

Chapter 4

Curriculum and Learning Process

School curricula in *Thailand* have often been modified and revised in order to be responsive to the changing socio-economic conditions as well as to advanced technologies. The development of primary and secondary school curricula is mainly under the responsibility of the *Ministry of Education* while the university curricula are designed by individual departments with an approval from the university/institutional councils before submission to the *Ministry of University Affairs* for information and examination.

4.1 Formal Education

The curriculum and learning process of formal education is presented here according to level and type of education as follows :

A. Level of Formal Education

1 . Pre-primary Education

The curriculum for pre-primary education is developed by each agency in accordance with the principles and guidelines stated in the *National Scheme of Education*. Normally, the provision of learning experience is organized for the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of children through everyday activities.

Characteristics of Pre-primary Schools

Pre-primary education is organized by various agencies, both public and private. The courses offered can be classified into 3 types : child development centre, kindergarten and pre-school class (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Characteristics of Pre-primary Education Provided by Different Ministries and Departments

Responsible Bodies (Ministry / Department)	Type of School or Course		
	Child Dev. Centre	Pre-school Class	Kindergarten
1. Ministry of Education			
1.1 Office of the National Primary Education Commission		✓	✓
1.2 Office of Private Education Commission		✓	✓
1.3 Rajabhat Institutes		✓	✓
1.4 Dept. of General Ed.		✓	✓
1.5 Dept. of Religious Affairs	✓		
1.6 Dept. of Non-formal Ed.	✓		
2. Ministry of University Affairs			
- Demonstration Schools		✓	✓
3. Ministry of Interior			
3.1 Dept. of Community Development	✓		
3.2 Dept. of Local Admin.		✓	✓
3.3 Border Patrol Police General Headquarters	✓	✓	
3.4 BMA		✓	✓
- Dept. of Education		✓	
- Dept. of Health	✓		
- Dept. of Community Development	✓		
4. Ministry of Public Health			
4.1 Dept. of Health	✓		
4.2 Dept. of Mental Health	✓		
4.3 Dept. of Communicable Disease Control	✓		
4.4 Dept. of Medical Services	✓		
5. Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare			
5.1 Dept. of Public Welfare	✓	✓	✓
5.2 Dept. of Labour Protection and Welfare	✓		

2. Primary Education

The primary school curriculum was revised in 1990 and was first implemented in primary school grade 1 in 1991 and came into full effect in all grades in 1996.

Table 4.2 Curriculum Standard of Primary Education

Duration of Course (years)	Qualifications for Admission	Attendance			Requirements for Graduation
		Week per Year	Hour/Period per Week	Period per Year	
6	Age of 6	40	25 hours	3,000 (1,000 hours)	Completion of six-year course with achievement in four experience groups at least "1" out of "4"

Structure of Primary School Curriculum (Revised Version 1990)

The primary school curriculum does not single out subjects into fragmented courses, but it is made up of 5 learning experience groupings as follows:

1) **Basic Skills Group**, comprising Thai language and mathematics as the tool subjects.

2) **Life Experiences**, dealing with the process of solving social and daily life problems with an emphasis on scientific process skills for better living.

3) **Character Development**, dealing with activities necessary for developing desirable habits, values, attitudes and behaviour, which will lead to a desirable character.

4) **Work-Oriented Experiences**, dealing with general practical work experiences and basic knowledge for career preparation.

5) **Special Experience**, dealing with activities based on learners' interests provided for those in grades 5-6 only. The learning activities in the area of special experiences can be organized by each school according to learners' needs and interests and may include knowledge and skills selected from the other four groups such as English for everyday life.

Table 4.3 Approximate School Hours of Primary Schools

Group of Subject Contents	Grade 1-2		Grade 3-4		Grade 5-6	
	%	Period /Year	%	Period /Year	%	Period /Year
1. Basic Skills Group providing tool subjects	50	1,500	35	1,050	25	750
2. Life Experiences	15	450	20	600	25	750
3. Character Development	25	750	25	750	20	600
4. Work - Oriented Education	10	300	20	600	30	900
Total	100	3,000	100	3,000	100	3,000
5. Special Experiences (For Grade 5-6)	-	-	-	-	-	600

Note : One period is a class of 20 minutes. One school hour consists of 3 periods.

