

## **Frequently Asked Questions : UK-India Mutual Recognition of Academic Qualifications**

### **1. What qualifications are covered by this agreement?**

The agreement covers qualifications typically used to access higher education (for example qualifications at Level 3 of the Regulated Qualifications Framework for England and Northern Ireland), plus bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in most subject areas.

### **2. Which subjects are not recognised as a part of this MRQ?**

Professional degrees in the fields of Engineering, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Law and Architecture are outside the scope of the MRQ. All other subject areas are covered under the agreement. Refer to paragraph 2.5 of the [MRQ agreement](#).

This agreement covers around 80 per cent of courses that Indian students choose to study in the UK.

### **3. Are subject areas such as computing, allied health (including medical imaging and public health) and veterinary medicine excluded?**

All professional qualifications are out of scope of MRQ. These include the fields mentioned above as well as veterinary medicine. It however should be noted that some professional qualifications are governed by their dedicated Council which issues license to operate. Some already have processes that allow for holders of UK degrees to practice in India. For example, holders of UK law degrees may apply to either central or state Bar Councils and take an exam which will allow them to practice.

### **4. Is there any plan to expand mutual recognition of qualifications to subjects excluded under the current agreement? When will more information about these subjects be released?**

The current agreement has been the first step for mutual recognition of qualifications. Work is underway to create a roadmap to expand this recognition, however there is no specific timeline at this point.

Readers should note that even among the 20 per cent of courses not covered by this agreement, some subject areas such as law have systems and processes which will allow graduates to have their qualifications recognised in India.

### **5. Will there be any change in the way law qualifications are recognised between the UK and India?**

The agreement does not make any change to the way these qualifications are recognised. Those looking to enter the law profession in either country can still directly contact the relevant professional body. There are processes that allow the degree holder from UK to directly apply to either central or state Bar Councils and take an exam which will allow them to practice.

**6. How do you envisage a level playing field between different institutions (UK and India) in terms of mutual recognition?**

This agreement is about qualifications and not institutions. The agreement covers all accredited and quality assured institutions from the two countries, so no barriers to specific institutions should exist (in either direction).

**7. Will an Indian PhD be equivalent to UK PhD? And will Indian PhDs be counted in points-based migration?**

A PhD from one country will be comparable to a PhD from the other (providing it is from a recognised institution). Eligibility for specific immigration routes was outside the scope of the agreement.

**8. The MRQ agreement states that qualifications awarded by branch campuses and through hybrid learning will be recognised, but those awarded through other transnational education arrangements will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, via UK ENIC and AIU respectively ([articles 3.3 and 3.4](#) read in conjunction with 2.6 and 2.7). What will be the process for evaluation and recognition of those qualifications?**

From the perspective of UK ENIC, comparability is established through a review of the qualification, with particular reference to learning outcomes. The mode of study is noted but is not a reason for lack of recognition, unless the programme is not quality assured or accredited.

In India, there has traditionally been a distinction in the acceptance of degrees awarded through distance learning arrangements, to those awarded through class-based study. The agreement ensures that all UK degrees will all now be considered, and in the case of branch campuses and hybrid learning, will all now be recognised. There will need to be follow-up work here with the AIU.

It should be noted that the final authority for deciding the individual cases will be AIU in India and ENIC in the UK and they will work to establish precedence and processes.

**9. Would the MRQ agreement apply to UK qualifications awarded in third countries too?**

Yes. The agreement covers UK qualifications, it does not exclude awards based on location of study.

**10. As a result of the MRQ, can credits offered by a foreign HEI in partnership with an Indian HEI be recognised through India's Academic Bank of Credits?**

The Indian ABC framework currently only covers Indian HEIs. It does not apply to foreign education institutions. Credit transfer / articulation is another area for follow-up work.<sup>11</sup>

**11. Franchised degrees are currently out of scope in India with the UGC's focus on twinning, dual and joint degrees. Will MRQ change that? Will there be new models of collaborative arrangements?**

The University Grants Commission's regulations on dual/joint/twinning are independent of the MRQ agreement. Hence, the new agreement it is not likely to change the guidance on franchised degrees or the UGC's definition of twinning, dual and joint degrees.

