with 100 and 200 designations. Rather, graduation requirements should indicate that a certain number of 300 and 400-level courses are mandatory.

Internships, Practicums, and Field Work

Many colleges also have internships, practicums, and field work. To be credit-bearing, they must combine supervised experiential hours with an academic component (reflection, documentation, or faculty evaluation) that ties the experience back to the curriculum. The actual hours, format, and weight vary by program. These hands-on learning experiences can follow the academic crediting system, whereby 45 hours is equal to one credit.

Internships

An internship is a structured, short-term work experience in a professional setting that allows students to apply academic knowledge, explore career interests, and build workplace skills.

Requirements:

- Usually tied to an agreement between the student, employer, and faculty advisor.
- Credit hours based on work hours (≈40–50 hours per credit; e.g., 120–150 hours for 3 credits).
- Reflective assignments such as journals, progress reports, or a final paper/presentation.

Notes:

- May be paid or unpaid.
- Often graded pass/fail, though some programs assign letter grades.
- Usually elective, but some majors require one.

Practicums

A Practicum is a supervised, practice-based learning experience embedded in professional programs (e.g., education, social work, nursing, counseling), designed to provide structured, real-world training.

Requirements:

- Formal supervision by both faculty and licensed professionals in the field.
- Integration of seminar/classroom sessions with practical hours.

- Evaluation through observation, reflective logs, and faculty assessments.

Notes:

- Mandatory in many accredited professional degrees.
- Emphasizes skill development for licensure or certification.
- More structured and academically integrated than internships.

Fieldwork is hands-on, experiential learning conducted outside the classroom, often in community, clinical, or research settings, where students collect data, observe, or directly engage in practice.

Fieldwork

Requirements:

- Defined number of field hours tied to course credit (similar to internship ratios).
- Documentation such as field notes, observation journals, or community project reports.
- Close faculty oversight, sometimes paired with a research or service component.

Notes:

- Common in disciplines like anthropology, public health, environmental studies, education, and social sciences.
- May be short-term or semester-long, sometimes off-campus or abroad.
- Focuses heavily on connecting theory with lived, observed practice.

Calendar years and terms

Colleges generally operate over the course of 12 months. The academic year is divided into terms. Some institutions operate on a trimester or quarter term system, but the most common term schedule in the US and Thailand is two semesters of about 15 weeks each. Institutions may offer the option of taking shorter “summer term” courses or “winter term” courses in between the standard terms.

For example (from the US):

- Sept-December: Fall Term (15 weeks)
- January-February: Winter Term (5 weeks)
- February-June: Spring Term (15 weeks)
- July-August: Summer Term (5 weeks)

(In the 15-week terms, students will take three-seven classes, attending each for at least three hours per week. In the five-week terms, students will take one-two classes and will attend class for nine hours per week.)

For example, Chiang Mai University's 2025 Academic calendar is as follows:

- Semester 1: June 23-November 3 (19 weeks, which includes one “reading week” to prep for midterms, one week of testing for midterms, and two weeks for final examinations)
- Semester 2: November 17-March 29 (19 weeks, which includes one “reading week” to prep for midterms, one week of testing for midterms, and two weeks for final examinations)

- Summer Term: April 20-June 5 (7 weeks, which includes one week for final examinations)

Regardless of whether an institution has a semester, trimester, or quarter term system, what is most important is the quantity of learning that takes place during each term and how this is measured and recorded.

Taking a three-credit-hour course as an example, over the course of a 15-week semester, a class will meet for three hours per week for 15 weeks. If, however, the institution operates under trimesters of ten weeks each, the class is taught for 4.5 hours per week for ten weeks. Both three-credit-hour courses will meet for a total of 45 face-to-face hours during their terms.

Grading and Grade Point Average

GPA stands for Grade Point Average. GPA is the grading system that takes into account the credit hours of a student's courses and the student's grades in those courses to come up with an average grade of the student per term and a cumulative (total) GPA for their enrollment. Grades for each course may be designated as a letter grade, such as A, B, C, and including + and – indicators; or on a percentage basis, such as 87%. Letter grades correspond with designated but variable ranges of percentage grades. For example, 87% is generally considered a B+.

A student's GPA is a way to assess student performance within an institution and across institutions. Although different institutions may have different standards of grading individual courses, a student's average performance relative to a standard scale is a useful indicator.

