

Thailand



REGION: EAST ASIA

Also included in this region: China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam

PART I: ENROLMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS

The Thai HE system loosely fits the unitary model. Over 80% of students were enrolled in comprehensive universities in 2018, with most of the rest pursuing HE programs in secondary school environments. The number of students in Thailand actually declined by 13% between 2006 and 2018, unlike in the rest of East Asia where enrolments rose quickly throughout this period. The number of HEIs mostly remained constant, which means that Thai institutions became smaller on average. Just over 80% of students attended public providers in 2018, which was similar to the average across the rest of East Asia.

TABLE 1 – Types of higher education providers

CATEGORY	INSTITUTIONS	INSTITUTIONS COUNT IN 2018		
		PUB.	PRIV.	TOTAL
Comprehensive Universities	Universities	84	71	155
Hybrids	The Buditpatanasilpa Institute; Physical Education Colleges; Higher Education Institutions under the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Transport, and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration	21	0	21
Short-cycle HEIs	Community colleges	1	0	1
Semi-HE	Ministry of defence institutions	NA	NA	NA
Secondary Schools	Schools under the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Interior Department of Local Administration, the Office of the vocational education commission, and the office of the permanent secretary - private education commission	NA	NA	NA

FIGURE 1 – Numbers of institutions by type, 2006-2018

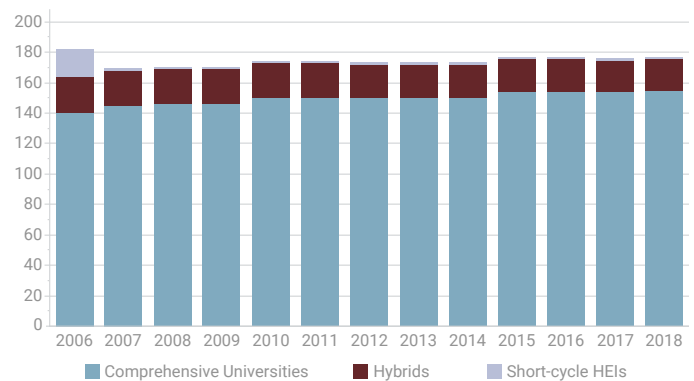


FIGURE 2 – Total enrolments with public and private higher education providers, 2006-2018 (Millions)

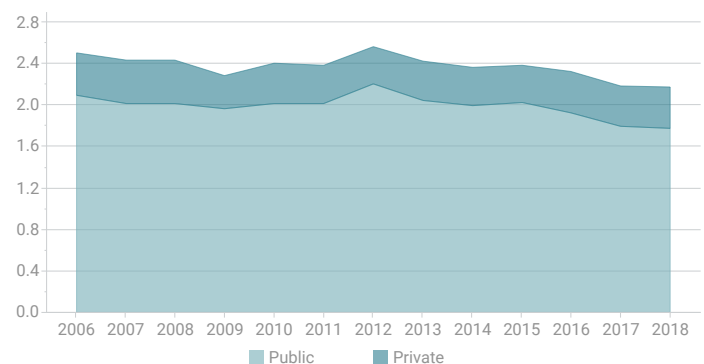


FIGURE 3 – Changes in enrolment in Thailand, the rest of East Asia and the rest of the Global South, 2006-2018

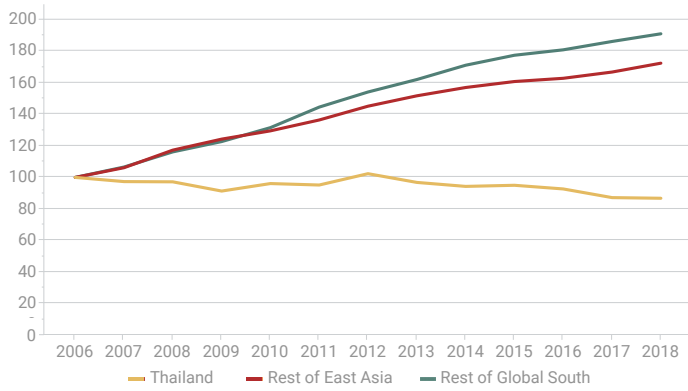


FIGURE 4 – Share of enrolments by institution type in Thailand and the rest of East Asia, 2006 and 2018 (2006=100)

