UK INDIA
BUSINESS COUNCIL

# BEYOND THE TOP 200 – EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION FOR INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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# FOREWORD

India's age dividend remains a key facilitator of the economic development of the country. Attainment in higher education is seen as a vital route to achieving key ambitions. Hence, Indian parents are increasingly prepared to make significant financial and personal sacrifices to give their children the best possible start in life.

Yet, for a long time, these ambitions have been undermined by systemic failings within Higher Education in India. But positive change is coming, and it needs to if the aspirations of many of India's youth (and their parents) as well as the requirements of much of the corporate sector is to be met.

The Indian Government has flagged significant changes ahead of the imminent publication of its New Education Policy. Many of these changes are to be welcomed being radical in nature with an explicit realisation that in the future the private sector is key to success.

Ten years ago, less than 8% of academic institutions were in the private sector. Now, some 30% of all academic institutions in India are within the private sector. This trend should continue.

And, hand in hand with this growth in education infrastructure must go an improvement in standards. We believe that much of the change – in teaching, curriculum and the embedding of soft skills – should be bottom-up driven so that those students which emerge from Indian academic institutions in the future are "fit-for-purpose" within the new paradigms of rapid economic, demographic and technological changes, and the associated evolving needs of industry.

Foreign universities – and particularly UK universities – have much to contribute to the changes that are occurring in India. Much attention has been given to Indian students coming to the UK – the number of which has grown by 30% in each of the last two years. Yet the real opportunity lies in UK universities educating Indian students in India.

We welcome the Government of India's policy of allowing foreign universities to operate more freely in India thereby allowing the best courses, teaching, and facilities available globally to directly change lives in India. And it needs to as education FDI currently amounts to paltry 0.5% of overall flows.

Our report on 'India's Education Policy', published in March 2018, outlined the staggering demand and consequent opportunities. This paper "Beyond the Top 200" focuses on India's need to expand its higher education system focusing on excellence, equal access, and employability. Yet, disappointingly, only "the top 200 in the world" are to be allowed to collaborate with the best Indian institutions.

We think reliance on this metric is wrong and, in this report, we analyse what a Top 200 approach would mean in practice, arguing that while International ranking systems are designed to help students choose where to study, they are not a suitable tool to judge which foreign universities have what India and Indians want.

To truly unlock the potential of India's young population, a more flexible approach is needed. We argue that business inputs into the types of degrees needed versus an arbitrary and blunt measurement the Top 200 universities would produce a better and more sustainable result.

UK India Business Council undertakes work across Higher Education connecting UK institutions to partners in India whether they be universities, businesses, or the all-important student. We hope that you find this latest report of interest and a worthwhile contribution to this important ongoing debate.

Richard Heald, OBE - Chief Executive Officer, UK India Business Council

# INTRODUCTION

To achieve its social and economic ambitions, India needs engineers, data scientists, teachers, healthcare professionals, urban planners, architects, managers, social workers, pharmacists, environmental scientists and a whole range of other professionals on an unprecedented scale. It is clear India needs a Higher Education system that provides sufficient high-quality graduates across all sectors.

The Government of India recognises this, and, through reform of its Higher Education policy, is seeking to enhance the system's capacity to produce high-quality graduates on a more consistent and widespread basis.

There is an important role that UK Higher Education institutions can play to support this goal, not least in partnering with Indian institutions, and it is encouraging to see the government, in its draft policy, making provision for foreign institutions to play a role.

This paper builds on the UK India Business Council's March 2018 report on 'India's Higher Education Policy, and sets out a model for India's collaboration with foreign HE institutions in a way that matches India's social and economic priorities with the best curriculum from across the world.

By looking beyond the global 'Top-200' universities, Indian Higher Education institutions have the potential to form strong and effective international relationships that deliver across the four pillars of excellence, equal access, expansion, and employability. This is what India will need on the path to becoming a 21st century superpower.

# INDIA – A 21ST CENTURY SUPERPOWER

Experiencing rapid economic, demographic, and technological change, India's goal is to create a Higher Education system that allows its young population and the nation to achieve their true potential and become a 21st century global superpower.

Half of India's 1.25 billion people is under 25 – so Higher Education will make a significant impact on the future of the country's economy. The current need to deliver a Higher Education system of international ambition and quality is a historic opportunity to generate economic prosperity across India.

To meet the opportunities afforded by this generation, the Government of India has identified a range of priorities, including the digitalisation of the public and private sectors, expanding the manufacturing base, creating smart cities, expanding access to quality healthcare, and reducing $CO^2$ emissions through a substantial renewable energy drive. To succeed, more needs to be done to deliver the skilled people in these, and many other, strategic areas.

For example, Mr Modi's 'Ayushman Bharat Yojana' scheme – the largest state provision of healthcare in the world – promises to expand health insurance coverage to all Indians. This not only creates a demand for more healthcare, but also quality healthcare, as access to more complex procedures will grow. To meet this, India requires 7.4 million healthcare professionals by 2022, more than double the existing workforce[1].

