Internationalising Indian Education:
Work Visas for Foreign Students

by **Sifra Lentin,** Fellow, Bombay History Studies

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About the Author

Sifra Lentin is Fellow, Bombay History Studies. She was Visiting Fellow 2018 at the Herbert Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania for a project on Karachi's Jews. Her latest Gateway House policy report on "India and the SCO, Bound by Buddhism" (November 2020) proposed how India could leverage her soft power as the holy land of Buddhism in this multilateral grouping. Her "Mumbai-Shanghai Sister Cities" report (May 2017): proposed recommendations on how sister city relationships between these two cities can be made to work. She has also written several books, namely, Mercantile Bombay: A Journey of Trade, Finance and Enterprise (Routledge, 2022); Bombay's International Linkages (Gateway House, 2019); Our Legacy: The Dwarkadas Family of Bombay (2018), and A Salute to the Sword Arm – A Photo Essay on the Western Fleet (Western Naval Command, 2007). Her work has also appeared in edited volumes: "The Jewish Presence in Bombay" in India's Jewish Heritage: Ritual, Art, and Life-Cycle (Marg Publication, 2002), "Shalom India" published in One India One People's book Know India Better (2006), "The Jewish presence in Mumbai: their contribution to the city's economic, social and cultural fabric", in Mumbai—Socio-Cultural Perspectives: Contribution of Ethnic Groups & Communities (Primus Books, 2017). Most recently, she co-edited Four People of the Book: From Foreign Jewish Roots to South Asian Islamic Roles (2023) with Kenneth X. Robbins, Zohaib Ahmad, Omar H. Ali, William L. Richter, and Ephraim Nissan.

Sifra graduated in English Literature from Elphinstone College, Mumbai, and went on to complete her Bachelor's in General Law (BGL) from Government Law College, Mumbai. Her earlier career was in journalism with a focus on Bombay and South Asian Jewish history. Most notably, she wrote a popular thrice-weekly column for Mid-Day "Vintage Mumbai" from 1995 to 1997 and a five-part Partition series for Reuters on the golden jubilee of Indian Independence in 1997. She is on the Board of Trustees of the Sir Jacob Sassoon School (Byculla, Mumbai).

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S Visa

Indian Student visa. According to the Bureau of Immigration (Government of India), the 'S' Visa is granted to a foreigner whose sole objective is to pursue on-campus, full time courses at educational institutions recognized by statutory regulatory body. The foreigner should produce proof of admission to a full-time course in a recognized educational institution in India.

Higher Education Institutions

According to the All India Survey on Higher Education, Higher Education Institutes provide education which is obtained after completing 12 years of schooling or equivalent and is of the duration of at least nine months (full time) or after completing 10 years of schooling and is of the duration of at least 3 years. The education may be of the nature of General, Vocational, Professional or Technical education.

International students/Foreign students

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), international students are "individuals who have physically crossed an international border between two countries to participate in educational activities in the destination country, where the country of destination of a given student is different from their country of origin." This definition excludes students in distance-learning programmes and exchange programmes that run for less than an academic year for which course credits are awarded by their home institutions.

In India, the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) uses the term "foreign" students in policy to denote "those students who are citizens of a country other than India".

Technical institutions

According to the All India Technical Education Act, 1987, technical institutions refer to the "institutions, other than universities, conducting the courses or programmes in the field of Technical Education" Technical Education is defined to include "programmes of education, research and training in engineering technology, architecture, town planning, management, pharmacy and applied arts and crafts.

Institute of National Importance

There are 164 Institutes of National Importance in India, and these include the Indian Institutes of Technology and Indian Institutes of Management Studies, among many others. They earn this title based on the pivotal role they play in developing highly skilled personnel within a specified region of the country or state. These Institutes get special funding from the Indian government.

Institute of Eminence	Institutes of Eminence (IoE) is a scheme launched by the University Grants Commission in 2017 to empower IHEIs to help them become world-class teaching and research institutes. Institutions that acquire the IoE status get full autonomy over their educational structure and courses. Moreover, the central government authorities will give INR 1000 crore to public IoEs every year.
Academic Bank of Credits	The Academic Bank of Credits is a digital storehouse that contains information of the credits earned by individual students throughout their learning journey. Credit records are stored in personalised accounts created by students. The system paves the way for seamless mobility between or within courses and HEIs through a formal system of credit recognition, credit accumulation, credit transfer and credit redemption to promote distributed and flexible learning.
EdCIL Ltd.	EdCIL is a Public Sector Undertaking in India under the administrative control of the Ministry of Education. It provides management and consultancy services in all areas of education and human resource development, both within India and overseas. This includes verticals like education infrastructure, advisory services, and overseas education services.
Study In India Programme	Study in India (SII) programme was launched on 18 April 2018 by the Ministry of Education to make India a preferred education destination for foreign students. The programme involves partnership with over 150 select Indian higher education institutes, and focuses on 48 countries across South-East Asia, West Asia, and Africa for internationalization. It conducts education fairs in countries that have traditionally sent a high number of students to India, such as Bhutan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Mauritius, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Dubai, USA, Indonesia, and Kenya. To attract foreign students, the programme offers tuition fee waiver ranging from 100% to 25% to select meritorious students. To be eligible for scholarships under the SII, foreign student applicants have to give the Performance Rating of Applicants through Global Aptitude Test for Indian Institutions (PRAGATII), formerly known as Indian Scholastic Aptitude Test (Ind-SAT). EdCIL Limited, under Ministry of Education, is the implementing agency of the SII Programme.
Knowledge Based Economy	According to the OECD, "the knowledge-based economy" is an expression coined to describe trends in advanced economies toward greater dependence on knowledge, information, and high skill levels and the increasing need for ready access to all of these by the business and public sectors.

List of Abbreviations

AICTE	**All India Council for Technical Education**
AISHE	**All India Survey of Higher Education**
CEP	**Cultural Exchange Programme**
CPT	**Curricular Practical Training**
EEP	**Educational Exchange Programme**
FICCI	**Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry**
HEI	**Higher Education Institute**
IHEI	**Indian Higher Education Institute**
ICCR	**Indian Council for Cultural Relations**
IoE	**Institute of Eminence**
ITEC	**Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation**
MEA	**Ministry of External Affairs**
MHA	**Ministry of Home Affairs**
MoAYUSH	**Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy**
MoE	**Ministry of Education**
MoU	**Memorandum of Understanding**
NEP	**National Education Policy**
OPT	**Optional Practical Training**
SII	**Study in India**
STEM	**Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics**
UGC	**University Grants Commission**
UNESCO	**United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization**

1. Executive Summary

This paper recommends amending India's student ('S') visa policy to allow foreign students to work in India in paid internships while studying at Indian colleges and universities, and in jobs for pre-determined periods after they graduate. This modification to India's 'S' Visa provisions would be an important step towards internationalising Indian higher education institutes (IHEIs) – a pivotal objective of India's National Education Policy (NEP 2020), which advocates attracting more foreign students to study in Indian colleges but does not address changes in student visa rules, even though they would align India's student visa practices with global norms.

The paper supports its argument with five key findings:

- First, authorizing foreign students to work in India surely would attract many more than the estimated 50,000 foreign students currently studying in Indian colleges either at their own cost or on scholarships.

- Second, India's accredited new private and regional or state universities and colleges would benefit greatly from an increase in overseas students. New Indian universities have been seeking to build culturally and globally diverse student bodies, enrich classrooms, expand student networks and bring in foreign exchange revenues. Allowing foreign students to work during or immediately after their time on campus will support their pursuit of all these goals, in particular by attracting students from beyond India's neighbourhood. The success of overseas Indian doctors and engineers in these countries will encourage students from developed countries to enrol in Indian institutions, and students from established source countries in Africa and South Asia will see the opportunity to get field experience in India as a key value addition to Indian degrees.

- Third, work visas for foreign students would be important for Indian companies that are internationalising. Through on-campus recruitment and hiring of foreign talent on Indian campuses and hiring alumni of Indian colleges and universities who return to their home countries, Indian companies should be able to develop a natural talent cohort that is culturally acclimatised to India.

- Fourth, alumni of Indian institutions of higher learning who return to their countries of origin can serve as a valuable "cultural bridge" between India and other countries.

- Finally, for India's foreign policy, student work visas would reinforce an important plank of bilateral relations: reciprocity. An estimated 65% of Indian students who study abroad – 7,50,000 Indian students in 2022 – avail themselves of overseas work experience. Offering one-to-three-year work visas to foreign students who graduate from Indian universities can only strengthen India's international relationships.

A student work visa policy can be implemented in a two-year phased and regulated manner. Such an implementation period will help all stakeholders – universities and colleges, companies, and ministries of education, external affairs, home, finance, and commerce – to develop and hone systems, processes, policies, regulations and coordination structures.