Characteristics of Primary Schools

Public primary schools are mainly organized by the *MOE* through the *Office of the National Primary Education Commission (ONPEC)* for nearly 80 percent of the total of primary school age students. Other departments in the *MOE* also provide special types of educational services, i.e. special schools and welfare schools for children with special educational needs, and sports schools. In addition, approximately 12 percent of the total enrolment at this level of education are in private schools. Under the *MOI*, the *Bureau of Local Education Administration* and the *BMA* look after municipal schools while *Border Patrol Police* organize primary schools in remote rural areas. A number of demonstration schools are organized in various universities and *Rajabhat Institutes (RIs)*.

3. Secondary Education

The structure of lower and upper secondary school curricula includes 4 components :

1. Core subjects : basic subjects that correspond to life and society in general and must be taken by all students. All of these subjects are prepared by the *Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, MOE*.

2. Prescribed elective subjects : basic subjects which are different according to local conditions and needs. The local authorities are given an opportunity to choose the subjects offered according to the number of credits, or the local authorities can prepare the subjects offered by themselves in addition to those prescribed by the *Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development*.

3. Free elective subjects : subjects that are open for learners to choose according to their interests, aptitude and needs. Students can choose either the subjects prepared by the *Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development* or those created by the local authorities.

Table 4.4 Characteristics of Schools Providing Primary and Secondary Education

Responsible Bodies (Ministry/Department)	Type of Schools	Courses Offered		
		Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary
Ministry of Education 1. ONPEC 2. Dept. of General Ed. 3. Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council 4. Office of the Private Ed. Commission 5. Dept. of Physical Ed. 6. Dept. of Fine Arts 7. Dept. of Vocational Ed. 8. Rajamangala Institute of Technology	● Public	✓	✓	
	● Public :			
	- General Ed. School	✓	✓	✓
	- Special Ed. School	✓	✓	✓
	- Welfare Ed. school	✓	✓	✓
	● Public :			
	Demonstration School	✓	✓	✓
	● Private :			
- General Ed. School	✓	✓	✓	
- Special Ed. School				
- Welfare Ed. school				
● Public : Sports School	✓	✓		
● Public :				
- Dramatic Arts College		✓	✓	
- Fine Arts College		✓	✓	
● Public :				
- Technical College			✓	
- Vocational College			✓	
- Agricultural College			✓	
● Public			✓	
Ministry of University Affairs	● Public : Demonstration School	✓	✓	✓
Ministry of Interior 1. Bureau of Local Ed. Administration 2. Bangkok Metropolitan Administration 3. National Police Office	● Public (local)	✓	✓	
	● Public (local)	✓	✓	
	● Public : Border Patrol Police Primary School	✓		
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare ● Department of Public Welfare	● Public : - Hilltribe Welfare School (Temporary Seasonal) - Child and Youth Welfare School	✓ ✓		

Table 4.5 Curriculum Standard of Secondary Education

	Duration of Course (years)	Qualifications for Admission	Attendance			Requirements for Graduation
			Week per Year	Hour/Period per Week	Period per Year	
● Lower Secondary	3	Graduate from primary school (Grade 6)	40	35 periods (1 period = 50 minutes)	1,400	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Completion of 90 units of compulsory and free elective subjects. ◆ Acquisition of core subjects in Thai and Social Studies. ◆ Acquisition of at least 80 units. ◆ Having participated in activities specified with at least 80% of attendance and having passed required objectives of such activities.
● Upper Secondary	3	Graduate from lower secondary school (Grade 3)	40	35 periods (1 period = 50 minutes)	1,400	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Completion of at least 75 units of compulsory and free elective subjects. ◆ Acquisition of all compulsory subjects. ◆ Acquisition of at least 75 units. ◆ Having participated in activities specified with at least 80% of attendance and having passed all objectives required of such activities.