Employing three million directly and supporting a wider industry of nearly ten million more jobs indirectly, India's IT sector accounts for 8% of GDP, and is at the heart of a rapidly changing technological landscape. This is an industry that requires high-quality specialist skills, with its potential impacted by a lack of Postgraduates emerging from India's universities[2].

Being able to produce high-quality engineering graduates will be core to making good on India's ambitious transport, smart city, and regional connectivity plans. However, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors estimated that by 2020, India will have 778,000 civil engineers but will need 4.6 million[3].

In short, India needs not just more graduates, but more high-quality graduates. Graduates that have both the necessary workplace skills and specialist knowledge to work at a global standard. The Government of India has rightly identified that to achieve this, international collaboration will be vital.

Sources

1. https://www.msde.gov.in/Executive_Summary/Healthcare.pdf
2. https://www.msde.gov.in/Executive_Summary/IT_%20ITeS.pdf
3. https://www.cebglobal.com/talentdaily/indias-manufacturing-drive-struggles-to-overcome-skills-gap/

# CHALLENGES FACING INDIA'S HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

Due to these challenges, the Indian Higher Education sector is experiencing unprecedented levels of demand across both government and private sector institutions. As outlined in the UK India Business Council's March 2018 report on 'India's Higher Education Policy', for India to meet these challenges, the Government of India must focus on four pillars: excellence; equal access; expansion; and employability. UK, and other foreign universities, can support delivery across all four pillars.

**THE FOUR PILLARS FOR INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION**

1. **EXCELLENCE**
2. **EQUAL ACCESS**
3. **EXPANSION**
4. **EMPLOYABILITY**

## Excellence

It is recognised in India that the quality of teaching in Higher Education institutions does not yet consistently meet international standards nor the need of domestic employers.

A 2014 report by the British Council stated that the greatest challenge facing Higher Education in India is a chronic shortage of faculty. Estimates put 30-40% of faculty positions unfilled, whilst many in post have received little to no training in teaching. The report found that a high student-to-teacher ratio was only compounded by pressures from industry and government to increase the number of places[4].

Furthermore, a separation of research and teaching, and a lack of early stage research experience, limited innovative research output. Despite India producing the fourth largest number of doctoral graduates in the world in 2014, the number of research articles published by Indian doctorate students is comparatively very low[5]. During 2017-18, about 1,500 articles were published by India, compared to about 7,000 by the UK, or 13,200 by China[6]. This is in a context of stagnation in the proportion of students enrolled into postgraduate studies. In 2008, 11.9% of total student enrolments were for Postgraduate courses, which has risen only to 12.9% by 2018[7].

As well as increasing the quality and quantity of faculty, progress needs to be made in curriculum design, delivery, and practical learning. Too often, the academic structure is slow to adapt to technological change as teaching staff often have limited opportunities for continuous professional development[8].

## Expansion

The Government of India has made

Sources

4. https://www.britishcouncil.in/sites/default/files/understanding_india.pdf
5. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/02/countries-with-most-doctoral-graduates/
6. https://www.natureindex.com/country-outputs/generate/All/global/All/n_article
7. Figure 1-Source: MHRD - AISHE 2017-18, SHTE 2008-09 http://mhrd.gov.in/statist
8. https://www.britishcouncil.in/sites/default/files/understanding_india.pdf

significant progress in creating and stimulating more institutions and more places. A key measure of participation in education, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), has leapt from 11% in 2007 to nearly 26% now.

To achieve the GER growth to date, the number of universities has more than doubled from 430 in 2008 to more than 950 in 2018.

Although 70% of this increase is accounted for by State universities, the biggest change in this sector is the emergence of private universities, the number of which have grown at an exponential rate to meet industry demand, and now account for almost one-third of the total institutions in India compared to less than 7% in 2008. With a strategic push by the Government of India to liberalise the sector, the number of private universities is expected to double in the next five years to over 500 by 2023.

**FIGURE 1**[7]

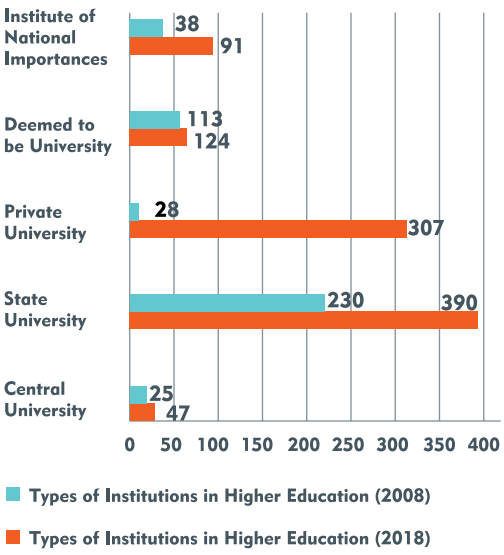
**HE EXPANSION INDICATORS 2008 – 2018**

| INDICATORS | 2008 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|
| TOTAL HEIs (INCLUDING UNIVERSITIES) | 434 | 959 |
| TOTAL COLLEGES | 27,882 | 39,050 |
| TOTAL ENROLMENT | 18.5 MILLION | 36.6 MILLION |
| GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO | 13.7 | 25.8 |

This, though, is only stage one of a journey. In 2014, the Indian Government set a goal to increase gross enrolment to 30% by 2020. Although a significant increase, 30% would still be low by international standards. For example, the GER stands at 48% in China, 51% in Brazil and at an average of 68% across EU member states.

