



## THE CURRENT CONDITIONS OF PROMOTING THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS AT VIETNAM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, HO CHI MINH CITY

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### Abstract:

The purpose of the study was to have a comprehensive understanding of the existing conditions assured to give physical education (PE) programs to students at Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City (VNUHCM). Through document synthesis, interviews, and statistical processing, the article gained a general evaluation of the current PE conditions according to the following aspects: facilities, administration, and curriculums. In terms of facilities, the total space for sports activities at VNUHCM is measured at 25,454m<sup>2</sup>, besides, the ratio of sports field area per student is 0.44m<sup>2</sup>/student. This indicates that VNUHCM's students do not have enough space for their sports practice as standard. In terms of faculty, teachers at VNUHCM Sports Center are comprised 67.6% male, 88.2% at the age of thirty to fifty, and 100% holding postgraduate qualifications. In addition, 79.4% of the staff at the VNUHCM Sports Center graduated with PE specialized degrees, and 64.7% of them have less than five years of seniority. However, 68.8% of those who are currently delivering PE courses at this Center are visiting teachers. The statistic number reveals that the ratio of students per teacher at VNUHCM is 814.75 students/teacher, which reveals that the number of PE lecturers has

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not met the standard, and they have been in charge of a large teaching volume. In terms of curriculums, PE programs are conducted with 06 credits in total (90 periods), divided into 02 modules with 3 credits per each (45 periods). Students are allowed to choose their favorite PE content among 10 sports courses including football, volleyball, basketball, table tennis, tennis, badminton, martial arts, aerobics, swimming, and chess. The results indicate that VNUHCM's students actively participate in sports training and competitions to advance their physical fitness.

**Keywords:** current conditions, physical education, physical training, and sports activities, Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City

## 1. Introduction

Physical education (PE) is widely acknowledged as a pedagogical process aimed at protecting ourselves, promoting health, perfecting fitness, training personality and equipping the necessary motor skills for each individual in their daily lives. Fitness and physical development are important parts that are mainly focused on in PE programs. Physical development is proven to be not only affected by genes but also greatly influenced by environment and health education, in which PE plays a decisive role in the process of physical development and fitness promotion for humans [1].

Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City (VNUHCM) is acknowledged as one of the most reliable multi-field education institutes for undergraduate, and postgraduate studying science and technology, the core for the higher education system to satisfy the human resource for socio-economic development. Now, VNUHCM consists of seven member universities, one research institute, two affiliated faculties, and a number of research and service centers, with more than 4,500 faculty members who have been training over 50,000 students coming across the country.

The PE work has been implemented and sustained by VNUHCM for many years with the purpose of not letting the youth studying here forget their physical health while fulfilling academic performances. Moreover, PE programs at every educational institute need adjusting to suit the current materials and serve the country's development goals. One of the important stages that determine PE work is the conditions of facilities, faculty, and curriculums. Hence, understanding the current situation and thereby finding solutions is the first and foremost action. With the practical experiences and responsibilities of individuals who have been implementing PE work at higher education institutions, the authors proceed to write this article: "The current conditions of promoting the physical education and sports activities for students at Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City".

The article was written to provide accurate and comprehensive information about the current conditions serving PE classes and sports activities for VNUHCM students.

Research results were hoped to offer a reliable basis for further solutions for improving PE quality there.

## 2. Research Methods

The research methods consisted of document review, interviews, and statistical methods. Interviewees were composed by 8 managers, 60 PE lecturers working VNUHCM Faculty: University of Technology (HCMUT), University of Science (HCMUS), University of Social Sciences and Humanities (USSH), University of Economics and Law (UEB), University of Information Technology (UIT), International University (IU), School of Medicine, School of Political and Administrative Sciences (SPAS).

## 3. Results

To assess the current status of conditions serving PE and sports activities for students at VNUHCM, the authors conducted a survey with managers and lecturers to collect their evaluation of the schools' facilities, faculty, and curriculums.

### 3.1. Current Status of PE Teaching Facilities

Table 1 shows statistics regarding the available space for PE teaching and sports activities at VNUHCM.

