
Strengthening institutional capacity for internationalisation in Indian higher education

Scoping study 2023



Contents

Executive summary	5
Introduction	6
Objectives	8
Policy context	8
Methodology	11
Phase 1 – Survey	12
Phase 2 – Focus groups and campus visits	14
Strategy	14
Finance	15
Infrastructure	16
Skills	18
Barriers and challenges	19
Findings	20
Recommendations	22
Capacity building programme(s)	22
Capacity building approach	23
State-based approach	24
Monitoring and evaluation	24
Association of Indian Universities (AIU)	24
Next steps	25
Appendices	26
Appendix 1 - Survey questions for phase 1	26
Appendix 2 - List of survey respondents	28



Executive Summary

This scoping study examines the internationalisation efforts in Indian higher education institutions, through a survey and focus group discussions. Its objective is to identify areas to target for future capacity building. The findings reveal both strengths and areas for improvement in the institutions' internationalisation strategies. Key findings of the survey include:

- approximately 19 per cent of institutions did not have an international office, and staffing levels varied greatly among those that did
- lack of representation from international offices in the institution's leadership group was identified in around 22 per cent of institutions
- roughly 30 per cent of institutions lacked a formal international strategy document
- while recognising the benefits of international students, support and services for them varied across institutions
- barriers to recruiting international students were mentioned, but most institutions did not list specific obstacles.

The focus group discussions highlight the need for leadership development, staff training, and sharing of best practices to enhance internationalisation efforts. Based on the findings, the study provides recommendations for capacity building within Indian higher education, including the development of core and additional modules addressing various aspects of internationalisation.

The recommended training approach involves a blended delivery model, combining face-to-face and online interactions. Certification, self-assessment, and reflective components are suggested to foster engagement. A study visit to the UK and the establishment of a mentoring programme are proposed to further support learning and networking opportunities.

The report concludes by recommending the initiation of the first round of capacity building modules through a collaborative approach (both introductory and advanced), involving both higher education institutions and private training organisations. Pilot phases could specifically target the states of Maharashtra and Karnataka. The potential for establishing an alumni group of champions and future interventions for the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and the Indian Network for Internationalisation of Higher Education (INIHE) network are also highlighted.

Introduction

This report sets out to summarise the findings of a recent scoping study into the institutional capacity for internationalisation within the higher education sector in India. This work follows a series of policy interventions in India (at national and state level) that set out to encourage and simplify internationalisation. In particular, the work is in response to the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP2020), the 2021 University Grants Commission Guidelines (UGC guidelines/Guidelines) for Internationalisation of Higher Education published by the University Grants Commission of India (UGC).

The work has been commissioned by the British Council, primarily as the UK is well known for having a higher education sector that is deeply international, with many decades of experience of this work being embedded in the structure of British universities. Almost all universities in the UK have an 'International Office' function. The structure of these vary according to the institution type and size, and it is common for each institution to have an executive team member with responsibility for internationalization. They often lead teams of over 50 staff in the pursuit of objectives outlined in a clear internationalisation strategy. These objectives would generally include a focus on recruitment of international students and the development of international partnerships, to work towards wider university goals. As an example, some UK universities have objectives to source up to 50 per cent of their student population from overseas, or to offer 50 per cent of their students an international mobility experience at a partner institution. This background and experience positions the UK as a 'partner of choice' for Indian universities who are seeking to respond to recent policy updates. By laying out the current scope of internationalisation in the Indian HE sector, the report seeks to define a potential roadmap of training and development to support growth in the existing capacity. In addition to defining the training needs, the report will highlight existing best practices within the Indian higher education sector and identify mechanisms for creating communities of practice at a domestic and international level.

The report, with resultant interventions and their impact, will also be of interest to those based outside of India, seeking to partner with Indian universities. To enable greater collaboration between the UK and India, as well as India and other countries, there should be a common vocabulary and shared understanding of structures and drivers of each other's sectors. This report will highlight where work could be targeted to foster a shared language and remove potential barriers to achieving internationalisation objectives.

The scoping study is split into four sections:

1. **Policy context:** What is driving the internationalisation agenda in India?
2. **Survey:** Results of a survey of Indian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to establish the current capacity for internationalisation.
3. **Focused discussions:** A summary of outcomes from a series of focus groups and campus visits in India.
4. **Findings and recommendations:** Common emerging themes and how should we respond.

There are several stakeholder groups relevant to this work, who have been consulted during the scoping study and will also inform the next steps around this work, following its release. These stakeholders include:

- Association of Indian University (AIU)
- state government of Maharashtra
- state government of Karnataka-Karnataka State Higher Education Council KSHEC)
- British Universities International Liaison Association (BUILA)
- British Council
- universities in India
- Universities in UK
- international education consultants

In undertaking this study, the authors acknowledge the limitations of the data collection due to sampling. The results of the study must therefore be read with an understanding that there is likely to have been a bias towards institutions and individuals who are more invested, and advanced in, the internationalisation of Indian higher education. In addition to this, potential bias based on the geographic location of the focus groups, and therefore the institutions involved, must be taken into account.

This work is part of a series of activities that the British Council will be delivering this year to enhance acceptability of qualifications between the education systems of both countries. The activities will include knowledge sharing and creating a platform for resolution of degree equivalence queries of HEIs in India and the UK.

Objectives

This scoping study aims to:

- further develop the understanding of the context in which the Indian higher education sector is operating in relation to internationalisation
- define the baseline capacity within the Indian higher education sector for further internationalisation, in line with the UGC guidelines and other local Indian regulations
- gain insight into the drivers for internationalisation, at a sector and institutional level
- further define the meaning of internationalisation for the Indian higher education sector
- to outline the skills, need and potential training approach for colleagues engaged in internationalisation in the Indian higher education sector.

Policy Context

The NEP2020¹ was launched in July 2020 and outlines the vision for India's education system. The policy is a comprehensive framework covering all forms of education- from elementary education to higher education. It also includes adult education and vocational training, in both rural and urban India.

The role of higher education within India's economy and society is a key focus of the NEP2020. The Indian government's stated ambition is that 'the higher education system must, at the earliest, be readjusted, re-vamped, and re-energised' to ensure it supplies India with a highly skilled workforce, to fill the future employment opportunities within the emerging knowledge economy.

In addition to a 'revamped' higher education system, which includes a focus on creating more multi- disciplinary universities, the NEP2020 also wants to restore India's place within the global education network and welcome students and scholars to India, called Viswa Guru. The report reminds policy makers that India's ancient universities, such as Takshashila and Nalanda, 'had thousands of students from India and the world studying in vibrant multidisciplinary environments' and it is the government's desire to reintroduce this great Indian tradition.