**FIGURE 2**

**EXPANSION IN THE HE SECTOR: 2008 VS. 2018**




In practice, a rise to 30% means providing 40 million university places across India — 14 million more than currently exist and potentially the largest expansion in higher education the world has ever seen.

According to current forecasts, by 2030 India will have the largest number of people of college-going age — a staggering 140 million. Of the 959 Higher Education institutions across India today, 736 universities currently educate 28.6 million

Sources

9. https://www.ukibc.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2018-06-14-India-Education-Policy-Web-version.pdf

students. To meet demand whilst improving quality India will need at least another 1,500 institutions by 2030, to accommodate this huge influx of students[9].

Expanding quality and capacity in higher education will need sizable investment now to reap long-term rewards. Given limited public resources, there is a very real opportunity for non-state institutions in the higher education sector to help fill the capacity gap. Lack of existing infrastructure and resources, coupled with a growing demand for Higher Education, makes India not only ripe for international partnerships, but the application of new, accessible, technological, and innovative pedagogy platforms.

## Equal Access

The challenge is not only in expanding enrolment, but ensuring this is done in a way that puts equal access to all citizens at its core.

India has made substantial progress in closing the Higher Education gender gap. The All India Higher Education Survey 2018 showed the Gender Parity Index closed in Higher Education from 0.86 in 2011 to 0.94 in 2017[10]. However there remain significant male biases in technology and diploma-level courses, with women making up less than 20% of students in engineering colleges[11].

Secretary General of Association of Indian Universities, Furqan Qamar, however highlighted that only 25% of 18-24-year olds in India have access to Higher Education despite there being over 40,000 colleges and universities[12]. A big reason for this is the distribution of institutions across regions that make enrolment especially difficult for people from rural and hard-to-reach locations.

Digital innovation can go a long way towards addressing this. Innovations driving Industry 4.0 are not only changing the future of work; they are also ushering in new possibilities for delivering education - 'Education 4.0'.

Through these advancements, personalised, distance, and online learning tools are becoming a reality, allowing learners to choose from a variety of bespoke educational programmes and instructional approaches[13]. This will be vital to ensuring education is accessible across disadvantaged and hard-to-reach groups, including women, and socially, geographically, and economically isolated people. International involvement will allow the adoption of both tested and cutting-edge teaching systems.

UK universities have rich experience in digital education, and well-developed models to encourage and enable access by members of under-represented communities.

## Employability

In the face of systemic pressures to increase the number of places,

Sources

10. https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/education/news/gender-gap-narrowing-in-higher-education-hrd-survey/articleshow/62407944.cms
11. https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/trichy/proactive-measures-can-make-higher-education-accessible-to-all-expert/articleshow/63806966.cms
12. https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/trichy/proactive-measures-can-make-higher-education-accessible-to-all-expert/articleshow/63806966.cms
13. Leapfrogging to Eduction 4.0: Student at the Core, November 2017, FICCI EY
14. https://www.aspiringminds.com/research-reports

more attention is now focussing on the employability of the graduates produced.

The problem is not just the lack of specialists in fields such as engineering, which is vital to building India's future infrastructure, but ensuring they are trained to work-place standards. According to a 2016 report by Indian employability assessment firm, Aspiring Minds, more than 80% of engineers in India are "unemployable"[14].

This is not limited to engineering. Research by the British Council suggests that up to 75% of graduates from Indian universities are not considered 'employable'[15].

Soft skills are crucial to a graduate's employability and, indeed, if they are entrepreneurs setting-up their own businesses.

To fill the skills gap, Indian firms are increasingly turning to in-house training and courses. This is a costly endeavour and not feasible for most SMEs, which are engines of India's future growth. More concerning is that employers are frequently working to ensure their recruits have not just specialist skills but are capable of more general tasks such as analytic thinking, decision making, project management, and effective communication in the workplace.

Expansion of institutions and places is not enough and, if done in the wrong way, could simply compound these problems.

A particular characteristic of UK universities is the excellent engagement they have with businesses, particularly those in their locality but also much further afield including Indian businesses. In terms of academia-industry collaboration, there is a lot of transferable know-how across the UK Higher Education system. The UK's new regulatory body, the Office for Students, prioritises working with education providers and employers to directly address skills gaps and ensure graduates are more employable. This means businesses – the employers - are engaged as important partners in shaping courses and training in UK institutions.

