



A comparison and contrast of  
UK & South-East Asian Universities,  
Introduction to the Program &  
Inter-disciplinary Research

Colin Flint OBE

Ashok Naidu

EDS UK

# UK / Britain

- ◆ England
- ◆ Scotland
- ◆ Northern Ireland
- ◆ Wales

- ◆ Britain
- ◆ UK

Population ~66 million



# Number of universities

UK

◆ 100+

South-East Asia

◆ 400+



# Private universities

UK

- ◆ 1 (another soon to start)

Buckingham University

(but all universities act  
commercially)

South-East Asia

- ◆ Many



# New universities?

UK

- ◆ Several in recent years, including former Polytechnics

South-East Asia

- ◆ Several in recent years, including Rajabhat Universities, Nottingham



# Oldest university

UK

- ◆ Oxford University  
1190?
- ◆ 2<sup>nd</sup> oldest =  
Cambridge University  
1206?

South-East Asia

- ◆ Chulalongkorn  
University, Thailand  
~1917
- ◆ University of  
Indonesia 1851





# Types of UK universities

- ◆ Ancient (Oxford, Cambridge)
- ◆ Old (e.g. Edinburgh, Durham)
- ◆ “Red-brick” (e.g. Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool)
- ◆ New
  - (a) 1960’ s  
(e.g. York, Lancaster, Sussex)
  - (b) former polytechnics  
(e.g Oxford Brookes, Huddersfield)

Government Policies and their evolution

# Number of students in each university

UK

- ◆ 5,000-30,000
- ◆ Open University  
180,000  
inc 25,000 overseas

South-East Asia

- ◆ 5,000-30,000
- ◆ Open Universities  
many students







# Number of foreign students

UK

- ◆ Many ~12%  
(and increasing)

South-East Asia

- ◆ Some, more in  
Malaysia

# Degrees

## UK

- ◆ Bachelors
- ◆ Masters
- ◆ Doctorate
- ◆ Professional
- ◆ Vocational

## South-East Asia

- ◆ Bachelors
- ◆ Masters
- ◆ Doctorates
- ◆ Some Vocational



# Doctorate

## UK

- ◆ Little taught input
- ◆ Research focus
- ◆ Students independent
- ◆ 3 year full-time
- ◆ 6 years part-time

## South-East Asia

- ◆ Considerable taught input
- ◆ Students supported
- ◆ Time =



# Expectations that students will...

UK

- ◆ Question, debate and challenge

South-East Asia

- ◆ ....



# University academics

UK

- ◆ Not civil servants
- ◆ Not government employees
- ◆ Employed by the university

South-East Asia

Mixture

Visiting Scholars



# “Style”

## UK

- ◆ All have both teaching and research role  
(but will change?)

Increasingly working  
with Industry

## South-East Asia

- ◆ Mainly teaching universities, with some research
- ◆ Industry participation selective





# Key issue in UK universities currently

- ◆ Increase in student fees

2011 starters = ~ £3,000 per year

2012 starters = ~ £9,000 per year

- ◆ Student loans

- ◆ Universities can set fee up to maximum of £9,000; most have chosen £9,000



# Interdisciplinary Research

- ◆ We define interdisciplinary research as occurring where the contributions of the various disciplines are integrated to provide holistic or systemic outcomes





# Why Inter-disciplinary Research

- ◆ Need driven by demand for quicker innovation
- ◆ the nature of the subject is interdisciplinary (e.g. transport, environment)
- ◆ Sharing resources and optimisation
- ◆ Wider investigative base
- ◆ Increased attraction to funders



## The Process

- ◆ Iterative steps with strategies and criteria
- ◆ Investigative framework and questions
- ◆ Identifying relevant disciplines, theories, methods, phenomena, literature
- ◆ Evaluating disciplinary insights
- ◆ Reconciling and integrating disciplinary insights
- ◆ Reflecting, communicating, testing



# The Value

- ◆ Strategic value
- ◆ Bringing together disciplinary methodologies
- ◆ Structured & Shared Goals
- ◆ Seeks to integrate diverse insights
- ◆ Increased commercialization
- ◆ relevant to policy making in complex areas
- ◆ Faster delivery



## Skills needed by interdisciplinary researchers

- ◆ flexibility, adaptability, creativity
- ◆ curiosity about, and willingness to learn from, other disciplines
- ◆ an open mind to ideas coming from other disciplines and experiences
- ◆ good communication and listening skills
- ◆ an ability to bridge the gap between theory and practice
- ◆ a good team worker