

# Experiences with the Memorandum of Understanding between Kasetsart University and Partner University

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## ABSTRACT

Since Kasetsart University has emphasized on opening its door to development of university internationalization. Each year Kasetsart University welcomes partners and friends from all over the world to our campus. Potential projects have been discussed and ended up with signing the Memorandum of Understanding. Currently we have signed Memorandum of Understanding with more than 200 universities and institutes from every continent.

With that big number, Kasetsart University found that less than 40% of the total number works effectively while the rest are still kept in the file. In order to make use of those non action MOU, the International Affairs Division was assigned to monitor all the MOU and collected data to analyze the status and problems we are facing.

International Affairs Division is responsible for keeping the manuscripts of all memorandum of understanding signed by Kasetsart University's President with partner universities. We studied the validity, content and commitment of memorandum of understanding. We sorted the memorandum of understandings by nation and continent as well as the productive data.

In terms of geographical data Kasetsart University has signed memorandum of understanding with 92 universities in Asia (54% of total number of MOU) 34 universities in Europe and the same number in America (20% of total number of MOU) and 11 universities in Australia (6% of total number of MOU) as table shown.

Continent	number of MOU	percentage
Asia	92	54
Europe	34	20
America	34	20
Australia	11	6
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Total	171	100

Then we grouped the memoranda by looking at their performances and productivities. We identified them into 5 categories as follows :

1. “Active memoranda” which means group of memoranda which are still valid as well as still initiate and operating.
2. “Recently signed memoranda” identified by the time of signing not more than 2 years, these memoranda are on process of launching new programs and activities.
3. “Activity Declining memoranda” includes memoranda which used to be counted as the high performance ones but reduction of activity starts to be noticed for a period of time .
4. “Zero growth memoranda” means there are no activities after signing.
5. “Invalid memoranda” means they terminated while both universities have not requested for extension for some reasons.

The categories of memoranda helped us to seek for the key factors that caused those performances. The International Affairs Division which is in charge of collecting data and submitting the report to the university has analyzed the factors effected to the succeed of memoranda into 6 factors as follows :

1. Geographical Factor

The location of partner university is a key factor for both universities to initiate exchange or joint program. Since host and home universities have to deal with different attitude and perception of university personnel and students. So it's hard to keep balance of activities among all our partner universities.

2. Partner University Reputation

International University ranking has a lot of effects on participation of university population .While Kasetsart University itself has intention to deal with any university in all rank. We need to manage the understanding of university staff and students in order to have various types of collaboration.

3. Language Barrier

Language proficiency has been considered as the obstruction in international collaboration for Thai students and foreign students who do not use English as their native language. Especially among Asian students,

language may affect their studies ,communication as well as their daily life in their host universities.

Building English efficiency in Kasetsart University has been seriously considered as the main issue to strengthen the capacity both for students and staff for the last 10 years.

#### 4. Budget Constraint

For Kasetsart University, 80% of student exchange expense will be responsible by students themselves. The rest comes from other sources such as faculty scholarship, foundation, international or partners funds.

For university personnel, there is a budget allocation in faculty and institute level to support their participation in such activity. Some can be partially provided by university or national research fund.

Thus international collaboration are still seriously facing with the budget constraint .

#### 3. Effective Liaison

It's obviously seen that liaison officer is the important key to success. Liaison officer needs to have willingness, creative thinking, service mind, and enthusiasm. Also if partner university alumni are the liaison officers, they mostly do the negotiation and likely get the program succeeded smoothly.

However university found that those qualified liaison officers are very rare.

#### 4. University Policy

If the university policy is the path way that leads to our destination, the International perspective of the university President is the vehicle. Hence administrators in every level are the most important factor to our success in international collaboration .

Currently, our President has given the priority to establish the strategic plan to develop Kasetsart University to be a World Class University in the next decade.

In conclusion, Kasetsart University is focusing on strengthening the relationships between our partner universities continuously in order to achieve our mutual benefit.