In regard to the internationalisation of India's higher education system, the NEP2020 is succinct. It is reproduced here in full: 'India should be promoted as a global study destination providing premium education at affordable costs and restore its role as a Viswa Guru. High performing Indian universities will be encouraged to set up campuses in other countries, and similarly, select universities (e.g., those from among the top 1000 universities in the world for dual/joint degrees, or top 500 for Indian campuses) will be permitted to operate in India. A legislative framework facilitating such entry will be put in place, and such universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory, governance, and content norms on par with other autonomous institutions of India. Further, research collaboration and student exchanges between the Indian institutions and global institutions will be promoted through special efforts. Further, the credits acquired in foreign universities will also be permitted to be counted for the award of a degree.'

The legislative framework referred to in the NEP2020 has been taken forward by the UGC, who have produced a detailed framework to enable the internationalisation of India's higher education system.

1 National Education Policy, Ministry of Education, Government of India, available here: https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf

University Grants Commission guidelines

In July 2021, UGC published their Guidelines for Internationalisation of Higher Education². The Guidelines detail the opportunities that exist for Indian higher education providers to increase their global outreach, to increase the sector's research and innovation capabilities, and improve their institutional ranking globally, while focusing on improving the quality of its teaching and learning processes.

With regard to global rankings, the UGC guidelines point out that in the QS 2022 World University Ranking, 35 Indian institutions featured in the ranking. It also mentioned that 63 HEIs are listed in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Ranking 2021. The Guidelines go on to say that there is latent potential for many more Indian HEIs to do equally well in the global rankings. The Guidelines also highlight the fact that the internationalisation of Indian universities may be the catalyst that helps to propel them up the rankings and service the needs of a growing population of globally mobile scholars and students.

The UGC have set out five complementary objectives within the Guidelines for Internationalisation which are:

- to make India an attractive study destination for foreign students
- to foster international competencies in their faculty and students
- to develop a global mindset of their learners and shape them as global citizens with deep-rooted pride in being Indian
- to promote active linkage building between Indian and foreign HEIs
- to improve global ranking in internationalisation indicators.

The UGC guidelines also give detailed practical advice on how an Indian HEI may collaborate with a foreign university, whether this be through credit recognition under a twinning arrangement; academic and research collaboration; or advice on how to build the university's brand abroad to attract international students to their institution.

One of the key elements within the UGC guidelines is their recommendation that all higher education institutions establish an Office for International Affairs (OIA) to act as a single point of contact for foreign students, academics, and universities. The roles and responsibilities of the OIA are the key ingredients in each university's internationalisation strategy. Therefore, we are listing in full the activities they need to undertake, as recommended by the UGC, which are to:

- coordinate all matters relating to welcoming and supporting foreign students
- be the single point of contact for carrying out all collaborative activities with foreign institutions
- act as a liaison body between foreign students and the sponsoring agency
- address the grievances of foreign students in all matters
- be the single point of contact for foreign students' registration with FRROs/e-FRRO
- facilitate networking of international students with fellow students
- extend all possible help to the foreign students to adapt to the new cultural environment and make their stay in India comfortable and enriching
- provide support services for integration of international students into the institution's academic and social activities
- disseminate information related to the admission process amongst prospective foreign students

2 Guidelines for Internationalisation of Higher Education, University Grants Commission, available here: www.ugc.gov.in/e-book/IHE%20Guideline/mobile/index.html

- conceptualise and engage in promotional activities and adopt an effective approach towards brand building campaigns abroad
- address the concerns of Indian students, under twinning arrangements
- implement and monitor institution level strategies for internationalisation
- maintain records and disseminate information related to internationalisation
- maintain database of foreign students, including alumni, and carry out surveys on their needs and priorities
- make available information relating to internationalisation on HEI's websites and provide the same to government and regulatory bodies, whenever asked for
- share relevant information, including the contact details of the OIA, in website and to government and regulatory bodies

UK-India Mutual Recognition of Academic Qualifications (MRQ)

In July 2022, the UK and Indian governments signed a landmark agreement whereby each country officially agreed to recognise each other's higher education qualifications. The Mutual Recognition of Qualifications (MRQ) will not only allow students to seamlessly transfer between each country and continue their studies but will also allow UK and Indian universities to develop dual and joint degrees and expand twinning agreements, as laid out by India's UGC.

The UK-India MRQ agreement covers an estimated 80 per cent of courses that Indian students opt to study in the UK. The ability to develop dual or joint degrees applies to HEIs that are listed in the top 1,000 universities as listed in the QS or THE world university rankings. Beyond this, there are further specific mechanisms that allow for mutual recognition of professional qualifications such as those required for medicine and law.

The UK-India MRQ policy creates the opportunities not just for Indian students to study in the UK but will also encourage UK students to travel to India to study as part of the UK government's flagship Turing Scheme and the Welsh government's Taith Programme, both of which foster UK students' global mobility through international education exchanges. This is a particularly salient point for Indian institutions seeking to further internationalise, to redress the balance of the flow of students between India and the UK.

It is expected that the flow of undergraduate and postgraduate students between the two countries will increase in the coming years. This will ultimately contribute to, and help expand Indian HEIs' international footprint.

The NEP2020 and the subsequent UGC guidelines on internationalisation, establishing an estimated 174 international officers in Indian HEIs to promote internationalisation of Indian universities and UK- India MRQ agreement, has led to a step-change within the Indian higher education sector. The Indian government's encouragement for universities to 'go global' has led to a need for a better understanding of the capacity that currently exists within India's vast higher education sector. To better understand the sector's baseline, the British Council in India commissioned the BUILA to undertake an in-country research project entitled, *Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Internationalisation in Indian Higher Education*. The research project consisted of face-to-face, on-campus meetings and focus groups with vice chancellors, pro vice-chancellors and senior management drawn from a range of HEIs. These took place in the cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Hubli. In addition, the focus groups were supplemented with a qualitative online questionnaire that was completed by vice chancellors, pro vice-chancellors, and senior managers at HEIs from across India.

Methodology

This study was approached in several phases, including a desk research phase to contextualise the policy environment. Primary research was conducted in two phases, including a survey and a series of focus groups with key stakeholders. Research was conducted in April and May 2023.

