



Guidelines for

Internationalisation of Higher Education

University Grants Commission

Ministry of Education
Government of India

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Guidelines for Internationalisation of Higher Education



ज्ञान-विज्ञान विमुक्तये

University Grants Commission
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Foreword

In an ever-changing world, global awareness and interconnectedness through internationalisation of higher education has a significant role to play in shaping the next generations of learners. The National Education Policy, 2020 envisions attaining highest global standards in the quality of higher education. In line with NEP-2020, concerted national efforts and interwoven relationship between government's policies and Higher Education Institution's approaches will make our young generation of learners truly global citizens with deeply rooted pride in being Indian.

Striving to realize this objective, UGC has developed '**Guidelines for Internationalisation of Higher Education**'. Through a wide array of activities such as internationally relevant curricula, brand building of Indian Higher Education Institutions abroad, academic and research collaboration with foreign universities, credit recognition under twinning arrangements, global citizenship approach and engaging with foreign alumni, these Guidelines provide an excellent opportunity for global outreach of Indian Higher Education Institutions.

With great pride and privilege, I am sharing the '**Guidelines for Internationalisation of Higher Education**'. I am confident that the guidelines will encourage our Higher Education Institutions to explore innovative areas of cooperation in the fields of education and research and contribute in fulfilling the aspirations of NEW INDIA.

I call upon the Higher Education Institutions in India to come forward and take up various initiatives directed towards internationalisation of higher education in the larger interest of our students and enduring educational goals for our nation.



Prof. D. P. Singh
Chairman

University Grants Commission

New Delhi

29th July, 2021



Guidelines for Internationalisation of Higher Education

1. Preamble

Internationalisation of higher education promotes sharing of best academic and research practices through interactions between diverse education systems, and helps in developing global citizens through mobility of students and scholars. Mobility of scholars to pursue their scholarly activities and access the vast resources of the university system across the globe is an age-old practice. In the Indian context too, this aspect of internationalisation of higher education is as old as education itself. Student mobility and global exchange took place in ancient India starting from Takshashila, which attracted thousands of students from all over the world studying in numerous subject areas at this university. Later on, University of Nalanda also attracted many scholars from various parts of the globe.

In modern times, globalisation has been one of the most transformative forces. It has altered every conceivable aspect of our lives including higher education. Accelerated rate of globalisation in the 1980s has brought back the focus on internationalisation of higher education albeit in a broader way. It has been a catch phrase since amongst the international higher education community. Internationalisation of higher education is a response to globalisation in order to raise the quality of education to catch up to the global standards with alignment of curriculum to instil the type of skill to improve productivity in a globalized competitive economy. This also is essential for graduating students to navigate the increasingly interconnected world.

Opportunities to attract international students, academics and funding are growing and many Indian Higher Education Institutions are now committed to increase their global outreach. Aided by government policies/schemes, concerted efforts are on to enhance the development of India's research and innovation capabilities, improve their institutional ranking globally, while focusing on improving the quality of its teaching and learning processes. A few Indian higher education institutions already appear in the 'world rankings' of universities. In QS 2022 World University Ranking, 35 institutions have featured in the ranking and 63 Higher Education Institutions have figured in Times Higher Education (THE) World University Ranking 2021. What is more important however is to focus on the latent potential of many more Indian HEIs to do equally well in these rankings. Further, the score for internationalisation among all the indicators is found to be relatively poor for Indian Higher Education Institutions. Internationalisation of Higher Education may therefore be seen as the catalyst to spur many Indian universities to position themselves strategically to cater to the needs of the global knowledge society.

Student mobility is the most visible aspect of internationalisation of higher education. There is exponential growth in number of students enrolled in higher education outside their country and this trend is likely to continue. India is home to one of the largest global pools of foreign college aspirants. As on December 2020, India had more than 10 Lakhs students studying abroad (MEA 2021). However, in comparison, number for foreign students coming to India for the purpose of higher education as per All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2019-2020, is 49,348.

Further, for India, the motivation to committing to investments in internationalisation lies in the benefits that follow effective and systematic internationalisation of higher education: quality upgradation, economic expansion, global outreach, knowledge acquisition, development of internationally relevant curricular framework with specific initiatives under student, faculty, programme and institutional mobility. These initiatives will involve the leveraging of global resources for achieving the following: capacity building of faculty/staff/institutions, increasing student access to quality education, ensuring diversity in the classroom and campus, sharing of teaching-learning-research best practices, and gradually evolving into universities with global standards in teaching-learning-research, community engagement and pastoral services. Global rankings will follow.

2. NEP, 2020 and Internationalisation

India committed towards revamping and reinvigorating the higher education system through the new National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 for taking its rightful place amongst the best higher education systems in the world. The National Education Policy, 2020 built on the foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability recommends “path-breaking reforms that aim at paradigm shift by equipping our students, teachers and educational institutions with the right competencies and capabilities and creating an enabling and reinvigorated education eco-system for a vibrant new India”. The NEP extensively focuses on attaining the highest global standards in the quality of higher education. Further, it reinforces the need to attract a greater number of international students and achieve the goal of “internationalisation at home”. This policy appreciates the critical need to promote India as a “global study destination providing premium education at affordable costs thereby helping to restore its role as Vishwa Guru”.

The policy also aims to make our young generation of learners aware and understand global issues and make them truly global citizens committed to human rights, sustainable development and global well-being. The approaches to promoting the internationalisation of higher education in NEP, 2020 involve facilitating student

and faculty mobility, establishing international partnerships for research, easing the processes through which institutions can enrol students from around the world, as well as the feasibility of carrying credits across institutions in multiple countries, and other such measures. Above all the NEP calls for promoting India as a global study destination.