Sources

15. http://monitor.icef.com/2015/10/indias-employability-challenge/

# FIRST STEPS TOWARDS A NEW HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

In advance of the new Education Policy, the Government has already taken several important steps towards meeting these four main challenges facing India's Higher Education sector[16].

- To increase enrolments, the MHRD has directly encouraged private sector investment by granting institutions more autonomy to operate whilst maintaining academic standards. The Government also shortlisted six 'Institutions of Eminence' in India, of which three are from the private sector.
- To fast-track development of education facilities and infrastructure for public sector institutions, the Government set up the Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) with a sizable loan fund.
- The Government also created a National Testing Agency - an autonomous and self-funded body responsible for conducting entrance examinations for all Higher Education institutions. This standardises enrolment procedures, so they are transparent and ensure equal access based on ability.
- The University Grants Commission (UGC) is instructing every institution to ensure at least 50% of students have a job, are self-employed or pursue further higher education following graduation by 2022. In addition, the UGC expects two-thirds of students to be engaged in 'socially productive activities' during their studies.
- In tentative, but welcome steps towards internationalisation, the Government also established the Global Research Interactive Network (GRIN) and Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN). Both GIAN and GRIN focus on inviting foreign faculty members to India for short teaching stints and are complimented by the 'Study in India' programme attracting foreign students to study in India.
- The MHRD has eased restrictions on offering online courses if an institution already offers classroom and distance learning programmes in that discipline.
- The Government recently drafted a bill to establish the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) to improve governance across the sector. Once enacted, the bill will replace the University Grants Commission (UGC) with the HECI, which will set and enforce academic standards beyond simply awarding grants.

The UK India Business Council welcomes all of these reforms. Indeed, the last two were issues we advocated for in our March 2018 report.

## A New Higher Education Policy and 'Top 200' Intentions

These important steps indicate the direction of the much-anticipated new Higher Education Policy. It is currently at the draft stage and looks likely to

Sources

16. Press release by the MHRD, Available at: www.pib.nic.in

be a comprehensive Bill, rooted in the four pillars of excellence, equal access, expansion, and employability. Crucially, it also recognises that there is an important role for international Higher Education institutions.

In November 2015, the MHRD constituted a committee under TSR Subramanian for the 'Evolution of the New Education Policy'. This committee submitted a report in April 2016, recommending:

*"Encouragement should be given to 'high quality' foreign universities and educational institutions to collaborate with Indian partners, and establish an Indian presence. While the nature of cooperation and collaboration may vary, the foreign university should be in a position to offer their own degree to the Indian students, studying in India, which will be valid in the country of origin. It is recommended that the top 200 universities should be facilitated to have collaboration arrangements with Indian universities"*[17].

This 'top 200' sentiment was echoed later by the MHRD's summary input to the Subramanian Committee published in August 2018:

*"Selected foreign universities, from the top 200 in the world, will be encouraged to establish their presence in India through collaboration with Ministry of Human Resource Development… Rules/ Regulations will be framed so that it is possible for a foreign university to offer its own degree to the Indian students studying in India, such that these degrees will be valid also in the country of origin"*[18].

This is the first time policymakers in India are actively developing criteria to foreign university entrance into the Indian Higher Education market.

Though 100% FDI is possible through the automatic route in other sectors, policy restrictions on international universities are major hurdles to internationalisation and foreign investment. As a result, education's share of total FDI in India remains low, at 0.5% based on 2000 to 2018 data[19].

However, careful analysis suggests that limiting participation in India to the top 200 globally ranked institutions will not significantly mobilise global expertise, resource, and investment necessary to build a higher education system worthy of India's economic ambitions[20].

There are also limitations on which Indian institutions can partner with foreign universities. Currently, MHRD considers only those Indian institutions that have been graded 'A' by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) over the last 6 years, as eligible to apply for foreign collaborations[21]. The NAAC grades the quality of an institution from 'D' to 'A++' based on a weighted score of several criteria including research, innovation, teaching, student support, infrastructure, and governance.

Sources

17. http://nuepa.org/new/download/NEP2016/ReportNEP.pdf
18. http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/nep/Inputs_Draft_NEP_2016.pdf
19. DIPP Quarterly FDI Statistics, June 2018.
20. http://nuepa.org/new/download/NEP2016/ReportNEP.pdf
21. MHRD Regulations, Available at: http://www.egazette.nic.in/WriteReadData/2016/170684.pdf

# DELIVERING EFFECTIVE GLOBAL COLLABORATION

Indian policy makers are right to want only the best the world has to offer. However, while international ranking systems are designed to help students choose a place of study and research, they are not a suitable tool to judge which foreign universities have what India and Indians actually want.

