

The logo for the UK India Business Council, featuring the text 'UK INDIA' in a bold, sans-serif font with 'UK' in blue and 'INDIA' in orange, and 'BUSINESS COUNCIL' in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font below it. The logo is positioned on a white arrow-shaped background pointing to the right.

**UK INDIA**  
BUSINESS COUNCIL

# HIGHER EDUCATION COLLABORATION: **FUTUREPROOFING THE UK INDIA PARTNERSHIP**

**OCTOBER 2019**

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## INTRODUCTION

With the UK developing policies to enable UK universities to expand their international engagement and India embarking on the largest reform of its higher education sector in a generation, the time is right to ask UK universities about the future with India.

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 key tenets of excellence, equal access, expansion, and employability, which the Indian Higher Education ecosystem rightly aspires to.

Indian students are increasingly attending UK universities and there is great opportunity for UK universities to support education of Indian students in India too. Nearly 22,000 Indian nationals received a Tier 4 (study) visa in the UK for the year ending June 2019 – a 42 percent increase on the previous year. The number of Indians studying in the UK has almost doubled in 3 years and is now at the highest levels since 2011.

Foreign support will be vital to ensuring that India educates its huge population - half of whom are under the age of 25. By 2030, India will have the largest number of people of college-going age, a staggering 140 million.

The higher education sector in India is expected to surpass £27 billion by 2025. Since April 2000, more than £1.87 billion of foreign direct investment (FDI) has flowed in from abroad. As the Government of India targets a Gross Enrolment Ratio of 30%, up from the 26% that the GER currently sits at, foreign investment will be crucial in addition to the domestic investment that the GoI has set aside for higher education - £4.2 billion - in its recent budget.

In the UK, Higher Education exports contribute as much as £20 billion to the UK economy, from tuition fees and living expenditure of EU and non-EU students, research, and products and services such as qualification awarding bodies and education-related equipment, and tens of billions more indirectly through the subsequent benefits it provides to other sectors.

Building mutually effective higher education collaboration between the UK and India is one of the most important steps that can be taken by both Governments to future proof the UK-India partnership as it will improve the skills-base, investment and trade flows, and generate more jobs and prosperity in both countries.

Indeed, being able to share students, staff, best practice, teaching, and research material not only results in better education for students but brings our societies closer together, strengthening the living bridge that binds the UK and India.

This research shows that there are complementarities between the UK's and India's educational ambitions, but there are significant access barriers that we recommend both Governments address as a priority so that the opportunities can be realised.

## ABOUT OUR RESEARCH

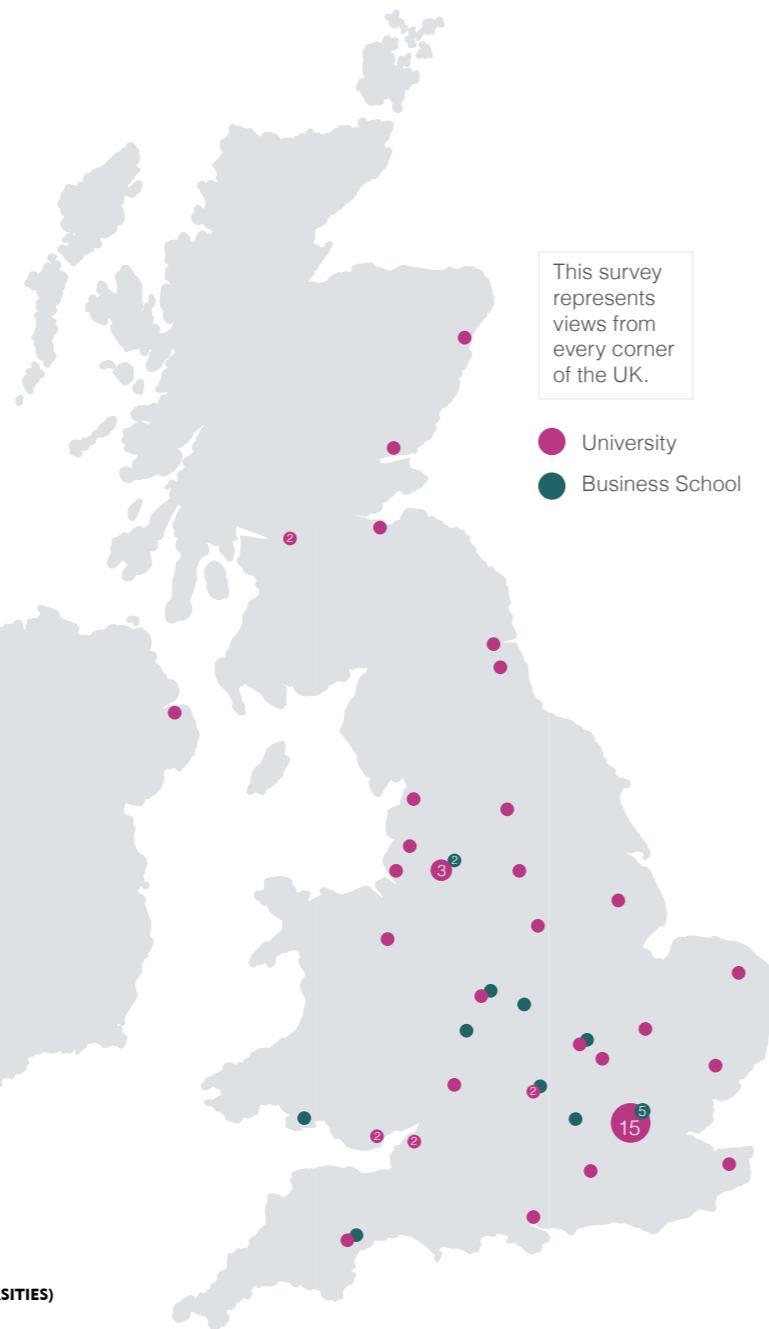
This research is based on the UK India Business Council’s survey of UK universities and business schools conducted in collaboration with Universities UK and the Chartered Association of Business Schools. It is worth pointing out that this survey was carried out in May 2019, prior to the UK Government announcing the reinstatement of the post-study work visa. The findings therefore reflect the rules and sentiment prior to this very welcome announcement.

