HIGHER EDUCATION EXCHANGE AND COOPERATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE
MACAU UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) plays a unique role in the construction of Belt and Road Initiative. Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST), founded at the same time as the SAR, will also bring its particular functions into full play in higher education exchange and cooperation under the auspices of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Cultivation of internationalised talent
Talent are crucial to the in-depth promotion of the Belt and Road Initiative. Currently, society is in an urgent need to cultivate a group of internationalised talent who are proficient in foreign languages and familiar with international rules and standards, possess an international perspective, and are good at seizing opportunities and taking initiative in global competition. Therefore, the principle of talent as the priority must be adhered in the process of promoting the realisation of the Initiative. MUST will participate deeply by combining its own characteristics with its academic strengths, and highlighting the priorities and specialties. The University will establish high-level international talent programmes; to accelerate the promotion of education for students studying in China from the countries along the routes, and speed up training high-calibre internationalised talent required by the Belt and Road construction for Chinese-funded enterprises. Education for overseas students studying in China is conducted by focusing on the disciplines and professions required by the development of countries along the Belt and Road. MUST will expands the enrollment scale of overseas students studying in China from the countries along the routes, thereby building a complete education and management system of overseas students while cultivating well-educated internationalised talent who are familiar with and friendly to China.

Cultural understanding and exchange
Amity among people holds the key to sound relations between states, and amity among people ensures the success of their cooperation. International education, cultural and academic exchanges are important means of national public diplomacy as well as important strategic measures by which China may make its voice heard around the world, coalesce the Chinese spirit, publicise the Chinese path and unite China. Carrying out international education and academic exchanges and promoting mutual awareness, mutual understanding, mutual trust and cooperation among citizens from the countries along the route have become important mechanisms for tackling such global problems as resources, environment and ecology. To be specific, MUST can establish the internationally influential “Silk Road Higher Education Cooperation Forum” to promote education diplomacy and forum diplomacy, encouraging visits to China by university presidents, experts, and scholars in related programmes and fields from the countries along the Belt and Road, encourage university cooperation, and deepen cultural exchanges. In addition, Confucius Institutes can be set up to strengthen cultural exchanges in the countries along the Belt and Road. These will become major initiatives for the implementation of the Initiative. Macao is a place where Chinese and Western cultures meet, and MUST has particular advantages in the promotion of cultural exchange.
Professional background

MUST has been committed to driving international strategies. Against the general backdrop of implementing the Belt and Road Initiative, MUST, in its efforts to cultivate talent, attaches greater importance to balanced development in national distribution and its faculties, adjust the student-body structure, optimise the level of classes, and boost the quality of cultivating talent. To meet the needs of such pillar industries as geology, resources, energy, environment, and ecology in the countries along the Belt and Road, MUST depends on its discipline resources and intellectual advantages to establish the “Silk Road Institute”, thereby supporting education ecology in the countries along the Belt and Road, and project joint cultivation to create targeted and commissioned training.