2. Introduction

The aftermath of the 2021 U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan revealed gaps in India's system of higher education. As the Taliban took control in Kabul, an estimated 14,000 Afghan students who were studying in India found themselves with no official channels to receive the necessary funding from their parents. The majority, who had received official scholarships from the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) as part of the Indian government's aid efforts,[1] could stay on but Afghan students who had graduated had no right to seek work despite many efforts by universities, companies, and individuals to help them.

ICCR found a way[2] to keep the affected students safe in the middle of the crisis: it gave them two-year extensions to stay on in India and study further. Students who graduated with bachelor's degrees were admitted into master's programmes and those who graduated with master's degrees are now advancing toward PhDs. Colleges like Sarhad in Pune that do not offer PhDs, worked hard to have their students admitted under the ICCR rules to other colleges. The immediate crisis was averted, but it could have been a long-term game-changer had India adopted a special work visa programme for Afghan students who already had been vetted by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

The absence of student work visas in India exists despite three regulations and guidelines[3] announced to date by statutory bodies of the Ministry of Education, and significant concessions under India's Union Budget 2023 to foreign universities that set up campuses in Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City)[4] to implement the internationalisation of Indian HEIs. It is still unclear whether students in GIFT City will be permitted to take up paid work in companies, banks and institutions located in this Special Economic Zone.

The regulations broadly provide for academic collaborations between Indian and foreign HEIs (by granting course credits for studies at a foreign HEI and allowing joint and dual degrees); guidelines on internationalisation by attracting foreign students, faculty and researchers; the setting up of an Academic Bank of Credits to enable students to pool credits earned in overseas programmes with those earned across IHEIs and, lastly, a regulation on international collaborations for technical educational institutes that offer engineering and architecture degrees. According to education experts, the provision of student work visas has come up frequently in inter-ministerial groups, regulatory bodies, and business chamber FICCI meetings, but a change in policy is yet to be considered even though higher education is one of the 12 champion services sectors approved in a Union Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Modi in 2018 for accelerated services export-promotion overseas.[5]

The biggest political obstacle to a student work visa policy has been India's own unemployment numbers. According to the Economic Survey of India, the overall unemployment is 4.2% of the workforce in 2022.[6] What is worrying is the relatively higher unemployment among educated youth aged 15 to 29 years, which stands at 8% for rural and 9.5% for urban youth in 2021-22.[7] The Directorate General of Employment in the Ministry of Labour & Employment in its Annual Labour and Employment Statistics, pointed out that youth unemployment is on a declining trend. It was 17.8% in 2017-18 and has gone down to 12.9% in 2020-21.[8]

The population of this age group is about 27% or 378 million youth. But a key reason for unemployment among India's college-educated is not an oversupply of job seekers. Even though the number of universities has increased exponentially from 266 in 2000-01 to 1,113 in 2020-21, most degree-holders

are unemployable because of the poor quality of education, not because of a lack of jobs. [9] According to The India Skills Report 2023, only 10% of fresh graduates possess the skills required to be employed in the corporate sector and need skilling over and above their degree to be employable. The internationalisation of Indian HEIs, far from being a threat because it would create competition for scarce jobs, will help in improving the overall quality of Indian higher education by setting global benchmarks. A higher enrolment of foreign students is a key indicator of the quality of education in a university/college. Modifying India's 'S' Visa to include paid internships and post-study work will accelerate enrolments.

India's lack of student work visas appears inconsistent given its growing global footprint on fronts ranging from increasing student mobility and emigration of skilled workers to the growing numbers of Indian multinational companies and the country's expansive foreign policy outreach. With India providing a workforce for the world, it is time the country also opens its doors to an international workforce. A student work visa policy would be a step in this direction – a progressive, positive one forward and a natural extension of the game-changing NEP 2020. [10]

3. Background: Higher Education in India*

Higher education is a critical driver of economic growth, sustainable development, and social progress in all societies. In post-colonial India, it has been transformative. Expansion of education infrastructure and the information technology industry, coupled with India's rising regional and global status, have contributed to India's efforts to transition into a knowledge-based economy with manufacturing capacity over the last decade. India is now a leading source of highly skilled workers with qualifications in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). It also benefits from the global financial and knowledge remittances from its emigrant population. [11] This has brought the Indian higher education system into the global spotlight, but it also has drawn attention to its gaps. One of them is a cohort of international manpower trained in India.

Higher education in India has been booming, and governments and institutions have been making proactive efforts to modernise and reorient the educational system to put it on par with global standards and practices. The Study In India online platform, 2018, and the NEP 2020 of India, were significant steps. The NEP 2020 for the first time has an exclusive section on the internationalization of Indian higher education; it focuses on retaining Indian students who are likely to go abroad for studies and on attracting foreign students to India's HEIs.

Efforts to internationalize the higher education curriculum, attract foreign faculty and students, and encourage collaborations between Indian and foreign universities are aimed at giving Indian students a globally competitive education and cosmopolitan outlook. These have not yet led to the expected positive results like attracting more overseas students. The number of foreign students in India has increased somewhat over time, but the rise has not been proportionate to global trends in international student mobility. [12, 13]

According to UNESCO, the number of international students globally nearly tripled from 2.1 million in 2001 to more than 6 million in 2020. India sent out approximately 500,000 students annually between 2017 to 2022, with a 68% increase in student outflow in 2021-2022 (7,50,365),[14] but it hosted only 48,035[15] foreign students at home during the same time, including the annual intake of up to 3,874 ICCR and MEA scholarship students. India's NEP 2020 aims to align Indian higher education to global standards across the board – for curricula, pedagogy, holistic student-centric approaches, international faculty, attracting foreign students, an academic bank of credits, and emphasis on research and research networks. However, it does not mention paid internships and post-study visas even in the context of curriculum practical training similar to what is offered in the U.S. under the F1 visa or even the UK's Tier 4 visa. The draw should not be only education, but the ability to put it to practical use, says Dr. Karunakar, dean of International Students Affairs, Manipal Academy of Higher Education. "Students will come to India if they see the option of employment or even practice of what they have learnt like the Curricular Practical Training offered to foreign students in the United States. A policy that allows temporary work for the duration of a course or after it will make a significant and positive difference."[16]

For the NEP 2020 to succeed, modifying the student visa to include work experience is urgently needed as a means of attracting more international students to study in India's accredited and/or ranked HEIs. It will boost the online admission platform SII and build on the broad policy directives of NEP 2020 and the regulations announced by the University Grants Commission (UGC)[17] and its technical education counterpart, the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), to promote the internationalisation of IHEIs.

It will also make easier the task of EDCIL Ltd, a public-sector company under the Ministry of Education, which is tasked with rebranding and marketing Indian higher education as a high-quality and competitively priced option for international students.

4. Trends and Patterns of International Student Enrolment in India

According to the All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), the number of universities in India increased from 266 in 2000-01 to 1,113 in 2020-21.[18] The number of foreign students in India has also risen but less so – from 27,531 in 2010-11 to 48,035 in 2020-21.[19]

Table 1: International Students: The top countries of origin (2012-13 to 2020-21)

Country	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Nepal	7167	8360	8694	9574	11250	11521	12747	13880	13574
Afghanistan	2330	3016	3717	4404	4423	4378	4657	4504	4078
Bangladesh	776	718	936	1100	1531	1566	2075	2259	2750
U.S.	852	1092	979	1022	1124	1418	1518	1627	2458
Bhutan	2468	2891	2697	2295	2284	1999	1811	1851	1827
Sudan	1649	1903	2104	2059	2073	2220	1905	1758	1600

Note: In 2020-21, the United Arab Emirates, with 2307 students, became the fifth largest source of foreign students in India. The top five source countries for 2020-21 are Nepal, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the U.S., and UAE.

Source: AISHE Annual Reports 2012-13 to 2020-21.

Figure 1: Foreign Students in India (by top countries of origin)
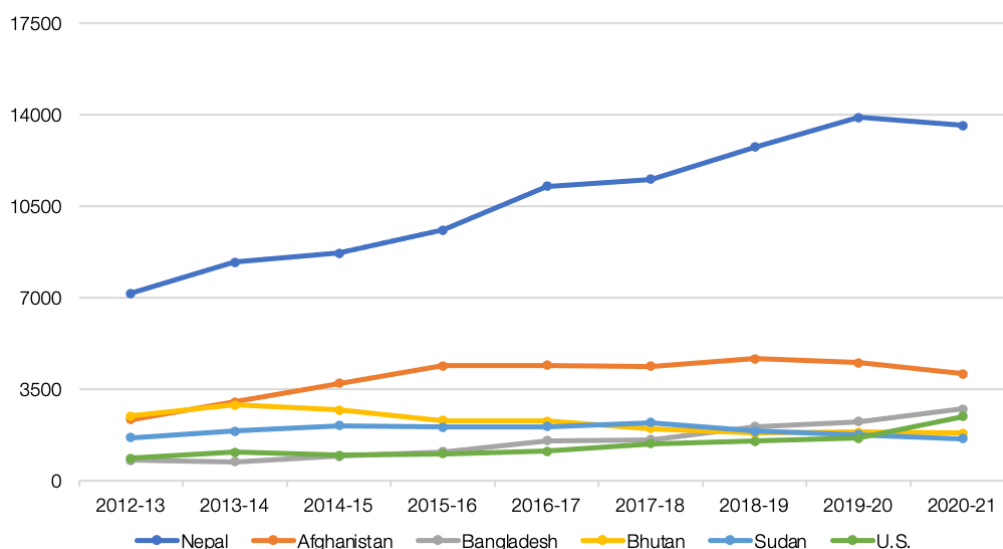
Source: AISHE Annual Reports, 2012-13 to 2020-21.