The survey was completed by a wide range of UK universities and business schools, including 75% of all Russell Group members and 38% of all Alliance Group universities.

This survey represents the views of higher education institutions that have as few as 25 Indian students to those with as many as 1,100 Indian students currently enrolled. Of these, on average 36% of Indian students studying in the UK are on a Postgraduate degree.

Given the level, quality, and spread of responses, we believe this to be the most comprehensive research carried out to date on the UK Higher Education sector’s engagement with India.

**51 RESPONSES FROM UNIVERSITIES (46% OF ALL REGISTERED UK UNIVERSITIES)**  
 ENGLAND - 42, SCOTLAND - 5, WALES - 3, NORTHERN IRELAND - 1  
**16 RESPONSES FROM BUSINESS SCHOOLS**  
 ENGLAND - 15, WALES - 1



“  
 The work of UKIBC has been very timely in establishing the policy context for enhanced inter-sectoral collaboration between the UK and India.  
 ”

**Dr. Daniel Rycroft**  
 Chair of India Dialogue  
 University of East Anglia

## HOW CAN INDIA BENEFIT FROM UK COLLABORATION?

Due to existing constraints in Indian Higher Education and the growing youth population in India, there are a number of challenges facing India’s Higher Education sector, from aligning education with the job market and economy, to quantity and quality of Higher Education institutions.

To overcome these challenges and enable Higher Education to flourish in India, the UKIBC has recommended that the Government of India concentrates on four pillars:



### THE FOUR PILLARS FOR INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

- 1 EXCELLENCE
- 2 EXPANSION
- 3 EQUAL ACCESS
- 4 EMPLOYABILITY

**EXCELLENCE** This means improving the quality of teaching in line with international standards, improving training that education faculties receive, and increasing the presence of Indian research across international academic circles, all of which are currently low.

**EXPANSION** India’s growing youth population requires more education institutions. This requires more universities and other education

facilities, as well as education faculty. However, time and financial constraints on physical infrastructure means online learning platforms and international partnerships should also play a significant role in expanding India’s education institutions, considering that India is expected to have more than 140 million people of college-going age by 2030.

**EQUAL ACCESS** As well as meeting the demands of the growing population generally, it is important that all Indians have equal opportunity to receive higher education. That is, women, rural dwellers and other current minorities in Indian higher education becoming a greater proportion of India’s university students. Online learning can go a long way to addressing this.

**EMPLOYABILITY** Graduates should be both prepared for work and suitable to the needs of India’s economy. Aligning the curriculum with India’s growth plans – for example engineering courses to support infrastructure growth and Make in India – and complementary soft skills to help graduates transition to work. UK universities have improved their engagement with businesses, and therefore can transfer know-how in academia-industry partnerships.