Curriculum Framework

As for the specifics of the curriculum, the elements and contents of the Belt and Road Initiative are introduced under the existing curriculum framework of different schools for strengthening and diversifying courses. For instance, the topics related to the Belt and Road are added, or case studies are introduced for discussion and analysis, in international trade, international finance, international economics and related courses. MUST also runs such courses as “Belt and Road Economics”, “Belt and Road Policy Analysis”, “Belt and Road Society and Culture” and “Belt and Road and International Cooperation” for interdisciplinary study by undergraduate and graduate students without restrictions of background, doing so on the basis of integrating the existing faculty and teaching resources. The “Belt and Road Economics” course holds rigorous, professional-level discussions in regards to the economic principles of national policies, and demonstrates the relevant trade and development opportunities. Moreover, in the analysis of related financial services needs and financing management strategies, students are imbued with the capacity to identify and manage country risks. The Faculty of Law at MUST runs such programmes as international law and international economics law, a master’s course in international economics and commerce, and a master’s course in international arbitration. In the future, these courses will place greater emphasis on research into the legal systems of the countries along the Belt and Road, agreements based upon international law, and the practice of participating in international arbitration, all of which will give students the skills to provide counselling to enterprises. The Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management provides bachelor’s and master’s courses in international tourism management, and in the future, they will integrate local tourism resources and publicise tourism resources and projects in Macao on the basis of project cooperation between China, the Belt and Road, and local social security. At the same time, the Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management will adopt rigorous school-running modes and close international relations as they help the Belt and Road to train senior management talent in the tourism industry. Traditional Chinese medicine has a time-honoured history in Silk Road countries, and acupuncture is particularly well received in many countries. The Faculty of Chinese Medicine at MUST offers systematic study of acupuncture and provides study programmes for students from overseas. The Faculty of Health Sciences and the School of Pharmacy provide courses in public health, nursing and professional pharmacy and can help the countries along the Belt and Road to train basic medical and nursing talent. Apart from the exchange of professional courses, MUST will also organise “Belt and Road” cultural exchange seminars or experience activities for the general public and high school students in Macao, and will offer special training in “Belt and Road” management in accordance with the needs of Macao’s enterprises.
Teacher exchanges

Ever since the publication of the Education Action Plan for Jointly Building the Belt and Road, MUST, in terms of exchange activities of teachers, has provided teachers with opportunities to visit the Belt and Road, thus expanding teachers’ vision and encouraging “closer people-to-people ties” for people along the routes. Firstly, MUST enhances its teachers’ awareness of the background and development of the Belt and Road. For instance, the University is planning to launch Mainland China exchange programme for teachers to visit Xi’an, Fujian, Dunhuang, Guangxi and other Mainland cities so they may understand the background and development of the Initiative, thereby promoting the operation of courses concerned. Secondly, MUST sets up teacher research and study funds, implements the Belt and Road teacher training programmes, and provides its teachers with more domestic and international training opportunities. MUST will actively nurture the required talent based on the actual circumstances. In addition, the University encourages its teachers to attend related training in the Belt and Road through the teacher research and study funds, hence broadening teachers’ horizons and introducing advanced teaching methodologies. Thirdly, MUST encourages teacher cooperation and exchanges, and expand the “Circle of Friends of Belt and Road”. MUST forges alliances with universities along the Belt and Road as it organises academic exchange activities. Furthermore, it will enhance teacher exchanges along the Belt and Road by promoting exchanges, visits and studies for teachers, and encourage learning from the quality education models of different countries. For instance, MUST intends to enter into teacher exchange agreements with universities along the Belt and Road, invite teachers to deliver lectures at MUST while also sending its teachers to teach in the alliance universities. Besides, MUST will also hold conferences and lectures with the alliance universities, and jointly explore hot topics concerning the Belt and Road, thus implementing the theme of “to establish closer people-to-people ties, and offer support of talent”.

Academic activities support Macao’s role as the “Target Contact”

To provide the Chinese and Portuguese bilingual teaching and research support required by promoting Macao as the “target contact” in the Belt and Road construction and cooperation among Portuguese-speaking countries along the Belt and Road, providing academic research and human resource support so that Macao may play a bigger role in the “Commercial and Trade Cooperation Service Platform between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries”, and thus integrate the Belt and Road construction. Firstly, MUST has continuously run the “Portuguese-speaking countries’ business environment training” programmes for teachers and researchers with higher education institutions in Macao, aiming to enhance the understanding of teachers and related researchers with universities in Macao regarding the business environment of Portuguese-speaking countries and to allow them to study basic Portuguese and preliminary application of Portuguese in communication. Secondly, MUST actively expands and enters into cooperation in scientific research, student exchanges and other aspects with higher education institutions in Portuguese-speaking countries and regions along the Belt and Road, such as Portugal and Brazil. Thirdly, in order to support Macao’s role as a “target contact” in the Belt and Road construction, MUST has established a series of special research efforts such as “Research into Investment Environment of Portuguese-Speaking Countries” in order to help Macao more fully embody the role of an “economy and trade service platform for China and Portuguese-speaking countries” and participate in the Belt and Road construction.