

# Starting your career in Thailand Country Guide for International Students



**You chose to study in the United Kingdom. You are beginning to think about what your options are after graduation. Building on an excellent international education you are returning to your home country, Thailand. You stand at the beginning of an exciting career, but what are the steps you need to take in order to find a suitable job, and where do you find the information you need?**

**This careers profile provides you with practical advice about returning to work in Thailand to help you make a successful start in your career in the Thailand labour market. Included are key facts about current trends and jobs in Thailand industry, advice about seeking employment in Thailand, hints and tips for making a successful application, and helpful information sources.**

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## Country profile

The Thai economy is mainly driven by export and the tourism industry. In recent years the economy has experienced growth, however due to the economic crisis, the country has witnessed a certain degree of regression. One of the main reasons for the weakening of the Thai economy is the great dependency on foreign investments which have reduced as an outcome of the global financial crisis. Not only is the economical insecurity affecting Thailand, but also the unstable political situation has been weakening the Thai economy.

Nonetheless, there are some sectors that can help the country to alleviate the poor economic situation. As said before, such sectors include tourism but also the rice production and manufacturing industries. Export is a main contributor to the Thai economy, with one of the main export products being rice.

### KEY FACTS: The Thai economy

GDP per capita:	US\$8,300 (2010 est.)
Labour force:	38.2 million people (2009)
Unemployment rate:	1.6% (2010 est.)
Major sectors of occupation:	Wholesale and retail trade (13.8%); Services (37.2%); Industry (40.1%); Agriculture (8.9%) (2010 est.)
Main trading partners:	USA, Japan, China

### KEY FACTS: The Thai graduate labour market

Average age at graduation:	26
Average graduate starting salary:	US\$3,000 annually
Average working week:	48 hours (full-time)
Holiday entitlement:	13 days of national holidays, 6 days of vacation

# Benefits

## **Benefits of a UK qualification**

Possibly the largest benefit which all international students receive when studying at one of the over 100 universities in the UK, is the fact that UK universities have some of the most renowned and prestigious histories of higher education in the world. Even if a graduate does not study at one of the more famous institutions, the graduate can return to their home country safe in the knowledge that no matter where they look for work, their qualifications will be highly respected. This is also useful in job interview situations, in which your study in the UK can come into conversation as a point of interest and as an example of experience in situations of teamwork, cultural awareness, when possibly you were outside of your comfort zone.

Furthermore, your experiences in writing and reading English are extremely valuable in the job market. As an added benefit, you will no doubt have been exposed to a variety of accents and dialects during your study stay, making you more open to the English language than you may have realised.

### **Case study:**

My experiences of studying in the United Kingdom were outstanding. I was given top class surroundings in which to learn, individual attention when I needed it most, and the opportunity to be immersed in the language, which for me was the most effective way of learning. I thought I knew English pretty well before I got there, but I didn't know nearly half of it!

# Benefits

## Graduating: Searching for work

Not long ago, student life and job finding was a far simpler procedure. Graduates would simply leave university, either looking for work through friends and family, a large company or a local business, and often step into a full-time job after an interview. These days, a wider variety of options exist which match the wider variety of jobs and the ease of travel which is available to the worldly student. As the number of students increases, so does the quality of the competition.

It's tough out there. Many graduates having just left university know this, whilst others are soon to find out. Since so many new university leavers have a career path in mind which they may have had for many years, the competition is fierce in many of the desirable graduate schemes. This is more the case in the UK than almost anywhere else. However, one benefit which you as an international student have is that you have a home country to which you can return. The lack of vacancies in the UK has led to many British students leaving for work further afield, often with little experience of the language in that country outside of the native English speaking countries. For example, in China whilst there are some international companies which accept English-only students, the vast majority will prefer a candidate with some basic Chinese.