The survey was designed to capture feedback on the experiences of Indian universities from a range of backgrounds, including state, central, deemed, autonomous, self-financed and institutions of national importance. The questions in the survey (listed in Appendix 1) aimed to collect the scope of internationalisation activity already undertaken by universities, and the support that was in place to achieve this, both strategically and operationally.

The focus groups were structured to follow up from the survey results and enable the researchers to probe further into the background and decision-making approach within institutions that has led to the current approach. Furthermore, the focus groups provided a good opportunity to discuss the ambitions of the institutions, and how these could be supported through additional capacity building.

The research team was led by BUILA and participants were drawn from a range of backgrounds including:

- professional services staff at UK universities
- academic staff at UK universities
- commercial staff from a UK-based international HE consultancy
- an independent international education consultant

This research approach was adopted to ensure we captured as wide a range of responses as possible, in addition to enabling the research team to interrogate the meaning and drivers behind responses. As with similarly designed studies, the research has a potential bias towards those more likely to engage with the subject matter, and therefore the analysis of findings will take this into account.

Phase 1 – Survey

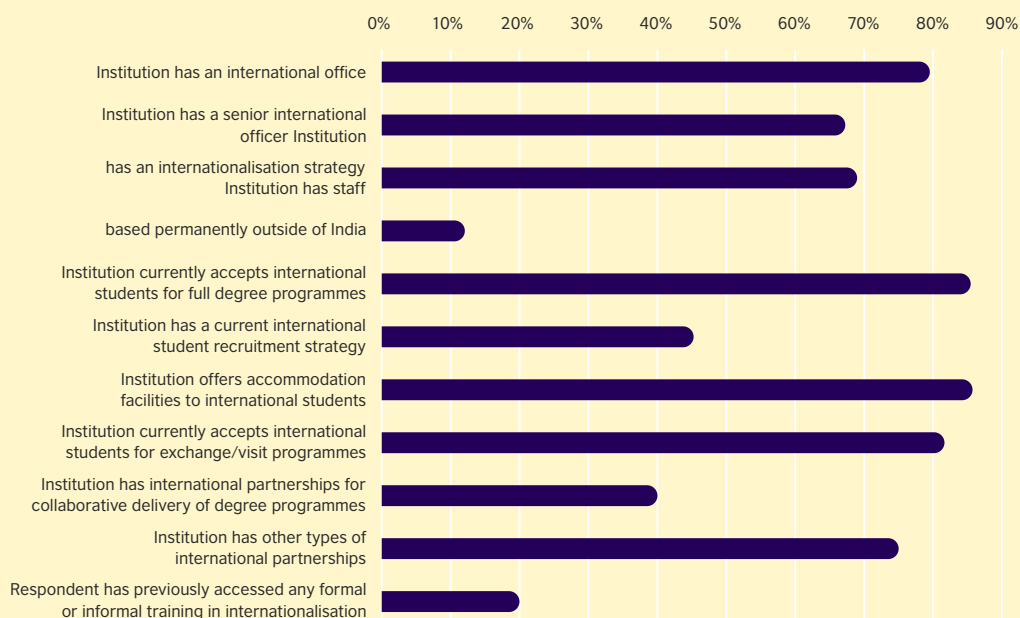
In April 2023, an on-line survey was distributed by the British Council in India to vice chancellors, pro vice-chancellors and senior managers at HEIs drawn from across India. The purpose of the survey was to better understand the institutions' current international strategies, and capacities, and to gauge how institutions were adapting in light of the publication of the NEP2020; the introduction of the UGC guidelines on Internationalisation; and following the signing of the UK-India MRQ.

Summary

- 60 HIEs responded from over a dozen states including those in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Gujarat, Punjab, Kerala as well as institutions with multiple campuses in several locations across India.
- The size of the HIEs varied considerably, ranging from 700,000 students to institutions with less than 1,000 students.
- Approximately 19 per cent of responding HIEs did not have an 'international office' (or similar 'office of global affairs/global engagement').
- 81 per cent of responding institutions said they had an international office.
- For those HIEs that did have an international office, staffing levels varied from one staff member to large teams of 16 people that supported international students and the relevant committees. One responding institution listed 50 staff members within the international office.
- Approximately 33 per cent of responding institutions lack a representative drawn from the international office on the leadership group of the institution, such as its governing council.
- Approximately 30 per cent of responding institutions do not have an 'international strategy (e.g. an approved document outlining the institution's approach to all types of internationalisation).
- Over 80 per cent of responding institutions do not have staff based permanently outside India. Those that did have staff overseas listed countries such as Nepal, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bhutan, European Union countries (EU) and Bangladesh.
- All respondents recognised the benefits of welcoming international students to their universities. They listed a wide range of benefits: cross-cultural exchanges, knowledge sharing, enhanced global reputation, increased enrolment and revenues – both for the university and local economy, appreciating cultural diversity, helping prepare students for a globalised workforce, and developing global leadership skills and good citizenship.
- 90 per cent of responding institutions accept international students on full degree programmes.
- The number of current international students enrolled at the responding universities varied – for those institutions who are just starting the process and have no international enrolments to those who currently have 3,000 international students, from a range of countries in the Asia-Pacific, Middle East and Africa.

- The question of financial support and whether institutions offered scholarships elicited a varied response. Most would only offer a scholarship via the Indian government funded Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), who seem to act as the biggest sponsor of international study amongst the respondents.
- The support for international students, both pre-arrival and on-campus, varied amongst the respondents. The majority hosted an orientation programme while some provided a ‘buddy’ or mentor to support new international students. Some institutions are initiating a support programme while others offer little support beyond what local Indian students receive.
- 86 per cent of responding institutions provide accommodation for international students.
- Less than half (45 per cent) of responding institutions had an international student recruitment strategy (e.g. a document that outlines the tactics that should be taken to recruit international students and relevant Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- Several respondents highlighted barriers to welcoming international students to their institutions, such as the support infrastructure needing to be in place or that most of the academic programmes are in a regional language. However, the vast majority of respondents did not list any barriers to the recruitment of international students.
- 82 per cent of responding institutions currently accept students for exchange/visit programmes while only 40 per cent have partnerships to deliver degree programmes (e.g., articulation, twinning, joint and dual degrees).
- 75 per cent of responding institutions have other types of international partnerships (such as student exchanges/staff exchanges/research, etc.).
- Only 20 per cent of responding institutions had access to formal or informal training in internationalisation of higher education, this had come from existing international university partners, the Institute of International Education (IIE) or the British Council.

