



/ U-PNT AND FRENCH-SPEAKING UNIVERSITIES OF BELGIUM /

TWO DECADES OF COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIP

ARES

ACADÉMIE
DE RECHERCHE ET
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ARES, U-PNT and French-speaking universities of Belgium: two decades of cooperation and partnership. Brussels: ARES, February 2017.



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TWO DECADES OF COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIP

The background image shows a library or study area with wooden bookshelves filled with books. In the foreground, two students are seated at a table, focused on reading open books. The student on the right is wearing a white t-shirt with the text 'TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC PHẠM NGỌC THẠCH' printed on it. The entire image has a light blue overlay.

THE IMPACT OF THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN ARES AND THE PHAM NGOC THACH UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE

BETWEEN 2008 AND 2016, PHAM NGOC THACH UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE (U-PNT) HAS SEEN A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN ITS NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED, WHICH GREW EIGHTFOLD EIGHT IN LESS THAN A DECADE. U-PNT HAD 720 STUDENTS IN 2008-2009, AND 5,800 IN 2016-2017: THIS HAS RESULTED IN A RADICAL CHANGE IN THE INSTITUTION'S NEEDS IN TERMS OF TEACHING AND RESEARCH, WHICH FORMED THE BASIS OF ITS INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT PARTNERSHIP WITH ARES. THE PARTNERSHIP'S GOAL IS TO HELP U-PNT CARRY OUT ITS MAIN PURPOSE: HUMAN RESOURCES TRAINING FOR THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM OF HO CHI MINH CITY AND SOUTHERN VIETNAM.

A BROAD AND DURABLE IMPACT FOR U-PNT

From both a general and an institutional perspective, the partnership between ARES and U-PNT has had a major influence across all of the University's teaching departments, administrative services, and faculty members. It has impacted all of U-PNT's activities: teaching and testing methods, scientific research methods, resource materials, and the University's system for assessing the quality of its training programmes, research activities, and administration.

The initiatives that were launched as a part of the partnership have had a concrete, profound and durable influence. As for results on a more individual scale, five students who have completed their PhD thesis as a part of this partnership were awarded post-doctoral research scholarships from ARES in order to continue their research. Two of them will coordinate a research project for development funded by ARES and entitled 'Building strategies for prevention and management of Helicobacter pylori infection in children', with activities starting in 2017. As for academic results, U-PNT teachers who had the opportunity to do a refresher course in Belgium have now returned home, where they are at the forefront of a teaching reform.

TEACHING PROGRAMMES THAT MEET ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

Activities intended to reinforce the curriculum and teaching and testing methods (course materials, programme reforms, e-learning, clinical reasoning, computer-based scoring) have been successful. Its achievements in medical teaching have earned U-PNT financial support from the World Bank in February, 2016, as a part of its Health Professionals Education and Training for Health System Reforms (HPET) project for Vietnam.

SUPPORTING TARGETED RESEARCH

Through its medical English workshops and its library, both of which are supported by ARES, U-PNT improved scientific research methods for teachers; this is helpful to teachers as well as students, and impacts both the University's teaching and research activities.

A concrete example of this is the support for targeted research in the departments of clinical medicine, fundamental medicine, community healthcare and nursing care, which has resulted in a steady increase in the number of research reports and publications produced by U-PNT. Twelve research projects have even received the national research award during the conference on scientific research for young teachers in Vietnam.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR FAMILY MEDICINE

The U-PNT department of family medicine was created as a part of the University's partnership with ARES, who took part in developing and implementing new teaching methods used at U-PNT (mainly e-learning and clinical reasoning) and in training the city's teachers of family medicine. In addition, the department has created U-PNT's family medicine consultation centre, providing services for Ho Chi Minh City's healthcare system. The city's healthcare system can also rely on U-PNT's basic science research centre, also a creation of the partnership programme, will contribute to reinforcing science teaching at U-PNT starting in early 2017.

QUALITY AT THE SERVICE OF THE FUTURE

After 18 years of partnership between ARES and U-PNT, it has become clear that the activities developed have provided relevant solutions to the challenges encountered not only by the University, but also by the city, the region, and their inhabitants.

U-PNT will now endeavour to maintain a high level of quality throughout its activities. This is why the phasing out of its partnership with ARES includes a series of steps designed to enhance the quality control system covering the University's training, research, and administration activities. A software application dedicated to managing students, staff, and financial aspects was developed during the partnership and is now used by all of U-PNT's administrative departments, for whom it has become an essential tool for total quality management.

