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# Developing Graduation Application Guidelines for International (Chinese) PhD Student in Performing Arts at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

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## Abstract

The objectives of this research are: 1) to examine the problems in the graduation application process for international students from China in the Doctor of Philosophy Program in Performing Arts at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, and 2) to develop an improved graduation application process for these students. This study employed a qualitative research methodology, focusing on a sample of 10 international students from China who graduated in the academic year 2023. Data were collected through surveys, unstructured observations, and interviews. The results identified three key issues in the graduation application process: 1) document-related issues caused by the use of Google Forms, which were inaccessible to Chinese students; 2) payment issues due to unsuitable and inflexible payment channels and schedules for Chinese students; and 3) coordination problems with other agencies. This research proposes solutions aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the service process for the program.

**Keywords:** Development, Graduated, International Student

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background and Significance of the Problem

Humans are considered one of the most critical factors in driving a country's development in the desired direction (Pornpachanthanamat, 2015). Education, in particular, plays a significant role in human life as it helps to expand knowledge and critical thinking, enabling individuals to build on existing knowledge for the benefit of themselves and others. Graduate education is one such avenue, gaining popularity among both Thai and international students due to the opportunities it offers for career advancement, such as applying for academic positions or upgrading educational qualifications for professional growth.

At present, many universities provide graduate-level programs, including certificate, master's, and doctoral degrees, as a means to demonstrate their academic potential (Theerakul et al., 2013). Consequently, there is a growing interest in pursuing advanced degrees, especially master's and doctoral programs. Graduation is considered a significant milestone in education. As noted by Wongchana and Meengam (2019), graduation is the culmination of knowledge and skills acquired through educational institutions and other environments, which enable

individuals to successfully complete their studies. However, each institution follows unique processes and procedures for graduation applications.

However, Suan Sunanda Rajabhat University has provided its personnel with opportunities to engage in research related to their daily tasks. As stated by Cheteh, Saeng-on and Rakbumrung, (2024), "Executives encourage personnel to share their opinions and foster activities related to knowledge management, thus enabling employees to learn by granting them the freedom to think and work..." The researcher has identified problems from working as a staff member of the Doctor of Philosophy Program in Performing Arts, Faculty of Fine Arts at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. It was found that the problems in the graduation application process for international students (specifically Chinese students). These issues often cause delays in their applications. Therefore, this study aims to develop guidelines for improving the graduation application process for international students (China), enhancing convenience for students, reducing the workload for program staff, and benefiting all stakeholders. The proposed development focuses on optimizing the process, from preparing graduation documents to issuing diplomas for students.

## **1.2 Research Objective**

1.2.1 To examine the problems in the graduation application process for international (Chinese) students in the Doctor of Philosophy Program, Performing Arts Major, at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

1.2.2 To develop an improved graduation application process for international (Chinese) students in the Doctor of Philosophy Program, Performing Arts Major, at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

## **2. Body of paper**

### **2.1 Research Methodology**

#### **2.1.1 Research Tools**

This study employs a qualitative research methodology, presenting the data obtained from the analysis in a descriptive format. The tools used in this research include student surveys, unstructured observations, and unstructured interviews.

#### **2.1.2 Data Collection**

This research focuses on studying the problems in the graduation application process to identify ways to improve it. The researchers collected the following data:

2.1.2.1 Data were collected through a survey of 10 students who graduated in the academic year 2023, conducted via online contact channels (WeChat).

2.1.2.2 Collect data from unstructured observations were used to examine behavioral interactions and communication between students and the coordinator during the graduation application process, starting from the document preparation stage.

2.1.2.3 Collect data from unstructured interviews were conducted with practitioners involved in the graduation application process, including the Chinese coordinator and other course staff, to obtain factual insights. Examples of interview questions included:

- What are your opinions on preparing documents to apply for graduation for Chinese students?

- When fees are charged by the university, how do you get Chinese students to pay the fees?

After data collection, the researcher analyzed the information to identify problems and propose solutions for developing the graduation application process.