It can be difficult to come across vacancies in graduate jobs, full-time occupation is hard to find without experience and most find that internships can involve heavy competition. All is not lost however! Most graduates find that the main issue is simply knowing where to look, and this guide hopes to point you in the right direction.

Check out the '**More Information**' section to see handy links with tips and advice in the search for work.

# Main routes to employment

## Getting started

### Online recruitment and vacancy websites:

- Jobs DB Recruitment: [www.th.jobsdb.com/TH](http://www.th.jobsdb.com/TH)
- JobThai: [www.jobthai.com](http://www.jobthai.com)
- Nazionejobs: [www.nazionejobs.com](http://www.nazionejobs.com)
- The Engineering Job: <http://th.theengineeringjob.com>
- XPress Jobs: [www.xpressjobs.net](http://www.xpressjobs.net)

### Social networking

Social networking has become an increasingly common and important part of seeking work, especially with the social media generation. Sites such as Facebook.com and LinkedIn.com have flourished into everyday use for graduates and employers alike, in order to find the right person for the job. Graduates looking for work in their home nation may already be aware of the value of such sites, and may be aware of specific sites which are specialised in their own country. Graduates can place details of themselves including their job experience, education level, home/current university as well as a photo if preferred. On some of these sites they can also search for jobs according to their specific interest or area of study. What is clear is that graduates should certainly take the time to discover the potential job opportunities which these sites offer, both socially and at a socio-professional level.

The following list of examples is not exhaustive, and contains websites with varying emphasis on professionalism and social networking.

### Sites worth checking out (global):

- [www.ecademy.com](http://www.ecademy.com)
- [www.efactor.com](http://www.efactor.com)
- [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)
- [www.Linkedin.com](http://www.Linkedin.com)
- [www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com)
- [www.plaxo.com](http://www.plaxo.com)
- [www.ryze.com](http://www.ryze.com)
- [www.spoke.com](http://www.spoke.com)
- [www.ziggs.com](http://www.ziggs.com)

# Main routes to employment

As a graduate looking for work in Thailand, you should use a variety of strategies. Newspapers are a helpful starting point when it comes to the Thai job-hunt.

## Key newspapers to look for:

- Daily News: [www.dailynews.co.th](http://www.dailynews.co.th)
- Thairath: [www.thairath.co.th](http://www.thairath.co.th)
- The Nation: [www.nationmultimedia.com](http://www.nationmultimedia.com)

However, a vast amount of the job vacancies are not advertised in any newspaper. Therefore, the use of alternative sources, persistency and well developed detection skills will help you to discover the hidden jobs.

## Graduate jobs/Careers Fairs

An interesting way of finding work or further education is through graduate fairs. With varying focuses in each event, graduates can find themselves coming face to face with companies of interest, and may even find interest in something which was not previously considered.

Graduate fairs are also a good opportunity to find out about graduate schemes being offered by companies and what these entail.

Many fairs offer other facilities such as CV workshops, letter writing tuition and a chance to network with individuals representing companies of differing sizes and reputations, thus they can offer a good learning opportunity even if you struggle to find a company suited to you.

Many universities in the UK hold their own fairs near the end of the spring/summer term and throughout the summer, so it is well worth getting involved and putting yourself out there. There may also be fairs in your home country, whether a national event or a university which is local to you, so keep your eyes and ears open.

Attending career fairs and joining professional networks can help you get in touch with valuable new contacts. Career fairs take often place in cooperation with different Thai universities. It is advisable to go to local Thai universities for further information on the various career fairs.

## Main routes to employment

You may find the following websites useful for locating fairs:

- [www.careercenter.ait.ac.th](http://www.careercenter.ait.ac.th) Career Center Asian Institute of Technology
- [www.nhkspg.co.th/en/career/job\\_fair.php](http://www.nhkspg.co.th/en/career/job_fair.php) NHK Spring: a company that assists and works with other companies in the industry sector. The website features career fairs at Thai universities.
- [www.qsncc.co.th/events/attraction\\_event\\_details.asp](http://www.qsncc.co.th/events/attraction_event_details.asp) Queen Sikit National Convention Center gives an overview of all fairs taking place at this venue.