The UK, thanks to its expertise and experience, can support delivery across all four pillars.



## WHY DO UK UNIVERSITIES WANT TO COLLABORATE WITH INDIA?

India is clearly a priority for UK universities and business schools. Indeed, nearly 80% of higher education respondents put India in their Top 5 most important countries in the world to engage with.

INDIA RANK	UNIVERSITIES (%)	BUSINESS SCHOOLS (%)
TOP 1	7.8	0
TOP 5	78.4	43.75
TOP 10	90.1	68.75
TOP 25	98	93.75
NOT A PRIORITY	2	6.25

Why? Well, universities in the UK receive enormous and diverse benefits as a result of engaging with India: academically, socially, and economically. In short – India aligns with their long-term strategic goals.

### HOW UK UNIVERSITIES CURRENTLY BENEFIT FROM THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA

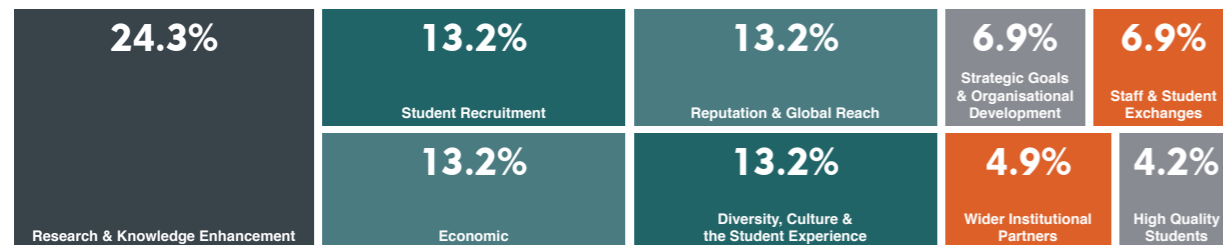


FIGURE 1 RESPONSES WERE GROUPED TOGETHER INTO NINE OVERARCHING CATEGORIES ILLUSTRATED IN THIS GRAPH IN PROPORTION TO THE FREQUENCY IN WHICH EACH WERE MENTIONED ACROSS ALL RESPONSES.

Research and knowledge enhancement were the most frequent benefits cited by UK higher education universities from their relationship with India. UK India collaboration widens the research personnel involved, incorporating multiple cultural views and backgrounds, and methodologies and ways of thinking. Likewise, student recruitment from India can benefit UK universities by improving the diversity, culture and student experience, which also helps to improve a university's reputation and global reach.

In regard to the economic benefits, universities and their local economies benefit directly from Indian students through tuition fees, research grants, and accommodation rents, as well as indirectly through Indian students working part-time during their studies and investing in the local economy.

We spoke to nine of the universities surveyed on the financial benefits that Indian students bring to UK Universities. With thousands of Indian students between them, these universities received incomes worth millions of pounds - with one in particular receiving over £11 million - illustrating the economic benefits that international university links facilitate in addition to the social good.

“  
For our College of Humanities, India would rank amongst the most important countries in the world owing to the excellent record we have for delivering research with Indian partners.  
”

**James Smith**  
Assistant Head of Global Partnerships,  
University of Exeter

## WHAT STANDS IN THE WAY OF DEEPER UK-INDIA COLLABORATION?

Despite the great benefits that UK higher education institutions gain from India, there are a range of barriers that have limited UK-India higher education collaboration, as our survey respondents told us:

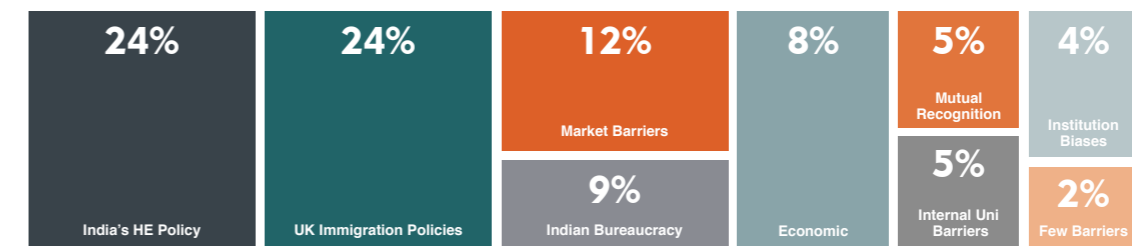


FIGURE 2 RESPONSES WERE GROUPED TOGETHER INTO NINE OVERARCHING CATEGORIES ILLUSTRATED IN THIS GRAPH IN PROPORTION TO THE FREQUENCY IN WHICH EACH WERE MENTIONED ACROSS ALL RESPONSES.