Nepal has the highest share of foreign students in India, accounting for 28.25% of foreign students in 2020-21, up from 18% a decade ago. The most attractive factor for Nepalese students is that they can work in India during and after their studies. India does not require permits for Nepalese nationals to work in India – a benefit unique to Nepal as part of the special historical and political ties between both countries.[20]

The AISHE data on international student migration to India over the past decade indicates that India is a preferred destination for foreign students from developing countries, particularly from South Asia. From 2013-14, Afghan students became India's second largest foreign student community, varying between 7% and 10% of the total foreign students. The large number of Afghan students is attributed to India's development assistance partnership with Afghanistan. In addition to the 1,000 ICCR scholarships for Afghan students, Afghans are also among the largest beneficiaries of Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Fellowships. The 625 fellowships are short-term (2 to 52 weeks) and targeted mostly to middle-level public officials.[21]

Bangladeshi students are the third largest foreign student group, which more than doubled over the past decade to 5.7% of the total in 2020-21. The U.S. has moved from sixth to fourth place; it now contributes 5.1% of foreign students. Many American students come under scholarships and programmes offered by the United States-India Educational Foundation (USIEF).[22] A country that is not from India's neighbourhood, the United Arab Emirates, occupies fifth place, sending 2,307 students in 2020-21. Other big source countries are Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Nigeria, Yemen, and Tanzania.[23] Many of these students come on ICCR and MEA scholarships. (See Annexure 2)

Very few students come from the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, which are all popular higher education destinations for Indian students seeking to study overseas. This pattern is repeated with other countries of the Global North like France and Germany. Although international students in India come from 163 countries, the top 10 sending countries contributed 67% of the cohort in 2020-21. With neighbouring and developing countries still dominating the list of source countries, India must take measures to widen its appeal as a quality education provider. Besides continually adapting its course offerings to appeal to a global student community, reconsidering its student visa frameworks and providing work experience during and after studies are vital to achieving this goal.

Table 2: Top 10 Sending Countries of India's Foreign Students, 2020-21

Sl. No.	Country	No. of Students	Share of Total
1	Nepal	13574	28.25
2	Afghanistan	4078	8.36
3	Bangladesh	2750	5.72
4	United States	2458	5.11
5	United Arab Emirates	2307	4.80
6	Bhutan	1827	3.80
7	Sudan	1600	3.33
8	Nigeria	1419	2.95
9	United Republic of Tanzania	1306	2.71
10	Yemen	1095	2.27
Total		**32,414**	**67.47%**

Source: AISHE Annual Report 2020-21.

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Geographically, foreign students in India are attracted to certain places and institutions in India. For instance, Karnataka has consistently been the top host state in India,[24] with 8,094 foreign students in 2020-21 (10,231 in 2019-20). Punjab, Maharashtra (especially Pune), Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and Haryana, are also prominent destination states.[25]

A perennially popular university for foreign students is the Symbiosis University in Pune and the Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE), an Institute of Eminence known for medical and STEM education. According to a university spokesperson from MAHE interviewed for this paper, the number of foreign students has fallen post-COVID to about 1,000 students which is largely attributable to the closure of the Melaka Manipal Medical College for Malaysian students on its campus.[26] New private universities now have a larger intake of foreign students than central and state universities. The Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) is an exception, with foreign students from across the world studying at the university and its affiliated colleges.[27]

Figure 2: State-wise distribution of foreign students, 2020-21

Karnataka 20%
Punjab 16%
Maharashtra 12%
Uttar Pradesh 12%
Tamil Nadu 9%
Delhi 7%
Gujarat 7%
Andhra Pradesh 6%
Odisha 6%
Haryana 5%

Source: AISHE Annual Reports, 2012-13 to 2020-21.

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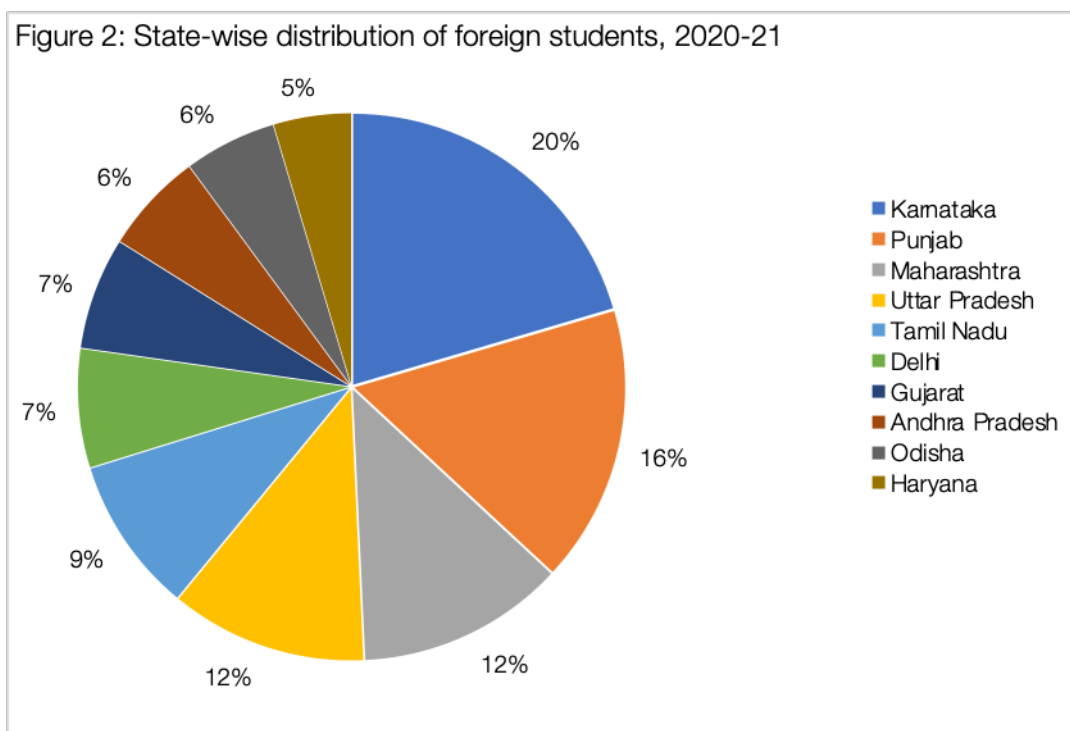
Unlike most public universities, private institutions seek international faculty and accreditation. They also vigorously advertise and promote themselves at educational fairs and counselling sessions in targeted countries, where they sign partnership agreements with foreign institutions to enhance global visibility and collaboration. They allocate seats to foreign students and conduct foundation and remedial English language classes for non-English speaking students with peer buddy systems to help the social integration of foreign students into campus life.[28]

The Indian government is catching up to these ambitions. Since the adoption of the NEP 2020, it has passed legislation that has enabled the alignment of India's HEIs with global standards and practices. Robust marketing of India's higher education programmes for their quality and competitive fees and living costs marks a decisive shift from the earlier focus on education as aid to under-developed and developing countries.

In line with this strategic policy shift, care has been taken to list only those higher education institutes on the SII website that have greater academic and infrastructure bandwidth to deal with foreign students. This website benchmarks colleges and universities according to their All-India rankings.[29] Of the 500 institutions pitched on the SII website, 164 to 170 institutions have set up international student affairs departments so far, which like in the U.S. will be the interface between foreign students and government departments and are ready to do so for potential employers should the policy change.

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5. Student Visa Regime in Select Countries: A Comparative Study

How does India's student visa regime compare with that of other countries?

The MEA[30] data for 2022 shows that most of the popular higher education overseas destinations for Indian students – 61% of them – are English-speaking countries like the U.S., Canada, Australia, and the U.K. A comparison between their student-visa offerings reveals why these four countries are particularly attractive to Indian students despite their high cost and overhead expenses, and why other destinations like Germany and France, both non-English speaking countries, are gaining a foothold in this space.

The U.S., U.K., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, and Germany offer work visas for degree students who have studied in recognized universities and colleges in their countries. Additionally, Canada offers student work visas to foreign students in bridge certificate or diploma courses that help students make the transition from undergraduate to post-graduate degree programmes. All these countries allow undergraduate students to take paid internships off campus while studying. In the United States, foreign students must demonstrate a need for off-campus jobs – for instance, economic necessity or course requirements.