Academic departments or departments of academic affairs may give course instructors guidelines on how to assign or distribute grades. For example, grade distribution standards may not allow all students to receive A or B grades in an introductory course, whereas advanced courses may allow the instructor greater freedom in assigning grades.

Course syllabi must also ensure that students understand the basis on which they are graded, often assigning percentages of the total grade to attendance, class participation, assignments, papers, projects, quizzes, tests, or final assessments.

Here is an example from Mahidol University⁴:

Grade	Achievement	Final score (% range)	GPA
A	Excellent	90-100	4.0
B+	Very Good	85-89	3.5
B	Good	80-84	3.0
C+	Fairly Good	75-79	2.5
C	Fair	70-74	2.0
D+	Poor	65-69	1.5
D	Very Poor	60-64	1.0
F	Fail	Less than 60	0.0

enrollment. Transcripts are created, updated, and stored by the registrar's office.

Transcripts should include:

- The date of issue of the transcript
- Student's full name and identifying information, such as ID number
- Dates the student has attended the institution
- Any degree or certificates earned
- Cumulative GPA

Every course the student enrolled in, the number of credit hours of that course, whether the course was completed, and the grade they received

Every student who has enrolled at the institution will have a transcript, regardless of whether they completed a program. A student who enrolls for one term, for example, may wish to have those courses transfer to another institution rather than retaking them. A transcript from an accredited institution will facilitate a transfer process. Students applying for advanced degrees will also need a transcript to validate their previous education. Some jobs also have degree requirements, and a transcript acts as proof of a candidate's education. When applying for visas or work authorization in another country, immigration departments also routinely request to see academic transcripts.

Opposite is an example: transcript for the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Education from Central Michigan University.

Transcripts

All a student's courses and grades are reflected on a transcript, which is an official document issued by the institution that records a student's

Page: 1 of 3
Date: 12/16/2011

CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT

Transcript Prepared For: JENNIFER RENEE SLACK
2151 KNOTTY PINE TRAIL
HOWELL, MI 48855

Academic Record of: JENNIFER RENEE SLACK
Student Number: 267934
Student Level: Undergraduate
Term Admitted: Fall 2007-2008
Birth Month /Day: 08/05
SSN: XXX-XX-4122
Michigan UIC: 3051265956