Frequently, universities that do not fall into the top 200 offer world-class education in certain areas. For example, a UK university not in the top 200 globally may actually be in the top 10 globally for, say, mechanical engineering. Conversely, a top-ranking university may not excel when it comes to their mechanical engineering courses.

Yet, under current proposals, India would allow top-level institutions to establish poor-quality mechanical engineering courses, but prevent high-quality courses coming from Universities not in the top 200.

This works both ways. Allowing only the top Indian universities to forge international partnerships will mean that any institution below a NAAC 'A' grade accreditation will not be able to experience and benefit from international expertise, despite having the potential to expand and improve quality.

The implication is that a much more flexible approach is required. This means not only welcoming foreign courses that best fit India's requirements, irrespective of where the delivering institution is placed on overall rankings, but allowing them to collaborate with any Indian institution that exhibits a real need for the same.

## Limitations of a Top 200 Approach

International University Ranking Systems (URSs) can act as an effective guide for students choosing a course of study but are a flawed foundation for assessing India's needs. Ranking systems are limited in a number of ways: they each use different metrics, contain a geographic bias, reward research over teaching, create mis-incentives, and do not assess a university's ability to internationalise.

**FIVE FREQUENTLY CITED RANKING SYSTEMS**

1. QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKING (QS)
2. TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKING (THE)
3. ACADEMIC RANKING OF WORLD UNIVERSITIES (ARWU), ALSO KNOWN AS SHANGHAI RANKINGS
4. U-MULTIRANK
5. CWTS LEIDEN RANKINGS

### Different Metrics

Each URS judges universities against different metrics. For instance, QS and THE rankings include reputation amongst academia and employers, but the ARWU does not.

One reason for this is that URSs are not comparable with one another. Even when two systems share a similar focus, the weights they attach to their scored criteria are frequently different and use independent methodologies.

As such they often do not compare like-for-like. For example, 'Engineering – Mechanical' and 'Engineering – Aeronautical' are two separate categories in the QS, whereas in the THE, they are one – 'Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering'.

These distinctions add up when looking at the overall university rankings and can make a big difference in where a university ranks each year. In the recent results shown below, seven institutions in the top ten are not common across the three major rankings – QS, THE (2018) and ARWU (2018)[22]. This gap of universities common to all URSs widens considerably between 100 – 200 rankings.

**FIGURE 3**

**TOP TEN UNIVERSITIES ACROSS THREE 2018 URSs**

| QS | THE | ARWU |
|---|---|---|
| MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY | UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD | HARVARD UNIVERSITY |
| STANFORD UNIVERSITY | UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE | STANFORD UNIVERSITY |
| HARVARD UNIVERSITY | CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY | UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE |
| CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY | STANFORD UNIVERSITY | MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY |
| UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE | MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY | UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA BERKELEY* |
| UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD | HARVARD UNIVERSITY | PRINCETON UNIVERSITY |
| UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON* | PRINCETON UNIVERSITY* | UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD |
| IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON* | IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON* | COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY* |
| UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO | UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO | CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY |
| ETH ZURICH* | ETH ZURICH AND UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA* | UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO |

*NOT COMMON TO TOP 10 OF ALL THREE RANKINGS

Sources

22. https://www.topuniversities.com/student-info/university-news/comparing-world-university-rankings-qs-shanghai

URSs frequently recognise the limitations of their own methodologies. Many employ 'ranges' to caution against reliance on a specific rank, particularly when lower down the ranking. For example, QS uses a "201 to 250" range. This implies strong limitations to being able to accurately differentiate between the university ranked 201 and the university ranked 250 and recognises that regular fluctuations in rank often do not reflect a real change in quality.

### Ability to Internationalise

While a URS can help guide students embarking on their higher education journey, are they good at determining collaboration between institutions? The evidence suggests not – the ranking systems are simply not designed for that purpose. Many URSs include the percentage share of international students and faculties as an indicator, but these do not measure an institution's capacity to successfully form institutional partnerships.

### Geographic Bias

Researchers have even gone so far as to suggest that each system can carry a geographic bias, with U-Multirank oriented towards Europe, ARWU towards North America, the Leiden Ranking towards emerging Asian countries, and QS and THE towards Anglo-Saxon countries[23]. Over-reliance on one URS could paint a distorted picture for Indian collaboration.

### Mis-incentives

It is often argued that URSs incentivise universities to implement measures aimed at improving rankings without adding real value to the quality of teaching, learning, and research. This is a powerful incentive when coupled with the prospect of diminishing public funding. Increasingly, students are having to bear the costs of education, meaning fluctuations in a university's ranking can make a big difference to its financial intake each year.

Likewise, reliance on top 200 URSs sends the wrong signal to Indian employers who currently invest significant resources into re-training 'unemployable' graduates. Establishing a top 200 policy would suggest that a graduate from an institution with a better overall world ranking is more valuable to an employer than a graduate from a relevant, better quality course delivered by an institution outside the overall top 200.