UK universities strongly feel that Government Policy needs reform in the UK and in India, with immigration policies and mutual recognition the most common issues cited.

Fortunately, many of the responses (though not exclusively) referred to the need for reinstatement of the two-year post-study work visa period, which the UK Government has now committed to since this survey was carried out.

Few responses mentioned internal barriers such as those specific to the university, the financial investment it would take, and institutional bias – suggesting that external barriers, such as national immigration and higher education policies, outside of university's hands are the key barriers to address.

As well as barriers to overcome, we also asked universities what their priorities are for the future. Uncovering these tells us if the UK and India are a good fit for collaboration.

Accordingly, we posed the question 'what are your priorities in India?' and this is the response we got:

### UK UNIVERSITIES AND BUSINESS SCHOOLS' PRIORITIES IN INDIA\*

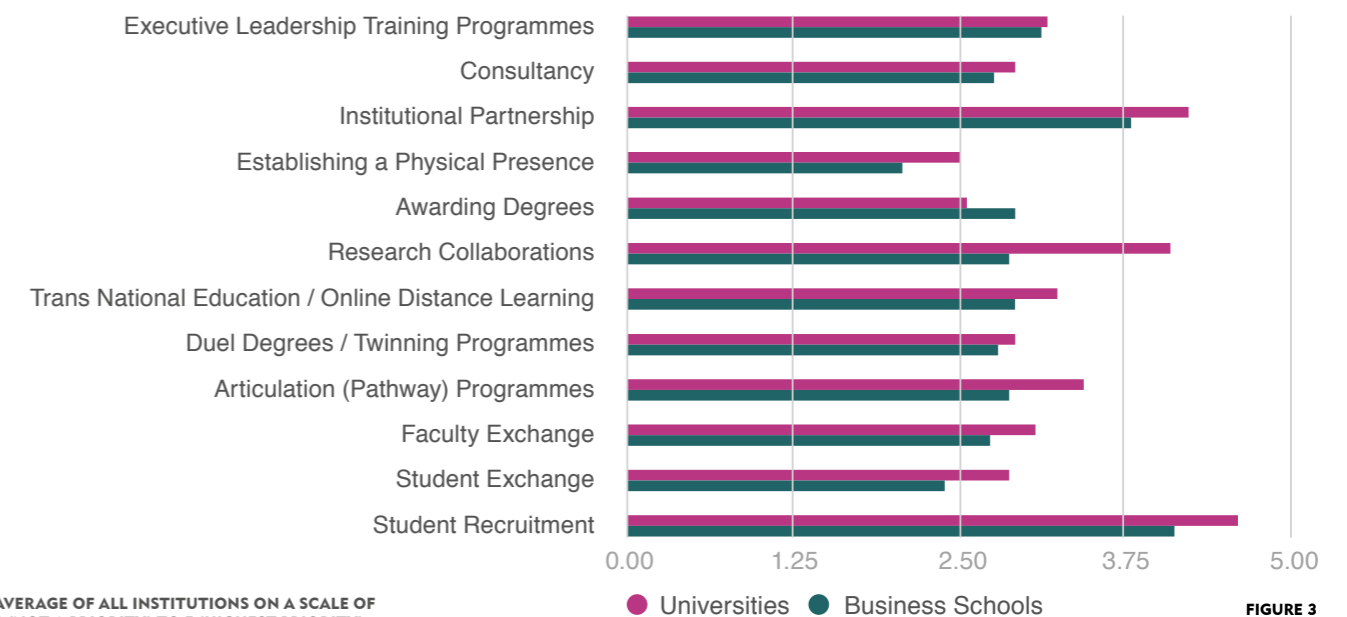


FIGURE 3

**THE HIGHEST PRIORITIES FOR UK UNIVERSITIES ARE CLEAR:**

1. **MORE STUDENT RECRUITMENT**
2. **GREATER RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS**
3. **CEMENTING INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS**

A closer look at their collective priorities reveals that the common thread linking most of the universities is the demand for a Mutual Recognition Agreement. Mutual recognition would directly support two of the three priority areas for universities and business schools - student recruitment and institutional partnerships, and indirectly support the third – greater research collaborations. Interestingly, mutual recognition of qualifications features significantly in India’s Draft New Education Policy which also cites greater research collaborations and more high-quality international partnerships as its key focus areas.