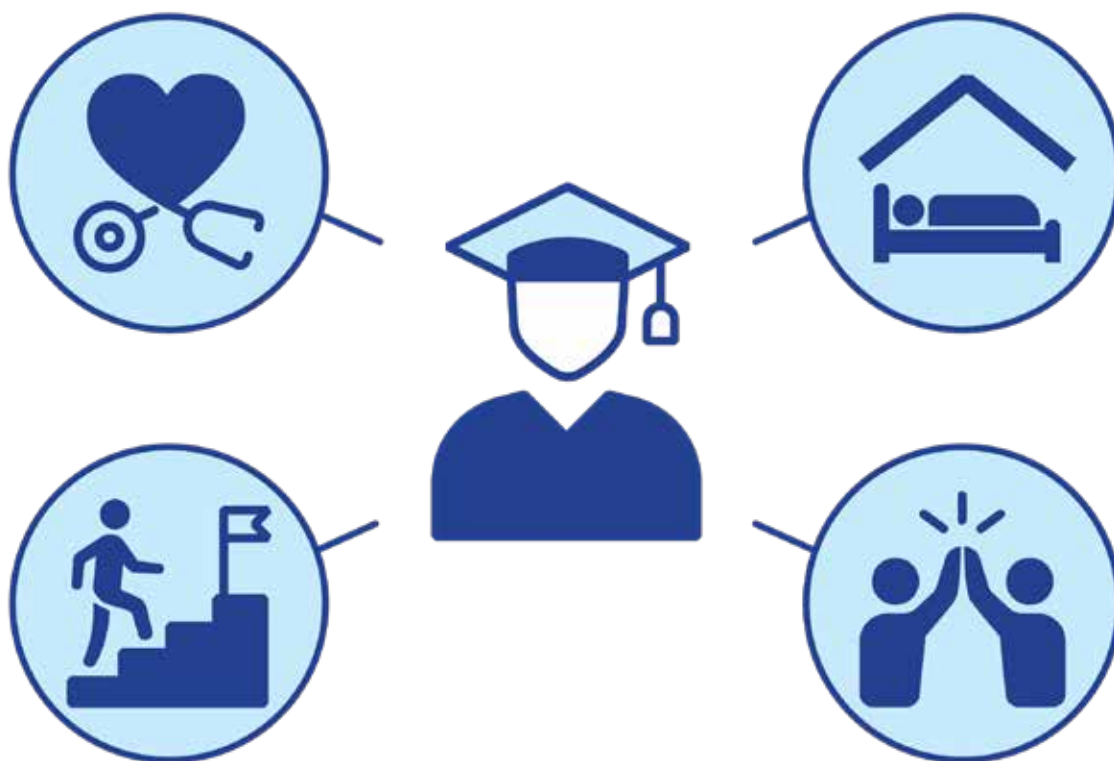
CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY CREDITS:					Notes
Course	Title	Credits	Grade	Repeat	
Fall 2007-2008					
EDU 107	Intro to Teaching	3.00	A		
ENG 101	Freshman Composition (Advanced Placement Credit)	3.00			
ENG 134	Intro to Literature	3.00	A		
GEO 105	Physical Geography	3.00	B+		
HST 101	Devel of Western Civilization (Advanced Placement Credit)	3.00			
HST 102	Devel of Western Civilization (Advanced Placement Credit)	3.00			
PSY 100	Intro to Psychology	3.00	B+		
SDA 101	Intro Speech Communicatn	3.00	A-		
STA 282	Introduction to Statistics (Advanced Placement Credit)	3.00			
Sem Hrs Earned: 15.00		GPA Hrs: 15.00	Points: 54.90	GPA: 3.66	
Cum Tot Earned: 27.00		GPA Hrs: 15.00	Points: 54.90	GPA: 3.66	
Spring 2007-2008					
EDU 290	Technology in Education	3.00	A		
ENG 175	Nature of Language	3.00	B		
ENG 234	Intro Literary Analysis	3.00	B+		
ENG 329	African American Lit	3.00	B+		
HST 111	U S To 1865	3.00	B+		
Sem Hrs Earned: 15.00		GPA Hrs: 15.00	Points: 50.70	GPA: 3.38	
Cum Tot Earned: 42.00		GPA Hrs: 30.00	Points: 105.60	GPA: 3.52	
Fall 2008-2009					
ENG 201	Intermediate Composition	3.00	A		
ENG 262	Masterpieces Europe Lit	3.00	A-		
ENG 294	Intro Creative Writing	3.00	A-		
HEV 100	Hum Grow & Dev: Lifespan	3.00	A		
HST 112	U S 1865 To Present	3.00	A		
Sem Hrs Earned: 15.00		GPA Hrs: 15.00	Points: 58.20	GPA: 3.88	
Cum Tot Earned: 57.00		GPA Hrs: 45.00	Points: 163.80	GPA: 3.64	
Spring 2008-2009					
ANT 175	Archaeology of the Americas	3.00	A		
ENG 251	Am Lit Colonial-Romantic	3.00	A-		

John E. Hittler
Registrar

RAISED SEAL NOT REQUIRED. TRANSCRIPT IS ONLY VALID WITH COLORED SIGNATURE

THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENT HAS A REFLECTIVE WATERMARK ON THE BACK. HOLD AT AN ANGLE TO VIEW WHEN CHECKING THE ENDORSEMENT.

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5. What Else Do Colleges Offer?

Student Life & Development

Colleges offer various kinds of student services⁵ that range from extracurricular activities to on-campus housing to mental health counseling. These usually fall under the “Student Affairs” or “Student Development” department. Below are some of the most common.

- **Clubs and Organizations** – Most institutions facilitate extracurricular activities for students, like clubs and organizations. These may be entirely student-run clubs based on hobbies and interests, or academic-related activities such as a newspaper or broadcast station, theater productions, or other endeavors with faculty advisors. Institutions often provide student groups with a small amount of funds to support these activities.
- **Leadership Development** – Colleges often provide intentional growth experiences that teach students to lead ethically, inclusively, and effectively – in student life now and in their professional/civic roles later. This may happen through opportunities in student government, mentor programs, special workshops and training, service opportunities, etc.
- **Career Development** – Career development services are designed to help students transition from university to meaningful employment or further education. They include:
 - **Career counseling and advising:**
 - Workshops and training (how to write a CV, interview skills, etc.)
 - Internships

- Networking with employers
- Job boards, alumni networks, and online career development opportunities