The U.S. F-1 Student Visa, which authorizes foreign students to receive Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and Optional Practical Training (OPT) for one year and allows an OPT-Extension of three years for STEM students, has proved to be a key factor in attracting foreign students. After the expiry of the F-1 Visa, a student can apply for an H1B Visa to continue working in the U.S. This seamless progression from a student visa to a work visa remains a big draw.

Indian students studying overseas also benefit from Bilateral Mobility and Migration Agreements signed by India with the U.K., France, Germany, Australia – and soon, Austria and Finland. These Agreements are aimed at regulating migration – that is, discouraging illegal and irregular immigration while attracting professionals, highly skilled individuals like engineers and software designers, and foreign students with advanced professional degrees to address a dearth of talented job seekers in these countries. Since 2021, the U.K. has opened 3,000 slots per year for Indians with the skill sets that its market needs. It also has extended student work visas for Indians studying in the U.K. from one to two years.

Singapore and China, like India, do not have post-study work visas – but are experimenting with variations. Students in Singapore who can find jobs that pay a minimum salary of S$4,500 per month can qualify for limited Work Passes. China recently initiated a pilot policy to enable international students who have graduated from Chinese universities to switch their student visas to 'Personnel Affairs Resident Permits,' which enable them to take paid internships or invest in or start their own businesses in specific places like the Shanghai Free Trade Zone or the Zhanjiang National Innovation Demonstration Zone, East Shanghai, for up to two years.[31]

Russia and its former Soviet republics including Ukraine and Kazakhstan, are popular destinations for Indian students who want to study medicine. In Russia, work during studies is permitted only for students in full-time courses at state-accredited universities. They can work only in the profession specified in their work permit, and in the city where their university is located. Post-study work is not permitted under a student visa.[32]

In addition, there are various bilateral agreements, MoUs and treaties that include educational scholarships between India and several foreign countries. (See Annexure 3.)

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Country	Student Visa Name	Paid Internship	Work-While-Study Policy	Steps after Post-Study and Duration of Post-Study Work
Australia	Subclass 485 or Temporary Graduate Visa (Post Study Work category)	Yes	Includes work-while-study	Duration: • Bachelor degree (including honours) - 2 years • Bachelor degree (including honours) in select degree - 4 years • Masters by research and masters by coursework - 3 years • Masters by research and masters by coursework in select degree - 5 years • Masters (extended) - 3 years • Masters (extended) in select degree - 5 years • Doctoral degree - 6 years.(a)
Canada	Student Visa/ Study permit	Yes	Includes work-while-study	Mainstreaming of student visas into Post Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) is permitted but only for those graduating from Designated Learning Institutes. Duration. The PGWP duration: 1. Is equivalent to the length of the course if the course is from 9 months to 2 years 2. If a programme is 2 years or more it is for 3 years, and 3. A combination of the length of two or more degrees will earn the candidate a PGWP of more than three years.(b)

Note: Paid Internships allow students to pursue an internship in a field related to and as part of their course of study, while a Work-While-Study allows students to work in any field not strictly related to the course of study as it is aimed to help financially support themselves.

Country	Student Visa Name	Paid Internship	Work-While-Study Policy	Steps after Post-Study and Duration of Post-Study Work
China	X1	No	No	With effect from 2017, international graduates who have obtained a Master or Doctoral degree within the past year can apply for a work permit in China without having to demonstrate two years of work experience overseas.
France	Visa de Long Sejour Etudes (lit. Long Stay Study Visa)	Yes	The host university/college must be informed by the student of the internship	A student who is about to complete their bachelor's degree must secure paid employment before applying for a temporary residence permit. This does not apply to Master's students who can apply for an APS or temporary residence permit of 2 years after completion of the degree. Under the India-France bilateral migration and mobility agreement, Indian post graduate students can get an extended visa of 2 years. Duration: Bachelor's degree 1 year Master's degree 2 years

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Country	Student Visa Name	Paid Internship	Work-While-Study Policy	Steps after Post-Study and Duration of Post-Study Work
Germany	Visum Zur Studienzwecken (lit. Visa for Students)	Yes	Yes	Post-study work is permitted but one must apply for a post-study work visa before one's results are declared. Duration: 18 months from the declaration of the final exam results.
India	S Visa	Only if required by the course.	No	Students who wish to work in India must apply for a new visa. Student visas cannot be extended into Employment (E) Visa.
Russia	Russia Study Visa	Yes	Yes. Permit issued if a student is not interning at the university. Students can only intern in the profession specified in the permit and in the city/region where their university is.	No. Students who wish to work in Russia post study have to apply for a work visa.
Singapore	Student Pass	Only if required by the course.	No	Employment passes are granted only after the student pass has expired. (c)

Country	Student Visa Name	Paid Internship	Work-While-Study Policy	Steps after Post-Study and Duration of Post-Study Work
UK	Tier 4 General Student Visa	Yes but only if the course is more than six months	Yes	Tier 4 visas can be extended into the Graduate Route Visa which permits work. Duration: It is two years for graduates and post-graduates, and three years for PhDs.
USA	F1 Visa	Yes	Yes	Duration: F1 Student Visa permits up to 12 months of work after graduation. Students in the STEM fields on an F1 Visa are eligible for engaging in practical training during the program or after it ends. Curricular Practical Training (CPT), which is part of the study programme, and optional practical training (OPT), which must be related to the programme but need not be part of it. STEM students get a special OPT Extension of three years' work experience.

Notes:

(a) To be eligible for the post-study visa, a foreign student should have graduated recently from a Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Course for Overseas Students (CRICOS) institution.

(b) Work permits are also available to students who have not studied in Designated Learning Institutes like an employer-specific work permit or open work permit.

(c) Foreign students can also apply for short-term and long-term visit pass until they find a job, after which they are eligible for an employment pass, provided they meet its conditions.

Source: Department of Home Affairs, Government of Australia; Immigration and Citizenship, Government of Canada; Consular Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of China; Bureau of Immigration, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Singapore; Visas and immigration, Gov.uk; Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State; France-Visas, Government of France; Study In Russia, General Administration for Migration Issues of the Interior Ministry of Russia; German Federal Foreign Office.

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6. Policy Recommendations: A Staged Approach to Providing a Student Work Visa

India can phase in a policy of allowing foreigners who come to India for higher education to participate in paid internships or to work in jobs from one to three years after they successfully complete their studies. A staged approach is imperative to ensure the policy's success, the ultimate measure of which is whether students carry home positive experiences from working in India. Five ministries – the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Commerce – along with the Prime Minister's Office, decide on student work visa policies. If the Policy is extended to medicine, dentistry, law, and chartered accountancy, then the statutory national councils will need to participate in framing such a policy. Currently, foreign students are permitted to do these professional courses, except for the MBBS degree,[33] but are not permitted to practice in India after completing their degree. A lawyer will not get a Sanad (a license) and a chartered accountant will not get a Certificate of Practice.

Of these, the MHA is the decisive voice as it deals with internal security. Its Foreigners Divisions (I and II) oversee foreign citizens during their stay in India through regional police stations (Foreigners Regional Registration Officer or FRRO) or sub-regional police stations (Foreigners Registration Officer or FRO).[34] Given the MHA's stringent screening and oversight, it is unlikely that students overstaying their visas will pose a challenge.

The student work visa policy should be rolled out in three stages, with success in the first leading to the second step and finally to a fully implemented long-term policy. This policy should cover all foreign students studying in accredited universities in India irrespective of whether they secure admission through the SII platform or not. It also should include the short-term ITEC students whose programmes do not exceed 52 weeks and students who come to study Indian traditional dance, music, and art under the ICCR Guru Shishya scholarships or on their own, but only at accredited institutions or with accredited gurus (teachers). ITEC students may be given a work duration equivalent to the length of their course.

Step 1 - Pilot or Immediate Policy

As a pilot or immediate policy, India should offer student work visas allowing paid internships in the form of curricular practical training (CPT) similar to the U.S. model, and post-study work visas for one year only for students from India's Institutions of National Importance, Institutes of Eminence, and specified premier high-ranking institutions. The reason for this is the admission criteria for these institutions are high so only the very best students are accepted. They will not be competing with the average Indian graduate or postgraduate students for post-study work as their skill sets will be at a higher level.

Eligibility

- The first group of undergraduate students eligible for student work visas should be from STEM fields of study in premier public HEIs like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Indian Institute of Science, and Institutes of Eminence like private universities BITS Pilani and Manipal Academy of Higher Education.

- The second group of students can be drawn from premier business management schools like the Indian Institute of Management (Ahmedabad), Indian School of Business (Hyderabad), Bajaj Institute of Management Studies, and SP Jain (both in Mumbai), and XLRI (Jamshedpur). These are postgraduate or older students who often must have two years of work experience before they join a business management course.

- Next, all undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral, and post-doctoral STEM and management students from the institutions named above would become eligible to work in paid internships and jobs for one year after completion of their degrees.

