

# **The Dragon and the Tiger Cubs: China-ASEAN Higher Education Relations in The GATS Era**

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## Abstract

Higher education is widely acknowledged as a key pillar in constructing the new knowledge economies of the 21st century. Each country wishes to deploy its resources in higher education to greatest advantage to increase national competitiveness, enhance its economic growth rates, and raise its prestige internationally. Yet, at the same time, competition, particularly for international students, is no longer just within, but also between countries, some of which are better placed than others to take advantage of what is becoming a growing global market for higher education,

But no single state possesses the resources to gain an advantage in all areas, or to attain complete international leadership. This is all the more the case, as massification of higher education becomes more widespread, including in Asia but often can still not meet ever-increasing demand. Moreover, the increasing globalisation of higher education continues to breach national boundaries – creating new challenges but also opening up prospects for new alliances, often regional. Hence, higher education policies become a mix of competition and cooperation. This analysis addresses such competitive and cooperative strategies in higher education between China and ASEAN, in particular the three ASEAN member nations of Singapore, Malaysia, and Viet Nam. Examples of regional trade agreements with an educational component, Asia Pacific consortia in higher education, and cross-border institutional collaborations, are given in each case. A brief taxonomy of cross-border educational relations is developed, and policy implications summarised, based on the case studies.