Responses to scoping survey - April 2023



Phase 2 – Focus groups and campus visits

Focus groups were coordinated by the British Council India team and took place in April 2023. Focus groups were held in Mumbai, Bangalore and Delhi. The invited attendees to these focus groups were drawn from a variety of institutional backgrounds, in order to capture a wide range of viewpoints and levels of experience.

In addition to structured focus groups in three locations, the research team also visited campuses of three universities in Mumbai, one university in Bangalore and one university in Hubballi. These institution visits enabled the research team to hear more details about the internationalisation efforts by a small group of universities, as well as to see evidence of how some campuses had been set up to support international students and internationalisation projects, in terms of physical infrastructure.

The outcomes of the focus groups are arranged by theme in the following paragraphs.

Strategy

In this segment of the focus groups the researchers set out to establish institutional approaches to internationalisation. Firstly, by understanding the drivers for this work and then unpicking the strategic approaches that institutions have taken.

The starting point of all conversations was to approach the definition of internationalisation with participants. This was followed by a discussion about why this was a priority, which resulted in lively conversations. The definitions generally aligned with the ambitions set out by the UGC in their 2022 Guidelines (discussed above, in the 'Policy context' section), though the focus expanded to include:

- world-class institutions - as individual universities set out to be 'world-class' through wider strategies, they see internationalisation as a dependency to achieving this
- graduate outcomes - to provide students with the best outcomes once they graduate (employability in particular), institutions were seen to be required to expose students to an international environment. The definition of an 'international environment' was expansive and could be aligned with the concept of 'internationalisation at home' as shared by the UGC.
- Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) - perhaps a legacy understanding of internationalisation, the idea that universities would need to 'collect' MoUs with partner institutions seemed to be a key component of undertaking international activity.

Participants in the focus groups were familiar with the NEP2020 and UGC push for internationalisation of Indian higher education, and provided a range of responses to questions about why their own institutions were pursuing this agenda. It is notable that the majority of institutions have been engaged in some kind of internationalisation work since before the publication of the NEP2020. The rationale for undertaking this work

primarily included; the provision of a better learning environment for students, a more attractive and productive working environment for academic staff, and supporting the reputation and brand of the universities amongst prospective students and staff. It was suggested that this is slightly different from the UK HE context, where the above points still stand, though an additional driver for internationalisation is the income from tuition fees and other commercial projects. When discussing this point, the majority of Indian universities confirmed that the income gained from internationalisation activities was largely invested back into resources to support further internationalisation, rather than feeding any wider institutional financial driver. In some cases, it was confirmed that the pursuit of internationalisation activities was actually an overall cost to the institution, rather than income. There was a clear mix of strategic approaches in place across the sector. Those universities that already had in place a senior leader for internationalisation (such as a dean/vice president of international relations/affairs or similar) were more likely to be able to describe the strategic objectives of the institution in relation to internationalisation. The senior leader role was most often an academic member of staff who was in the role for a fixed-term period, often selected for success in prior internationalisation projects (such as research collaboration) or for having an international education background (e.g. a PhD achieved overseas). In terms of documentation there was a spectrum of responses ranging from nothing to a stand-alone internationalisation strategy. The majority had a clear reference to internationalisation in a general institution strategy or policy, sometimes listed on their website. However, there was a clear need for development in this area, if only to support internal communication of the institutions' internationalisation objectives. Where strategies were documented and available, these tended to include strategic ambitions for the types of activity to be undertaken (e.g. promotion, collaboration, research) though there were limited examples of documented KPIs to outline what the targets in these categories would be.

Internationalisation activities are suggested in the UGC guidelines, though individual institutions have prioritised according to their own agendas. Some activities were seen as more 'high value' in terms of the benefits that they will bring the students and staff of the university. These include student and staff short-term mobility partnerships, long-term visiting international faculty (e.g. one year) or permanent appointments, internationalisation of curriculum, support for visiting international students. Lower priority activities included establishment of twinning partnerships and investment in international student recruitment campaigns/structures. The rationale for the prioritisation was unclear and though it varied by institution, there was some consensus around the lack of capacity for the latter, and the expectation that the former activities might yield faster results.

In general, there was a stark contrast between the public and private universities that participated in this element of the study. While most of the private universities had clear goals (if not strategies) and enabling systems for achieving them, many of the public universities lacked institutional vision, structure and resources.

Finance

Some internationalisation activities that are being prioritised, e.g., student mobility, require funding to underpin them. There are limited central financial resources to support these projects, though ad hoc funding has been made available for well-defined projects when possible. Other internationalisation activities, e.g., international student

recruitment, are revenue generating though the balance between these two types of activities is often unequal in institutions.

International student tuition fees are charged at up to five times the domestic rate, with lower multiples for SAARC nations. The fee setting process varies by institution, with some charging flat fees and others making fee setting decisions on the basis of competitor levels and salary expectations of graduates. Income generated by this activity is ring-fenced to a specific set of uses, largely to be reinvested in activities to support further internationalisation, such as scholars and OIA staff. This is clearly different to the UK context, where international tuition fee income subsidises other core institution activity. This, in turn, means that the direct financial incentives to undertake more internationalisation activity are limited given that much activity in this area would be income neutral. Indirectly, there are more financial incentives to engage in internationalisation activity, such as the potential to leverage greater international reputation benefits, better placement results and stronger research outputs.

Scholarships for international students are available at many universities, up to 100 per cent. The criteria for awarding scholarships appeared to, almost always, be linked to academic merit and/or financial need. There were very limited examples of scholarships targeted to strategically grow international student recruitment or to further engage with a particular partner. Again, this was a slightly different approach to UK institutions who regularly used an 'India Scholarship' (for example) to better target student recruitment of Indian students to UK universities.

While some of the institutions involved in the focus groups were able to share examples of staff undertaking promotional activities, there was less assuredness around using institutional funds to openly undertake large international marketing and/or recruitment campaigns. Interestingly, some of the examples of attending overseas education fairs included senior management of the institution, rather than more operational staff involved in the support of international students.

Other than staffing and scholarships, a large financial cost to international universities when recruiting international students is related to agent commission. Student recruitment agents hold a significant place in the supply chain for international student recruitment. The general model involves a 'payment on success' commission, based on the tuition fee payable by the student. During this section of the conversion, the vast majority of Indian universities felt unprepared to engage in this type of activity and there was uncertainty on the regulations for use of funds in this way.

Infrastructure

A key part of internationalisation is ensuring the institution is well structured to support the strategic ambitions. This ranges from physical infrastructure, such as accommodation, to the portfolio of courses on offer, and the staffing in place to support these activities. It also extends to the systems and processes that are needed in order to be able to undertake activities.