4. Activities : All schools are required to organize three types of activities for learners : those organized in accordance with the regulations of the *MOE*; guidance, remedial teaching or academic development activities; and independent activities of learners.

Characteristics of Secondary Schools

● Lower Secondary Education

Education at lower secondary level is mainly provided by the *Department of General Education (DGE)*, the *Office of the National Primary Education Commission (ONPEC)* and private schools under supervision of the *Office of the Private Education Commission (OPEC)*. There are also demonstration schools of various universities and *RIs* which are outside the control of the *MOE*, but they follow the national standard curriculum. Primary schools under the *ONPEC* and *MOI* have offered lower secondary classes in accordance with the government policy on the expansion of educational opportunities at lower secondary education levels. Besides this, special and welfare schools also provide lower secondary education for the handicapped and disadvantaged.

● Upper Secondary Education

The upper secondary schooling system is divided into two parallel tracks : general or academic, and vocational tracks. Public upper secondary education in general or academic stream is mainly under the responsibility of the *DGE* ; the rest of the students are in private schools and demonstration schools of the *RIs* and universities. Special and welfare education is also provided in general upper secondary schools.

Public vocational education at upper secondary level is provided by the *Department of Vocational Education (DOVE)*, *Department of Fine Arts (DFA)*, *Rajamangala Institute of Technology (RIT)*. In addition, *King Mongkut's Institute of Technology North Bangkok* under the *MUA* also offers courses at upper secondary level in industrial technology. Upper secondary education is also provided in both general and vocational streams by other ministries which will be presented later.

In addition, specialized schools have been organized such as science schools and sports schools. The first science high school in *Thailand* has been established since 1991, emphasizing the teaching of science and mathematics at upper secondary level. Since 1993, a science secondary school has been organized in each of the 12 educational regions to promote the teaching and learning of science, technology and environment at lower and upper secondary education. As regards sports schools, special training in sports is offered at primary and secondary school level.

4. Higher Education

Higher education is mainly under the responsibility of the *MOE* and the *MUA*. In addition, other ministries and agencies also provide education at this level for their specific needs which will be mentioned later in this chapter. It is offered at three major levels : lower than bachelor's degree or diploma, undergraduate, and graduate levels (Table 4.6).

▲ Ministry of Education

Higher education under the *MOE* is currently provided at diploma and undergraduate levels by Rajabhat Institutes, Rajamangala Institute of Technology, public and private vocational colleges, as well as colleges of physical education, dramatic arts and fine

arts. The majority of courses offered are related to vocational and teacher education which will be presented later.

▲ Ministry of University Affairs

The major role of the *MUA* is to supervise and coordinate public and private higher education institutions except some specialized professional training which falls under the jurisdiction of other ministries. Its major responsibilities are the formulation of educational policy within the framework of the *National Education Development Plan* and standardization of curricula.

Degrees and Qualifications

Within the higher education system, the first professional qualification is that of a bachelor's degree which is obtained after four years of higher study. In the fields of architecture, painting, sculpture, graphic arts and pharmacy, five years of higher study are required for a bachelor's degree; medicine, dentistry and veterinary science, require six years of study. In some fields, an associate degree is available after the first three years of a bachelor course. The professional, first degree in medicine, veterinary science and dentistry is that of doctor. In some of these professions, additional post-degree study is required before professional qualifications allowing the candidate to practice in his or her field are awarded.

Advanced studies of at least one but generally two years, combined with a thesis, lead to the award of a master's degree. A doctorate is awarded in some fields and requires an additional three years of study following a master's degree.

An advanced diploma or certificate may be obtained after one or two years of course work. It is intended for students who already possess a degree or professional qualification.

