

# Curriculum Development of the Master of Arts in Peace Studies and Diplomacy (MAPD) Program and Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

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## ABSTRACT

This peace education article qualitatively presents the latest development of the MAPD curriculum in the Graduate School of Peace Studies and Diplomacy at Siam University, a private university in Thailand. Revision of the curriculum is required within every five years by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation. Guided by the Curriculum Development and Educational Standards Committee and the ASEAN University Network (AUN) Quality Assurance System, the MAPD Program has made various curriculum changes as suggested mainly by stakeholders. Through the conceptual framework of related input, process, and output, key PLOs are delineated. It is expected that the students who graduate from this program will become academically sound and possess visions, knowledge and skills needed to apply diplomacy to maintain needed peace in international relations.

**Keywords:** Curriculum Development, Peace Education, Peace Studies and Diplomacy

## INTRODUCTION

This academic article qualitatively presents the latest development of the curriculum of the Master of Arts Program in Peace Studies and Diplomacy (MAPD) in the Graduate School of Peace Studies and Diplomacy at Siam University in Thailand.

The MAPD program was established in 2011 with partial funding from the University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific. The first curriculum was jointly written by representatives from Kung Hee University of South Korea, Angeles Foundation University of the Philippines, and Siam University of Thailand.

The latest MAPD curriculum revision was conducted in 2021, under the guidance of the Curriculum Development and Educational Standards Committee of Siam University and by the use of ASEAN University Network QA System (AUN-QA).

According to the AUN-QA, quality in higher education can be said to be multidimensional which embraces all of its functions and activities including teaching, research and scholarship, staffing, students, facilities, services to the communities, and academic environments (AUN-QA, (2021). AUN-QA harmonizes higher education systems and standards in the ASEAN, promotes mobility of faculty members and students, encourages collaborative researches, and

facilitates credit transfer among members (<http://uplb.edu.ph>>achievements; Retrieved on 1 March 2022). Key messages of AUN-QA are that learning outcomes relate more to the achievements of the learner rather than the intentions of the teacher (AUN-QA, Version 4).

## OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

This study aims to study how the Graduate School of Peace Studies and Diplomacy can achieve the objective of the 2021 MAPD curriculum revision that shall fulfill the requirements of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation (MHESRI) which stipulate that universities must revise their curricula every five years or less.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

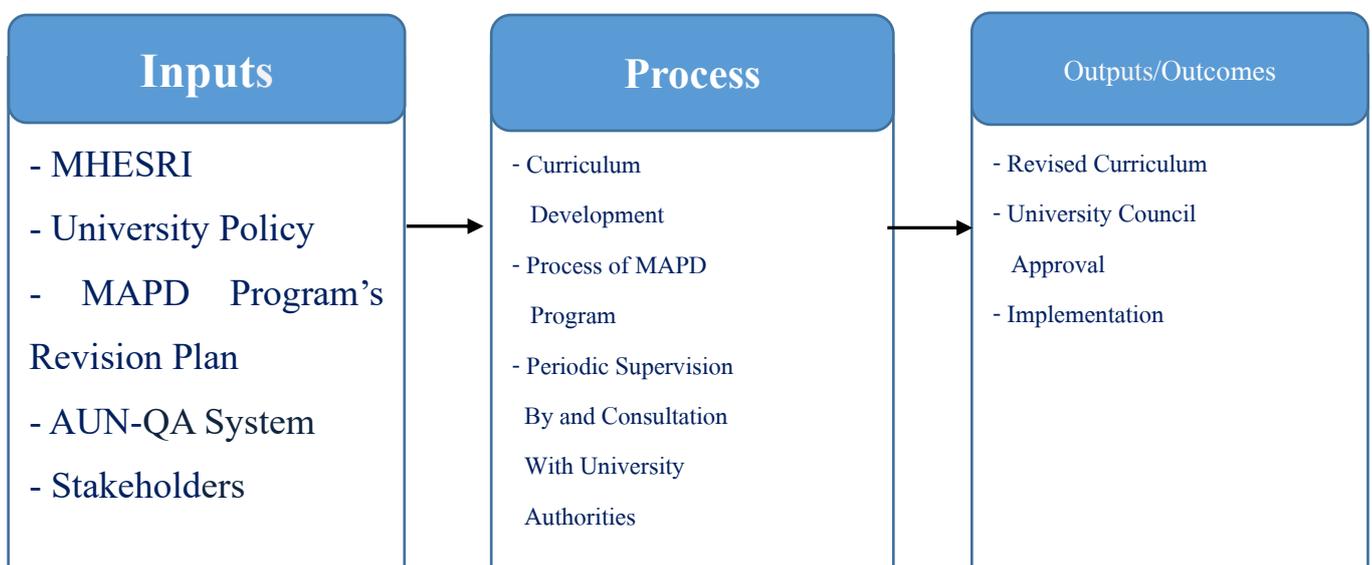


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the above conceptual framework in diagram 1, the researcher delineates and reveals the interaction between the background input factors, the process of MAPD Curriculum development, and subsequent factors of outputs/outcomes as follows:

### 1. The Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation (MHESRI) Requirements

The MHESRI requires Thai higher education institutions to revise their curricula every five years or less. This is to keep up with major borderless changes including demographic, social, economic, educational, and political aspects. The objectives are to keep course contents updated and to follow the latest government regulations. New course contents give a platform to students to learn new techniques, tools and skills for the future.



## 2. Siam University Policy:

Under the vision of becoming the treasure of wisdom on sustainability, Siam University's main policy is to provide students with exciting experiences and professionalism to succeed and become proficient leaders in the future. Students are given the opportunities to share experiences with others from over forty countries around the world.

## 3. MAPD Program Curriculum Revision Plan:

The program is continuously committed to international standards of high-quality education. It intends to inspire a new generation of leaders who possess a vision of a new global society diligently work to help attain, promote, and maintain peace and social wellbeing through diplomacy and other related means. The MAPD program continues to revise its plan to integrate theoretical approaches with case studies, current issues, as well as practical skills.

### **Expected Learning Outcomes: Identification of desirable characteristics of the graduates after the course**

The Master of Arts degree program in Peace Studies and Diplomacy, Siam University, defines the attributes of desirable graduates according to the following important principles and objectives:

1. It is an educational program to foster the use of diplomatic means as a tool for building and sustaining regional and global peace of international relations in the digital world.
2. It is an educational program to create a new generation of diplomats with visions, knowledge, skills, abilities and personality, consistent with diplomatic management in a global context.
3. It is an educational program to create opportunities for learners to gain international experience through exchange programs of students and faculty with leading international academic institutions.
4. It is an educational program to create opportunities for advancement for students in many future careers
  1. Foreign affairs officers, embassy staffs, intelligence agencies
  2. Employees of multinational corporations (MNCs)
  3. Foreign relations staffs of private companies
  4. Foreign news media
  5. Academics, researchers and experts in peace and diplomacy
  6. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and public benefit organizations
  7. International Organization Officers
  8. Organization of Human Security
  9. Others, etc.

### **Desirable characteristics must have a distinctive identity of the curriculum:**

1. The program is unique in that it requires students to have knowledge and skills in diplomatic management to build peace and eliminate conflict within the framework of international law.
2. The program is unique that requires students to become diplomats

3. with a vision of maintaining sustainable peace and eliminating conflicts between nations.
4. The program is unique that that require students to be able to use technology to keep up with the changing diplomatic world in the digital age without frontiers.
5. The program is unique in that it requires students to be competent
6. to use research process skills in acquiring knowledge of peace and diplomacy in conducting international relations.

#### **4. Design Process of Program Learning Outcome (PLOs)**

The design process of Program Learning Outcome (PLOs) is based on a conceptual framework of the Outcome Based Education, starting from the creation of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) derived from an analysis of the needs of all stakeholders, who have an influence and impacts on the curriculum. The PLOs shall have to demonstrate that the students who graduate from the program should have what knowledge and skills for working and must achieve the learning outcomes of the course. The PLOs are then used to design the structure and content of the curriculum (Backward Curriculum Design). To achieve the defined PLOs, the curriculum must link the PLOs to Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and after that we shall design learning processes and activities, as well as assess learning outcomes in accordance with PLOs (Constructive Alignment), which can show details of curriculum design according to the framework of educational management.

**AUN-QA Assessment Model:** This model is one of the leading systems of quality assurance in higher education systems. It has its strength in being a holistic system intending to raise academic standards and enhance education, research and services among its member universities, and hence being recognized internationally.

AUN-QA Assessment System was developed to meet the necessary needs of quality assurance of higher education in ASEAN member countries. The AUN-QA criteria are stakeholder oriented. Stakeholders' needs are formulated into the expected learning outcomes which drive everything that the program wishes to achieve (Wongse-ek, Panvisavas, and Sivarak, 2022).