When searching the Internet for job offers and vacancies, it is advisable to bookmark webpages and re-visit them regularly. Make use of email alert services offered by online resources to stay updated with the newest jobs. The Guardian graduate fair offers a large fair for students in the UK for work both in the UK and abroad, including Thailand - [www.bvents.com/event/304732-the-guardian-summer-graduate-fair](http://www.bvents.com/event/304732-the-guardian-summer-graduate-fair)

### Alternative sources of information on jobs and companies:

- Department of Employment, DOE-JOB Services System: [www.ejob.doe.go.th](http://www.ejob.doe.go.th)
- Department of Skills and Development: [www.dsd.go.th](http://www.dsd.go.th)
- Ministry of Labour: [www.mol.go.th](http://www.mol.go.th)
- National Science and Technology Development Agency, Reverse Brain Drain Project: <http://rbd.nstda.or.th>

When you are looking for a job, it is important to extend your network of contacts. Make sure that not just your relatives but also friends, former professors and teachers, neighbours and other acquaintances know that you are searching for a job and tell them what kind of job or position you are looking for.

It is advisable to register with any employment agency up to one year before the date of your return to Thailand. Applications for a specific role, however, should be sent no sooner than one month before your scheduled arrival back in Thailand. Another strategy that has proven successful for some applicants is to approach employers directly and send open applications to companies you are interested in working for.



# Main routes to employment

## The right skills and competencies

In the Thai work space, hierarchy plays an important role. It is essential to have a good education in order to attain a good position within an organisation. Nonetheless, seniority is of vital importance so don't expect to achieve a top position right away. Social networks are greatly used in order to gain personal advantage. Nowadays, networking also takes place in virtual settings. Websites such as Facebook and LinkedIn are widely used by Thai organisations and individuals for networking purposes.

The importance of cooperation is a vital part of Thai work ethics, and social skills are highly regarded since Thai society is mostly group oriented. Instead of competitiveness, collaboration with one another is regarded as an important quality for employees. Authority is highly respected, meaning that assertiveness is not always appreciated.

### Most wanted:

- Respect for seniority.
- High academic record.
- Strong communication and negotiation skills.
- Strong interpersonal and social skills.
- An in-depth knowledge in your field of expertise.

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## The application letter

A letter of application should attract the recruiter's attention. It should make the potential employer want to look at your application in more detail, read the attached CV/ résumé and hopefully invite you for an interview.

Precision, a positive attitude and honesty are the keywords when writing your application letter. Your letter should explain your motivation for applying and portray the competencies and skills you have gained during your studies, previous work experience or elsewhere. Try to give concrete examples and avoid empty phrases. Application letters should not be longer than one page.

State your qualifications and try not to repeat in detail the information already given by your CV.

# Main routes to employment

## The curriculum vitae (CV) / résumé

Your CV/résumé is an important part of the job application. A CV/résumé is typically two to three pages long and should be as concise as possible.

Your CV/résumé should list your personal details, education and employment history, relevant skills, qualifications, and extracurricular activities. Referees and their contact details are usually listed at the end of the résumé.

It is common to include personal details as date of birth, religion, or gender. Passport-sized photographs are also usually included.

## Digital applications

Digital application forms have become more common. The Internet is considered a fast medium of communication but completing an application form online requires the utmost attention – always check your submission before pressing 'send'.

If you are making your application via email, write a concise application email with your CV/résumé attached. Applicants should always remember to use formal language when submitting an online application or applying via email.

## The job interview

Throughout the application procedure it is essential to make a good impression. Never lie or bend the truth during your interview, and avoid being pushy or showy. It is important not to be confrontational.