**SHOULD A MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENT BE A PRIORITY?**

When asked which aspect of UK and Indian education policy reform is most important, nearly 70% of all UK universities and business schools stated that a mutual recognition agreement should be a priority for both Governments during their bilateral dialogues.

	UNIVERSITIES		BUSINESS SCHOOLS	
<b>YES</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>68.6%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>68.8%</b>
<b>NO</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6.3%</b>
<b>UNSURE</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12.5%</b>
<b>N/A</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17.6%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12.5%</b>

FIGURE 4

Clearly our higher education institutions want UK and Indian Governments to prioritise this sector at bilateral forums and, specifically, focus efforts to deliver a **Mutual Recognition Agreement**.

“  
A Mutual Recognition Agreement is absolutely critical.  
”  
**Chris Marshall**  
Associate Dean,  
University of Bedfordshire

“  
Ultimately it will depend on the terms of that Recognition Agreement but it could be hugely beneficial.  
”  
**Rick Canavan**  
Faculty Head of International,  
Manchester Metropolitan  
University

**WOULD ADDRESSING THESE BARRIERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE?**

We have already shown that welcoming more Indian students to the UK has clear benefits for UK and Indian institutions, as well as the all-important student. But should this be a priority for the UK and Indian Governments?

Well, one way to show this is to see how India changes as a priority for UK universities should their market access barriers be addressed:

	WHERE INDIA STANDS	
	AS A TOP PRIORITY CURRENTLY	AS A PRIORITY IF BARRIERS ARE ADDRESSED
<b>TOP 1</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>15.6%</b>
<b>TOP 5</b>	<b>78.4%</b>	<b>78.4%</b>
<b>TOP 10</b>	<b>90.1%</b>	<b>90.1%</b>

FIGURE 5 THE TABLE (ABOVE) SHOWS THE MOVEMENT OF INSTITUTIONS REPORTING INDIA'S PRIORITY STATUS CURRENTLY TO WHERE IT WOULD RANK AS A PRIORITY IF THEIR MAIN MARKET ACCESS BARRIERS WERE ADDRESSED

This indicates that should the priority market access barriers be addressed, principally a Mutual Recognition Agreement, the proportion of UK universities that consider India as their number one priority doubles.

Given the importance of removing these barriers to fulfilling the priorities of higher education institutions, have UK Higher Education Institutions engaged with the Government of India and how?

**HAVE THEY ENGAGED?**

UNIVERSITIES		BUSINESS SCHOOLS	
<b>YES</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>NO</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>UNSURE</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>UNSURE</b>	<b>3%</b>

FIGURE 6

**OF THOSE WHO SAID 'YES' WHO DID THEY MENTION?**

- **MINISTERS AND POLITICIANS**
- **INDIAN HIGH COMMISSION**
- **MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**
- **MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**
  - **DIRECTORATE OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION**
  - **ASSOCIATION OF INDIAN UNIVERSITIES**
  - **UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION**
  - **ALL INDIA COUNCIL FOR TECHNICAL EDUCATION**
- **DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**
  - **DEPARTMENT OF BIOTECHNOLOGY**
- **MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**
- **MINISTRY OF COMMERCE**
- **MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION**

The UKIBC has engaged with both the Government of India and the UK by submitting several recommendations to foster greater Higher Education collaboration. Developing these recommendations further in line with recent developments in UK India Higher Education leads us to come up with six key recommendations described in the final section of this report.

## UNLEASHING OUR COLLABORATIVE POTENTIAL TO FUTUREPROOF THE UK INDIA PARTNERSHIP

As these outcomes show, UK Higher Education institutions see India as among their top priorities and that they want to engage further. These priorities align well with the Government of India's ambitions for India's Higher Education sector as set out in the draft New Education Policy. However, very real and tangible barriers continue to act as obstacles to achieving the goals of the institutions, Governments, and students themselves.

### UKIBC'S HIGHER EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### 1) MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENT OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS

As discussed, the priority for the Governments of India and the UK should be to negotiate and implement a Mutual Recognition Agreement. Mutual recognition of qualifications and allowing universities to award dual degrees will be a true gamechanger for India's Higher Education system as it will give a real boost to collaborations and will attract more foreign students to come and study in India. Mutual recognition and dual degrees will enable students to seamlessly transition between India and other countries, unlock new opportunities, and create wide ranging cross-border linkages that go well beyond the Higher Education sector. In our experience, mutual recognition continues to be the single most desired reform from both UK and Indian universities and would be transformational for the Indian economy when it is launched.