The University's eventual goal is to earn an accreditation that will recognise the quality of its academic programmes based on nationwide criteria: this will enable it to continue its development as a reference institution in the area of medical research and training.

QUALITY MANAGEMENT

QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN UNIVERSITIES IS A NEW AREA IN VIETNAM, WITH FEW EXPERTS HAVING RELEVANT EXPERIENCE OR A DEGREE. IN ORDER TO TAKE PART IN THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY OF MEDICAL AND ACADEMIC TRAINING, U-PNT DIRECTORS HAVE DECIDED TO PROMOTE QUALITY MANAGEMENT AS A PART OF THE UNIVERSITY'S UPCOMING REFORM, FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A HOSPITAL UNIVERSITY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH HO CHI MINH CITY'S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

With the partnership between ARES and U-PNT being phased out, the University has turned to the standards set by Vietnam's ministry of education in terms of education, research, and administration. This project could not be carried out separately; it had to interact with other activities, and be completed in parallel with a systematic and regular internal audit.

U-PNT's directors have remained involved throughout the programme, ensuring the various activities could be carried to fruition. Teachers and administrators from the University's education and research departments, as well as members of its administrative staff, travelled to Belgium in order to attend training and refresher courses on quality management. Meanwhile, U-PNT offered workshops and seminars for its staff members, with the participation of Vietnamese and Belgian experts. Specific software was also installed in order to improve the University's management

system in the areas of education – especially for the management of students' academic careers –, research, and administration.

At the end of 2015, an internal audit report on U-PNT's organisation based on nationwide standards was submitted to Vietnam's ministry of education, who found it satisfactory.

With quality management system in place, U-PNT was able to identify its weaknesses and issues, which helped it determine what initiatives were necessary to improve quality. The University is planning on calling upon an independent organisation for quality control, in order to earn an accreditation for the quality management system it has set up. This accreditation should ensure U-PNT's recognition at both the national and international levels.

THE TEACHING REFORM

Passwords: 201605

PHAM NGOC THACH UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE (U-PNT) IS A YOUNG UNIVERSITY FACING MANY CHALLENGES. IT MUST TRAIN PHYSICIANS THAT WILL SERVE A CITY OF NO FEWER THAN EIGHT MILLION INHABITANTS. HO CHI MINH CITY'S STUDENT POPULATION IS CONSTANTLY GROWING, YET ITS TEACHING SYSTEM REMAINS VERY TRADITIONAL AND TEACHER SALARIES ARE NOT ATTRACTIVE. IN ADDITION, THE CITY DOES NOT HAVE A PROPER UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL OR A RESEARCH CENTRE.

In spite of these limitations, U-PNT teachers have been striving to meet the many challenges they are facing, in particular with regards to the evolution of its teaching methods. The partnership with ARES was particularly focused on this area over the past few years, in order to start a teaching reform in the University.

The partnership's overall goal was to provide physicians with better training and a teaching programme based on developing skills that are immediately useful for practitioners. To this end, U-PNT's medical teaching department has been especially active, including by sending U-PNT teachers to Belgian universities where they followed training and specialisation courses – especially at the Université de Liège – and by hosting Belgian teachers at U-PNT.

The partnership covered several areas, among which the curriculum, student tests and teacher evaluations, e-learning, and student guidance.

CURRICULUM: FROM U-PNT TO A NATIONWIDE REFORM

The curriculum reform was promoted through a number of conferences and courses, with content covering the curriculum's integration into modules, problem-based learning, the development of a skills-based curriculum, self-learning activities for students in medicine, and medical teaching for teachers and clinical teachers.

The development of these activities, and the insights they have yielded, have resulted in a number of changes and adjustments to the curriculum, including an improvement of practical lab skill development for 2nd-year students, a recentring of the 6th-year curriculum on medical practice, and a reorganisation of clinical internships.

These changes have enabled teachers to improve their teaching methods and the quality of their classes; moreover, professors were trained on providing clinical teaching activities and were able to prepare a nationwide reform of medicine studies curricula. This reform project was centred on student skills, and it was accepted by the Vietnamese ministry of health, who provided significant funding.

TESTING PRACTICES: LOWER COSTS, HIGHER QUALITY

With regards to testing, the partnership also involved conferences and training sessions focused on the principles and organisation of objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs) and objective structured practical examinations (OSPEs), as well as on how students should be tested using these tools and on how to help them self-test. Multiple-choice tests were standardised, both in terms of creation and scoring.