Accommodation is seen to be a key issue, both for students and institutions. There has long been feedback that standard accommodation (hostel) facilities that are offered by Indian universities for domestic students would not meet the requirements of international students - particularly those from Europe and North America. In response,

many Indian universities have now established specific 'international hostels' that more closely meet these specifications, including single/twin bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms. This was a particular aspect of internationalisation that universities involved in focus groups were keen to point to when demonstrating their investment in internationalisation efforts.

The portfolio of courses on offer was linked to internationalisation in several different ways. Firstly, in terms of 'internationalisation at home', many universities had an understanding that existing curriculum could be adapted to include more international case studies and/or international faculty. Secondly, the idea that the portfolio could be adapted or enhanced to attract international students received mixed responses. The UGC guidelines suggest some topics such as Indian art, culture, yoga etc. could be offered in the portfolio to attract international students, and this had been trialed by some with mixed success. These courses, when offered alongside more traditional disciplines such as business or engineering, ensured that there was some additional appeal for international students, and had the added benefit that it supported the cultural induction for students. There were no examples of universities introducing entirely new degree programmes specifically to attract international students, as can sometimes happen in other countries. A particularly important part of the infrastructure of a university to support internationalisation is the staff who deliver the activities, ranging from support for international students to partnerships development and student recruitment. These roles are generally based within an international affairs/relations office or similar. Of the institutions attending the focus groups, the majority had at least one staff member in post, with a small number (up to five) being the average. In these cases, it was generally a small team consisting of a head/dean role, supported by one to two student support staff and one to two partnerships administrators. A small number of institutions were more established in terms of staffing, and reported that over 30 staff engaged in internationalisation activities in one case. In these cases, the institution was also advanced in its pursuit of activities, with advanced international partnerships in place as well as overseas campus presence.

The systems and processes that underpin internationalisation activities are important to consider when assessing capacity of infrastructure. This extends to admissions, immigration support, partnerships approvals and record keeping as well as process documentation to support staff approaches to specific situations. Institutions reported that the AIU had provided guidance on international qualification equivalencies, and this was applied consistently across the majority of institutions. However, there was less confidence regarding document validation and veracity, an area of significant concern for some international universities. Immigration support was not typically provided at a detailed level by the majority of institutions, though some state institutions had experience of inviting immigration officials to campus to support students with documentation and other immigration matters.

Finally, the structures in place relating to marketing and recruitment of international students are an important consideration. Again, there were a variety of experiences related to the degree of experience and the relative value of international students in the institutional strategies. At the basic end of the scale, the majority of institutions had some reference to international students on their websites, with a description of the relevant tuition fee and admissions processes. This might also extend to a specific brochure or publication that could be distributed to campus visitors or at key events. At the more advanced end of the spectrum, institutions described approaches that would

be more familiar in the UK, including staff with specific marketing responsibilities (including digital and social media focused roles), and a planned campaign of recruitment activity at international events in key source markets. The latter was almost exclusively confined to private institutions. Where there were examples of state and central funded institutions engaging in international recruitment events, it was mainly limited to one-off events coordinated with other institutions, such as the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs (NAFSA) in the USA, the European Association for International Education (EAIE) and the Asia-Pacific Association for International Education (APAIE), rather than a sustained campaign. As referred to in the 'finance' section above, student recruitment agents can play a key role in the recruitment of international students. The participants in the focus groups had very limited examples of engaging international agents to support their recruitment.

Skills

Given that one of the key outcomes of this report is to assess the capacity of institutions, with the aim to develop a potential training solution for internationalisation, the focus groups spent some time considering the skills that their institutions already have, the skills that they would be required to develop in line with the UGC guidelines and what type of training might help in delivering these. It was clear from the conversations that the skills need is more complex than providing a one-dimensional 'howto' in internationalisation. With the range of experience levels across different institution types, as well as the needs varying by staff role, we have grouped this into three sections..

Firstly, there is a skills need for 'operational staff' within institutions who are generally undertaking front line roles in internationalisation. This includes those involved in marketing and recruitment, partnership development and student support. These can be very technical roles, though there is commonality across these that could be assessed to develop a programme to upskill individuals engaged in this operational work. This includes, for example, communication skills, inter-cultural awareness and internationalisation vernacular. Beyond this, there could be an opportunity to develop technical skills in partnership with relevant industries such as the marketing sector in India, in addition to legal and financial organisations that might be relevant to the partnership staff.

Secondly, there is a skills need for the 'strategic staff' within institutions who are accountable for the delivery of the internationalisation activity. These roles are normally the dean of international relations/global affairs who have taken on executive responsibility for the delivery of all of the internationalisation elements. The skills need for these roles was reported to be very different from the operational staff, with more focus on the development of internationalisation strategies and gaining senior stakeholder buy-in from across the institution. Beyond this, it was considered that these roles would benefit from having greater awareness of the global environment for internationalisation in education, such as global student flows (data) and the operational drivers of internationalisation in other countries (strategies) to help them develop a relevant and strong proposition in their own institution.

Thirdly, the groups identified a training need for all staff (academic and professional/administrative services) in institutions that were seeking to become more internationalised. This might perhaps be a more basic level of awareness-raising, to

ensure that all staff are aware of the institutional ambition and approaches in internationalisation. However, it could also extend to cultural awareness training and ultimately it would help to galvanise the workforce towards the institutional ambitions, perhaps even engage some of them in support of the work that was being undertaken in the central international relations office.