#### 2) THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA SHOULD LOOK BEYOND A UNIVERSITY'S OVERALL RANKINGS WHEN SETTING RULES ON WHICH INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS CAN PARTNER IN INDIA

We have highlighted the benefits of this approach in our November 2018 report titled Beyond the Top 200: Effective International Collaboration for Indian Higher Education. International ranking systems can mask the reputation of individual courses and teaching quality – both important considerations for India when partnering with UK and other international higher education institutions. For example, a UK University that does not fall into the top 200 may actually be in the top 10 globally for, say, mechanical engineering, a skill needed to support Make in India.

A further disadvantage of global rankings is that they place a high emphasis on research, preventing those universities with high levels of teaching making the top 200.

By looking beyond the global Top 200, the new policy will facilitate collaboration with foreign higher education institutions in a way that matches India's social and economic priorities.

#### 3) SCHEMES SHOULD BE INTRODUCED TO STIMULATE BILATERAL COLLABORATION TO DELIVER ONLINE LEARNING PROGRAMMES.

We have highlighted the benefits of this approach in our November 2018 advocacy report titled Beyond the Top 200: Effective International Collaboration for Indian Higher Education. International ranking systems can mask the reputation of individual courses and teaching quality – both important considerations for India when partnering with UK and other international higher education institutions. For example, a UK University that does not fall into the top 200 may actually be in the top 10 globally for, say, mechanical engineering, a skill needed to support Make in India. While, rankings can be biased towards research, preventing those universities with high levels of teaching making the top 200. By looking beyond the global 'Top 200,' the new policy will facilitate collaboration with foreign higher education institutions in a way that matches India's social and economic priorities with the best curriculum from across the world to effectively unlock the potential of India's higher education ecosystem.

#### 4) THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA SHOULD MAKE EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS FOR GRADUATES A TOP PRIORITY AND CONSIDER UK MODELS TO EFFECTIVELY INTEGRATE VOCATIONAL SKILLS WITH MAINSTREAM EDUCATION

A nationwide focus on building employability skills by deepening the links between industry, government and higher education to ensure employees are trained to workplace standards is urgently needed if India is to capitalise on its demographic dividend and achieve its economic and social potential. Currently more than 75% of the 15 million young people entering the Indian workforce are not job ready due to the lack of technical and soft skills.

A particular characteristic of UK universities is the excellent engagement and ongoing dialogue they have with businesses, particularly those in their locality but also much further afield including Indian businesses. It is often argued by employers in India that the demarcation of government policies between skills and education has been a barrier to providing appropriate vocational skills to graduates. Given the policy's ambitious objective to "provide access to vocational education to at least 50% of all learners by 2025" (Chapter 20), we recommend that the MHRD and the Ministry of Skills should look for ways to work more closely together to implement policies. This could be done by considering models such as degree apprenticeships which are growing in popularity in the UK where students get a degree that requires them to learn and demonstrate strong practical skills in areas such as electrical, mechanical and aerospace engineering. This would provide a joined-up avenue for horizontal and vertical mobility and will have the added advantage of fostering dignity and social acceptability for quality vocational training.

#### 5) BOTH GOVERNMENTS SHOULD STIMULATE AND SUPPORT A UNIVERSITY-TO-UNIVERSITY DIALOGUE ON UNIVERSITY SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Such dialogue will lead to higher education institutions, in both countries, playing a greater role in their communities and wider society. To develop an international and sustainable forum for the promotion of University Social Responsibility, the UKIBC commends the recent efforts made by the MHRD to make USR an integral facet of India's Higher Education policy. The UKIBC looks forward to connecting with the MHRD, UGC, and other stakeholders to facilitate UK-India cooperation in the numerous opportunities that are emerging for higher education providers to work collectively to ensure that 'education for sustainability' becomes not only a maxim that we all understand, but a means to ensure the future we want – a full realisation of our shared aspirations, interests and responsibilities.

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# UK INDIA

BUSINESS COUNCIL

## WHO ARE WE

The UK India Business Council believes passionately that the UK-India business partnership creates jobs and growth in both countries. Through our insights, networks, and policy advocacy, we support businesses to succeed.

## GET IN TOUCH

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