URSs do not attach significant weight to a graduate's employability or soft-skills educational outcomes, neither do they value collaboration with businesses in driving this. Higher Education institutions looking to improve their standing under a top 200 approach therefore have little incentive to improve real employability outcomes for the benefit of graduates, firms, or the wider economy.

Sources

23. Moed, H.F. Scientometrics (2017) 110: 967. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-016-2212-y

## Rewarding Research over Teaching

URSs consistently reward research metrics over teaching ones, making them a poor fit for assessing India's teaching needs.

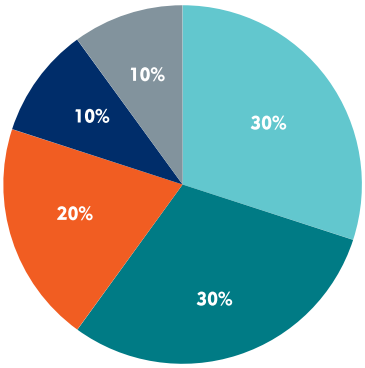
In the tables below we evaluate the three main URSs against the Indian Government's own ranking system, the NIRF, launched by the MHRD in 2015[24].

The NIRF relies on the following five parameters listed below with their weightage in the ranking matrix presented as a percentage against each indicator.

The NIRF acknowledges the importance of research but reflects India's wider needs more accurately. With the exception of 'perception', the chosen indicators are closely aligned to the four pillars of excellence, equal access, expansion, and employability. Specifically, the NIRF includes indicators related to access from disadvantaged social groups and emphasises graduate outcomes, which are missed out in other ranking systems. The NIRF places the strongest emphasis on teaching and learning – key to delivering excellence in Indian Higher Education.

**FIGURE 4**

**BREAKING DOWN THE NIRF**




- Teaching Learning and Resources (student strength, faculty-student ratio, faculty qualifications and financial resources)
- Research and Professional Practice (publications, patents and projects)
- Graduation Outcomes (Students graduated, higher studies selection, median salary)
- Outreach and Inclusivity (women students, differently abled, economically and socially disadvantaged category)
- Perception (peer, public and employer)

**THE NIRF PLACES THE STRONGEST EMPHASIS ON TEACHING AND LEARNING – KEY TO DELIVERING EXCELLENCE IN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION.**

Sources

24. National Institutional Ranking Framework, MHRD, Available at: https://www.nirfindia.org/About

When comparing the NIRF to each URS, we reach the following conclusions:

**FIGURE 5**[25]

| QS RANKING | RELEVANCE FOR INDIA FROM NIRF PERSPECTIVE | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **INDICATOR AND WEIGHTS** | **MERITS** | **LIMITATIONS** | **BEST-FIT RATING** |
| 1. ACADEMIC REPUTATION – 40%<br>2. CITATIONS PER FACULTY – 20%<br>3. FACULTY/STUDENT RATIO – 20%<br>4. EMPLOYER REPUTATION – 10%<br>5. INTERNATIONAL FACULTY RATIO – 5%<br>6. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RATIO – 5% | QUITE COMPREHENSIVE, BUT STILL OBJECTIVE AND SIMPLE<br><br>RESEARCH FOCUS AS BALANCED AS OTHERS | REPUTATION JUDGED USING A SURVEY GIVEN VERY HIGH WEIGHTAGE | 1 LOW<br>2<br>3 MED<br>4<br>5 HIGH |

**FIGURE 6**[26]

| THE | RELEVANCE FOR INDIA | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **INDICATOR AND WEIGHTS** | **MERITS** | **LIMITATIONS** | **BEST-FIT RATING** |
| 1. TEACHING – 30%<br>2. RESEARCH – 30%<br>3. RESEARCH CITATIONS – 30%<br>4. INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK – 7.5%<br>5. INDUSTRY INCOME – 2.5% | TEACHING IS GIVEN A SIGNIFICANT WEIGHTAGE AND IT ACKNOWLEDGES A UNIVERSITY'S INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK | HIGH WEIGHTAGE OF 60% IN TOTAL FOR RESEARCH AND RESEARCH CITATIONS | 1 LOW<br>2<br>3 MED<br>4<br>5 HIGH |

**FIGURE 7**[27]

| ARWU | RELEVANCE FOR INDIA | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **INDICATOR AND WEIGHTS** | **MERITS** | **LIMITATIONS** | **BEST-FIT RATING** |
| 1. QUALITY OF FACULTY – 40%<br>2. RESEARCH OUTPUT – 40%<br>3. QUALITY OF EDUCATION – 10%<br>4. PER CAPITA PERFORMANCE – 10% | QUALITY OF FACULTY RATED HIGHLY AND EQUAL TO RESEARCH OUTPUT | HIGH VALUE GIVEN TO RESEARCH OF 40% AND ABSTRACT REPUTATION AND OUTPUT MEASURES LIKE NOBEL AND FIELDS MEDAL PRIZES | 1 LOW<br>2<br>3 MED<br>4<br>5 HIGH |

Different ranking systems have their own individual merits and de-merits though. As can be seen above, they often over-emphasise abstract research measures at the expense of teaching. As such they are not considered a good fit for assessing India's self-identified teaching needs.