- All Ph.D. and post-doctoral students irrespective of stream of study or institute should be eligible for student work visas with paid internships and a one-year student work visa.

- All categories of students listed above must comply with Rules and Limitations (see below).

Step 2 - Intermediate Policy

A year after the launch of the Pilot Policy, an Intermediate Policy can be introduced to provide for paid internships during study plus one-year post-study work visas with more inclusive benchmarking to reach a larger number of students. This would include students studying in specialised courses like mining, an expanded pool of STEM institutions, and postgraduate students from all institutions and fields of study including those from liberal arts programmes. Doctorate and post-doctoral students should now have their work visas extended to two years.

Eligibility

- Foreign students from the STEM stream studying in regional/state or private science and engineering colleges. This includes undergraduate, post-graduate, and pre- and post-doctoral students. (The many ICCR and MEA scholarship students studying at these second-tier institutes should be eligible for student work visas.)

- Students studying in agricultural science institutes and the Indian Institute of Mining (Dhanbad). This can include undergraduate, post-graduate, and pre- and post-doctoral students. (Many African students studying in India's agricultural science colleges will become eligible in this second round.)

- Students in the social sciences from central, state, and private colleges and universities, who have completed both undergraduate and postgraduate studies in India (five years of study), be eligible for student work visas.

- All Ph.D. and post-doctoral students irrespective of whether they are in STEM, social sciences, or business and management studies streams can be eligible for Student Work Visas of two years.

- All categories of students listed above would be expected to comply with Rules and Limitations (see below).

Step 3 - Long Term Policy

The Long-Term Policy should be to provide one-year visas for students completing undergraduate studies, two years for students completing post-graduate studies, and three years for those completing doctoral and post-doctoral studies. This will put India's student work visa policy on par with other popular higher education destination countries. The policy can be made more inclusive by extending eligibility to students in the fine arts (music, dance, painting, sculpture), AYUSH, and vocational (fashion designing) streams.

Eligibility

- After the completion of their degree, foreign students would have to have confirmed jobs in Indian companies meeting criteria (3) and (4) in Rules and Limitations below.

- Students who have secured jobs in NGOs and Start-Ups would have to fulfil criteria (4) and (5) in Rules and Limitations.

- Students studying under the ICCR scholarship Guru-Shishya program, and the Lata Mangeshkar Scholarships for dance and music should be allowed to work in their chosen fields for two years. This should include self-financed foreign students studying only at accredited institutes and with accredited gurus. Periodic visits with gurus are essential for the growth of any artiste, therefore visa rules for them should be liberalised. No other country has a guru-shishya tradition of teaching traditional dance, music, and knowledge like yoga, with students living in and becoming a part of their guru's household.

- Foreign students doing vocational courses like fashion technology, hotel management, film acting/direction/technician/make-up prosthetics/set design, and media studies, should be allowed to work for one year in India.

- Foreign students studying traditional medicine whether under ICCR-MEA scholarships or self-financed and pursuing their degree in accredited colleges only, should be permitted to work for one year in India.

Table 4: Policy changes needed to enable student work visas

Ministry name	Policy changes needed or new regulations
Ministry of External Affairs	Modify the current student visa policy to include paid internships and post study work.
Ministry of Home Affairs	Periodic announcements about industries and fields in which foreign students cannot work.
Ministry of Finance	Reviewing the current double taxation laws and their applicability to income earned by foreign students. Clarify whether students' income earned in GIFT City will be taxed minimally or not at all.
UGC, Ministry of Education	Regulations regarding student employment and the coordination/documentation required to be done by the universities/colleges.
Ministry of Commerce	Promote Indian higher education more aggressively by pitching the new student work visa regime.

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Rules and Limitations

1. Salaries for scholarship students doing paid internships should not exceed double the amount paid for living expenses under ICCR-MEA scholarships. Currently, this is about Rs 15,000/- per month.

2. Students should have no record on campus or with their local police stations of violence or any other kind of deviant behaviour or crime.

3. Jobs should be secured before completion of the degree either through on-campus recruitment or application to companies, NGOs, and start-ups meeting the required criteria.

4. Jobs for students should be in listed Indian multinational companies with:

    *   market capitalization of $ 1 billion,

    *   overseas operations, and

    *   membership in an all-India business chamber like CII or FICCI.

5. Awardees should not be allowed to work in companies that make defence equipment (including drones), engage with atomic energy, petroleum refineries or the power sector, or deal with sensitive information. This includes public sector companies (PSUs) that are involved in the above industries or departments of the Indian government under whose purview these sensitive sectors fall. (The Ministry of Home Affairs will notify sectors or industries that are closed to foreign students).

6. Awardees should be allowed to work in Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) except for NGOs working amongst India's tribal populations or those engaged in religious or community-affiliated activities, as these have often been politically and socially sensitive domains for the Indian government. Foreign students can work in think tanks that address foreign policy, SDGs, and indigenous solutions for climate adaptation, and in organisations working for the revival of local arts and artisanal crafts.

7. Visa awardees should be allowed to work in start-ups or e-commerce companies involved in services like food delivery, digitalisation, and manufacturing except for those in (5) above.

8. Awardees should be allowed to work as paid researchers in their host institutes provided the subject of research does not fall under the subject matter of (5) above.

7. Conclusion

Implementing a Student Work Visa policy would align India's vast university and college network with global standards and practices and introduce a cosmopolitan, global student body in Indian classrooms by attracting more foreigners to choose India as a study destination. It also would internationalise Indian companies.

This would produce the following tangible benefits:

1. It would increase India's foreign exchange earnings as it would lead a greater number of students to enroll in Indian HEIs. According to the Services Export Promotion Council, which falls under the Ministry of Commerce, educational services is one of 12 champion sectors identified by India's Prime Minister. In 2019-20, the country earned $181 million from foreign students.[35]

2. Limited work visas would make Indian workplaces more cosmopolitan and create a ready pool of potential recruits for the overseas operations of India's many multinational companies like Infosys, Tata, Godrej, Mahindra & Mahindra, Reliance, Adani, Kirloskar.

3. If the student work visa policy is handled astutely so that working in India is a positive experience for foreign students, it will create an expansive network of foreign alumni who have studied in India. This will go a long way towards creating a cultural bridge of understanding between India and countries that are not in India's immediate neighbourhood. India's substantial soft power in her immediate neighbourhood is greatly attributable to influential Indian alumni in these countries. Attracting students from a more diverse range of countries (in 2022, India hosted students from 163 countries, including distant ones like the U.S., UAE, Nigeria, and Saudi Arabia) augurs well for India.

4. Allowing foreign students into India's well-known MBBS degree programmes and permitting them to do their residency in teaching hospitals where they are earning their degree, will further create goodwill for India. (The medical institutes open to foreigners can be confined to the top-tier ones. This would require a change in the rules by the Indian National Medical Commission.) Likewise, the Indian law degree (LLB) and Chartered Accountancy degree, which are also regulated by their own national bodies should also permit limited practice post-study.

5. Higher education can be a valuable tool of soft diplomacy for India's Act East policy. India has a substantive diaspora in ASEAN countries and a strong historical and cultural affiliation with the entire region. Promoting the vast higher educational network in India's North Eastern states (seven sisters and the brother state of Sikkim) will help integrate these Indian states with the Bay of Bengal region. (See Annexure 4)

8. Annexure 1: The National Education Policy (2020)

India's National Education Policy (2020), also known as the New Education Policy (NEP 2020) to distinguish it from earlier ones, is a paradigm shift in policy and approach to higher education in India. In the past, the emphasis was on "massification" or getting the largest number of Indians educated but without a marked qualitative shift in syllabi, pedagogy, upskilling of faculty, merit-based approach to teachers' career progression, and a restructuring of the colonial era large affiliating universities framework which has dominated degree education in India for 73 years. The only exceptions to the latter were centrally established premier teaching institutes like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and the Indian Institutes of Management Studies (IIMs), and research institutes like Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (Mumbai) and the Indian Institute of Science (Bengaluru), which are academically autonomous, specialised, and research-based.

The NEP 2020 aims to upgrade India's HEIs to global norms by using the pivot of 'Internationalisation', understood as aligning India's higher education to best practices followed abroad to prepare students for a knowledge economy with manufacturing bandwidth. One example of this is the introduction of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary undergraduate education known as liberal arts rather than excessive specialization.

For the first time, India's NEP 2020 expressly includes "Internationalisation" (Sections 12.7 and 12.8) as a desired goal for its HEIs.[36] To achieve this, the two sections aim to:

1. Restore India's role as "Vishwa Guru" (lit. global teacher) or as a destination for premium higher education at a competitive cost by aligning it to global norms;

2. Encourage IHEIs to have foreign faculty and researchers to work part or full-time alongside their Indian peers on campus, a collaboration that is aimed at upgrading and integrating syllabi, pedagogy, and academic peer research/review networks to global standards;

3. Attract foreign students to study in Indian HEIs and Indian students to avail of options to study abroad that are offered by collaborations between Indian and foreign HEIs through Twinning, Dual, and Joint Degrees;

4. Incentivize the country's premier institutions to set up campuses overseas, and the top 500 ranked foreign universities to set up campuses in India. This will result in prestigious academic offerings for Indian students at home and will attract more foreign students to study in India.