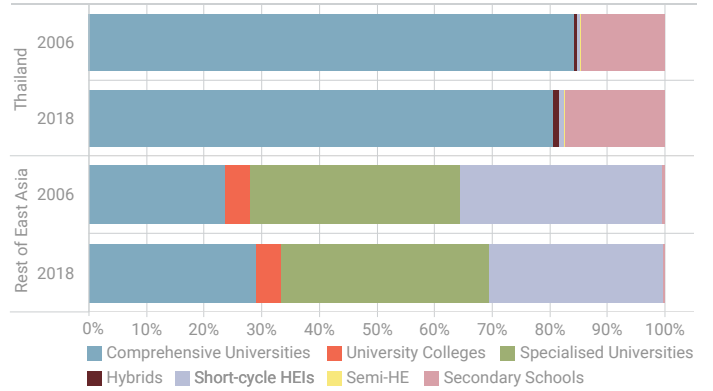


FIGURE 5 – Share of enrolments in public and private institutions, by institution type in Thailand and the rest of East Asia, 2018

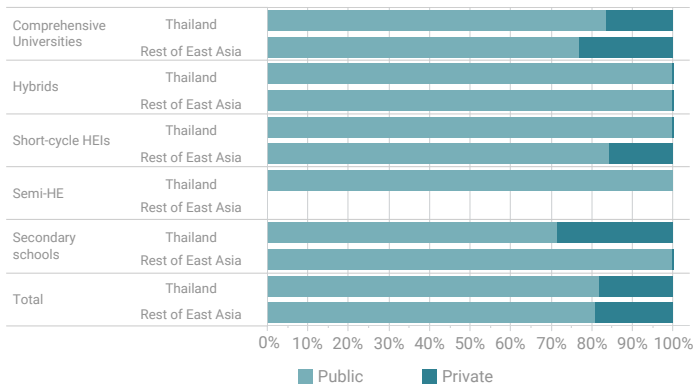
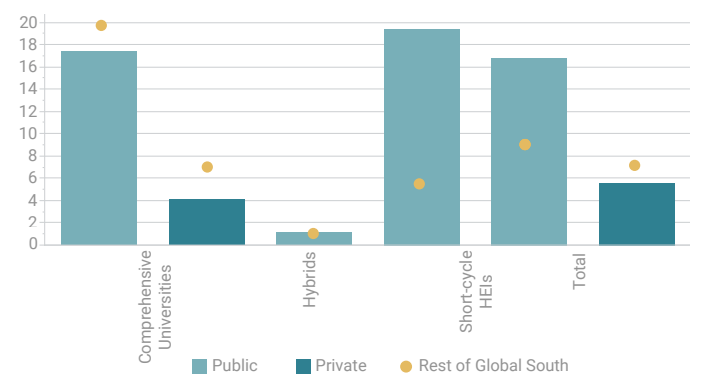


FIGURE 6 – Average institution-size by institution type in Thailand and the rest of the Global South, 2018 (Thousands)



Bangkok University, Thailand



PART II: HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCING

Public HE spending in Thailand rose by about 60% from 2006 to 2018. While substantial, this growth was still below the averages across the rest of East Asia and the Global South. Due to declining student numbers, per-student government transfers to HEIs actually increased even more markedly, from under USD 3,000 to a little over USD 6,000. Public HE spending grew less markedly relative to GDP though, from 0.6% to 0.7%. This last figure was slightly below the average across the rest of East Asia.

FIGURE 7 – Change in real total public spending on higher education in Thailand, the rest of East Asia and the rest of the Global South, 2006-2018 (2006=100)

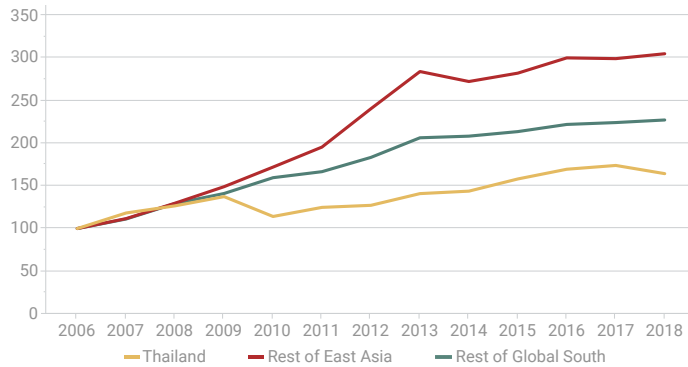


FIGURE 8 – Total public spending on higher education relative to GDP in Thailand, the rest of East Asia and the rest of the Global South, 2006-2018

