

Pre-departure briefings 2016: Indian students get ready for a bright future!

The pre-departure orientation 2016 delivered by SIEM India was held in eight cities across India.

542 students with offers from UK institutions attended the session in Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Delhi and Kolkata. We witnessed a 25% increase in the number of attendees when compared to last year's pre-departure sessions.

Ethihad Airways and Student.com were our associate sponsors and they made a presentation highlighting the various travel discounts and offers for students at these sessions.

During the pre-departure sessions we provided guidance on how to prepare for an exciting, enlightening and culturally diverse student life in the UK.

The session in each city started with a welcome address and was followed by a series of presentations that covered the following themes- preparing for the journey, travel, dealing with immigration, securing finances, sorting out accommodation and meals as well as completing medical formalities. Some of these sessions included advice from experts through multimedia presentations and videos. During each session we played GREAT videos which covered experiences of current students in the UK.

The main highlight of the pre-departure sessions was the presentation on 'do and don'ts' for students applying for a 'student visa' and this session was delivered by the UK Visas and Immigration colleagues. In some cities these sessions were delivered face to face while in others they were delivered through Skype.

Interactive and fun sessions with alumni in each city put students at ease as they discussed concerns around safety, accommodation, eating out and cultural shifts amongst other things. This went on to be the most enjoyable session for the students. We also welcomed parents and addressed their concerns, queries and anxieties of sending their kids to study abroad.

The sessions in each city concluded with hi-tea and networking.

Promotion of the British Council pre-departure sessions:

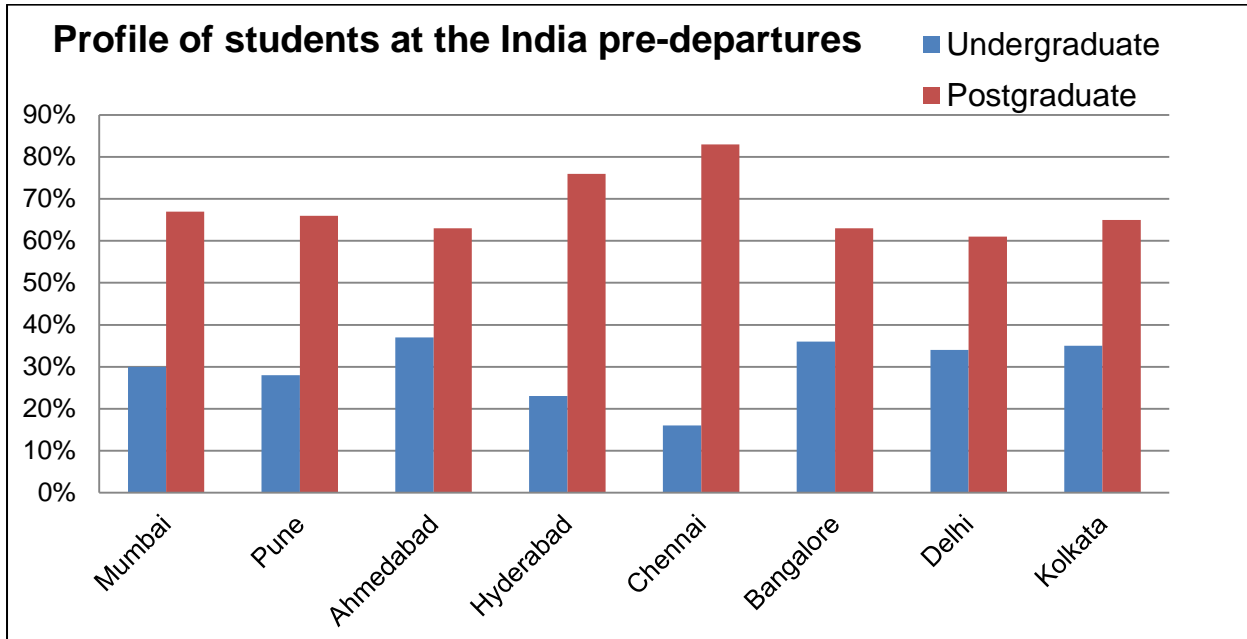
This year's pre-departures orientations were promoted extensively on digital and social media – mainly Facebook and Twitter. In totality we reached out to more than 125,000 Facebook users during the month long promotion. There were city specific posts carried out each day that helped reach a target audience of interested students in each city.