This pivot will coalesce everything that the NEP 2020 aims to change in the old system. Some of the key sections of this new policy are:

- Section 10: Moving toward large multidisciplinary universities, colleges, and knowledge hubs.

- Section 11: A more Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education, especially a Liberal Arts syllabi for undergraduate programmes.

- Section 12: Optimal Learning Environment and Support for Students. This includes a holistic student-centric approach; no super exams but year-round assessments, and quality infrastructure to support students.

- Section 13: Motivated, Energized, and Capable Faculty. This includes higher salaries for professors even in public universities; merit-based promotion and a well-mapped career path, and tenured professorships for outstanding teachers.

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- Section 14: Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education. This is one of the SDGs and is aimed at supporting and mainstreaming students from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Economically Backward Classes, and students with learning disabilities.

- Section 15: Upgrading Teacher Education. This includes stricter regulation and accreditation of stand-alone colleges conducting the Bachelor of Education degree programmes to ensure quality teaching personnel. All Ph.D. candidates will be required to put in a certain number of hours of teaching at their college or university.

- Section 17: Catalyzing Quality Academic Research in All Fields through a New National Research Foundation (NRF)

- Section 18: Transforming the Regulatory System of Higher Education by setting up the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), a nodal organization that will regulate IHEIs through:

    1. Regulations (National Higher Education Regulatory Council or NHERC)

    2. Accreditation (National Accreditation Council or NAC)

    3. Funding (Higher Education Grants Council or HEGC)

    4. Academic Standard Setting (General Education Council or GEC)

- Section 19: Effective Governance and Leadership for IHEI

In keeping with the above broad policy outline in NEP 2020 for higher education institutes, the University Grants Commission and All India Council for Technical Education have so far announced the University Grants Commission (Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Higher Educational Institutions to offer Twinning, Joint Degree, and Dual Degree Programmes) Regulations, 2022; Guidelines for Internationalisation of Higher Education (UGC, Ministry of Education of GOI, July 2021); All India Council for Technical Education (Grant of Approvals for Technical Institutions) Regulations, 2020, and The UGC (Establishment and Operation of Academic Bank of Credits in Higher Education) Regulations, 2021.

Annexure 2: Types of Scholarships offered by the Government of India

Name	Funded By	Courses	Slots (as of 2022-23)
Atal Bihari Vajpayee General Scholarship Scheme	ICCR	UG, PG, M Phil, Ph.D. Post Doctoral Courses	613
S. Radhakrishnan Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP), Education Exchange Programme (EEP) Scholarships*	ICCR	UG, PG, MPhil, PhD	152
Bangladesh Scholarship Scheme i) Bangladesh Scholarship Scheme ii) India Scholarship (Bangladesh) Scheme iii) Border Guard Bangladesh Scholarship Scheme	ICCR-MEA	UG, PG, MPhil, PhD, Post Doctoral	100
Lata Mangeshkar Dance and Music Scholarship Scheme	ICCR	Indian dance, music, theatre, cuisine, sculpture-making courses	100
Suborno Jayanti Scholarship Scheme for the nationals of Bangladesh	ICCR	UG, PG, PhD	500
A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme	ICCR	UG, PG, MPhil, PhD	24
Nehru Memorial Scholarship Scheme for the nationals of Sri Lanka	ICCR	UG, PG Courses	60
AYUSH Scholarship Scheme for Malaysia	MoAYUSH	UG, PG, MPhil, PhD Courses on Indian medical systems - Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Homeopathy	20

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Name	Funded By	Courses	Slots (as of 2022-23)
AYUSH Scholarship Scheme for non-BIMSTEC Countries	MoAYUSH	UG, PG, MPhil, PhD Courses on Indian medical systems - Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Homeopathy	25
AYUSH Scholarship Scheme for South East Asian Region Countries			29
AYUSH Scholarship Scheme (BIMSTEC)	MEA		30
Aid to Bhutan Scholarship Scheme	MEA	UG, only BTech courses	25
Aid to Maldives	MEA	UG	20
Aid to Mongolia	MEA	UG, PG, PhD	20
Mekong Ganga Co-operation Scholarship Scheme (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam)	MEA	UG, PG, PhD	50
Nehru Memorial Scholarship Scheme for the nationals of Sri Lanka	MEA	UG	60
Special Scholarship Scheme for Afghan Nationals	MEA	UG, PG, PhD	1000

Name	Funded By	Courses	Slots (as of 2022-23)
Scholarship Scheme for Children/ Dependents of Afghan National Defence and Security Forces	MEA	UG, PG	103
Africa Scholarship Scheme	MEA	UG, PG, PhD	908
Maulana Azad Scholarship Scheme for the nationals of Sri Lanka	MEA	PG in Agriculture Science and Engineering Courses	50
Rajiv Gandhi Scholarship Scheme (Sri Lanka)	MEA	BE, BTech courses	25
Scholarship for students from SAARC Countries	MEA	UG, PG, PhD	64
Silver Jubilee Scholarship Scheme for the nationals of Nepal	MEA	PG, PhD	64
Total			**3878**

*Note: CEP and EEP slots are only available for countries with which CEP and EEP agreements are in place. For a list of countries with valid agreements, see Annexure 3.

Source: Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Scholarship Manual: Academic Year 2022-23, Oct 2022.

Annexure 3: Bilateral Agreements, MoUs and Treaties for Educational Cooperation

I. List of Bilateral Agreements Covering Higher Education signed by India

Cultural Exchange Programme/Educational Exchange Programmes provide a framework for exchanging students, researchers, academic staff, and educational and cultural collaboration through joint research, dual degrees, and exchange programmes.

Name	Exchange Programme Type	Year Signed	Name	Exchange Programme Type	Year Signed
Armenia	EEP	2002	Botswana	EEP	2010
Australia	EEP	2003	Russia	EEP	2011
Guyana	EEP	2003	Mozambique	EEP	2011
Israel	EEP	2003	Yemen	EEP	2012
Syria	EEP	2003	Mauritius	EEP	2012
Tanzania	EEP	2003	Tajikistan	EEP	2012
Sri Lanka	EEP	2005	Peru	EEP	2013
New Zealand	EEP	2005	Estonia	EEP	2013
Mexico	EEP	2005	China	EEP	2015
Uzbekistan	EEP	2005	Argentina	CEP	2019
Ecuador	EEP	2006	Thailand	CEP	2022
Rwanda	EEP	2006	Greece	EEP, CEP	2022
Brazil	EEP*	2006			
China	EEP	2006			
Portugal	EEP	2007			
Ethiopia	EEP	2007			
France	EEP, CEP	2007			
Vietnam	EEP	2007			
Chile	EEP	2009			

*Note: Cultural Exchange Programme signed in 2020.

Source: International Cooperation Cell, Department of Higher Education (Ministry of Education); Indian Treaties Database (Ministry of External Affairs), last updated Feb 17, 2023.

II. List of MoUs signed in the field of higher education for student exchange programmes

Country	Name	Student Mobility	Year Signed
United States of America	Agreement Between India and United States of America for Financing Certain Educational Exchange Programmes	Establishment of the United States Educational Foundation in India to finance and facilitate student mobility	1950
China (The State Education Commission of the People's Republic of China)	Protocol Between India and China on Cooperation in The Field of Education Exchange Programme in the Field of Education (2006)	1. Exchange of students, faculty, scholars, academics 2. Providing scholarships in recognised HEIs 3. Joint study programmes for students	1993
Myanmar (Ministry of Education)	MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Higher Education	1. Exchange of students, scholars, teachers, staff, and experts 2. Providing scholarships in recognized HEIs	2003
Thailand	MoU on Cooperation in Field of Higher Education	1. Exchange of students, scholars, teachers, staff, and experts 2. Providing scholarships in recognized HEIs	2005
Saudi Arabia (Ministry of Higher Education)	MoU on Cooperation in Field of Higher Education	Exchange of academic scholarships and grants.	2006
Turkmenistan	MoU on Cooperation in Field of Higher Education Educational Exchange Programme	1. Exchange of students, scholars, teachers, staff, and experts 2. Providing scholarships in recognized HEIs	2010

Country	Name	Student Mobility	Year Signed
Indonesia	MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Higher Education	1. Exchange of students, scholars, teachers, staff, and experts 2. Providing scholarships in recognized HEIs 3. Facilitate internship programmes and vocational training	2011
Republic of Korea (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology)	MoU on Exchange and Cooperation in the Field of Education	1. Exchange of students, scholars, teachers, staff, and experts 2. Providing scholarships in recognized HEIs	2012
Germany (Federal Ministry of Education and Research)	MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Higher Education	Indo-German Strategic Partnership (IGSP) in Higher Education provides funding for academic and student exchanges between the two countries	2013 (extended to 2024 in 2019)
Japan (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan)	MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Education	1. Exchange of students, scholars, teachers, staff, and experts 2. Providing scholarships in recognized HEIs	2015
Australia	MoU in the Fields of Education, Training and Research	The agenda of the Australia-India Education Council includes facilitating student mobility and welfare through exchange programmes	2015

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Country	Name	Student Mobility	Year Signed
Afghanistan	MoU on Cooperation in Human Resource Development	1. Facilitates student mobility. 2. Mutual Recognition of Qualifications 3. Facilitating Afghan students in India through the Study In India programme	2019
Canada	MoU concerning Cooperation in Higher Education	1. Exchange of undergraduate, graduate, vocational, doctoral and post-doctoral students 2. Reciprocal internship programmes in areas of mutual interest	2019
Norway (Ministry of Education and Research)	MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Higher Education	1. Exchange of students, scholars, teachers, staff, and experts 2. Providing scholarships in recognized HEIs 3. Building institutional linkages	2022

Source: International Cooperation Cell, Department of Higher Education (Ministry of Education, Government of India), last updated Feb 17, 2023.