- **Health and Wellness** – On U.S. college campuses, health and wellness services are designed to support students' physical, mental, and emotional well-being so they can succeed academically and personally. Most campuses have student health centers that provide medical care, preventive services, and health education, along with counseling centers offering therapy, crisis support, and workshops. Many also promote wellness through fitness centers, recreation programs, nutrition services, peer support groups, and stress-reduction activities. Together, these resources reflect a holistic approach, recognizing that student well-being is central to learning, retention, and overall college success.
- **Residential Life** is an important aspect of education for students. It refers to the system of housing, programs, and support services that shape students' living and learning experience on campus. Many institutions have dormitories or residence halls; cafeterias, canteens, or dining halls; computer rooms, libraries and study rooms; athletic facilities; green space, lawns, forests, ponds, or other natural environments; and other facilities open for student and faculty use during their free time outside of classroom hours. Some colleges even have on-site child care for their students, staff, and faculty. The facilities should be managed and administered by the institution, or may be contracted out to private entities such as food service providers or grounds and maintenance crews. Either way, they may hire student workers, which is a mutual benefit for students to earn money, and the facilities have access to a ready pool of part-time staff.

Civic Engagement & Community Service

Civic Engagement & Community Service at many colleges is an integral part of their mission to educate students as responsible citizens and ethical leaders. These institutions emphasize learning beyond the classroom, encouraging students to apply critical thinking and values of justice, equity, and compassion to real-world challenges. Through service-learning courses, volunteer programs, and community partnerships, students connect academic study with civic responsibility, deepening their understanding of social issues while developing practical skills. Liberal arts colleges do this because they see education not only as preparation for careers, but as a pathway to cultivating informed, engaged graduates who contribute meaningfully to society.

Student Conduct & Behavior Standards

Institutions and student life departments are free to decide rules governing students while on campus, such as curfews, whether uniforms are to be worn, and rules regarding student conduct and behaviour. Discipline committees and procedures may exist to handle violations of rules. Penalties may include suspension or expulsion from the institution, in serious cases.



6. Where Do Colleges Get Their Authority?

Degree-Granting Authority

Anyone can call themselves a college, but without degree-granting authority, a degree issued by the institution won't necessarily hold weight in the wider world. Degree-granting authority is always granted by the government.

In Thailand, all public universities are formally conferred in the name of the King. This is why a member of the royal family (or representative) is always present when degrees are presented. Private universities are also given degree-granting authority by the government – the Ministry of Higher Education (but are not conferred in the name of the King).

For example:

- Parami has degree-granting authority authorized by the District of Columbia Higher Education Licensure Commission in the United States.
- Mon National College has degree-granting authority from the Mon Department of Education.
- Note: It's important to note that if other countries/states do not recognize the government that grants the degree-granting authority, the degree may not be broadly recognized.

Accreditation

Once an institution has obtained degree-granting authority, the next step is accreditation. Accreditation is the formal recognition by an external body that an institution or program meets established standards of quality. It serves as a guarantee to students, communities, and partner institutions that the education provided is credible and aligned with its stated goals. Without accreditation, there is no clear assurance of quality or accountability.⁶

Who Can Give Accreditation?

In most countries, accreditation is given by the government. In the United States, accreditation is given by private, nongovernmental organizations that exist for this purpose.

The accreditation process involves:

- Self Study
- Peer Review
- Decision
- Continuous Monitoring

The process evaluates budgets, infrastructure, pedagogy and curriculum, and leadership and management⁷.

Important Note: Accreditation cannot even be applied for until a full class of students has completed the program. For example, a four-year program cannot be accredited until the program has had students complete all four years at their institution. Accreditation will evaluate the experience and career prospects of those students alongside the rest of the accreditation requirements.

Degree Granting Authority Vs Accreditation

Degree-granting authority is like a license to operate. It doesn't have a quality guarantee. It's like a driver's license: it gives you the legal right to drive on the road, but doesn't prove that you're a skilled driver.

Accreditation is an external quality review process that tells students, employers, and governments that a degree from this institution is credible. It's more like an inspection.

Community Recognition

A less formal but equally important way for colleges to earn trust is by gaining recognition from their communities. This happens when graduates show they have gained useful skills, confidence, and knowledge that make a difference in their lives and work. Local businesses and organizations notice this and want to hire them. At the same time, students and parents see that learning at the college is valuable - not only for getting a good job, but also for personal growth, community service, and other life goals. This recognition builds pride and support for the institution.

Case Study: Bard College

Bard College says, “Civic engagement is at the core of Bard College’s institutional mission, reflecting the fundamental belief that higher education institutions can and should operate in the public interest. Bard uses its resources to develop partnerships that address local, national, and global problems, reach underserved populations, and tackle critical issues of education and public policy⁹.”