The partnership between ARES and U-PNT has resulted not only in lower examination costs, but also in an improvement of the quality of testing activities. In concrete terms, testing a large number

of students was made possible the purchase of 400 computers, 3 servers, and a software application, which are now operational. Currently, more than 50% of U-PNT's departments use multiple-choice tests for their students, who have been taught to complete structured clinical examinations in order to develop their professional skills; the final examination before graduation is a combination of multiple-choice tests for theory and OSCE for practice, with student results going through a vetting and quality control process.

E-LEARNING AS A RESPONSE TO MASSIFICATION

Several programmes were organised focusing on the advantages of online learning and its function as a companion tool for learning activities. Workshops were held where teachers could experiment with creating their own e-learning programmes.

In practice, four departments have developed an environment that is suited to e-learning activities (teaching, learning, testing) and produced e-books that are available from the university library.

By actively developing e-learning activities, U-PNT was able to cope with its skyrocketing student population (800 to 1,000 enrollments each year!). The teachers have also learned how to create digital courses, laying the groundwork for the University's new skills-based curriculum.

ONLINE STUDENT GUIDANCE

Lastly, a website was set up in order to provide students with guidance throughout their academic career at U-PNT: what challenges should be expected when studying medicine, how to develop and learn to know themselves, how to work efficiently and complete their education, how to pass tests, and how to live a balanced life. Also in order to support its students, the University has published a book on self-learning methods.

A Facebook page has also been created to provide a more direct point of contact with students, offering more advanced features (e.g. campaigns and events) in a format that is better suited to instant communication and individual advice than a static website.

A MODEL FOR VIETNAM

U-PNT's achievements in terms of teaching methods have helped students develop the skills required by high-level medical practice, and have made the increase in the student population manageable by enabling rational processes to assess student skills and to control the quality of teaching.

The teaching staff at U-PNT has become so well-known in Vietnam that it is setting the new standards used by the ministries of health and education, with other faculties of medicine following in their footsteps.

HEALTHCARE IN VIETNAM

“WHAT LIEM IS WORKING ON CHANGES FOR HEALTHCARE IN VIETNAM”

**LIEM, ULG PHD STUDENT
& DIDIER GIET, ULG PROFESSOR**



Our joint history started in Ho Chi Minh City in 2008: Liem applied for a PhD grant as part of an activity that aims to support the creation of a Family Medicine Department at Pham Ngoc Thach University (U-PNT).

Improving family medicine in Vietnam contributes to solving the huge problems faced by the healthcare system. These are the overcrowding of hospitals, and the absence of an efficient “first line” in healthcare.

Liem’s research compares healthcare in rural and urban areas, in Vietnam and Belgium. The

data Liem has collected shows how Vietnamese patients heavily rely on pharmacists or hospitals, due to the absence of local medical professionals.

From exposé to exposé, Liem has argued and provided scientific proof that it is urgent to improve family medicine in his country. He defended his thesis with panache and conviction in 2013, becoming the first to obtain the grade of PhD with a family medicine thesis in Vietnam.

Today, Liem contributes to the development of family medicine, which has recently become a priority for sanitary authorities in Vietnam.”



IMPROVING OF MEDICAL ENGLISH TEACHING

AS FAR AS MEDICAL ENGLISH IS CONCERNED, IT WAS NOTED THAT THE LINGUISTIC ENVIRONMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY PHAM NGOC THACH (U-PNT) WAS NOT REALLY ADAPTED TO THE PRACTICE OF A GOOD ENGLISH. THAT'S WHY IT WAS DECIDED TO START A PROGRAMME IN MEDICAL LINGUISTICS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN ARES AND U-PNT.

A PROGRAMME THAT STARTS WITH NEW INFRASTRUCTURES

First of all, they worked on improving the language learning infrastructure at U-PNT. ARES sponsored the development of a digital language laboratory driven by Belgian software, while the workstations were provided locally. Secondly, ARES gave the members of the English Department of U-PNT the opportunity to purchase digitalized pedagogical materials and benefit from in-service training, by attending and giving presentations at international conferences in neighbouring countries, such as Thailand, Cambodia and Taiwan. Then, the Institut des langues vivantes (ILV) of Université catholique de Louvain (UCL) suggested using the electronic platform Moodle, which turned the language lab into a digital language centre, where U-PNT students could work as a group or individually, either on location, or from home. Results and satisfaction surveys were carried out that demonstrated the added value of this new multimedia room. Of course, U-PNT medical English teachers had to be trained in the use of the new Moodle software. This was done, on the one hand, by annual teaching missions carried out by the person in charge of activities for the U-PNT programme in Medical Linguistics and, on the other hand, by organizing short one-month internships for all teachers from the U-PNT department of foreign languages at the ILV in Louvain-la-Neuve. During these internships, the interns were involved in the daily work of ILV-UCL English teachers (classroom observation, teaching, exam preparation, assessment of student presentations and oral exams, etc.). Moreover, every intern had a specific project to carry out, for instance, how to insert videos on Moodle and how

to design grammar and pronunciation exercises on Moodle. This expertise is being used in their courses at U-PNT today.