Table 4.6 Levels of Higher Education Courses Offered by Ministry of Education and Ministry of University Affairs

Responsible Bodies	Type of Institution	Level of Courses Offered		
		Diploma	Bachelor's Degree	Post-Graduate Degree
Ministry of Education				
① Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council	Public	✓	✓	
② Dept. of Physical Ed.	Public	✓	✓	
③ Dept. of Vocational Ed.	Public	✓	✓	
④ Rajamangala Institute of Technology	Public	✓	✓	
⑤ Dept. of Fine Arts	Public	✓	✓	
⑥ Office of the Private Ed. Commission	Private	✓		
Ministry of University Affairs				
① State Institutions of Higher Education	Public :			
	• Open University	✓	✓	✓
	• Limited Admission University	✓	✓	✓
② Private Institutions of Higher Education	Private		✓	✓

Grading and Examination

Grading at all universities is based on the course unit system/semester of credit. In most universities, generally, course evaluation is done by grades and grade points for one credit.

Private universities use the same grading system as the public universities. This is in addition to the specific graduation requirements of each institution.

Quota System and University Special Programmes

Provincial universities and provincial campuses of Bangkok universities retain their quota system to fill 50 percent of seats available each academic year from all secondary schools in their respective regions.

A number of students are also admitted through university special programmes such as the Promotion of Medical Science Education for Rural Areas Project, the Development and Promotion of Science and Technology Talents Project, and the Sports Promotion Programme and the Arts Promotion Programme.

B. Type of Formal Education

1. Teacher Education

At present, 114 institutions of post – secondary education are involved in preparing future teachers. Major institutions offering teacher training courses are university faculties of education and Rajabhat Institutes or formerly teaching training colleges. In addition, Rajamangala Institutes of Technology, vocational education colleges, physical education colleges, as well as dramatic arts and fine arts colleges also train vocational teachers.

- **University Faculties of Education**

Currently, dergraduate teacher training courses are offered in 16 public universities both in Bangkok and in other regions. Master's degrees in education are offered in 14 public universities and 2 private universities, while doctorate degree courses are available only in Bangkok in 4 public universities.

- **Rajabhat Institutes (RIs)**

Rajabhat Institutes or former teachers colleges began to offer a four-year programme leading to a bachelor's degree in education in 1957. Since 1984, teachers colleges have diversified their curricula to train manpower in fields other than education. The curricula are classified into 3 areas : education, science and liberal arts.

All RIs provide courses at undergraduate level to match the local and national needs. If any of the institutes wishes to provide courses at postgraduate level, they should receive approval from the *Academic Council* and the *Council of Rajabhat Institutes* respectively. At present, master's degree courses are offered in 23 Institutes.

2. Vocational Education

In the general education stream, work-oriented education is offered to primary school children as one area of gaining experience in order to provide them with work experiences and basic knowledge for career preparation. Work-oriented education and

vocational education are offered as elective, compulsory and free elective courses respectively at both lower and upper secondary levels.

In the vocational stream, formal vocational education is provided at three levels : upper secondary, leading to a certificate equivalent to that given to graduates of general secondary schools; post – secondary, generally for two years, leading to a diploma; and university level, leading to a degree.

Vocational colleges under *DOVE*, Rajamangala Institutes of Technology, and private vocational schools and colleges offer courses in five areas : industrial technology, business and commerce, agriculture, home economics, and arts and crafts (Table 4.7). The *DOVE* and *RIT* use different curricula to prepare students for the same certificate and diploma. Private vocational schools and colleges may follow either the curriculum of the *DOVE* or *RIT*.

- **Vocational Education Colleges**

Public and private vocational education colleges offer 3 year courses for lower secondary graduates leading to the Certificate in Vocational Education. A two – year programme is offered for those who have completed the Certificate in Vocational Education, leading to the Diploma in Vocational Education.

For those who have completed their general upper secondary education and wish to further their studies in a vocational stream, a two – year programme is provided, leading to the Diploma in Technician Education.