**Table 1:** Current situation of sports courts and yards serving PE work and sports activities at VNUHCM

No.	Institution	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )		Total area (m <sup>2</sup> )
		Indoor (m <sup>2</sup> )	Outdoor (m <sup>2</sup> )	
1	Sports centers	N/A	7458 m <sup>2</sup> (4 mini football fields, 4 volleyball courts, 2 basketball courts, 2 tennis courts, 1 swimming pool)	7458
2	University of Technology (HCMUT)	1500 m <sup>2</sup> (multi-purpose sports hall) (1 basketball court, 3 badminton courts, 1 volleyball court)	3374 m <sup>2</sup> (9-player football court, mini football field, volleyball court, basketball court)	4874
3	University of Social Sciences and Humanities (USSH)	1500 m <sup>2</sup> (multi-purpose sports hall) (1 basketball court, 2 badminton courts, volleyball court, football court, table tennis)	500 m <sup>2</sup> (volleyball court, basketball court)	2000
4	University of Science	1250 m <sup>2</sup> (multi-purpose sports hall) (basketball court,	1000 m <sup>2</sup> (11-player football field, volleyball court,	2250

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	(HCMUS)	2 badminton courts, volleyball court)	basketball court)	
5	University of Economics and Law (UEB)	N/A	500 m <sup>2</sup> (volleyball court, basketball court)	500
6	University of Information Technology (UIT)	250 m <sup>2</sup> (table tennis)	1000 m <sup>2</sup> (7-player football court, volleyball court, basketball court)	1250
7	International University (IU)	200 m <sup>2</sup> (table tennis, chess)	N/A	200
8	School of Medicine	N/A	N/A	00
9	School of Political and Administrative Sciences (SPAS)	N/A	N/A	00
10	Dormitory Management Center	N/A	2150 m <sup>2</sup> (4 artificial grass football fields, 2 volleyball courts, basketball courts)	2150
11	Centre for Service and Investment Promotion (VNUHCM Guest House)	N/A	4772 m <sup>2</sup> (3 tennis courts, swimming pool)	4772
Total		4 700	20 754	25 454
Total sports area of VNUHCM				57 239
Ratio m <sup>2</sup> /student				0.44

The overall yard space of the VNUHCM sports centers for PE classes and athletic events is 25,454 m<sup>2</sup>, with a maximum outdoor area of 7,458 m<sup>2</sup>. There are no sports fields in the School of Medicine or SPAS. In detail, HCMUT has a 4,875 m<sup>2</sup> sports field (1,500 m<sup>2</sup> indoors and 3374 m<sup>2</sup> outdoors); HCMUS has a 2,250 m<sup>2</sup> sports field (1,250 m<sup>2</sup> indoors and 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> outdoors); USSH has a 2,000 m<sup>2</sup> sports field (1,500 m<sup>2</sup> of indoors and 500 m<sup>2</sup> of outdoors); UEB has a 500 m<sup>2</sup> sports field (no sports room and 500 m<sup>2</sup> of outdoors); UIT has 1.250m<sup>2</sup> sports field (250 m<sup>2</sup> ping pong house and 1000 m<sup>2</sup> of outdoors); IU has 200m<sup>2</sup> sports field (200m<sup>2</sup> ping pong and chess house and no outdoor yard); Dormitory Management Center has 2.150m<sup>2</sup> sports field (No gym room and 2.150m<sup>2</sup> of outdoors); Centre for Service and Investment Promotion (VNUHCM Guest House) has 4772m<sup>2</sup> sports field (No gym room and 4772m<sup>2</sup> of outdoors). The sports field area to student ratio is 0.44 m<sup>2</sup> per student. In accordance with the Prime Minister's Decision No. 2160/QĐ-TTg dated 11/11/2013 approving the "Planning on Development of Physical Training and Sports in Vietnam in 2020, orientation to 2030," the expected ratio is expected 02 m<sup>2</sup> in 2015, 03m<sup>2</sup> in 2020, and 04 m<sup>2</sup> in 2030 [9]. Based on the standard, it is evident that there is not enough room for sports practice, particularly in the yard where students are taught physical education. Thus, apart from the existing sports fields, VNUHCM universities

also make use of small vacant yards inside the campus to teach some PE content such as martial arts, athletics, and aerobics for students.

As widely proven, a good PE program depends greatly on the condition of the sports courts. In other words, students will have more opportunities to enhance their movement density and develop solid motor skills if sports courts and equipment meet the criteria. The restricted resources of VNUHCM, however, are now basically sufficient to complete the PE requirements at HCMUT, USSH, UIT, and HCMUS. In addition, it must also assist sports training for schools with too few fields, such as the School of Medicine, SPAS, IU, and UEB.