Bard College has a Center for Civic Engagement (CCE). CCE initiates programs, fosters sustained partnerships, and supports and connects students, faculty, and staff of Bard’s local, national, and international networks as they work to make a difference in the civic life of their communities.

The CCE

- **Hosts “Democracy Day”.** Democracy Day features events and opportunities designed to

educate incoming students on the importance of supporting democratic ideals and practices.

- **Runs the Trustee Leader Scholar Program.** The Trustee Leader Scholar Program (TLS) is a student leadership incubator at Bard College. Students design and run their own projects, from local partnerships with community organizations to annual international volunteer trips.
- **Offers Community Action Awards.** Community Action Awards fund student participation in internships that address issues impacting communities locally, nationally, and around the world.
- **Allows students to enroll in OSUN courses.** Bard students may enroll in online courses offered by Open Society University Network (OSUN) partners, or take Network Collaborative Courses, which are co-designed and offered at Bard and other OSUN institutions simultaneously.

Case Study: Shan Community College

When Shan Community College went to the parents in their community to ask what they wanted/needed for their children, parents’ biggest concerns were around drugs, early marriage, abortion, migration, and the recruitment of soldiers. Of course, the parents were worried about their children’s future. Shan Community College tried to design something to help ease those worries and brighten their students’ futures. They have

an entirely drug-free campus, which includes no smoking or alcohol for students enrolled. This has helped them build trust in the community. They try to limit relationships at their college, and they say that dating is not allowed. The community knows that this is how the program is designed, and it has resulted in deeper investments by the community, including parents’ willingness to pay tuition fees.

How Can I Partner With an Established College?

Colleges that are unable to gain accreditation can partner with accredited institutions. They are then able to use this “stamp of approval” even though they have not gone through the accreditation process themselves.

- **Teach their courses/certificate**

programs: An example of this is Myint Mo Academies and Payap University’s Social Entrepreneurship Certificate. Payap University, through its Center for Social Impact (CSI) and International College, offers a certificate in Social Entrepreneurship and Community Development. Having partnered with the Myint-Mo Foundations, students at any of the Myint-Mo schools are able to complete this certificate from Payap University by taking the courses at one of the Myint-Mo academies. When completed, the students receive their certificate of completion from Payap University.

- **Transfer agreements:** Some colleges sign transfer agreements, where students who have completed a certain number of course credits can transfer to a more established college or university (this is usually in cases where a student’s qualifications wouldn’t otherwise grant them admission to the more established college). An example of this is Shan Community College (SCC) and Rajabhat University. Students who complete three years at SCC can transfer to Rajabhat University, where, after two years of study, they earn their bachelor’s degree.

- **Shared Degree programs:** Some colleges have been able to teach entire degree programs from accredited universities. An example of this is Parami University and

Bard College. When students receive an associate’s or undergraduate degree from Parami University, they are also given the same degree by Bard College. To do this, Bard College must approve all of Parami’s faculty appointments. Additionally, the Bard President sits on the Board of Parami.

- Another example of this is Mon National College (MNC) and the Royal College of Nursing (UK). The Royal College of Nursing manages the Bachelor’s of Nursing curriculum taught at MNC, including assessment and quality assurance. MNC students have access to the Royal College of Nursing’s online library. MNC grants the degree. Students who have earned their Bachelor’s of Nursing from MNC are eligible to earn a Master’s degree from the Royal College of Nursing.





7. Why Is Quality Assurance Important?

Colleges have standards to guarantee the quality of the education they offer. In many countries, primary and secondary education are compulsory and subject to government regulation. However, post-secondary education is optional, and public and private institutions offer programs that range widely in their content, focus areas, and other factors, including faculty, facilities, and resources. Accreditation is one path to ensuring a comprehensive set of standards is shared by institutions receiving accreditation from that accreditation body. It offers stakeholders quality assurance.

Standards ensure that stakeholders, including students, educators, and the public, know that an institution provides:

- Quality education
 - Is the institution able to deliver on its promises of educating students?
 - Can the institution, the program, and the courses meet students' needs for learning, employability, and professionalism?
- Minimum academic standards
 - Is the institution and are the teachers qualified to teach students the programs they are offering?
 - Is the program content similar to other programs in the region?
- Job Readiness
 - Will students have the information and preparation they need to succeed in the workplace?