III. Bilateral Migration and Mobility Partnerships/Agreements

(Only includes agreements that facilitate the movement of students, researchers, and academics)

Country	Name	Year Signed
Italy	Declaration of Intent between the Government of the Republic of India and Government of the Italian Republic on Migration and Mobility	2 March 2023
Cyprus	Declaration of Intent on Migration and Mobility between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Cyprus	29 December 2022
Finland	Joint Declaration of Intent on Migration and Mobility between India and Finland	13 December 2022
Germany*	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany on a Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership	5 December 2022
Denmark	Declaration of Intent on Migration and Mobility between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Kingdom of Denmark	3 May 2022
Greece	Declaration of Intent on Migration and Mobility between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Hellenic Republic	23 March 2022
Australia	Letter of Intent Between The Government of the Republic of India and The Government of Australia Regarding The Migration And Mobility Partnership Arrangement	18 March 2022
United Kingdom	MoU on Migration and Mobility Partnership between the Government of the Republic of India and Her Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain And Northern Ireland	4 May 2021

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Country	Name	Year Signed
France	Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement Between The Government of the Republic of India And The Government of the French Republic	10 March 2018
European Union	EU-India Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility	29 March 2016

*Note: The agreement follows the Joint Declaration of Intent on Cooperation in the Field of Skill Development and Vocational Education and Training signed in 2019.

Source: Indian Treaties Database, (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India), accessed on July 12, 2023.

Annexure 4: Higher Education Institutes in North Eastern States

I. Number of Higher Education Institutes in North Eastern States (2016-2021)

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Arunachal Pradesh	31	30	37	42
Assam	541	512	544	595
Manipur	87	87	92	105
Meghalaya	63	60	63	75
Mizoram	30	30	32	39
Nagaland	65	66	67	68
Tripura	52	52	52	54
Sikkim	7	7	7	8

Source: AISHE Annual Report, 2020-21.

II. State-wise List of Universities established in North Eastern India (as of 2021)

Name	Year	Type
ARUNACHAL PRADESH		
Rajiv Gandhi University	1985	Central w.e.f 2007
North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology	2005	Deemed to be university
The Indira Gandhi Technological and Medical Sciences University	2012	Private
Venkateshwara Open University	2012	Private
Arunachal University of Studies	2012	Private
Apex Professional University	2013	State
Himalayan University	2013	Private
North East Frontier Technical University	2014	Deemed to be university
Arunodaya University	2014	Private
The Global University	2017	Private

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Name	Year	Type
ASSAM		
Guahati University	1948	State
Dibrugarh University	1965	State
Assam Agricultural University	1968	State
Assam University	1994	Central
Tezpur University	1994	Central
Indian Institute of Technology	1994	Central
Krishna Kanta Handique State Open University	2007	State
Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health Sciences	2007	State
Assam Don Bosco University	2009	Private
Bodoland University	2009	State
Assam Down Town University	2010	Private
Assam Rajiv Gandhi University of Cooperative Management	2010	State
Assam Science and Technology University	2011	State
Kumar Bhaskar Varma Sanskrit and Ancient Studies University	2011	State
The Assam Kaziranga University	2012	Private
National Law University and Judicial Academy	2012	State
Assam Women's University	2013	State
The Assam Royal Global University	2013	Private
Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya	2013	Private
Bhattadev University	2017	State
Cotton University	2017	State
Rabindranath Tagore University	2017	State
Krishnaguru Adhyatmic Visvavidyalaya	2017	Private
Madhavdev University	2018	State
Majuli University of Culture	2018	State
Central Institute of Technology	2018	Deemed to be university
Sri Sri Anirudhadeva Sports University	2020	Central
Birangana Sati Sadhani Rajyik Vishwavidyalaya	2021	State

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Name	Year	Type
MANIPUR		
Manipur University	1980	Central from 2005
Central Agricultural University	1993	Central
Sangai International University	2015	Private
Manipur University of Culture	2015	State
Manipur Technical University	2016	State
National Sports University	2018	Central
Dhanamanjuri University	2018	State
Manipur International University	2019	Private
Bir Tikendrajit University	2020	Private
Asian National University	2021	Private
MEGHALAYA		
North Eastern Hill University	1973	Central
Martin Luther Christian University	2005	Private
William Carey University	2005	Private
Techno Global University	2008	Private
CMJ University	2009	Private
The Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India University	2009	Private
Mahatma Gandhi University	2011	Private
University of Science and Technology	2011	Private
University of Technology and Management	2011	Private
North East Adventist University	2020	Private
MIZORAM		
Mizoram University	2000	Central
The Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India University	2006	Private

Name	Year	Type
NAGALAND		
Nagaland University	1994	Central
The Global Open University	2006	Private
The Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India University	2009	Private
North East Christian University	2013	Private
St Joseph's University	2016	Private
SIKKIM		
Sikkim-Manipal University	1995	Private
The Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India University	2004	Private
Sikkim University	2007	Central
Sikkim Professional University	2008	Private
Shri Ramaswamy Memorial University	2014	Private
Sikkim State University	2017	State
TRIPURA		
Tripura University	1987	Central
The Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India University	2004	Private
Maharaja Bir Bikram University	2015	State
National Law University	2022	State

Source: University Grants Commission Annual Report, 2020-21.

9. Notes

[1] ICCR notification dated 8 October 2021 extended its scholarships to existing holders and to Afghans who had originally self-financed their studies in India. [See Indian Council for Cultural Relations, 'Current issues regarding ICCR Scholarship students from Afghanistan,' October 8, 2021, https://www.iccr.gov.in/sites/default/files/2021-11/Notification%20for%20Afghan%20Student%20under%20ICCR%27s%20Afghan%20Scholarship%20Scheme_0.pdf]

[2] ICCR is supported by Indian academia especially in Pune, think tanks like Gateway House, and the Mahratta Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture.

[3] The regulations and guidelines announced by the University Grants Commission to implement the 'internationalisation' of higher education in India are:

1. University Grants Commission, 'University Grants Commission (Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Higher Educational Institutions to offer Twinning, Joint Degree, and Dual Degree Programmes) Regulations, 2022,' May 2, 2022, https://www.ugc.gov.in/pdfnews/4555806_UGC-Acad-Collab-Regulations.pdf

2. University Grants Commission, Ministry of Education, Government of India, Guidelines for Internationalisation of Higher Education, July 2021, https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/int_he.pdf

3. All India Council for Technical Education, which is the regulatory body for technical education in India and is under the Ministry of Education, has released its own rules for twinning and collaborations between Indian institutes and foreign ones. [See All India Council for Technical Education, 'All India Council for Technical Education (Grant of Approvals for Technical Institutions) Regulations, 2020', Feb 4, 2020, https://www.aicte-india.org/sites/default/files/Gazettee_of%20India%20-%20Regulations%202020.pdf

4. University Grants Commission, 'University Grants Commission (Establishment and Operation of Academic Bank of Credits in Higher Education) Regulations, 2021,' July 28, 2021, https://www.abc.gov.in/assets/resources/228549.pdf.

5. A draft of the forthcoming 'University Grants Commission (Setting up and Operation of Campuses of Foreign Higher Educational Institutions in India) Regulations, 2023' is already available.