Moreover, extracurricular sports that are conducted outside of school hours are often for school teams or competitions due to the lack of facilities. It results in the fact that extracurricular activities do not flourish to draw in participation from regular pupils. As a result, VNUHCM really does need more new yards for offering extracurricular activities.

### 3.2. Current Status of the Faculty of PE

Table 2 shows the statistics of PE staff at VNUHCM.

**Table 2:** The current composition of PE managers and lecturers at VNUHCM

No.	Content	Number	%	
1	Position	Manager	08	11.8
		Lecturer	60	88.2
		Total	68	100
2	Gender	Male	46	67.6
		Female	22	32.4
		Total	68	100.0
3	Age	Under 30	06	8.8
		30-40	46	67.6
		41-50	14	20.6
		Over 50	02	2.9
		Total	68	100.0
4	Educational background	College bachelor degree	00	00
		Bachelor degree	00	00
		Master or PhD degree	68	100.0
		Total	68	100.0
5	Teaching personnel	Visiting teachers	40	68.8
		Permanent teachers	28	41.2
		Total	68	100.0
6	Majoring	Physical education	54	79.4
		Sports training	14	20.6
		Other	00	00
		Total	68	100.0
7	Seniority	Less than 5 years	06	8.8
		6 – 10 years	38	55.9
		10 – 15 years	07	10.3

		Over 15 years	17	25.0
		Total	68	100.0
Total number of students at VNUHCM: 57 239 students				
Student-faculty ratio: 841.75 students/lecturer				

Table 2 revealed that:

Regarding the organizational structure or positions in PE faculty: 60 lecturers accounted for 88.2%, and 08 managers accounted for 11.8%.

Regarding genders: 46 men accounted for 67.6% and 22 women accounted for 32.4%

Regarding age: 46 lecturers aged 30-40 years old accounted for 67.6%, 14 lecturers aged 41-50 years old accounted for 20.6%, 6 lecturers under 30 years old accounted for 8.8%, and 02 lecturers over 50 years old accounted for 2.9%.

Regarding educational backgrounds: 68 lecturers have postgraduate qualifications, accounting for 100.0%.

Regarding working types: 40 visiting lecturers accounted for 68.8%, and 28 primary lecturers accounted for 41.2%.

Regarding specialty: 54 trainers with PE expertise accounted for 79.4%, and 14 ones specializing in sports training accounted for 20.6%.

Regarding teaching seniority: 38 lecturers with 6-10 years of PE teaching experience accounted for 55.9%, 17 lecturers with more than 15 years seniority accounted for 25.0%, 07 lecturers with 10-15 years seniority accounted for 10.3%, and 06 lecturers with less than 5 years of PE teaching experience accounted for 8.8%.

The student-faculty ratio of VNUHCM is 814.75 students/lecturer.

The above analysis showed that the composition of PE faculty at VNUHCM was mainly: 67.6% male, 88.2% aged from 30 to 50 years old, 100.0% having postgraduate qualifications, 68.8% be visiting lecturers, 79.4% specialized in PE, 64.7% having less than five years of teaching experience.

Pursuant to the Prime Minister's Decision No. 2160/QĐ-TTg dated 11/11/2013 on approving the "A plan of physical training and sports development in Vietnam up to 2020, with orientation to 2030", the lecturer-undergraduate student ratio must reach 1/500 in 2015, 1/400 in 2020 and 1/300 in 2030 [9].

Due to the lack of lecturers, particularly full-time instructors, VNUHCM has fallen short of the aim put forth by the Prime Minister. The above figures demonstrate that the volume of students that PE instructors at VNUHCM institutions must handle now is rather massive.

### 3.3. Current Status of PE Curriculum

Table 3 presents the PE curriculum VNUHCM has been implementing in accordance with Decision No. 1476/QĐ-ĐHQG, dated November 27, 2020, by the Director of Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City [2].

**Table 3:** Distribution of PE classes for undergraduates at VNUHCM

Module	Module code	Number of subjects	Number of credits	Content		
				Theory (lessons)	Motor skills (lessons)	Total (lessons)
Module 1	HP01	1	3	6	39	45
Module 2	HP02	1	3	6	39	45
<b>Total</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>6 credits</b>	<b>12 lessons</b>	<b>78 lessons</b>	<b>90 lessons</b>

The PE curriculum at VNUHCM is set up with 06 credits (90 lessons) divided into 02 modules (45 lessons) with 3 credits per each. Each module has 45 lessons with a total of 06 hours of academic learning and 39 hours of practice. The PE programs used by VNUHCM are assured to follow the guidelines in Circular 25/2015/TT-BGDĐT [6].