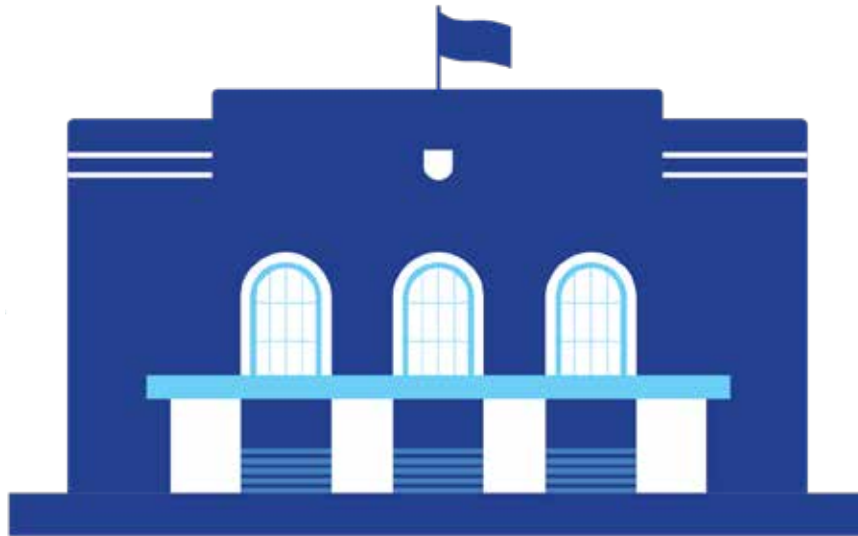
- Will students have greater career opportunities and success as a result of completing the program?

In addition, when students seek to transfer from one institution to another, both institutions want to know whether the students' prior education and the new institution:

- Ensure the same standard of education
 - Will transfer students be able to keep up with their peers?
 - Did transfer students receive the necessary knowledge from their previous courses to succeed in the school they are transferring to?
- Have similar graduation outcomes
 - Will transfer students be able to graduate on a similar schedule?
 - Will transferring students negatively affect the institution's graduation outcomes?
- Perform similarly post-graduation
- Will transfer students be able to perform at similar levels compared to their non-transfer peers?

Other stakeholders have an interest in the standards of an institution. Donors want to know that their money should be given to that specific institution instead of any other institution. Scholarship providers want to know that the money they give students to attend the institution is offering those students a quality education. Professors who join the institution want to know that their students are prepared for their level of expertise.

For institutions from Myanmar without a shared set of norms, moving toward standardization will allow for greater recognition domestically and comprehension internationally.



8. Steps to Take to Align With International Standards

- What categorization of college does your school most align with? These questions may help decide whether your institution is a university, college, vocational school, or other type of institution:
 - What kinds of degrees or certifications does your school award to students?
 - How many years does it typically take a student to earn a degree or certificate?
 - What are the learning outcomes of the institution?
- Is your institution prepared to create or modify its learning outcomes and curricula to conform to a standard?
 - Does your institution have a governance body to effect new or changed learning outcomes and academic standards that apply to the entire institution?
 - Does your institution have separate departments and faculty leadership within each department to implement new or changed learning outcomes and academic standards, and to design new or updated curricula?
 - Does your school have non-academic departments to manage the other affairs of the school?

- What administrative or procedural changes are necessary to conform the academic calendar and credit system to a shared standard?
 - Does your school have a standard academic calendar, and can it be modified to a semester or quarter schedule?
 - Do your courses align with a credit hour system within a standard academic term? What modifications to schedules are necessary?
 - Does your school keep records about student enrollment, and can it implement a transcript system?

If you want to learn more about the terminology used in this resource, utilize this [Glossary of Higher Education Terminology](#) by Parami University's Center for Education Policy Research.

Endnotes

1. Check out Mon National College's research unit [here](#).
2. Kachinland College is guided by their motto, "To lead is to serve".
3. Examples from CMU in [Social Science](#); Rangsit University's [Bachelor in International Relations and Development](#); UCLA [International Development Studies](#).
4. Helpful [reference](#) for fail vs incomplete and other unique letter grades.
5. Overview from [CMU](#); Overview from [Bard College](#).
6. <https://www.chea.org/about-accreditation>
7. <https://accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/Eligibility-Requirements-for-Accreditation.pdf>
8. <https://isdsi.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/SCT-Sustainability-in-Thailand-Syllabus.pdf>
9. <https://www.bard.edu/>