Some public vocational colleges also offer a two – year programme for those who have completed Diploma in Vocational Education wishing to be vocational teachers, leading to Higher Diploma in Technology.

- **Rajamangala Institute of Technology (RIT)**

RIT operates as a department of the *MOE*. It administers 13 faculties in different disciplines, which offer bachelor's degree courses at different campuses located throughout the Kingdom. A separate teaching force offers certificate and diploma courses in varying combinations on the same campuses. In addition, *RIT* trains teachers for certificate and diploma programmes, and bachelor's degree programmes have been developed as well since 1981 in response to the needs for higher – level technical manpower.

3. Special Vocational Education

Special institutions offering courses for learners to train and develop specific vocational skills and expertise are sports schools, physical education colleges, and dramatic arts and fine arts colleges.

- **Sports Schools**

In 1998, there were six sports schools organized by the *Department of Physical Education* offering special training for students who have sporting skills. Admission is provided to students with capabilities in sports from all over the country who are given full financial support from the government until they finish school.

Suphan Buri Sports School in the central region offers classes starting from Grade 4 at primary level to secondary level until Grade 12. The other five schools in the north, the northeast and the south offer classes only at secondary level, Grades 7-12.

- **Physical Education Colleges**

The *Colleges of Physical Education* under the *Department of Physical Education (DPE)* are responsible for producing teachers and personnel in physical education, health, recreation, sport science, health science, and safety education. Courses offered are at secondary and higher education levels as follows :

① **Certificate in Vocational Education (Cert. Voc.)**

There are three-year programmes offering a certificate in Sport and Health and a certificate in Commerce. Admission through competitive entrance examinations is provided to students who have completed lower secondary education.

② **Diploma in Vocational Education (Dip.Voc.)**

This is a two-year programme offered in seven fields of study : Health Centre Administration, Business Computer, Business Management, Tourism Business and Hotel Management, Business English, Journalism and Public Relations, Accounting, Environmental Technology, Marketing, and Human Resource Management. Admission is made through competitive entrance examinations for those who have completed the Certificate in Vocational Education and upper secondary education, or the equivalent.

Table 4.7 Courses in Vocational Education Offered in Secondary and Higher Education Institutions under the Ministry of Education

	Type of Course				
	Industrial Technology	Business and Commerce	Agriculture	Home Economics	Arts and Crafts
Department of Vocational Ed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Certificate in Vocational Ed. • Higher Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diploma in Technical Ed. - Diploma in Vocational Ed. - Higher Diploma in Technology 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rajamangala Institute of Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Certificate in Vocational Ed. • Higher Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diploma in Vocational Ed. - Bachelor's Degree 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	(Engineering)	(Business Administration)			(Fine Arts)
Office of Private Ed. Commission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Certificate in Vocational Ed. • Higher Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diploma in Technical Ed. - Diploma in Vocational Ed. 	✓	✓			✓
	✓	✓			✓
	✓	✓			✓

③ Higher Certificate in Education

It is a two-year programme offering the higher certificate in Physical Education and Health Education for those who have completed the Certificate in Vocational Education and upper secondary education.

④ Bachelor's Degree (two-year programme)

The *Colleges of Physical Education* affiliate with the *RIs* in providing a two-year course leading to a Bachelor's Degree in Sport Science and Health Science for those holding the Higher Certificate in Physical Education and Health Education.

⑤ Bachelor's Degree (four-year programme)

The *Colleges of Physical Education* also affiliate with the *RIs* for a four-year undergraduate course in Public Relations (Sport Communication) and Health Science for those who have completed the Certificate in Vocational Education and upper secondary education.