Barriers and challenges

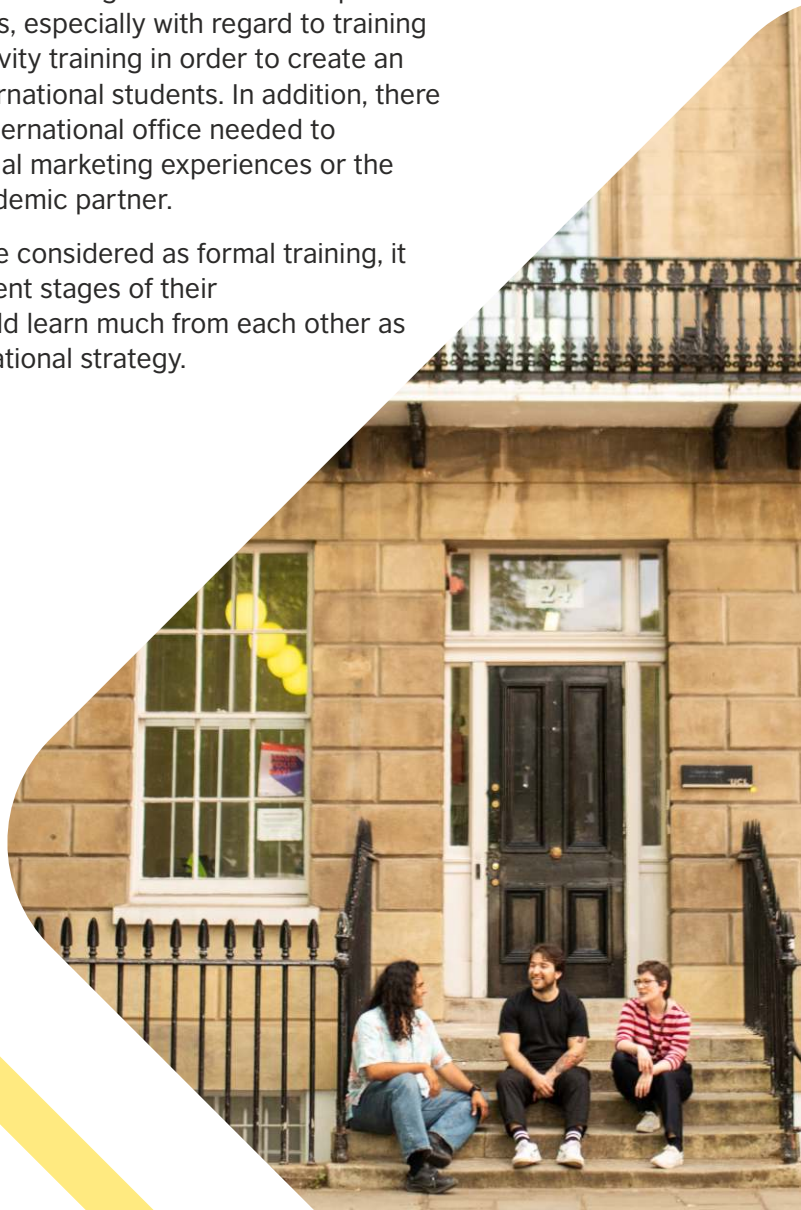
In seeking to understand the capacity for internationalisation, the focus group participants considered some of the most prominent barriers and challenges that they faced, or thought they might face, in their internationalisation journeys. There were several themes in this section of the conversations, and some initially brought up some of the challenges raised above, such as lack of suitable accommodation, the wrong course portfolio or a lack of human resource. However beyond this, there was an interesting conversation about the balance between domestic student needs and internationalisation objectives in institutions, which is not too dissimilar from the conversation in some UK universities in 2023. There is an overwhelming demand from domestic students for HE, and some institutions felt uncomfortable about the need to balance this with a parallel demand to boost internationalisation. In most cases this included the presence of international students on campus in India, effectively 'taking places' from domestic students. While ultimately it was recognised that the benefits of internationalisation served all students, this balancing act was seen as a challenge that needed constant management. Interestingly, the funding for internationalisation was raised by most participants as a potential barrier. The activities undertaken in this field of work were seen as a significant cost to the institutions, even when considering the potential additional fee income that could be gained through hosting more international students on campus. This is reflected in the conversations that many institutions considered some of the higher value internationalisation activities to be 'experiences' for their own staff and students, which often came at a direct cost to the institution. There seemed to be relatively few examples of institutions whose internationalisation activity was self-sustaining from international income; most had a central cost that was being subsidised by other activities or through external funding.

Findings

This section contains a summary of the findings from both phases of the research.

- Overall, it was recognised that HIEs are complex organisations. Each was at a different stage of implementing their Internationalisation strategy – and also defining what the word internationalisation meant to them as an institution.
- Approximately 19 per cent HIEs did not have an ‘international office’ (or similar office of ‘global affairs/global engagement’). For those HIEs that did have an international office, staffing levels varied from one staff member to ‘large teams’ of 16 people that supported international students and the relevant committees. One responding institution listed 50 staff members within the international office. Approximately 22 per cent of responding institutions lacked a representative drawn from the international office on the leadership group of the institution, such as its governing council.
- Approximately 30 per cent of responding institutions do not have an ‘international strategy’ (e.g. an approved document outlining the institution’s approach to all types of internationalisation). HIEs that took part in the face-to-face meetings were immensely proud of their internationalisation strategy, but it was noted that for quite a few participating institutions, it was not a written strategy.
- Another key area that was identified was the need for leadership development for senior staff to ensure an internationalisation strategy is developed, understood and embedded within the institution. Several participants described their strategy as ‘organic’ rather than proactive and that an international collaboration often resulted from an individual academic exchange rather than from an overarching university-wide strategy.
- All respondents recognised the benefits of welcoming international students to their university and listed a wide range of benefits: cross-cultural exchanges, knowledge sharing, enhanced global reputation, increased enrolment and revenues – both for the university and local economy, appreciation for cultural diversity, helping prepare students for a globalised workforce, and developing global leadership skills and good citizenship.
- The support for international students, both pre-arrival and on-campus, varied amongst the survey respondents. The majority hosted an orientation programme while some provided a ‘buddy’ or mentor to support new international students. Some institutions have initiated a support programme while others offered little support beyond what local Indian students receive.
- Approximately 86 per cent of responding institutions did not have staff based permanently outside India. Those that did have staff overseas were in countries such as Nepal, UAE, Bhutan, the EU and Bangladesh.
- The number of current international students enrolled at the responding universities varied – those institutions who had just started the process and had no international enrolments to those who had 3,000 international students from a range of countries in the Asia-Pacific, Middle East and Africa.

- The question of financial support and whether institutions offered scholarships enlisted a varied response. Most only offered a scholarship via the Indian government funded Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), who seemed to act as the biggest sponsor of international study among the respondents.
- Several participants highlighted barriers to welcoming international students to their institutions, such as the lack of support infrastructure that needs to be in place or the fact that most of the academic programmes are in a regional language. However, the vast majority of respondents did not list any barriers to the recruitment of international students.
- The question of formal training in internationalisation of higher education was well received and a range of training requirements were listed; to develop the ability to learn and share best practices, to learn to map courses for potential collaboration, to actively seek out student exchanges and partnerships, to be able to set up an international office to ensure it meets all the quality standards, to understand the barriers to internationalisation and find ways to navigate them, and develop the ability to strategically plan for the long-term. This was expanded upon in the focus groups by some participants, especially with regard to training in international cultural awareness and sensitivity training in order to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for international students. In addition, there was a need to define what skills staff in the international office needed to demonstrate, such as the need for international marketing experiences or the ability to identify a potential international academic partner.
- While the sharing of best practices may not be considered as formal training, it was highlighted that HIEs in India are at different stages of their internationalisation journey and that they could learn much from each other as they define and embed their individual international strategy.

