

Title : **Results of the Implementation of Co-operation Education Project at the Undergraduate Level Phase II**

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Abstract

The Results of Implementation of Co-operative Education Project at the Undergraduate Level, Phase II, refers to the evaluation of implementation results of the Project of SUT at the 2 stages i.e. 1) Process, from the trimester 1/1997 (June 1997) to trimester 3/1997 (April 1998) and 2) Products, the university graduates batch 1 and 2 who graduated in academic years 1996 and 1997.

Research instruments included co-op student performance appraisals; work-term-paper appraisals as evaluated by employers; questionnaires for co-op students, employers, SUT lecturers, graduates, graduates' employers and advisors of the graduates who furthered their study at graduate level. One thousand six hundred and forty two questionnaires were distributed. Mathematical average and percentage were applied to analyze the research data. The evaluation results were as follows:

1. Pattern and Process of the Project

Co-operative Education and Career Development Project reports directly to the Vice Rector Academic Affairs. It coordinates with employers to propose an idea of co-operative education arrangement, searching for the suitable jobs for co-op students both in country and abroad, coordinating and offering service to SUT lecturers and students to enhance the project and achieve succeed its aims.

The co-op working pattern has emphasized on the quality of students, employers, and the lecturers' supervision. A co-op student needs to be approved by lecturers that he/she is qualified in academic and behavioral aspects and needs to be trained in necessary courses before working in a workplace. An employer is requested to arrange a supervisor for a co-op student. Student job description needs an approval of SUT lecturers before placement. The co-op advisors must regularly visit all co-op students at the workplaces. The project implementation, therefore, requires effective planning,

coordination and administration. The co-op students, lecturers and employers evaluated the Project Pattern of Implementation at “good” level. They also evaluated their understanding in the Project Pattern at “good” level.

2. Quality of co-op Students

Based on student evaluation by employers, it was reported that among 239 students, all were evaluated “passed or satisfactory” by the employers. Sixty-nine point 0 four percent (69.04%) and seventy-three point three six percent (73.36%) of the students were evaluated “higher than standard” (i.e. “very good” and “excellent”) on working performance and on academic reports, respectively. Both lecturers and employers agreed that co-op students were furnished with good qualifications especially for personality, maturity and competence of work in the workplaces. Moreover, in the aspect of qualification needed by employers, they agreed that co-op students were qualified “the most” comparing to the other qualification. The presentation skills were evaluated as the “poorest” (i.e. fair in evaluation marks).

3. Quality of the Employers

The lecturers’ satisfaction with the employers was evaluated at the “fair” level. It was found that supervisors had taken good care of their students along with an orientation and fully-equipped materials. However, the quality of work assignment was evaluated at “fair” level with the least evaluation marks. Students’ satisfaction with the employers was proved at the “good” level i.e. the employers were most impressed by their hospitality and job supervision.

4. Quality of SUT Schools

Employers and students agreed at the “high level” that co-op advisors are essential to the success of the Project. They believe that orientation is useful to co-op students and courses placement by schools served well with the work term placement. However, employers cited that appropriateness of the ratio of co-op advisors and students was at the “fair” level.

5. Quality of the Graduates

When comparing the graduates of co-op curriculum with the graduates of non co-op curriculum, it was found that first mentioned group was better and higher in aspects of GPA., job application skills, starting salary rate, and rate of extended education. Moreover, the graduates of the co-op curriculum better performed in working skills, studying in higher education and more qualified the needs of employers.

In terms of benefits from the Co-op Project, lecturers, students and employers unanimously agreed on management and administration of the Co-op Education at SUT. They all agreed that Co-op Education be maintained and commented further that it should be implemented at other universities in Thailand.