● Dramatic Arts and Fine Arts Colleges

The *Dramatic Arts Colleges* and *Fine Arts Colleges* are run by the *Department of Fine Arts*. Two fine arts colleges also exist; one in Bangkok and the other in Supanburi Province in the central region. Courses are offered both at secondary and higher education levels. At secondary level, the Lower Dramatic Arts Certificate, the Intermediate Dramatic Arts Certificate and the Intermediate Fine Arts Certificate require three years of study. At higher education level, the Higher Certificates in Dramatic Arts and Fine Arts require two years of study. The *Bangkok Dramatic Arts College* is also affiliated to the *RIT* for a two-year bachelor's degree course for graduates of the Higher Dramatic Arts Certificate (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8 Courses Offered by the Dramatic Arts and Fine Arts Colleges

Institution	Secondary Education	Higher Education
● Dramatic Arts College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lower Dramatic Arts Certificate, equivalent to general lower secondary education ● Intermediate Dramatic Arts Certificate, equivalent to general upper secondary education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Higher Dramatic Arts Certificate ● Bachelor's Degree
● Fine Arts Colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intermediate Fine Arts Certificate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Higher Fine Arts Certificate

4. Education Provided by Other Agencies for Specific Purposes

Education is also organized by various agencies according to their specific needs at secondary and higher education levels (Table 4.9). Courses are offered for graduates from primary schools to upper secondary schools, both from general and vocational streams.

All responsible agencies have developed their own curricula which can be classified into 4 groups:

1) **Curricula for the production of professional soldiers and police** include the curriculum of Preparatory School for the Armed Forces Academies which requires 2 years of study after graduation from secondary school Grade 4, curricula of the military, naval, and air forces academies as well as the police cadet requiring 4 years of study, and curricula for preparing warrant officers for graduates from lower and upper secondary schools.

Table 4.9 Education Provided by Other Agencies for Specific Purposes

Responsible Bodies	Type of Institution	Level of Education				Short Courses
		Upper Secondary	Higher Education			
			Diploma	Bachelor's Degree	Specific Certificate	
● Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irrigation College • Veterinary School • Cooperatives School 	✓	✓	✓		
● Ministry of Transport and Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merchant Marine Training Centre • Meteorological School • Postal School • Railway Technical School • Civil Aviation Training Centre 		✓		✓	✓
● Ministry of Defence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armed Forces Academies Preparatory School • Military, Naval, Air Forces Academies • Medical Colleges • Nursing Colleges • Technical Training School • Survey School 	✓		✓	✓	✓
● Ministry of Interior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police Cadet Academy • Nursing College • Police School 			✓	✓	
● Ministry of Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursing Colleges • Public Health Colleges • College of Medical Technology and Public Health 		✓	✓	✓	✓
● Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chemical Practice Institute 		✓			
● Ministry of Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law Training Institute 				✓	
● Bangkok Metropolitan Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical College • Nursing Colleges 			✓	✓	✓

2) **Curricula for specific technicians** include those for training military technicians to work in the armed forces, and those for training specific technicians for various agencies such as Irrigation College, Railway Technical School, etc.

3) **Medical sciences curricula** are organized for secondary school graduates requiring 1-4 years of study in the institutions of the *Ministry of Public Health*, *BMA* and the *Thai Red Cross Society*.

4) **Curricula for other specific purposes** are organized for graduates from lower secondary schools, both in general and vocational streams, and general upper secondary schools as required by each institution, such as the Merchant Marine Training Centre, Cooperatives School, Postal School and Civil Aviation Training Centre, etc.

5. Special Education

Education for persons with special needs is mainly provided by the *Department of General Education* and the *Office of the National Primary Education Commission*. Other agencies providing special education services include *DNFE*, *DOVE*, some demonstration schools, hospitals, *Department of Public Welfare*, municipal schools, and private foundations.

Currently special education is provided for children who are hearing impaired, mentally retarded, visually impaired, physically impaired, and health impaired. Other groups of children who need special education services are specific learning disabled, autistic, emotionally/behaviourally disordered, as well as gifted and talented children.

The teaching and learning of special education is organized in both special and inclusive schools. Two types of curricula are used : 1) special curricula offered in special schools such as the School for the Deaf and the School for the Blind ; 2) regular curricula used in inclusive schools which may be adjusted to meet special needs of children.