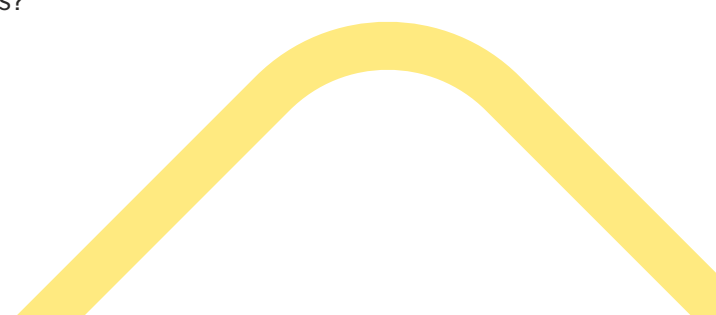


Recommendations

Capacity Building for internationalisation could, and does, take many forms. This includes attendance at higher education sector conferences, both domestic and on the global stage (such as Going Global/NAFSA/EAIE/APAIE), as well as joining associations and mailing lists, seeking mentorships and attendance of training workshops and modules. In considering the outcomes of both phases of the scoping study, the authors would recommend the following approach for the building of internationalisation capacity within Indian higher education. It is clear that there are differential needs according to institution type, as well as the roles that undertake internationalisation within institutions.

Capacity building programme(s)

A core module to be undertaken by the strategic lead for internationalisation in institutions. In some cases, the strategic lead will be the vice chancellor, as a delegated senior role might not have been created. This might include the following content:

- Self-Audit Tool - an opportunity for each institution to audit their own internationalisation experiences.
 - What is internationalisation?
 - What does it mean to you and your institution?
 - What does it mean to other stakeholders?
 - Why should you do it?
 - Data and policy review
 - What is the current context in India?
 - What are the local and global driving forces of education internationalisation?
 - Global student flows
 - Institutional data and policy context
 - Strategy development
 - Why do this, and what would it look like?
 - What are your institutional priorities?
 - What is the scope of an internationalisation strategy?
 - What would be the goals/targets over the next three to five years?
 - How could this be embedded into an institutional strategic structure and culture? Who needs to approve this? Who would be your key stakeholders to help integrate it?
 - Any risks/challenges and mitigation responses?
 - Pillars of internationalisation
 - How to bundle activity
 - Case studies
- 

Beyond this core module, we consider that there could be several further modules to be split between strategic and operational roles, both at the 'beginner' and 'advanced' levels. This could be arranged as below:

	Strategic Roles	Operational Roles
Beginner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internationalisation approaches • Strategy and KPI development • Mapping the student journey • Internationalisation at home • Decision-making in internationalisation • Structures and staffing in international offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural awareness for IRO staff • International recruitment 101 • International student support • International student mobility • International alumni engagement
Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding and Finance • Monitoring and evaluation • Study visits to the UK • Mentoring programme • Career development for deans of international relations Offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership development for research • MoU negotiations • Twinning and articulation • Embedding internationalisation into the curriculum

Capacity building approach

In considering the skills needs and potential training content we have also considered the training approach. This includes the delivery model, which could be blended with a mixture of face-to-face, to build rapport amongst a cohort of participants (perhaps delivered through a residential stay), in addition to online follow up and support. Training materials should be developed that could be referenced post study, and these should ideally be available in both soft and hard copies. The training should be created in such a way that the time required to participate should neither be too little (which requires a low level of investment therefore could be perceived as being of low value), nor too large (which could be off-putting to senior staff, in particular those with busy schedules).

To ensure engagement with the programme, it is recommended that vice chancellors be invited to nominate selected staff to participate. The programme should attract some form of certification and should also include some form of self-assessment or reflective piece to build engagement with the content and investment in its success.

As suggested above, there is a strong need for study visits to the UK which would involve campus visits and briefings to participants about internationalisation in the UK. This might also allow for the potential to establish a formal mentoring programme as part of the advanced programme. This could pair participants with their international director counterparts in the UK which could further embed the learning from the programme in addition to supporting them in international professional networking, a key feature of the strategic internationalisation role.

The scale of the training opportunity is very large, considering the size of the HE sector in India, though our recommendation is to consider a smaller pilot cohort for the training. There is potential to consider some of the participants, upon completion, as 'internationalisation champions' within their cities or states who could then become responsible for driving further engagement in future programmes and/or related activities. This alumni group of champions might be called on in the future to support

the design of further interventions. This was a suggested action from the focus groups – with an accompanying suggestion that the oversight for such a scheme could be provided by the INIHE network in the AIU.

State-based approach

The study above was undertaken with the support and engagement of the states of Maharashtra and Karnataka. Given the advanced state of HEI internationalisation and leadership within these states in particular, there is an opportunity to consider training pilots within these two states to enable a test and refine an approach to development of the capacity building programme. A state-based approach would enable the programmes to be tailored to suit the varying educational structures, priorities and opportunities that occur from state to state. This approach also acknowledges that some states are more advanced in their pursuit of internationalisation and could therefore benefit from the

programmes in different ways. Through directing training at cohorts of geographically concentrated HEIs, there is also an opportunity to gain efficiency through programme delivery and to build closer networks of connected professionals to enhance their ongoing development beyond the programme.

Monitoring and evaluation

In designing a capacity building intervention, we should also consider how the impact will be measured. Through careful monitoring and evaluation of the interventions we could track the successful outcomes for individual staff, institutions and the wider higher education sector in India.

This monitoring can track the number of participants completing the training, as well as the impact it has had on their careers. Within institutions, a survey could monitor behavioural and strategic changes in addition to operational. Through gathering this data, there could be an opportunity to collect and share ‘success stories’ for institutions which, in addition to demonstrating value and impact of the intervention, could be used to inspire more institutions in the sector to follow in their footsteps.

Association of Indian Universities (AIU)

This scoping study has developed with the support of colleagues at the AIU, who have already started to mobilise institutions in the sector in support of the internationalisation agenda. This has included the establishment of the INIHE which is aimed at supporting institutions in their internationalisation objectives. There are very clear linkages between the ambitions of INIHE and the outcomes of this scoping study. It is recommended that all training is developed in close partnership with the AIU and INIHE or organisations with similar roles and purpose.