### Preparing for the interview:

- Think in advance about questions that might be asked.
- Find out the objectives of the position and the skills required.
- Research the organisation's background.
- Be clear about your skills, abilities, personal qualities and experience.
- Prepare your own questions to ask the employer.
- Make sure you arrive on time for the interview. If you are unfamiliar with the location it might be worthwhile checking it out in advance.

## Where will your career take you?

Research from the i-graduate International Student Barometer study tells us the following about the main career drivers for Thai graduates:

### **Major career drivers for Thai graduates:**

1. I want to develop myself.
2. I like to be recognised for my achievements.
3. Future job security is important to me.

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### **Top 3 future plans of Thai students about to graduate from UK HE Institutions:**

1. Employment in Thailand.
2. Undecided.
3. Short term employment in the UK.

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## Current career prospects

The Thai economy has recovered from the political crisis in 1996, becoming one of Asia's booming economies. Nonetheless, Thailand has been affected by the current global financial crisis. This has mainly damaged the tourism sector and the construction sector. However, skilled workers are still in high demand. Thailand has a significant lack of skilled labour, and this offers opportunities for graduates.

Nowadays, the country aims to be a knowledge-based economy. Through the 'IT Policy Framework 2001-2010', the government aspires to become more competitive in the international market. The development of the economy should be guided by the information technology sector and related services.

### Where are the opportunities?

#### Banking and finance

Thailand has a developed financial system. The state restructured the system, allowing the creation of state-owned banks, foreign-owned banks as well commercial banks. Through this relatively new system the government aims to reinforce the banking structure by, for example, introducing better management. However, it must be kept in mind that the country depends on foreign investment which, due to the crisis, has decreased. Nonetheless, numbers of vacancies for administrator's accountants and bankers remain high.

#### Industry and manufacturing

Thai industry has witnessed large growth over the last decade. Opportunities lie within the automobile, textile and electronics industries. A large part of the GDP is derived from the manufacturing sector, creating career possibilities in this sector. There is a lack of skilled employees in this sector who are necessary for the development of new techniques and the use of different materials.

#### Agriculture

Large numbers of the Thai population work in the agricultural sector, while it contributes only a small amount to the GDP. The most important products are rice and shrimp, meaning most opportunities lie in the rice and fishery sectors.

# Current career prospects

## Architecture, planning and construction

The construction sector has, like most Asian countries, boomed in Thailand. The economic crisis has affected this sector although the sector has been recovering in 2010. Most opportunities lie within the further development of materials and construction. The effect of pollution on the environment has been taken into consideration, creating possibilities in the field of sustainable construction. Concerns over global warming are strongly linked to the rise in demand of green construction, which also increases the demand for landscaping architects.

## Biotechnology

For decades the Thai government perceived the biotechnical field as one of the main sectors of opportunity for the country. The main goals are to strengthen the knowledge base of this field and to be able to compete internationally. Biotechnological research focuses mainly on agriculture, food-handling and tropical diseases. National institutes as well as private companies can offer graduates good job prospects.

## Tourism

The tourism sector has traditionally been one of the largest sectors in Thai economy. However, due to political instability, public protests and the economic crisis, the tourist sector has diminished. Nonetheless, Thailand remains a popular destination for travellers, posing opportunities for the sector in the future, despite the fact that it is easily influenced by the economy or political turmoil. The Tourism Authority Thailand has started a marketing campaign for 2009-2010 planning to improve the sector by promoting Thailand amongst new markets and using new media as Youtube, Facebook and Twitter.

## Health and medical care

The health care system in Thailand has public and private facilities. The latter have developed greatly recently due to the increase of health tourism hosted in Thailand, where foreign nationals travel to Thailand to obtain healthcare. Thai medical care is often of high quality whilst the prices are relatively low. The goal of the Thai government is to make Thailand the 'health care centre of Asia'.