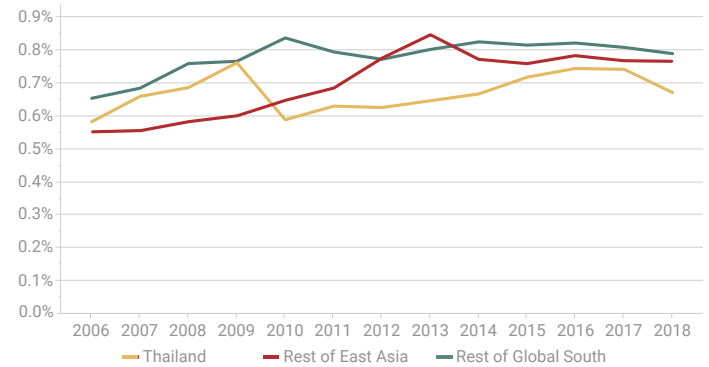


FIGURE 9 – Change in real government transfers to public institutions by institution-type in Thailand and the rest of the Global South, 2006-2018 (2006=100)

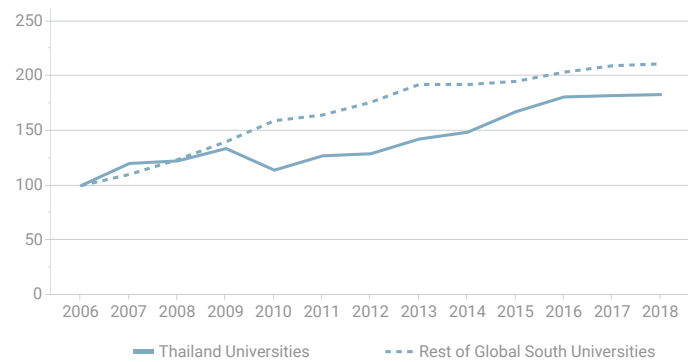
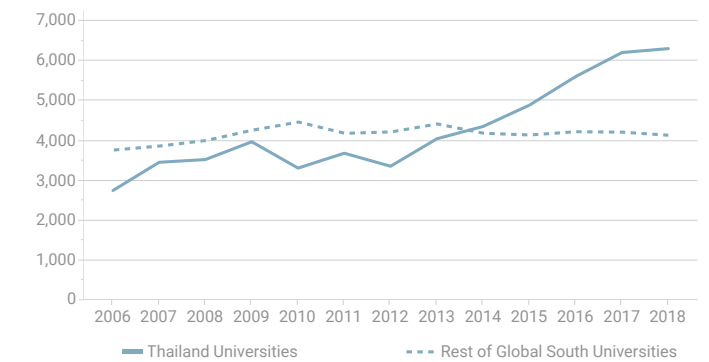


FIGURE 10 – Per-student government transfers to public institutions by institution-type in real PPP, in Thailand and the rest of the Global South, 2006-2018



PART III: STUDENT FEES

All HEIs in Thailand charge compulsory student fees. There is insufficient data to analyze fees in any more detail.

PART IV: STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

Government student financial aid in Thailand is essentially loan-only. There is some evidence that grants exist but we were unable to gather data on these. Roughly 12% of Thai students received a loan in 2018, up modestly from 10% in 2006, though down significantly from a high point of 22% in 2011. The total value of student financial aid disbursements declined from 0.15% of GDP in 2006 to less than 0.1% in 2018 due to the erosion of loans' average values. These final levels were roughly equal to the averages across the rest of East Asia and the Global South, whereas in 2006 Thai disbursements were three times as high as these comparator averages.