TOWARDS A NEW PERSPECTIVE OF MEDICAL ENGLISH

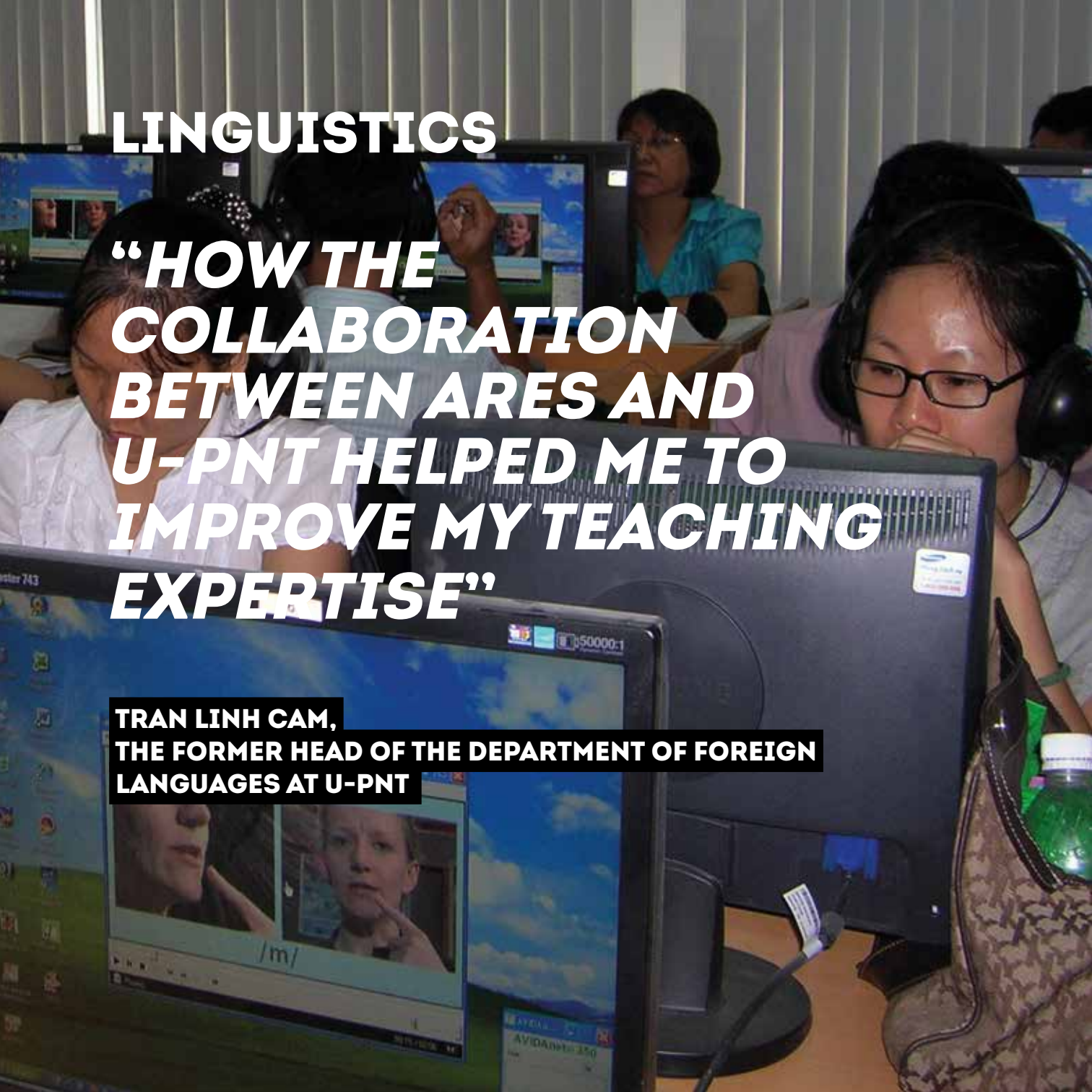
The U-PNT programme in Medical Linguistics ended in 2013 with excellent results. In the framework of a phasing-out programme between ARES and U-PNT, the objective of Medical English were redesigned into "Policies and methods support oriented research applications in the departments of clinical medicine, fundamental medicine, community health and nursing for the integration of research and training at U-PNT". In this new perspective, the beneficiaries weren't language teachers any longer, but academic staff (doctors and researchers). Seminars and workshops on several themes were organized, ranging from writing scientific papers and doing academic presentations to designing "posters" for international conferences.