Table 4 shows the specific contents of PE programs.

**Table 4:** Sports content of PE courses at VNUHCM

No.	Module	Module code	Number of lessons			
			Total	Theory	Practice	Test
1	Football 1	BD1	45	6	33	6
2	Volleyball 1	BC1	45	6	33	6
3	Basketball 1	BR1	45	6	33	6
4	Table tennis 1	BB1	45	6	33	6
5	Tennis 1	QV1	45	6	33	6
6	Badminton 1	CL1	45	6	33	6
7	Martial arts 1	VT1	45	6	33	6
8	Aerobic 1	AE1	45	6	33	6
9	Swimming 1	BL1	45	6	33	6
10	Chess 1	CV1	45	6	33	6
11	Football 2	BD2	45	6	33	6
12	Volleyball 2	BC2	45	6	33	6
13	Basketball 2	BR2	45	6	33	6
14	Table tennis 2	BB2	45	6	33	6
15	Tennis 2	QV2	45	6	33	6
16	Badminton 2	CL2	45	6	33	6
17	Martial arts 2	VT2	45	6	33	6
18	Aerobic 2	AE2	45	6	33	6
19	Swimming 2	BL2	45	6	33	6
20	Chess 2	CV2	45	6	33	6

Table 4 outlines the 10 PE optional sports contents available in VNUHCM, including chess, football, volleyball, basketball, table tennis, tennis, badminton, martial arts, aerobics, and swimming. At VNUHCM, the core curriculum for PE is fairly varied and caters to the abilities and interests of students.

Table 5 presents the comparison of PE course curriculum among VNUHCM, VNU-HN (Vietnam National University, Hanoi) [4], and the University of Da Nang [5].

**Table 5:** PE curriculums of VNUHCM, VNU-HN, University of Da Nang

No.	PE curriculum	VNUHCM	VNU-HN	University of Da Nang
1	Time	6 credits, 90 lessons	4 credits, 120 lessons	4 credits, 120 lessons
2	Content	10 (football, volleyball, basketball, table tennis, tennis, badminton, martial arts, aerobics, swimming and chess)	12 (track and field, volleyball, aerobics, basketball, football, table tennis, badminton, swimming, Taekwondo, dance, chess and bodybuilding)	9 (track and field, gymnastics, volleyball, aerobics, basketball, football, table tennis, badminton, Vovinam)
3	Form	Optional	Compulsory and optional Basic and special	Compulsory and optional Basic and weak health

Table 5 indicates that:

In terms of the length, the three universities differ in the number of credits and the number of lessons, with VNUHCM having 6 credits and 90 periods, while VNU-HN and the University of Da Nang have 4 credits and 120 periods.

In terms of contents, football, volleyball, basketball, table tennis, badminton, martial arts, aerobics, swimming, and chess are all available in the curriculum at the universities in Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, and Danang. However, each university offers one different course. In particular, the University of Da Nang offers Vovinam classes, whereas VNUHCM delivers tennis courses, and VNU-HN promotes bodybuilding.

Students at VNUHCM are free to pick the contents, but those at VNU-HN and the University of Da Nang must take both required and optional courses. Additionally, for instructional purposes, students at VNU-HN and the University of Da Nang are divided into two groups: the basic group and the special group (weak health).

Overall, in order to meet the physical training requirements of VNUHCM students, the PE program at VNUHCM offers unique parts that set it apart from other institutions in Vietnam.

### 3.4. Current Status of Extracurricular Activities

Table 6 provides a list of the contents that took place at the VNUHCM Student Sports Festival in 2022, along with the number of athletes from different universities.