# Current career prospects

## ICT and e-commerce

As stated before, the government aims to make Thailand a knowledge-based economy. The 'IT Policy Framework 2001-2010' programme serves as a scheme to achieve this. The further development of Internet services is one of the main goals within this approach. The ICT system is evolving at a fast rate but is still underdeveloped when compared to western countries. Since Thailand wants to be competitive in this field, there are many opportunities in this sector for the improvement of IT services and e-commerce. The Policy Framework also aims to achieve a knowledge-based economy through a pillar system. This does not only include e-commerce; other areas that should be restructured in this area are e-government, e-industry, e-education and e-society.

## Mining and energy

Thailand's energy consumption has increased over the last few years, and demand has risen even more. Most energy sources have to be imported, meaning costs rise. Renewable energy is now of increasing importance, since it can partly diminish the use of traditional fuels. Thai authorities realise that non-renewable energy will not last forever and that the environment needs to be protected. The 'Strategic Plan for Renewable Energy Development' aims to increase the use of renewable energy by 8% by 2011, in contrast with the 0.5% that is supplied nowadays.

Thailand has restructured its power industry by encouraging private companies or individuals to participate; the generation and distribution of energy can be carried out by private companies.

However, the organisation of the energy sector needs better management and planning, in order to maintain power stability.

Although a wide range of minerals can be found in Thailand, the mining industry is relatively small, having an undersized amount of fuel and metal resources. The country was a large exporter of tin, but reserves have decreased significantly since the beginning of this century.

# Where to find more information

## General information

<http://library.dsd.go.th/dsdinfor/index.aspx> Ministry of Labour

[www.moe.go.th](http://www.moe.go.th) Ministry of Education

[www.most.go.th](http://www.most.go.th) Ministry of Science and Technology

<http://rbd.nstda.or.th> National Science and Technology Development Agency, Reverse Brain Drain Project, 111 Patholyn Road., Klong 1 , Klong Luang, Pathumthani 12120

[www.thaibd.com/main.html](http://www.thaibd.com/main.html) Thailand Business Directory

[www.thaigov.go.th](http://www.thaigov.go.th) Thai Government information & services

## Advice and tips on Careers Fairs, CVs and general job seeking

[www.articlealley.com/article\\_1547972\\_36.html](http://www.articlealley.com/article_1547972_36.html) - An article for those in the nursing profession.

[www.collegegrad.com/articles/dont-give-up.shtml](http://www.collegegrad.com/articles/dont-give-up.shtml) - An article on staying positive throughout the work search process

[www.employmentblawg.com/2010/job-seeking-tips-for-college-graduates](http://www.employmentblawg.com/2010/job-seeking-tips-for-college-graduates) - Further tips in the competitive field of employment seeking graduates

[www.fpef.org/Education/Tips.htm](http://www.fpef.org/Education/Tips.htm) - Some good tips on networking

[www.thegraduate.co.uk/static\\_generic.cgi?a=tmg\\_jobboards](http://www.thegraduate.co.uk/static_generic.cgi?a=tmg_jobboards) – Link with good information for those still considering staying in the UK after study

[www.graduateopportunities.com/career\\_advice/graduates\\_with\\_disability](http://www.graduateopportunities.com/career_advice/graduates_with_disability) - A link providing useful tips and stats for graduates with a disability

[www.londongradfair.co.uk/autumn](http://www.londongradfair.co.uk/autumn) - The Guardian's annual job fair for graduates. It is located in London.

[www.marketoracle.co.uk/Article1277.html](http://www.marketoracle.co.uk/Article1277.html) - Tips on how to work out your finances post-study.