See https://www.ugc.gov.in/pdfnews/9214094_Draft-Setting-up-and-Operation-of-Campuses-of-Foreign-Higher-Educational-Institutions-in-India-Regulations-2023.pdf (Accessed on 25 August 2023)

[4] GIFT city, Gandhinagar (Gujarat), is an International Financial Services centre like Singapore and Dubai and a multi-service Special Economic Zone (SEZ). This effectively translates to exemptions from domestic taxes like GST with only minimal levies, concessions on civic taxes, amenities, real estate purchases, combined with ease of transacting in international currencies. Both the Bombay Stock Exchange and National Stock Exchange have set up bourses here. An India International Bullion Exchange (IIBX) was set up here in July 2022. As regards higher education in GIFT City, as per India's Union Budget 2023, international universities can set up centres here offering courses in financial management, fintech and STEM studies free from domestic regulations. This indicates student work visas are a likelihood in GIFT City along the lines of the Chinese government giving international students work visas in the Shanghai Free Trade Zone or the Zhanjiang National Innovation Demonstration Zone, East Shanghai. Deakin University and the University of Wollongong, both from Australia, have been permitted by UGC to set up a campus in GIFT City.

[5] Cabinet, Government of India, 'Cabinet approves Action Plan for Champion Sectors in Services,' PIB, Feb 28, 2018, https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1522078 (Accessed on 9 July 2023).

[6] Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India, Economic Survey 2022-23, Jan 2023, p. 158, https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/economicsurvey/doc/eschapter/echap06.pdf.

[7] Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, Periodic Labour Force Survey July 2021-June 22, Feb 2023, https://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/AnnualReportPLFS2021-22F1.pdf.

[8] Directorate General of Employment, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India, Labour and Employment Statistics 2022, July 2022, pp. 52-55., https://dge.gov.in/dge/sites/default/files/2022-8/Labour_and_Employment_Statistics_2022_2com.pdf.

[9] Wheebox, India Skills Report 2023: Roadmap to India's Skills and Talent Economy 2030, p 206, https://wheebox.com/india-skills-report.htm, accessed July 10, 2023.

[10] Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, National Education Policy 2020, July 29, 2020, https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf.

[11] Knowledge remittances or the remittance of knowledge implies the contributions of skilled migrants to their home country as drivers of innovation, upskilling, and knowledge circulation through their experiences and exposure to working in other countries. [Thomas A. Fackler, Yvonne Giesing, and Nadzeya Laurentsyeva, 'Knowledge remittances: Does emigration foster innovation?', Research Policy, Vol 49, No 9, Nov 2020, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2019.103863].

[12] Veena Bhalla and Krishnapratap B. Powar, 'International Students in Indian Universities,' International Higher Education, Vol 79, 2015, 23-24, https://ejournals.bc.edu/index.php/ihe/article/view/5847.

[13] The international student population has increased globally from 2.1 million in 2001 to over 6 million in 2020. Correspondingly, over 1.13 million Indian students were studying abroad in 2020, making India the second largest students sending country after China. For 2022, the number of Indian students studying overseas is 1.18 million. [See 'International students,' Migration Data Portal, updated 3 Mar 2023, https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/international-students; 'Data of Indian students studying abroad,' Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 396, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, answered on July 22, 2021; Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 'Estimated Data of Indian students studying abroad in 2022,' https://www.mea.gov.in/Images/CPV/lu3820-1-mar-25-22.pdf. Accessed May 16, 2023.]

[14] 'Indian Students going Abroad,' Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No – 667, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India, answered on 6 Feb 2023.

[15] Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India, All India Survey on Higher Education 2020-21, Jan 2023, p iv., https://aishe.gov.in/aishe/viewDocument.action?documentId=322

[16] Interview with Dean (International Department), MAHE-MIT, Prof. (Dr.) Karunakar A. Kotegar on 6 April in 2022,' https://www.mea.gov.in/Images/CPV/lu3820-1-mar-25-22.pdf. Accessed May 16, 2023.]

[17] See note 2 on regulations and guidelines announced.

[18] A total of 1,113 Universities, 43,796 Colleges and 11,296 Stand Alone Institutions were registered in AISHE 2020-21 as against 1043 Universities, 42343 Colleges, and 11779 Stand-Alone Institutions as per AISHE 2019-20. The increase has been in one year by 70 universities and 1453 colleges. [See Department of Higher Education

Government of India, All India Survey on Higher Education 2020-21, Jan 2023, pp i-ii, https://aishe.gov.in/aishe/viewDocument.action?documentId=322]

[19] The number of foreign students enrolled in Indian higher education in 2000-2001 was about 7,000. Currently, the total number of foreign students as per AISHE 2020-21 is 48,035 from 163 countries. About half of the foreign students came to India to pursue undergraduate studies, and a significant concentration can be seen in BTech, BSc, BBA, BE, B.Pharma, BA, BCA, BSc, Nursing, BBM, and BDS. Though many enrol for postgraduate courses in Medicine, Ph.D., MBA, MA, MSc, and Diploma courses as well, it is imperative to further promote these postgraduate programmes abroad [See Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India, All India Survey on Higher Education 2020-21, Jan 2023, https://aishe.gov.in/aishe/viewDocument.action?documentId=322; Bhalla and Powar, 'International Students in Indian Universities.]

[20] Other push factors are the limited educational infrastructure and in-take capacity, and insufficient variety of academic programmes on offer in Nepal's tertiary education sector. Besides, the cultural and linguistic affinity, ease of migrating to India due to open borders, similarities in the education systems, affordable tuition fees and cost of living, seat reservations, and numerous scholarships provided by the Government of India ensure an uninterrupted flow of Nepali students to India.

[21] 'ITEC Fellowships,' Embassy of India, Kabul, Afghanistan, https://eoi.gov.in/kabul/?0360?000.

[22] 'Study In India,' United States-India Educational Foundation, https://www.usief.org.in/Study-in-India.aspx.

[23] Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India, All India Survey on Higher Education 2020-21, Jan 2023, Table 16, https://aishe.gov.in/aishe/viewDocument.action?documentId=322.

[24] Rashim Wadhwa, 'Imbalanced Student Mobility in India: A Serious Concern,' International Higher Education, Vol 92, 2018, 19-20, https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2018.92.10282.

[25] Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India, All India Survey on Higher Education 2020-21, Jan 2023, https://aishe.gov.in/aishe/viewDocument.action?documentId=322.

[26] Interview with Dean (International Department), MAHE-MIT, Prof. (Dr.) Karunakar A. Kotegar on 6 April 2023. Also, the closure of the popular Melaka-Manipal Medical College (MMMC) last year, which was set up exclusively for medical students from Malaysia, has contributed to lower enrolments by foreign students in degree courses. MAHE, a private not-for-profit Institute of Eminence, began in 1953 with its first two foreign students from Malaysia. One in four doctors in Malaysia today has probably studied at this College. Students from MMMC did their two-year pre-clinical programme in Manipal before going home to complete their MMBS degree at the Melaka campus. This has changed because the Medical Council of India rules no longer permit foreign students to earn an Indian medical degree if part of the course is done overseas. Today, Manipal's Melaka campus offers a Malaysian medical degree.

[27] 'International Student's Centre,' Savitribai Phule Pune University, http://www.unipune.ac.in/university_files/international_centre.htm.

[28] For details, see 'International Collaborations,' Manipal Academy of Higher Education, https://manipal.edu/mu/about-us/international-collaboration.html

[29] Colleges and universities are ranked and accredited either by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (a University Grants Commission/UGC ranking) or National Institute Ranking Framework done by the UGC's technical education counterpart, the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). Both UGC and AICTE are

All-India regulatory councils. Not all universities (central or state or deemed or private) and colleges have qualified for listing on this official Ministry of Education website. Additionally, select higher education institutes that have an exceptional academic track record and are research institutes, have been certified as National Institutes of Importance and the Institutes of Eminence, this permits them to admit 30% foreign students over and above their seats for each course.

[30] Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 'Estimated Data of Indian students studying abroad in 2022,' https://www.mea.gov.in/Images/CPV/lu3820-1-mar-25-22.pdf., Accessed May 16, 2023.

[31] British High Commission, New Delhi, 'UK-India agree partnership to boost work visas for Indian nationals,' Gov. uk, May 4, 2021, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-india-agree-partnership-to-boost-work-visas-for-indian-nationals.

[32] 'Frequently Asked Questions,' Study in Russia, https://studyinrussia.ru/en/actual/faq/can-foreigners-study-and-work/.

[33] Foreign students will be permitted to do post-graduate medical degrees in India and permitted to practice within the duration of their degree or certificate if the new Draft Regulations to Practice Medicine 2022 proposed by the National Medical Council is passed. [See 'Licence to Practice Medicine in India: NMC Guidelines,' Medical Dialogues, Apr 7, 2022, https://medicaldialogues.in/health-news/nmc/nmc-introduces-draft-regulations-of-license-to-practice-in-india-invites-comments-91114. Accessed on July 29, 2023]

[34] One reason why students from Pakistan are not given student visas is on grounds of internal security.

[35] Services Export Promotion Council, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, 'Enigma of Quality Education,' A Monthly Newsletter by SEPC, Vol 1, No. 3, July 2020, https://servicesepc.org/upload/media/JULY2020.pdf. Accessed on May 17, 2023.

[36] Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, National Education Policy 2020, July 29, 2020, https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf

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