Concretely, the activities that were organized all along the partnership between ARES and U-PNT allowed the university to improve the framing of the students in Medicine and, for medical English teachers, to gain tools to improve the quality of the training.

LINGUISTICS

***“HOW THE
COLLABORATION
BETWEEN ARES AND
U-PNT HELPED ME TO
IMPROVE MY TEACHING
EXPERTISE”***

**TRAN LINH CAM,
THE FORMER HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN
LANGUAGES AT U-PNT**





I FIRST LEARNED ABOUT THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE THEN CUD (NOW ARES) AND THE UNIVERSITY PHAM NGOC THACH (U-PNT) AROUND 2008. IN LATE 2009, IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT OUR DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES (DFL) WOULD START BENEFITING FROM THE ARES-PNT UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP, WHICH INVOLVED NOT ONLY ACADEMIC BUT ALSO FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

In February 2010, as Head of department, I was the first teacher to start the one-month internships at the ILV, the Institut des langues vivantes of Université catholique de Louvain (UCL). There I was able to learn first-hand more useful skills than I had ever imagined.

Later, eight more teachers from my department were offered similar placements with the same purpose: learning new activities and ideas and then applying them in our own teaching jobs at U-PNT. Under the professional guidance of Timothy Byrne, my Vietnamese colleagues and I had several casual conversations with ILV English teachers about their teaching expertise.

These very helpful, mostly Belgian, colleagues offered us tools that could bring about more effective teaching results at U-PNT. We were also allowed to take part in the everyday work of an ILV teacher: testing and marking students' output, classroom observation, creating and planning Moodle activities, etc. Back at U-PNT, new textbooks and reference books were purchased, a digital multimedia language centre was set up, software for self-study was bought and, over a five-year period, the DFL had undergone a real metamorphosis.

Together, ARES and the ILV staff enthusiastically offered invaluable help to the members of my department for the purposes of academic development at U-PNT."



UNIVERSITY MEDICAL TRAINING: USING THE BELGIAN MODEL

UNIVERSITY MEDICAL TRAINING AND WORK EXPERIENCE IN HOSPITALS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR TRAINING DOCTORS AS WELL AS POSSIBLE. USING THE BELGIAN MODEL, DOCTORS/TEACHERS AT THE ARES INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAM (FORMERLY INSTITUTIONAL UNIVERSITY COOPERATION) HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO A COLLABORATION PROGRAM, ALONG WITH TEACHERS AT THE PHAM NGOC THACH UNIVERSITY (U-PNT) IN HO CHI MINH CITY AND SPECIALIST HOSPITAL DOCTORS, PARTICULARLY THOSE AT THE BLOOD AND TRANSFUSION HOSPITAL (BTH).

To improve the training of future doctors in Vietnam, a team of teachers from the U-PNT and teachers from Belgian universities have worked together to create a model for a hospital-university convention. It aims, among other things, to allow medical students to train in their clinical practice.

After these conventions were signed, more than 1,000 students were able to do work experience in a hospital, allowing them to improve their medical skills.

Many doctors are also involved in translation and clinical research programs.



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The Academy for Research and Higher Education (*Académie de Recherche et d'Enseignement supérieur* - ARES) is the federation of the French-speaking higher education institutions (HEIs) of Belgium. As a public interest body, it is responsible for supporting these institutions regarding their teaching, research and community service missions.

It brings together 6 universities, 19 university colleges, 16 colleges of arts and 86 adult higher education colleges. As a unique platform, ARES carries out the global coordination for the higher education sector in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, it organizes the dialogue between the institutions and promotes collaborations nationally and internationally. It particularly ensures the consistency of the provision of training and its labour market relevance, it supports its higher education institutions in their

advocacy efforts and international relations and makes recommendations about scientific or artistic research policy. ARES provides information about higher education in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. It also coordinates the commitment made by the institutions regarding lifelong learning, student success promotion or development cooperation. Finally, ARES collects and processes a set of scientific and statistical data related to the sector in order to monitor, evaluate and improve practices with a concern for the quality of teaching and support offered to the near 200,000 students registered in the higher education institutions.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: WWW.ARES-AC.BE



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