TABLE 2 – Student financial aid regime, including recipients and amounts disbursed in 2018

CATEGORY	PROGRAMS	BASIS OF ALLOCATION	RECIPIENTS	AMOUNTS DISBURSED (USD)
Grants	There is some indication of the existence of very modest government programs	ND	ND	ND
Loans	Students Loans Fund loans	Need-based	261,083	1,132,467,981

FIGURE 16 – Total disbursements to students in financial aid relative to gross domestic product in Thailand, the rest of East Asia and the rest of the Global South, 2006-2018

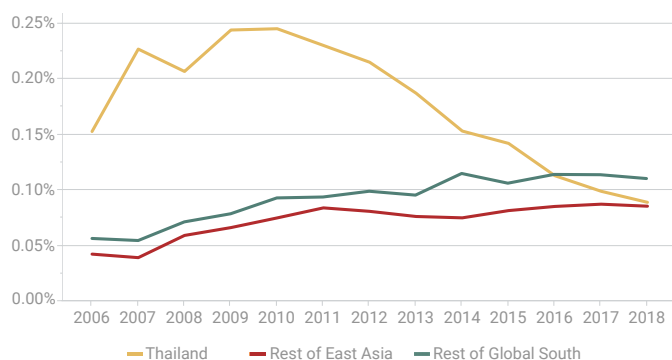


FIGURE 17 – Change in amounts disbursed to students by form of financial aid in Thailand and other Global South countries that offer financial aid of this type, 2006-2018 (2006=100)

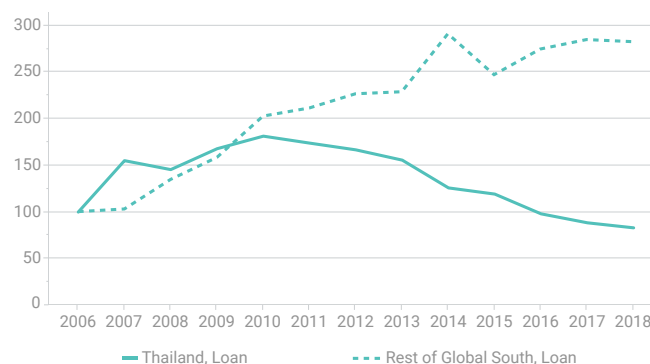


FIGURE 18 – Share of higher education students receiving student financial aid by type in Thailand and other Global South countries that offer financial aid of this type, 2006-2018

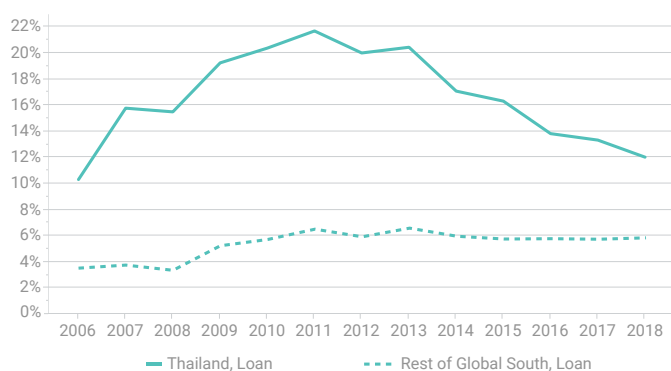
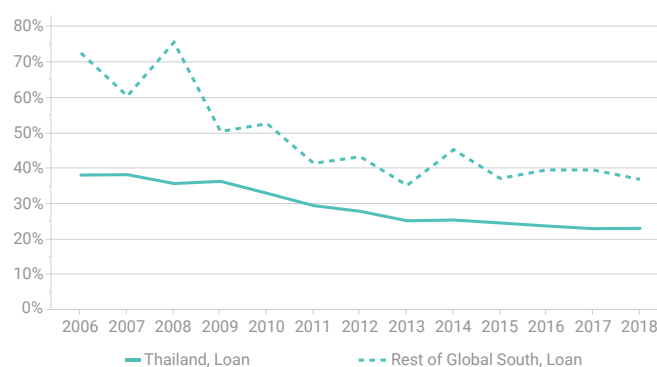


FIGURE 19 – Financial aid per recipient relative to GDP per capita by form of financial aid in Thailand and other Global South countries that offer financial aid of this type, 2006-2018



***Note:** For more on methodology and data quality please see [Appendices A and B](#).