**Table 6:** Statistics on the number of students participating in the VNUHCM Student Sports Festival in 2022

School Content	Number of students									Total
	HCMUT	HCMUS	USSH	IU	UIT	UEB	An Giang University	School of Medicine	SPAS	
Male football	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	12	14	124
Female football	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	12	-	110
Male volleyball	14	14	14	11	-	12	-	11	-	76
Female volleyball	12	14	14	14	-	14	14	-	-	82
Male basketball	14	12	14	12	14	14	-	11	-	91
Female basketball	12	12	12	13	-	13	-	-	-	62
Men's tug of war	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	-	10	80
Women's tug of war	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	-	10	80
Table tennis	12	12	12	12	12	12	4	6	-	82
Badminton	12	12	12	12	12	12	8	12	-	92
Chess	12	12	12	12	12	12	6	8	-	86
Swimming	8	10	6	8	10	10	-	8	-	60
Total	144	146	144	142	108	147	80	80	34	1025
Achievements	7 Gold, 6 Silver, 11 Bronze	8 Gold, 5 Silver, 7 Bronze	4 Gold, 4 Silver, 6 Bronze	4 Gold, 8 Silver, 5 Bronze	1 Gold, 2 Silver, 5 Bronze	8 Gold, 7 Silver, 7 Bronze	2 Gold, 1 Silver, 1 Bronze	0 Gold, 2 Silver, 3 Bronze	0 Gold, 0 Silver, 3 Bronze	

According to Table 6, VNUHCM Student Sports Festival 2022 had 12 sports contents with 9 involved universities and 1024 participants. Notably, five universities including HCMUT, HCMUS, USSH, IU, and UEB participated in all 12 contents, while An Giang University and School of Medicine joined 8 ones and SPAS with 4 ones.

In terms of the number of participants, UEB was the largest with 147 participating students, followed by HCMUS with 146, HCMUT and USSH with 144, IU with 142, UIT with 108, An Giang University and School of Medicine with 80, and SPAS with 34.

In terms of contests, 124 athletes from a total of 9 schools competed in men's football, whereas 110 athletes from 8 schools competed in women's football. There were 80 individuals from 8 schools playing the male and female tug-of-war. Table tennis, badminton, and chess, each had 8 schools participating with 82, 92, and 86 students, respectively. Men's basketball and swimming each had 7 schools engaging, with 91 and 60 athletes, respectively. Both boys' and girls' volleyball each had six participating schools, with 76 and 82 players. Women's basketball had the fewest schools participating, 5 schools with 62 athletes.

In terms of achievements, the UEB team placed first with 8 gold, 7 silver, and 7 bronze medals; USSH was second with 8 gold, 5 silver, and 7 bronze medals; HCMUT

was third with 7 gold, 6 silver, and 11 bronze medals; and IU school gained consolation award with 4 gold, 7 silver, and 5 bronze medals. Additionally, some other universities holding gold medals include USSH (4), An Giang University (2), and UIT (1); SPAS and the School of Medicine did not have any gold medals.

The above statistics demonstrate that VNUHCM students take an active role in practicing for and competing in sporting events to enhance their physical foundation.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The total space for PE instruction and sports activities at VNUHCM is 25,454 m<sup>2</sup>, with the one with the largest area being 7,458 m<sup>2</sup> wide. Neither the School of Medicine nor SPAS have a sports field. The ratio of 0.44m<sup>2</sup>/student demonstrates how little sports space there is at VNUHCM for students to practice. However, despite its limited space and lack of facilities, VNUHCM basically offers pupils proper PE classes.

The present faculty of physical education at VNUHCM is generally composed of: 67.6% men, aged 30–50 years old, 88.2% having postgraduate degrees, 68.8% being visiting lecturers, and 79.4% specialized in physical education, 64.7% having less than five years of seniority. Based on the ratio of 814.75 students per teacher, it can be concluded that there is a scarcity of PE teaching personnel at VNUHCM. As a result, lecturers are required to carry out a considerable number of pupils.

The VNUHCM's PE curriculum consists of two modules with three credits each, totaling six credits (90 lessons). Each module will include 45 periods, with 6 hours of theory and 39 hours of practice. Football, volleyball, basketball, table tennis, tennis, badminton, martial arts, aerobics, swimming, and chess are chosen as 10 contents for PE classes at VNUHCM. It can be clearly seen that the PE programs are fairly diverse and suitable to the students' interests.

The VNUHCM Student Sports Festival 2022 had 12 sports games, 9 attending universities, and 1024 participants. HCMUT, HCMUS, USSH, IU, and UEB competed fully in 12 sports contents, whereas UIT in 9, An Giang University and School of Medicine in 8, and SPAS in 4. The findings demonstrate that VNUHCM students actively engage in training and competing in sporting events to enhance their fitness.

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#### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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