[www.online-graduate.co.uk/tipsforgrads.html](http://www.online-graduate.co.uk/tipsforgrads.html) - Further tips for graduates seeking work experience

[http://www.prospects.ac.uk/international\\_students.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/international_students.htm) - Information for international students

# Where to find more information

## Books and Articles

Human resource development toward a knowledge-based economy: the case of Thailand, Institute of Developing Economies, Japan external trade organisation; Ed. Makishima, M., Suksiriserekul, S.,(Bangkok, 2003)

Successful Living in Thailand ; Welty, R., (Asia Books, Bangkok, 2004)

Thai Culture and Society; Welty, R. (Asia Books, Bangkok, 2004)

Country Guides for International Students series updated by Expertise in Labour Mobility, Summer 2010

## Acknowledgements

This guide was produced with funding from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the devolved administrations under the Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education (PMI2), and we are grateful for that support in enabling this project to take place.

The Country Guides for International Students are written by Expertise in Labour Mobility with support from i-graduate. We would like to thank Marianne van de Vorle & Nannette Ripmeester for providing extensive in-country information.

## Disclaimer

Whilst all efforts have been made to ensure the information in this Country Guide is correct at the time of writing, readers are advised that procedures and information sources may change regularly.



# Appendix 1 : Sample CV/Résumé

## CURRICULUM VITAE

### Personal details

Name: Aran Rodkhum

Home Address: 110 Mu 4, Ramindha Rd., Bangkok, 10510, Thailand

Home Telephone: (662) 5178659

E-mail: aran.r@mobility.ac.th

Gender: Male

Marital status: Single

Birth Date: August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1984

Nationality: Thai

### Education

March 2001: Bachelor Degree in Veterinary Science (D.V.M)

Second Class honors, Faculty of Veterinary Science, Chulalongkorn University

### Training

13<sup>th</sup> March - 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2003:

Workshop on Nucleic acid based technology and Bioinformatics, Department of Microbiology, Faculty of Medicine, Kon-Kaen University, Thailand.

22<sup>nd</sup> November - 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2001:

First International Training Course Surveillance of Salmonella and Antimicrobial Resistance in Food-borne Pathogens. Faculty of Veterinary Science, Chulalongkorn University.

### Employment

October 2006 – present:

- Instructor in Veterinary Microbiology, Department of Veterinary Microbiology, Faculty of Veterinary Science, Chulalongkorn University.
  - Committee of the center for antimicrobial resistance monitoring in food-borne pathogens (Collaborating with WHO), Faculty of Veterinary Science, Chulalongkorn University.

March 2004 – October 2006

# Appendix 1 : Sample CV/Résumé

## Field of Interests

- Infectious diseases of aquatic animals.
- Molecular biology of pathogenic organisms of aquatic animals.
- The current methods used to diagnose, prevent and treat the principal diseases of cultured penaeid shrimp and fish.

## Research and Publications

Kriengsak saitanu, Kriengsak poonsuk, Channarong Rodkhum and Suparp Kumlungpaet (2005). In vitro drugs susceptibility of *Vibrio* spp. isolated from Black Tiger Shrimps (*Penaeus monodon*) and their cultural environment by agar dilution technique, The Proceeding of 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of The Thai Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA), 27-29 October 2004, Bangkok, Thailand. P. 161-173.

Channarong Rodkhum, Narongsak Runglertkriengkri, Piyanan Taweetawarnsawat, Suwannee Nithiuthai, Boonlert Prechatangkit and Sudjit Jungpiwat (1997). Comparative studies on Anthelmintic efficacy of Nitroscanate, Mebendazole and combination of Pyrantel , Febantel and Plaziquantel against hookworms and ascarids in puppies. The Thai Journal of Veterinary Medicine: 27 (2), P. 121-137.

## Activities

2003: Committee of Congress facilities section, The 13<sup>th</sup> International Pig Veterinary Society Congress (IPVS), Thailand. The Congress was from 26 until 30 June 2003.

2004: President of Chulalongkorn Veterinary Student Club  
Staff of Technical conference, The 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual conference of the Thai Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA). Under the Royal Patronage. The Maruei garden Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand.

2008: Technical and executive committee of the Center for antimicrobial resistance monitoring in food-borne pathogens (collaborating with WHO). Faculty of Veterinary Science Chulalongkorn University.