Sources

25. https://www.topuniversities.com/qs-world-university-rankings/methodology
26. https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/methodology-world-university-rankings-2018
27. http://www.shanghairanking.com/ARWU-Methodology-2017.html

## Beyond Top 200 - Meeting India's Needs

India needs to look beyond the top 200 to meet its higher education goals. Instead of using global rankings as a benchmark to select foreign universities, the Government of India should follow a more flexible approach that allows quality courses and teaching in India, regardless of where they stand in the overall rankings. In this way, skills shortages and demand from students and industry can steer the type and scale of collaborations that add real value and directly address India's social and economic needs.

Examples below highlight how UK Higher Education institutions can offer world-class courses that would be lost to India if only the top 200 ranked universities can participate. The overall rankings are based on the latest results available – 2019 (QS and THE) and 2018 (ARWU).

**FIGURE 8**

**1. UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA**

| | OVERALL | SUBJECTS |
|---|---|---|
| QS | 269 | 12 (DEVELOPMENT STUDIES)<br>40 (ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES)<br>51-100 (EARTH AND MARINE SCIENCES)<br>201-250 (BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES) |
| THE | 190 | 89 (LIFE SCIENCES)<br>101-125 (PHYSICAL SCIENCES)<br>126-150 (SOCIAL SCIENCES) |
| ARWU | 201-300 | |

The University of East Anglia is a prime example of a university with world-class capability that may be excluded by a top-200 approach, depending on the URS viewed. Ranked in the UK top 15 by the 2019 Complete University Guide, it excels globally in environmental, life, and earth sciences, which are closely aligned to strategic Indian priorities. It has also been awarded 'Gold' status for teaching excellence by the government's newly established Office for Students.

FIGURE 9

**2. QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY OF BELFAST**

| | OVERALL | SUBJECTS |
|---|---|---|
| QS | 180 | 40 (NURSING)<br>101-150 (LAW AND LEGAL STUDIES)<br>151-200 (CHEMICAL ENGINEERING) |
| THE | 201-250 | 151-175 (LIFE SCIENCES)<br>201-250 (PHYSICAL SCIENCES)<br>251-300 (SOCIAL SCIENCES) |
| ARWU | 301-400 | |

Queens University's advantage in nursing, law, and chemical engineering could be lost to India under a Top-200 approach, depending on the URS used. Queens is acknowledged as the 25th most international university in the world, whilst also one of the UK's leading universities for gender equality and diversity under the UK's Athena Swan award. They are a university with a truly global outlook, holding long-established relationships with India's top businesses and universities[28].

FIGURE 10

**3. UNIVERSITY OF LOUGHBOROUGH**

| | OVERALL | SUBJECTS |
|---|---|---|
| QS | =218 | 1 (SPORTS)<br>42 (COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES)<br>51-100 (ARCHITECTURE)<br>101-150 (ENGINEERING)<br>151-200 (ACCOUNTING) |
| THE | 301-350 | 98 (SOCIAL SCIENCES)<br>176-200 (BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS)<br>201-250 (ARTS AND HUMANITIES)<br>201-250 (ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY) |
| ARWU | UNRANKED | |

The University of Loughborough now frequently ranks in the top-10 universities in the UK, is number one in the world for sports (according to the QS rankings) and was awarded 'Gold' status for teaching excellence by the Government's Office for Students. It's rise in the UK rankings has be dramatic in recent years with global URSs yet to catch-up to this.

URSs disguise the real value universities outside the top 200 have to offer India. As our case studies illustrate, looking beyond the top 200 reveals real opportunities to directly address India's Higher Education, economic and social goals.

Sources

28. https://www.qub.ac.uk/International/Global-engagement/India/

FIGURE 11

**4. UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX**

| | OVERALL | SUBJECTS |
|---|---|---|
| QS | 355 | 37 (POLITICS)<br>40 (SOCIOLOGY)<br>101-150 (ECONOMICS AND ECONOMETRICS) |
| THE | 251-300 | 46 (SOCIAL SCIENCES)<br>47 (LAW)<br>126-150 (BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS) |
| ARWU | UNRANKED | |

## Case Study 1 - University of Essex

The University of Essex is one of the leading universities in the world for social sciences — ranked in the top 40 social sciences and top 50 for law by the World University Rankings by Subject. However, Essex is currently ranked in the top 300 (but outside the top 200) in the THE's overall rankings.