Furthermore, there is an opportunity for more formal partnership between INIHE and BUILA or similar organisations given the latter’s experience in providing training to international office staff in the UK, in addition to the network of international directors and senior internationalisation staff who could be invited to participate in the delivery training programme. There is a potential future piece of work around capacity building for the INIHE network directly, which could follow from the initial work described above to ensure continuity of the institutional capacity building programme.

Next steps

Following this report, upon acceptance of the recommendations, the next step should be to invite expressions of interest from the UK sector to design and deliver the first round (pilot) of the capacity building modules described above. It should be recognised that there is the potential for strong contributions from individual HEIs, though a collaborative approach is likely to yield the strongest results given the diversity in the sector. In addition to HEIs, there are a range of private training organisations and associations in the UK that are well-placed to coordinate and deliver projects such as this, which should not be overlooked in an open call.



Appendices

Appendix 1 - Survey questions for phase 1

1. Name
2. Designation / job title
3. Institution
4. Approximately how many students in total are currently enrolled at your institution?
5. Which state is your institution located in?
6. Does your institution have an 'International Office' (sometimes also called global affairs / global engagement)?
 - a. If yes, how many staff and which functions work in this office?
7. Does your institution have a senior international officer role, e.g. a member of staff with responsibility for internationalisation that sits in the main executive body (leadership group) of the institution?
8. Does your institution have a central 'internationalisation strategy', e.g. an approved document outlining the institution's approach to all types of internationalisation?
9. Does your institution have any staff based permanently outside of India?
 - a. If yes, which countries?

International Students

10. What would you say would be the main benefits of welcoming international students to your university?
11. Does your institution currently accept international students for full degree programmes?
 - a. If yes, approximately how many international students are currently enrolled?
 - b. If yes, what are the top 5 source countries that international students come from?
 - c. If yes, what are the top 5 courses that international students study at your institution?
 - d. If yes, what are the approximate annual tuition fees charged to international students?
 - e. If yes, do you offer scholarships, bursaries or other financial support to international students (detail below)?
 - f. If yes, what type of marketing and/or recruitment activity does your university undertake to attract international students?
 - g. If yes, is there a current international student recruitment strategy (e.g., a document that outlines the tactics that should be taken to recruit international students and relevant KPIs)?

- h. If yes, what support do you offer international students pre-arrival (e.g., application / visa / travel support)?
 - i. If yes, what support do you offer international students once they arrive at your university (e.g., induction / friendship clubs and events / pastoral support)?
 - j. If yes, what accommodation facility do you offer international students?
 - k. If no, what do you think are the main barriers to welcoming international students to your institution?
 - l. If no, is there currently a strategy to try to attract international students?
12. Does your institution currently accept international students for exchange/visit programmes?
- a. If yes, approximately how many international exchange/visiting students are currently enrolled?
 - b. If yes, what are the top five source countries that international exchange/visiting students come from?
 - c. If yes, what are the top five courses that international exchange/visiting students study at your institution?
 - d. If yes, what support do you offer international exchange/visiting students pre-arrival (e.g. application / visa / travel support)?
 - e. If yes, what support do you offer international exchange/visiting students once they arrive at your university (e.g., accommodation / induction / friendship clubs and events / pastoral support)?
 - f. If yes, what accommodation facility do you offer international students?
 - g. If no, what do you think are the main barriers to welcoming international exchange/visiting students to your institution?
 - h. If no, is there currently a strategy to try to attract international exchange/visiting students?

International Partnerships

13. Does your institution have any international partnerships for collaborative delivery of degree programmes (e.g. articulation, twinning, joint and dual degrees)?
- a. If yes, how many partnerships and in which countries are partners located?
 - b. If yes, what type of partnership model has been used?
 - c. If yes, has the partnership been successful in recruiting students? How many have taken this route?
 - d. If yes, who maintains these partnerships in your institution?
 - e. If yes, which subject area(s) do you have these partnerships in?
 - f. If yes, does your institution have a formal internal approval process to establish these types of partnership? If so, please briefly describe the process.
 - g. If yes, does your institution have a current strategy to grow this type of partnership?
 - h. If no, is this a type of partnership that would be approved by your institution?
 - i. If no, is your institution actively looking for partnerships like this?

14. Does your institution have other types of international partnerships (student exchange / staff exchange / research etc.)?
- If yes, please outline the types of partnerships that your institution currently has, and why these have been created.
 - If yes, are the majority of these partnerships currently active, in terms of mobility or publications in last 12 months?
 - If yes, which subject area(s) do you have these partnerships in?
 - If yes, does your institution have a formal internal approval process to establish these types of partnership? If so, please briefly describe the process.
 - If yes, does your institution have a current strategy to grow this type of partnership?
 - If yes, who maintains these partnerships within your institution?
 - If no, is your institution actively looking for partnerships like this?

Training

15. Have you previously accessed any formal or informal training in internationalisation of higher education in your role within an Indian institution?
- If yes, please provide details
16. If you were given the opportunity to receive formal training in internationalisation of higher education, what are the top three elements that you would be keen to find out more about?

Appendix 2 - List of survey respondents

- Alliance University
- Bengaluru City University
- Bennett University (Times Group)
- Chitkara University
- Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute
- Dibrugarh University
- Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University
- FLAME University
- Goa University
- Gondwana University Gadchiroli
- Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economic
- Gujarat Technological University
- Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi

- Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar
- Indian Institute of Information Technology Kottayam
- Indian Institute of Technology Delhi
- Indira Gandhi University Meerpur, Rewari
- JAIN (deemed-to-be) University
- Jagat Guru Nanak Dev Punjab State Open University Patiala
- JSS Science and Technology University
- Kavikulguru Kalidas Sanskrit University, Ramtek
- Kavayitri Bahinabai Chaudhari North Maharashtra University Jalgaon
- Kumaraguru College of Technology
- Manav Rachna University
- National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, India
- NIEPA
- Panjab University
- Presidency university Bangalore
- Punyashlok Ahilyadevi Holkar Solapur University, Solapur
- R T M Nagpur University Nagpur
- SRM Institute of Science and Technology
- Somaiya Vidyavihar University
- SNTD Women's University
- Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS)
- Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune
- Tumkur University
- United University, Prayagraj
- Universal AI University
- University of Delhi
- Vellore Institute of Technology, India
- Vishwakarma University, Pune
- Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, Nashi



© British Council 2023. All rights reserved.

The views expressed in this research do not necessarily represent those of the British Council and are the researcher's own.