Additionally, a total of 15 adverts were released in leading newspapers across all cities. The adverts were released in the below newspapers:

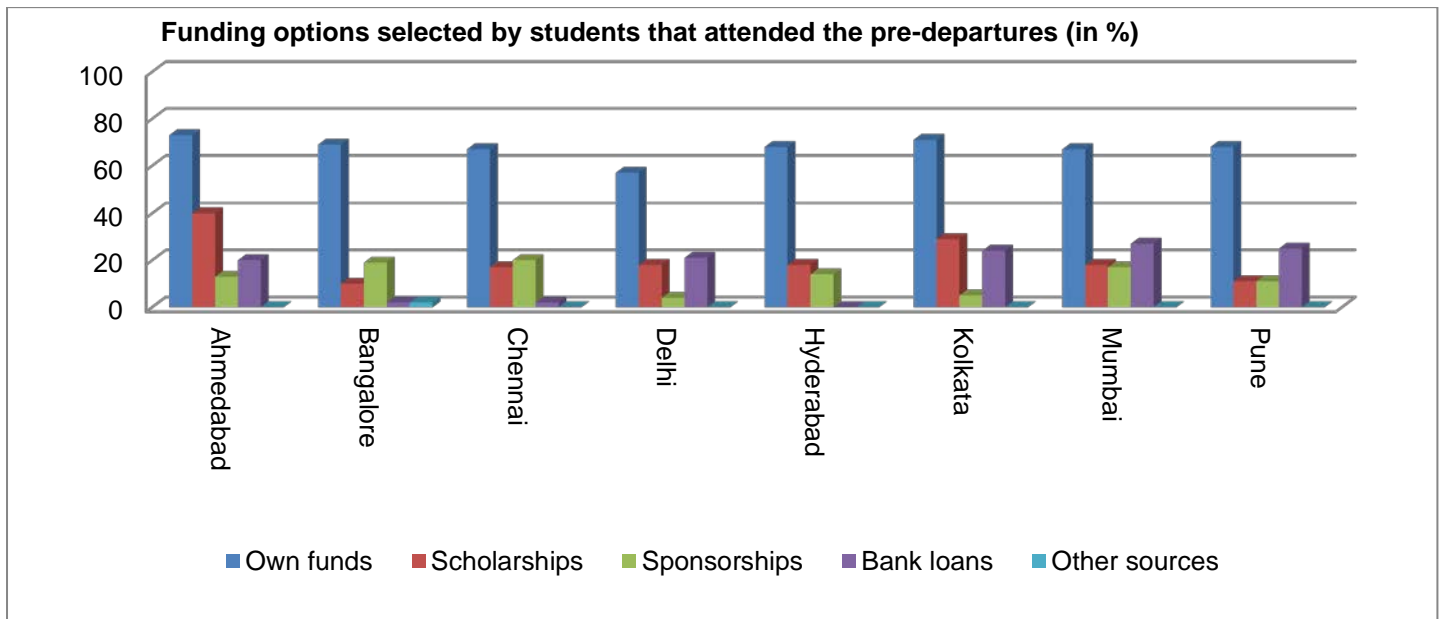
- Telegraph, Kolkata
- Times of India, Kolkata, Bangalore,
- Bartaman (Bengali vernacular)
- Education Times, Kolkata, Delhi, Ahmedabad and Baroda
- The Hindu, Chennai
- Deccan Chronicle, Hyderabad
- Eenadu, Hyderabad
- Mumbai Mirror, Mumbai
- Indian Express, Pune
- Loksatta, Pune
- Ahmedabad Mirror, Ahmedabad

The pre departures were also promoted to British Council owned databases reaching an audience of 66760 through mailers.

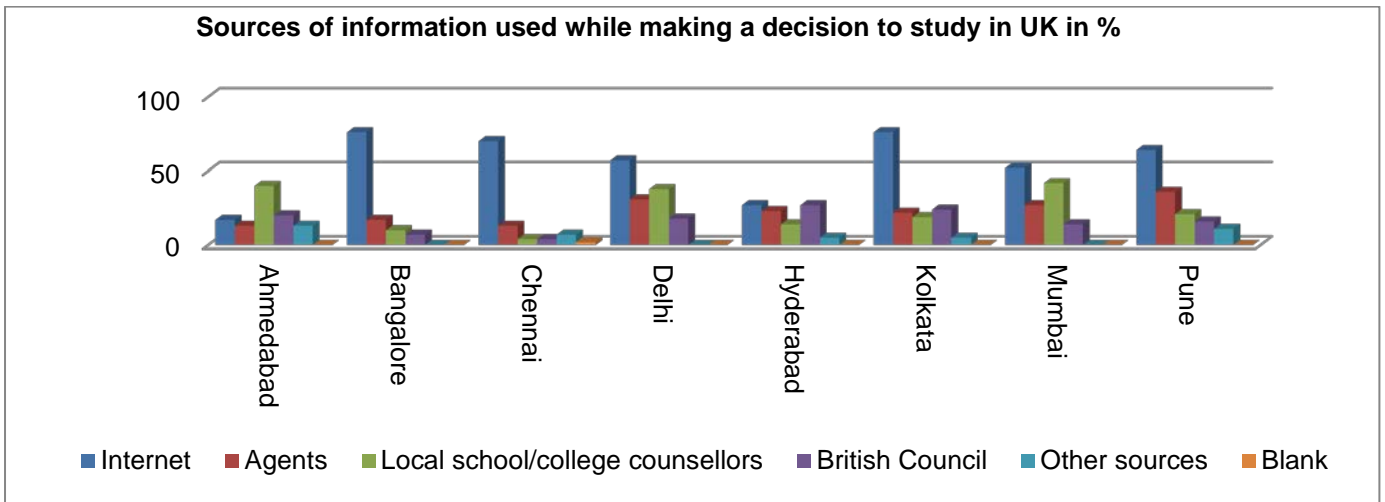
Some interesting facts: from analysis of feedback forms from students who attended the pre-departure sessions:



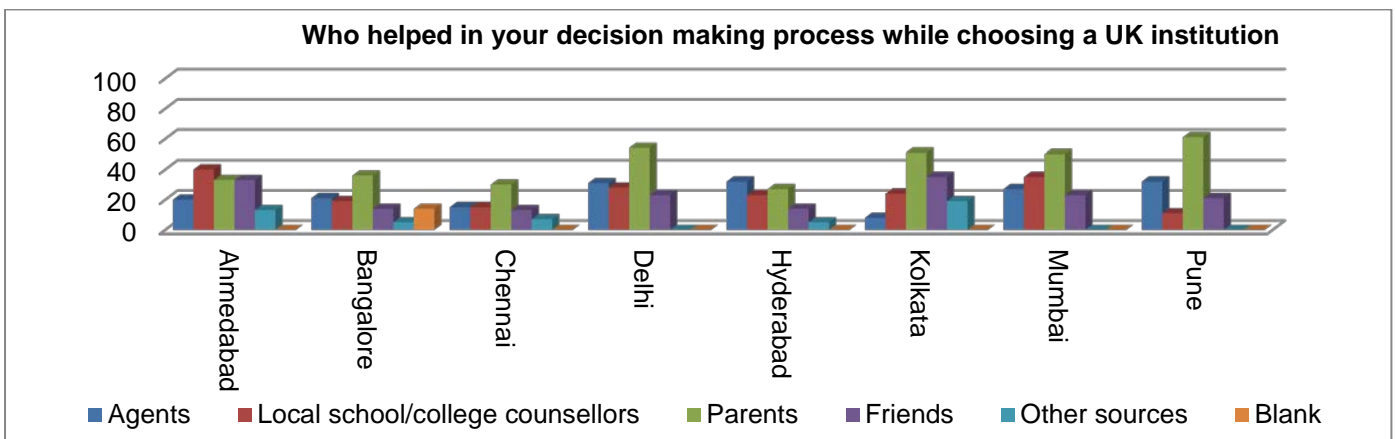
The above graph represents the profile of students that attended the pre-departure sessions in each city. Though India has witnessed an increase in number of students going to study at an Undergraduate level, the demand for Postgraduate courses is still dominant in the market.



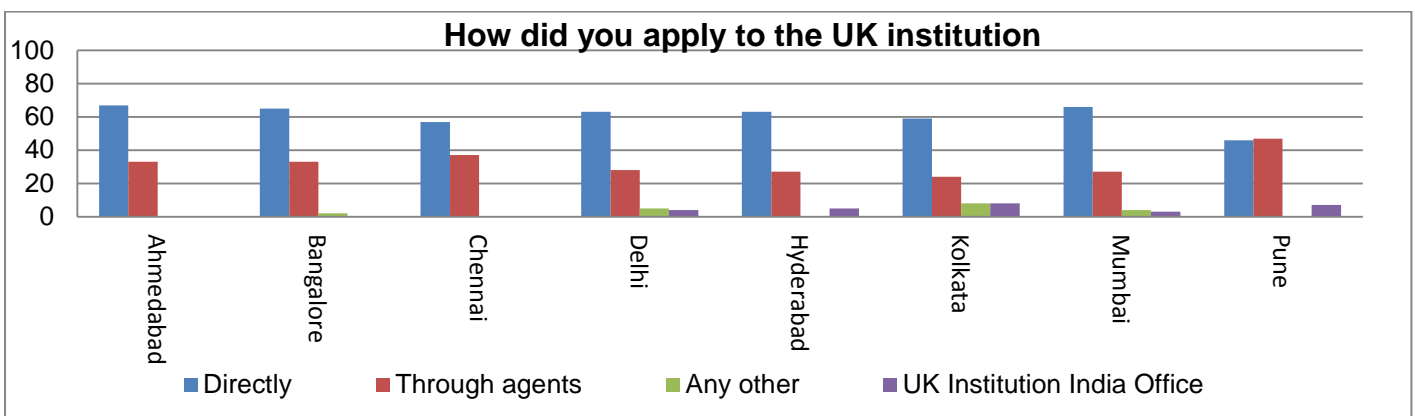
The above graph showcases the funding options selected by students going to the UK for the 2016 intake. Self-funding and scholarships are the most preferred by Indian students.



The above graph shows that students are now more reliant on information available on the internet as compared to agents. The Internet has become the prime source of information followed by information available with their local school/college counsellors.



The above graph shows that parents form an integral part in the decision making journey of an Indian student followed by friends, school or college counsellor and then the agent.



The above graph shows that most students applied directly to the UK institutions.

Pictures taken at the pre-departure sessions:



Pre-departure session in Ahmedabad



A house full of students in Mumbai



Alumni session at the Mumbai pre-departure session



Visa session at the Mumbai pre-departure session



Registration desk at the Chennai pre-departure session



Students at the Delhi pre-departure session



Students attending the alumni interaction in Kolkata