Essex is recognised globally for its quantitative social science expertise and is home to internationally important research centres, including the Institute for Social and Economic Research and the UK Data Archive. This research strength informs Essex's growing reputation in the emerging field of data analytics, which also benefits from Essex's expertise in artificial intelligence. Essex's new Institute for Analytics and Data Science is led by the UNESCO Chair in Analytics and Data Science, Professor Maria Fasli, and building links across the world. New courses designed to develop highly-skilled graduates for business include Essex's MSc Data Science with Professional Placement, offering students the chance to work at leading tech companies as part of their studies.

## Case Study 2 - Coventry University

Coventry University is not ranked within top 200 universities globally (571-580 in QS and 601-800 according to THE). However, the 2018 Guardian ranking placed Coventry 12th in the entire UK, with it awarded the title of "Top New University" in the 2018 Complete University Guide.

Under the criteria set by the UK government's new Teaching Excellent Framework, Coventry University was found to deliver consistently outstanding teaching, learning, and outcomes "of the highest quality found in the UK", according to the Office for Students*.

Coventry's strengths are in teaching excellence. On measures of 'value-added', determining how effectively students are taught, it has been rated above Oxford and Cambridge in the latest Guardian university league tables, with additional strengths in employability.

Coventry's courses related to automotive and manufacturing engineering are considered world-class, alongside an engineering course ranked amongst the UK's top 20. Indeed, it established an Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering (AME) facility in collaboration with the Unipart Manufacturing Group. Part-funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the AME brings together the best in academia, industry and R&D in a 'live' manufacturing environment**.

Despite not being a top 200 institution, it leads the sector in quality of teaching and employability – directly relevant to making progress on the four pillars.

*https://www.coventry.ac.uk/international-students-hub/partnerships-and-places-to-study/see-our-partners-across-the-world/inti-international-university-and-colleges/
***Available at: https://www.coventry.ac.uk/ame/

# RECOMMENDATIONS

India's new Higher Education Policy should not use an institution's overall position in global ranking systems as the basis for participating in India's Higher Education system.

We therefore recommend:

### Collaboration Based on Sustainable Goals

Partnerships and collaboration with foreign universities should be based on a long-term approach to attract sustainable relationships and outcomes. Rankings change every year, making it difficult to decide who should be permitted to enter the Indian higher education sector, particularly if the institution is close to the cut-off level. Like private sector businesses, universities need long-term clarity in order to make a commitment to India.

Collaboration, partnerships, and establishing campuses are costly for participating institutions, both in terms of investment and reputation. This is a decision universities take carefully knowing where they are internationally competitive and how they can offer real value to India's students, institutions, and employers in the long-run.

With a long-tradition in developing business-education relationships, many UK universities already deliver quality courses and employability outcomes that are responsive to the needs of businesses and the economy. A sustainable basis for collaboration between Higher Education institutions must incorporate the needs of employers in a way a static URS metrics cannot.

### Let Institutions Decide

A new Higher Education policy should work to harness the potential of all institutions in India, not just a select few. We recommend all institutions within India, public and private, irrespective of UGC category or NAAC score, be permitted to forge international partnership should such a partnership demonstrate, to both parties, real added value. Allowing private universities to also forge foreign collaboration will help improve access to quality higher education across the country.

Indian and foreign institutions are best placed to decide their own compatibility. An Indian institution outside the top NAAC grades may offer an attractive basis for collaboration in specific courses for foreign institutions. Limiting this could prevent many Indian institutions from accessing the very teaching and research resources they need to improve and deliver for students and employers.

Similarly, international institutions are best placed to decide which of their courses are internationally renowned and, therefore, best-placed to meet the demand and needs of India's students, HE institutions, and employers.

# CONCLUSION

India is rapidly becoming an economic and political superpower. Its high-growth and increasingly sophisticated economy is hungry for talented, highly-skilled workers. The quantity of India's young workforce is evident, and the Indian HE system is evolving to ensure that the quality, too, available.

UK Higher Education institutions want to play a role in India's remarkable rise and are very well-placed to do so, with expertise and experience across the four pillars of excellence, equal access, expansion, and employability.

Though global ranking systems provide a good overall indication of an institution, India's new Higher Education Policy should allow collaboration with foreign universities based on India's long-term needs, not short-term rankings. Irrespective of ranking, all Indian Higher Education Institutions should be able to build international relationships with foreign institutions that can offer real value in their areas of expertise.

The Ministry of Human Resource Development's recognition of the role global universities can play in meeting India's needs is to be applauded, and at the UKIBC, we offer our continued support throughout the policy and implementation phases.

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## Further Reports by the UK India Business Council

In March 2018, the UK India Business Council published its report analysing how the Indian Higher Education system could reach its full potential by focussing on the four pillars of excellence, equal access, employability, and expansion.

In the report, we made several recommendations on the need to harness technology, enhance the role of vocational skills, simplify governance, factor in private sector involvement, and allow foreign universities to play a role in the Indian Higher Education sector in order to truly meet India's needs.

To read the full report on our website visit www.ukibc.com/indiaeducationpolicyreport

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