#### **Some Highlights of Program Learning Outcome (PLOs)**

**Stakeholder Inputs: The stakeholders are divided into 4 groups as follows:**

- Group 1: Stakeholders who have the power to influence change or make decisions
- Group 2: Stakeholders concerned with regulators and decision-making
- Group 3: Stakeholders affected by changes or decision-making
- Group 4: Stakeholders least affected and have no influence on change or decision-making.

Table 1: Information on Communication Means to Request Expected Learning Outcomes from Stakeholders

<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Communication means</b>
<b>GROUP 1:</b> Stakeholders who have the power to influence changes or decisions - Graduate users - External institutions	Questionnaire Website Phone Inquiries
<b>Group 2:</b> stakeholders concerned with regulators and decision-making - Ministry of Higher Education (MHESRI) - instructors (full-time and part-time instructors)	MKO. 2 Questionnaire
<b>GROUP 3:</b> Stakeholders affected by changes or decision-making - Current Students - Graduates	Assessment Form Classroom interview
<b>GROUP 4:</b> Stakeholders least affected and have no influence on changes or decision-making - General interested persons - Student's parents	Phone Inquiries Interview

Sample needs expressed by stakeholders

- Good at solving immediate problems and being an analyst.
- Good command of English in diplomatic and foreign affairs.
- Can use diplomacy and international negotiations in various ways to build lasting peace and reducing international conflicts.
- Able to analyze international situations for successful diplomatic negotiations.
- Can use other languages beside English.

### **PLO Taxonomy: Determine Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Student Learning Outcomes**

#### **PLO 1: Having competence of diplomatic operations for peace in international relations**

- 1.1 Be able to apply the concepts and theories of diplomatic operations for peace-building and international negotiations in the framework of international law.
- 1.2 Be able to apply critical diplomatic knowledge and skills in diplomatic missions to build peace in international relations.
- 1.3 Be able to evaluate negotiation outcomes between parties to achieve a success of international negotiations that are mutually satisfied by all parties in international relations operations.



**PLO 2: Having visions of maintaining sustainable peace and eliminating international conflicts**

- 2.1 Having analytical skills in concepts and theories of peace and diplomacy for sustainable development in international relations.
- 2.2 Having vision skills in preventing and solving problems of peace and security in international cooperation and conflicts.
- 2.3 Having vision skills to integrate the interdisciplinary knowledge for peace, security, justice and international cooperation.

**PLO 3: Be able to use technology to keep up with the changing situation of peace and diplomacy in the digital world**

- 3.1 Be able to analyze the peace and diplomacy situation changed by technology in the digital age.
- 3.2 Be able to choose the right technology to keep up with changes in peace studies and diplomacy.
- 3.3 Be able to learn skills in using technology in diplomatic and international relations operations.

**PLO 4: Having competence to use research process skills in peace studies and diplomacy with ethics.**

- 4.1 Be able to use skills in defining research problem and designing appropriate research process for conducting research until it is successful.
- 4.2 Be able to use skills to conduct research properly in accordance with ethical responsibility of peace and diplomacy research methods.
- 4.3 Be able to use skills in data analysis, research conclusions, and useful recommendations for peace studies and diplomacy.

**PLOs Matched with MAPD Courses**

Table 2: PLOs Matched with MAPD Courses

PLOs	Courses
PLO 1: Capacity to develop and engage in practical diplomacy for peace building in international relations.	781606: Strategic Relations in Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific Regions 781608: Diplomacy and International Negotiations 781609: ASEAN Diplomacy for Peace 781705: International Public Law
PLO 2: Visions for sustainable peace and international conflict transformation.	781601: Peace and Governance 781603: Theory of Peace, Conflict And Security 781605: New International

<b>PLOs</b>	<b>Courses</b>
	Political and Economic Order 781610: United Nations and Sustainable Development: An Analytical Study
PLO 3: Use of appropriate fast changing digital technology for peace keeping and diplomacy.	781602: Diplomacy and International Negotiations 781718: Digital Diplomacy 700-201: English for Graduate Study 781691: Independent Studies 781692: Thesis
PLO 4: Capacity to apply research process in peace studies and diplomacy with ethical responsibilities.	700-511: Research Methodology in Social Sciences 781691: 781691: Independent Studies 781692: Thesis 700-201: English for Graduate Study

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Make a follow-up of the graduates who have been through the AUN-QA based MAPD programmer and assess their work life performance;
- Perform a benchmark study to analyze factors that may help improve the AUN-QA Assessment in the long run.

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