Welfare education is also provided for those who are socially and culturally disadvantaged. It is provided for children who are deprived of the opportunity to attend compulsory primary classes in regular schools covering a wide range of culturally and socially disadvantaged groups.

Welfare students are not only provided with free education, but also accommodation, food , clothing, equipment, textbooks and other necessities. Students are given special vocational training relevant to the locality of a particular school for future employment.

6. Education for the Ecclesiastics

Both a study of Buddhism and a general education are provided in Buddhist temples to monks and novices as well as to householders.

● **The Study of Buddhism** is divided into 2 sections : Dharma and Pali teachings. In the Dharma section, the teaching of Dharma is provided to the ecclesiastics and also to householders or laymen. The curriculum offered is at three grades : third grade, second grade, and first grade. The Pali teaching is at 8 grades, provided only to the ecclesiastics.

● General Ecclesiastical School

General ecclesiastical schools offer lower and upper secondary education curricula equivalent to those provided by the *Department of General Education*. Apart from general subjects, the curricula include learning units related to religious practice, the Buddha's doctrine, and Pali language.

● Buddhist Universities

There are two Buddhist universities situated in Bangkok with various campuses in the regions providing higher education for monks, novices and also householders. Mahamakutrajavidyalaya University offers undergraduate courses in 4 faculties : Faculty of Religion and Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Social Sciences, and Faculty of Education. At Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, courses at bachelor's degree level are offered in the Faculty of Buddhism, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Humanities, and Faculty of Social Sciences. In addition, master's degrees are also provided in Buddhism and Philosophy.

4.2 Lifelong Learning

Apart from formal education, lifelong learning is organized to provide an opportunity for those who have missed formal schooling to have a second chance in education. Non - formal education and vocational training as well as informal education services are provided to those outside the school system by both public and private bodies.

In addition to the *Department of Non-Formal Education (DNFE)*, there are other government departments and ministries which have been carrying out non-formal and informal education activities. Private voluntary agencies and various foundations have also been involved in the provision of non-formal education. Besides, industrial factories have organized non-formal education programmes for their employees.

Types of Non-Formal Education Activities

At present, non-formal education activities can be classified into three categories:

1) General Education

In this category, the programme has been designed for those who wish to obtain a school equivalency certificate comparable to primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education.

2) Vocational Education Programmes

These programmes are conducted by the *DNFE* and other agencies, both public and private, using different courses of training prepared by those agencies. The *DNFE* accepts credits earned outside as part of the requirements for completion of the certificate of general education as specified in the above category.

3) Education for Quality of Life Improvement

Training programmes other than those in the first two categories are offered in different fields. Such programmes are conducted by various agencies, both public and private. The *DNFE* accepts credits earned from such training courses as part of the requirements for completion of the certificate as specified in the first category.

Activities Promoting Lifelong Learning

A. Public Agencies

The *DNFE* provides educational services to promote lifelong learning as follows :

① Basic Education

The responsibility of the *DNFE* is to organize non-formal education programmes for adults who have missed the opportunity for formal schooling or have dropped out. The programmes offered are 1) Literacy Campaign Project, 2) Functional Literacy Programmes, 3) Hill Areas Education, and 4) Continuing Education.

② Vocational Education Services

The short-term vocational courses are divided into 4 types:

1) Stationary Vocational Training is conducted in existing educational institutions fully equipped with teachers and instructional materials. The courses are provided in accordance with local needs and the conditions of different seasons. The whole course normally does not exceed 300 hours and the daily schedule is between 09.00-20.00 hrs.

2) Mobile Vocational Training The procedure is similar to that provided in stationary training. Mobile units have been established to travel to rural areas where they visit remote villages. Once there, learning-teaching sites are set up and resource persons in the locality are recruited to provide training for groups of not less than 15 persons each. These courses are normally less than 300 hours in duration.