A copy of the UGC regulations for academic collaboration between Indian and foreign higher education institutions can be accessed [here](#).

**12. Are pathways / foundation courses included in the existing provisions of collaboration (twinning/joint/dual)? If no, then is there a way a pathways/foundation college can setup a branch in India?**

The agreement covers all qualifications that are considered level 3 programmes in the RQF. Therefore, where a pathway / foundation programme leads to a RQF level 3 programme, it would be covered by the agreement.

**13. For dual awards, are students required to study in the UK for a portion of the programme?**

Please note that dual awards are independent of the MRQ agreement. According to the UGC regulations for academic collaborations with foreign HEIs, the programmes under this are not allowed to be delivered in online and distance learning mode. It therefore means that the students will be required to study in the UK for the portion of the programme agreed between the partnering institutions.

**14. For articulation partnerships at UG level, can an Indian institution now also award a degree/diploma in the current framework?**

The regulations of joint and dual degree programmes for academic collaborations with foreign HEIs outlined in the UGC regulations not only states the minimum proportion of credits to be earned in each of the participating institutions but also about the award of the degree. For joint degrees, both institutions will award the degree through a single certificate upon completion while for dual degree programmes both institutions will award separate degrees at the same time upon completion. This is not affected by the MRQ agreement.

**15. When does the agreement become operational? Can students undertake or apply for research grants for PhD Programs if they finished masters from UK based institutions?**

From the perspective of the UK, the provisions of the agreement have already been put in place e.g. UK ENIC have changed their guidance in relation to Indian Standard XII examinations. On the Indian side, the signed agreement received the Indian Cabinet ex post facto approval on 7 September 2022 making it effective from then on.

**16. Will there be an in-country approval process for TNE agreements, and if so what would the timeline look like for that?**

This is not directly affected by the MRQ agreement. However, there is no longer a requirement to seek approval from the University Grants Commission for setting up academic collaborations to offer twinning, dual and joint degree programmes as long as the foreign higher education institution is in the top 1000 of Times Higher Education (THE) or QS World University ranking at the time of setting up the collaboration and the Indian higher education institution is either in the top 1000 of THE or QS world ranking, has a National Assessment and Accreditation Council score of 3.01 or more, or is in the top 100 of National Institutional Ranking Framework. However, it is expected that the Indian HEI shall seek approval from its appropriate authority like the Board of Governors/Board of Management/Executive Council for academic collaboration with the foreign HEI. Further details are available in the UGC regulations of May 2022.

The eligible list of Indian higher education institutions was provided by the University Grants Commission and has been shared by the British Council through its CARl website on 16 May 2022. This list can be accessed [here](#). The eligible UK higher education institutions from the top 1000 QS or THE world universities ranking list will be those who feature in the latest list of these two international ranking systems at the time of setting up collaboration. However, please note that this list applies specifically to twinning, dual and joint degree programmes – the MRQ agreement itself covers all accredited and quality assured institutions from the two countries.

You may also refer to the British Council's research on '[Exploring the outlook for UK-India Transnational Education partnerships](#)'.

**17. Will you be able to provide examples of best practice/templates of successful MOUs, and any 'check-list' that covers developing new partnerships?**

If this is a request to provide guidance on content for an institution-to-institution MoU to ensure recognition, then there is no template. If this is being asked for the TNE agreement, then there are no standard templates but there may be examples available on the participating university's website as voluntary public disclosure. Further, as per the UGC regulations, it is left to the Indian and foreign HEIs to decide mutually the requisite provisions in their agreement to offer twinning/joint/dual degree programmes such that they conform to rules, regulations and laws of their respective institution and country.

**18. Would there be any requirement in a TNE arrangement for UK universities to provide teaching staff from the UK in India?**

The regulations do not provide such stipulations and it will depend on the model that is agreed between the partners that is mutually agreeable.