



DOCKSIDE

CATALOGUE COURSES REPORT

Main Recommendations

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1. Introduction

Based on the DOCKSIDE CATALOGUE COURSES REPORT, the following document highlights the main recommendations from this report in order to better achieve international joint Master or PhD programs between EU and Cambodian Universities.

These recommendations are based on the survey of the 4 Cambodian Partners and 3 European partners of the DOCKSIDE Project: The Royal University of Law and Economics, The University of Battambang, the National University of Management and the Royal University of Agriculture, the University of Vigo, the University of Nantes and the Southern Denmark University.

2. Main Recommendations

Recommendation #1

Reinforce bachelor level and link it to master degree

Due to tuition fees, most students involved in master degree are part time student who had professional experiences before coming back to training for a master degree. As a consequence, the link between bachelor and master degrees is rather weak. First, it must therefore be ensured that the students' knowledge is robust enough and not too distant to allow a comeback into Master Degree several years after. Secondly, any policy which allows students to move directly from Bachelor to Master Degree should be incentivized (e.g. through scholarships).

Recommendation #2

Create professional master and link it with private sector for scholarship and students career

Based on our information from the 'course catalogue' visit in February 2018, the relationship with private sectors is rather weak, although most of the master students are involved in part-time professional programs. Professionalization of master degree programs could provide benefits to students and their future career. In that regard, the university must develop long-term relations with the industrial world, for example by including internship opportunities in their programs. Nevertheless, one should keep in mind that this strategy is likely to reduce students' motivations for research. One challenge is therefore to combine professional and research orientations within training programs, as two alternative ways for future jobs.

Recommendation #3

Internationalize the Master Degree

Nowadays, internationalization of master degrees is highly recommended. It creates opportunities attract foreign students, researchers, experts and professors. It also upgrades the content of training programs to international academic standards. The development of Joint Master Degrees with European partners is obviously one possible solution.

Recommendation #4

Capacity building for Lecturers, Researchers and Staffs

Most of Cambodian universities suffer a lack of full time academic and administrative staff. Indeed, full time teachers represent only a small proportion of teaching staff and only few of them have a PhD. Moreover, universities are not free to appoint full time professors. Only the MoEYS is authorized to select full professors (Royal degree). More generally speaking, the inexistence of clear regulations regarding the evolution of academic careers is a key (and negative) point. This produces adverse effects onto the supervision of students at Master and PhD levels, hence demotivating students to pursue at Master and/or PhD level. Furthermore, the publications of current researchers/professors do not meet the international standards. As an incentive to publish the research outputs in the international peer-reviewed journals, all hiring process and promotions to the university academic positions (lecturer → Assistant Professor → Associate Professor → Professor) must be based on a good publication record along with other criteria (e.g. academic results, professional experiences, networking with national and international scientific communities etc.).

Recommendation #5

Homogenize and standardize the quality amongst universities (private and public)

In Cambodia, there are (too?) many types of universities, either private or public ones. From a student's point of view, it is important to know what is the value of their diploma granted by an of the university schemes. The PhD programs and curricula should be harmonized by developing relevant PhD schools among all these HEIs proposing a PhD diploma. At Master and Bachelor Degrees, the creation of new master programs, for example, should satisfy common standards and requirements.

Recommendation #6

Increase Public – Private Partnership

Many reasons can explain why HEIs should developed stronger partnerships with Private sectors: to ease internships for students, to match the curriculum with professional expectations, to involve professionals having up-to-date knowledge in a specific field within some training sessions.

Furthermore, if students can generally succeed in their master degree while being simultaneously employed as full time worker in a company, it is almost impossible to perform similarly at the PhD level. Preparing a PhD has long been recognized as a full time work, which requires a few minimum conditions to achieve a PhD on time within three years. The first condition is to receive a decent revenue through a scholarship system to become a full-time PhD student. The Ministry should encourage the possibility for private firms to grant some PhD students who will be working as a young potential researcher on a specific issue related to the private interest of the firm.

Recommendation #7

Establish research Director with clear strategy and Terms of Reference

Developing strong research strategies should be a cornerstone for Cambodian universities. This objective also belongs to recommendation #4. In Cambodia, the incentives to develop research projects are rather weak since a) the professional status and wages are independent of any academic/research level and scientific investment; b) the universities are not free to appoint their full time professors; and c) to get an interesting salary, (assistant) professors are encouraged to teach a lot. The Ministry is preparing some Terms of Reference for a position of a research director within every university. This should be achieved very soon.

Recommendation #8

Link PhD Students to Research

PhD students should be able to become full time researchers whose aim is to publish in high quality international scientific journals. However, such journals are highly competitive. As a consequence, any PhD student should be encouraged to submit/published as soon as possible articles, and to participate to international conferences to increase the awareness of international scientific standards. International collaboration and participation to scientific networks should also be encouraged, as well as international joint direction of Cambodian PhD students.

Recommendation #9

Establish cooperation between universities at least at PhD level

This last recommendation is complementary to recommendation #5. Most of Cambodian Universities do not have a critical size, at least at PhD level, to develop efficient PhD programs/schools. For example, environmental issues can be investigated by PhD students either in Economics, Law or Agriculture. PhD students from various disciplines should try to work together by, at least, participating to some common trainings. Because it can sometimes be expensive to send on a regular basis PhD students from Province Universities to attend courses in Phnom Penh (or the other way around), Cambodian Universities should increasingly use distance learning equipment to share their PhD catalog course with other universities. Most of the funds available for research are proposed by international or national calls. It is nearly impossible to get success with these calls without belonging to a consortium team. Consequently, Cambodian Universities should, with the help of their research directors (see recommendation #8), define common research Projects, and create altogether either scientific communities or national conferences on a relevant multidisciplinary topic like 'maritime development for a sustainable blue growth'.

3. Curriculum of a PhD in Environmental and Resources Management

A PhD School in Cambodia related to environmental and maritime issues can be sustainable only if it covers different fields of research. For any PhD student involved in social sciences, whatever the discipline (economics, management, geography and law), the PhD course syllabus should include both shared courses and specific ones.

Below, we highlight some of the possible courses to be included as a minimum knowledge requirement for any PhD student in social sciences dealing with Environmental and Maritime issues.

Shared Potential Methodology courses:

- Quantitative and qualitative research methods
- Social science research methods
- PhD Research methodology
- Geographic information system
- Scientific writing and communication

Shared Potential Transdisciplinary courses:

- Climate change and Human Adaptation
- Basis in ecological science
- Environmental law
- Integrated Coastal Zone Management

Disciplinary courses

- Economics
 - Agricultural economics, water policy
 - Sustainability and Economic valuation method
 - Advanced econometrics
 - Risk and uncertainty
 - Game theory and decision theory

- Law
 - International law
 - Natural resource policy law and institutions
 - International investment law

- Management
 - Risk Management
 - Natural Resource Management
 - Stakeholder Management
 - Green Business
 - Emergency and crisis management

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