3) Interest Group Programme This programme is arranged to provide education in accordance with individual needs and interests of the people. Those having the same interest form a group of not less than 15 persons, and will receive training of not more than 30 hours per week.

4) Lower Certificate Vocational Education Programme is provided for employed workers in private enterprises to continue their vocational education. This three-year programme is organized through distance learning.

③ Provision of Information Services

Various facilities are available for providing information services to the general public such as public libraries, village reading centres, the *Bangkok Planetarium*, the *Educational Science Centre*, the *Mobile Exhibition Units*, etc. In addition, the *Centre for Educational Technology* also provides educational services through radio and television network as well as various kinds of media. The services provided include school broadcast programmes for formal education, distance education radio and television programmes for non-formal education, radio and television programmes for informal education purpose.

Table 4.10 Educational Services Provided by the Department of Non-Formal Education, Ministry of Education

	Services Provided	Target Groups
1. Basic Education	1. Literacy education 2. Sixth grade primary education equivalency programmes 3. Secondary education programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who are illiterate including the Thai muslims in five border provinces, Thai children in foreign countries and hilltribes. • The disadvantaged such as women, detainees, in - service military personnel, workers and farmers. • Women, local leaders, detainees, religious preachers, workers and primary school graduates who do not continue schooling at secondary level.
2. Vocational Education	Vocational education and training programmes 1. Interest groups 2. Short course vocational training 3. Lower Certificate Vocational Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women, detainees, in-service military personnel, employed workers in private enterprises, farmers and primary school graduates who are not studying in school including those in deprived areas or crippled persons.
3. Information Services	1. public libraries 2. village reading centres 3. educational science centres 4. Radio and television programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public

Apart from the *DNFE*, other departments and ministries also offer non-formal vocational training, for instance, the *DOVE*, and the *Department of Skill Development* of the *Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare* through the *National Institute of Skill Development (NISD)* and its six regional institutes.

Despite differences among the institutions in the design of their training programmes to suit local needs, the overall training activities of these institutes follow the same guidelines and have the same objectives. Training programmes provided are:

- **Pre-employment Training** for unemployed out-of-school youths with at least primary schooling. Skill training courses are provided in short duration ranging from three to eleven months followed by two to four months of on-the-job training.

- **Upgrading Training** for skilled workers who need training to keep up with the continual technological changes and to have increased mobility in the labour market.

- **Non-Technical Training** courses are offered by internal and experienced external instructors. The institutes conduct courses in entrepreneurship and for such occupations as secretary, receptionist, salesman, and waiter or waitress. The programme has been designed to be flexible, and new courses are offered as new occupational needs develop. In addition, *the NISD* offers training for foremen, instructors, officers, and promotes inplant training as well.

B. Private Agencies

Private institutions under the supervision of *OPEC* which also provide non-formal education can be classified into 2 categories :

- 1) Schools offering courses following the curricula of the *MOE*:

- Adult schools offering general education, and

- Vocational schools offering vocational training courses.

- 2) Schools offering non-formal education curricula approved by the *MOE* such as religious schools, tutorial schools, correspondence schools, art schools, etc.

In summary, education in Thailand is provided in the form of formal, non-formal and informal education. With regard to formal education, curriculum and the learning process of pre-primary education is organized as teaching units through everyday activities of children. At primary level, the curriculum is made up of 5 groups of learning experiences : basic skills, life experience, character development, work-oriented experiences, and special experiences. The curriculum and learning process at secondary education is diversified and comprehensive and is composed of 4 components : core subjects, prescribed elective subjects, free elective subjects, and activities. At higher level, education is organized at lower than bachelor's degree or diploma, undergraduate and graduate levels by different kinds of institutions. Special schools are organized for the handicapped while welfare schools are run for those who are socially and culturally disadvantaged at primary and secondary levels. In addition, education is also provided by other ministries and agencies for their own specific purposes at secondary and higher levels. Besides this, various types of non-formal and informal activities are organized by both public and private agencies in order to promote lifelong learning.