### **2.1.3 Data Analysis**

The researcher employed an inductive analysis method, synthesizing the collected data to form conclusions and present them descriptively. which can be summarized as follows:

2.1.3.1 According to a survey of 10 Chinese students who graduated in the 2023 academic year. The researcher analyzed the data obtained from students by selecting the responses of students who showed the same problems with their graduation applications.

2.1.3.2 From unstructured observations. The researchers analyzed data from behavior, including communication between the liaison staff and Chinese students. It was observed from the words used in communication about the graduation application documents that discussed the problem and asked for solutions.

2.1.3.3 Data from unstructured interviews were analyzed to identify factual insights. This included synthesizing responses with supporting documents and related research to develop a comprehensive understanding of the issues and propose actionable improvements.

## **2.2 Results**

The researcher analyzed the data and summarized the findings as follows:

### **1. Problems in the Graduation Application Process**

The problems faced by international students (China) in the Doctor of Philosophy Program in Performing Arts, Faculty of Fine Arts, who graduated in the academic year 2023 can be categorized into three main areas:

**1) Documentation Issues:** International students (China) face difficulties using Google due to restrictions in China. Most graduation application documents must be completed using Google Forms provided on the Graduate School's website. As a result, students are unable to complete the required forms independently.

**2) Payment Issues** The university requires students to pay graduation fees and graduation photo fees directly to the university on specific dates. However, many Chinese students are in China during the designated payment period, making it impossible for them to pay in person.

**3) Coordination Issues with Other Agencies** Obtaining a diploma is another step in the graduation process. The problem is that the relevant agencies do not have coordination and a clear process for receiving diplomas for students. The program will send a message to the Center for International Studies to obtain a diploma for students who have announced their graduation list, but after that, the program will not know the diploma and other documents related to the student's actual graduation. How many days after the message is recorded to the last recipient? This makes students confused about which party should inquire about the documents that students should receive.

## 2. Guidelines for Developing the Graduation Application Process

Based on the identified problems, the researcher proposed the following three guidelines to improve the graduation application process for international students (China) in the Doctor of Philosophy Program in Performing Arts, Faculty of Fine Arts:

**1) Documentation Improvements** The responsible department *should provide alternative channels for downloading application forms and documents*, allowing students to access them without relying on Google Forms.

**2) Payment System Enhancements** The university *should establish dedicated payment channels specifically for Chinese students*, enabling them to pay graduation-related fees while residing in Thailand or China.

**3) Improved Coordination with Relevant Departments** The program and the relevant departments, such as the Graduate School and the Center for International Studies, *should consult and reach a consensus on the receiving and sending documents related to students*, such as diplomas and other important academic documents, in order to establish a consistent approach to their management.

## 3. Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the problems in the graduation application process for international students (China) in the Doctor of Philosophy Program in Performing Arts, Faculty of Fine Arts, and propose ways to improve the process. Data were collected through surveys, unstructured observations, and interviews with individuals involved in the graduation application process. The findings revealed three primary issues: documentation problems, payment difficulties, and coordination challenges with other agencies.

To address these problems, the researcher proposed three guidelines for developing the graduation application process:

- 1) Improving the management and accessibility of graduation application documents.
- 2) Enhancing the payment process to accommodate international students.
- 3) Establishing clear and consistent communication and coordination with relevant agencies.

Based on the research results of this article, it can be said that the current situation of university education. There are a large number of both Thai and foreign students, especially Chinese students, who continue their studies. Universities should adjust the processes and procedures related to international students to facilitate students and to allow students to adapt to study abroad. As stated by Amatyakul, V., Surungkapiprat, J. & Rodkhwan, L. (2024) as mentioned: The role of educational institutions in supporting student adaptation is therefore of great importance, with the need to manage academic and psychological support systems, create social activities and counseling on an ongoing basis. However, Adapting education-related processes to suit international students It also affects staff who work with international students. In terms of reducing procedures and time for operations. Moreover, it also enhances the effectiveness of communication and work performance. In line with the research of Ninaron, P. & Pasunon, P. (2015), The Factors Affecting to Performance Efficiency of Academic Support Staff in Rajabhat Suan Sunandha University That said, the factors that affect performance include both the nature of the work and the working environment. The researcher

agrees that factors related to the nature of the work and the working environment significantly affect work performance.

#### 4. Acknowledgment

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