

**MFU buddies are here to help
the new international students!**

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Mae Fah Luang University

International Buddy Programme Handbook



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What is the Buddy Programme?

Adjusting to a new cultural environment can be exciting and challenging. New international students at the Mae Fah Luang University often have many questions and concerns during their first weeks on campus. The Buddy system is therefore available to help new students establish a social and academic network as soon as they arrive at the university.

New students can expect to receive inside tips from current students on how to prepare for their academic and personal life in Chiang Rai. Pre-arrival contact is via email and will be followed up with the orientation and activities upon arrival to campus.

Current students can expect to learn about different perspectives, increase their knowledge of the campus and community resources, and gain new skills in cultural communication from participation in this programme.



Objectives

- To allow new students to become quickly accustomed to the University campus, institutions and services
- To create networking and socialising opportunities for new students
- To provide effective integration and a welcoming introduction to life in another country
- To provide support in finding ways to be actively involved on campus
- To strengthen a sense of community and extend the opportunity to make new friends and learn different cultures

Why become a buddy?

- Gain insight on different cultural values and share experience
- Attend events with new international students and other current students
- Expand your community and build mutual friendships
- Learn different perspectives and increase knowledge of the campus and community values of the University
- Build your resume

How the buddy programme helps MFU?

- Gain cultural awareness and understanding
- Showcase the university's cultural diversity
- Develop skills that help the university to successfully induct and integrate new students
- Be a useful feedback mechanism to improve the student experience
- Recruitment of new students after their 1st year to replace as buddies

What does a buddy do?

- Contacting new international students after their buddy has been assigned
- Replying promptly to queries by new students via e-mail, phone or in person
- Joining in the pickup service
- Support the buddy in their first period at MFU, both on campus and off the campus in activities

Things for a buddy to do or show

- Where places are, such as food, study, sports areas, and lecturers' offices
- How to get to the first lecture
- Where you can meet up with other students
- Where on campus you find the best and cheapest food
- Where on campus you find the best coffee
- Meet during the first weeks of the semester
- Participate together in orientation events and activities
- Respond to weekly emails from the International Buddy Programme monitored by an International Affairs Division officer

Buddy Selection Criteria

- Demonstrates high academic performance
- Have available time to be accessible to the new student
- Have knowledge of the new student's programme
- Is proud of the university
- Is a peer of the new student
- Have patience and good communication and interpersonal skills
- Volunteers to be a "buddy"
- Is a positive role model (well-regarded and accepted by current students)

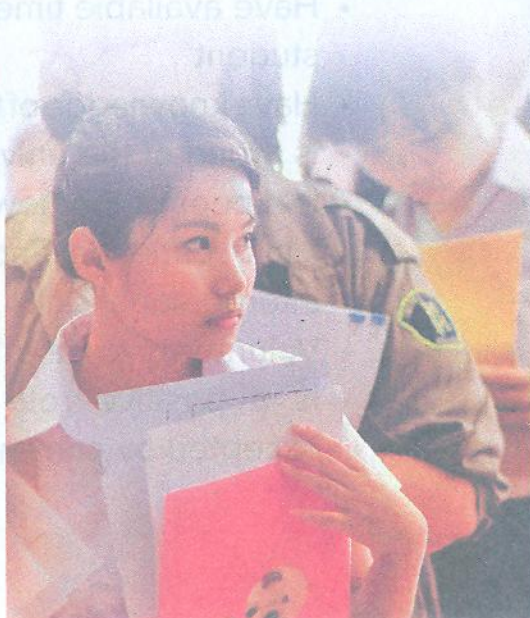


What are the requirements to become a buddy?

- Be enthusiastic to assist new international students
- Communicate effectively in both group and individual situations
- Express a sincere interest in helping people
- Be respectful to religious, political, sexual orientation and cultural differences
- Not promote any political or religious organisations to their buddy
- Have a grade point average of 2.0 or better
- Have no record of serious disciplinary procedures

What does a new student should expect from the buddy?

- General advice
- Guidance
- Encouragement
- Motivation
- Confidentiality of information
- Honest feedback
- Clear information
- Help in understanding the culture of the university and finding out how to get things done
- Assistance in building networks and insight into how to make them effective and productive



Time commitment of a buddy

- At least 30 minutes once a week regularly during the first month of the first semester
- Attentive for 4 or 5 brief queries a day
- One hour on the day of arrival to pick up new students from the airport

Termination of relationship

The buddy relationship between the buddy and the new student will be terminated when:

Three months expire, or either party requests it.

The buddy relationship operates under a “no-fault” termination mechanism. This means if either the buddy or the new student so requests, the buddy relationship immediately ends. Reasons for termination of the buddy relationship will not be sought or proffered. No discussion will ensue, no blame will ensue, and no blame will be apportioned.

The buddy's relationship with the new student should be open, positive, and supportive. Discussions between the buddy and the new student should be confidential. It is not necessary for anyone else to know the details of discussions between the buddy and the new student. Both parties can continue or terminate the relationship informally after the set amount of time ends.



Buddy Programme acknowledgement of contribution

Students' involvement and commitment to this programme is extremely valuable and the participants will be awarded a Certificate of Excellence by the Assistant of the President of Mae Fah Luang University. The students may also be eligible to use the certificate for academic purposes to show the students' aptitude in applying for employment, higher studies or scholarship programmes.