With the vision of increased internationalisation of higher education in India, University Grants Commission has formulated these Guidelines for Internationalisation of Higher Education within the framework of National Education Policy, 2020. These Guidelines will provide a broader roadmap and enable the Higher Education Institutions in transforming the higher education system in critical areas of internationalisation.

3. Objectives

These Guidelines will be a step towards internationalisation of higher education in line with the National Education Policy, 2020. Systematic planning and implementation within the framework of these Guidelines by the Higher Education Institutions will help in achieving the desired outcome of making India's higher education system globally competitive in offering quality higher education. The objectives of these Guidelines are:

- ✦ To make India an attractive study destination for foreign students
- ✦ To foster international competencies in our faculty and students
- ✦ To develop a global mindset of our learners and shape them as global citizens with deep rooted pride in being Indian
- ✦ To promote active linkage between Indian and Foreign Higher Education Institutions
- ✦ To improve global ranking in internationalisation indicators

4. Strategic Programmes and Initiatives

In order to achieve these objectives and harness the full potential of our higher education system, there is a need to develop a strategic approach. Significant initiatives are required to be taken both at institution and regulatory/government level. This synergy between national policy and institutional strategy will give a thrust to internationalisation of higher education. Accordingly, these Guidelines cover various strategic programmes/initiatives for internationalisation of higher education and Higher Education Institutions are encouraged to undertake these initiatives including but not limited to as discussed in these Guidelines.

4.1. Internationalisation at Home

The most important of all strategies related to internationalisation is “Internationalisation at Home”, which means integrating the dimensions of international learning environment within our higher education institutions. HEIs are encouraged to put necessary effort towards ‘internationalisation at home’ as discussed in these Guidelines without compromising the requirements of the Indian context.

- ✦ Capacity building in internationalisation initiatives
- ✦ Collaborative communication between Indian and international faculty
- ✦ International dimension to curricula in the sciences, social sciences, and beyond to spark a deeper reflection about course content and effective pedagogy to promote better learning outcomes for all students.
- ✦ Other areas of strength in India such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), computer science, gaming should be tied up with internship and apprenticeship to make them attractive for foreign students.
- ✦ Quality residential facilities to students from abroad to ensure effective living conditions and learning environment to international students
- ✦ On-campus support to students from abroad to provide continuous and inclusive support to international students, designed to facilitate students’ social and academic success and focusing particularly on the transition processes.
- ✦ Integrating incoming international students with local communities including assigning faculty mentors, host families and student buddies.
- ✦ Friendly environment for incoming students to have a safe, positive, and holistic experience
- ✦ Offering local language courses and other bridge courses as needed
- ✦ Foster connections among domestic and international students and value the inputs of international students on campus
- ✦ Short-term non-degree niche courses to create global perception about our core competencies in Yoga/Philosophy / Ayurveda/Health/Sanskrit/ Vaastushastra/etc.
- ✦ Courses and programmes in subjects such as knowledge of India and its languages, arts, history, culture, and global context; global literacy
- ✦ Incorporate internationalisation objectives into the institution’s broader quality assurance processes for teaching and learning, community engagement and student satisfaction.

4.2. Credit Recognition under Twinning Arrangement

Under a Twinning arrangement, Indian students are enrolled with a higher education institution in India but complete part of their programme at a partnering institution from another country complying with relevant national regulations. However, the degree under Twinning arrangement shall be given solely by the Indian Higher Education Institution.

The idea behind Twinning programme is holistic development of the learners with the help of cultural exchanges and social cohesion. Mobility under Twinning programme will equip the learners with best practices, approaches and methods of teaching and learning in international institutions. This will aid in capacity building of our institutions and help our students in career choices. Indian Higher Education Institutions are encouraged to offer degree programme under twinning arrangement.

- ✦ As National Education Policy suggested, this twinning arrangement will give effect to Credit Recognition
- ✦ Credit Recognition and Transfer means 'Credit' conferred by a Foreign Higher Education Institution to be recognised, quantified and included towards the credit requirements for a programme delivered by an Indian Higher Education Institution under a mutual twinning arrangement
- ✦ The collaborating Indian Higher Education Institution may enter into Agreement/MoUs with Foreign Higher Education Institution for recognition of credits under twinning arrangements
- ✦ In case of an institution affiliated to the University, NOC to be obtained from the affiliating University. The institution concerned, affiliating University and the Foreign Higher Education Institution shall enter into tripartite agreement/MoU for the purpose
- ✦ In this, the existing curricula may be supplemented by the additional curricula of the collaborating universities. The joint course structure can be worked out on the basis of need assessment and to complement the course structure of the corresponding semester
- ✦ The degree offered under such Twinning programmes shall be awarded by the Indian Higher Education Institution only
- ✦ The credits obtained at the Foreign Higher Education Institution shall be reflected in the transcript
- ✦ The Indian Higher Education Institution shall ensure that the credits earned by the students from the Foreign Higher Education Institution shall not be from overlapping course contents/curriculum.
- ✦ Any degree to be awarded under such Twinning programme must be in conformity with the provisions of section 22 (3) of the UGC Act,

1956 and shall also be in conformity with the norms, standards and requirement for award of such degree, as laid down by the statutory authority concerned.

- ✦ Any course or programme, which jeopardizes the National Interest, shall not be allowed to be offered in India.
- ✦ The Indian Higher Education Institutions should also make provision for exit pathways for student who are unable to complete the Twinning programme including for failing to secure VISA should be allowed to complete the programme in the Indian Higher Education Institution.
- ✦ The Indian Higher Education Institution shall provide periodical report annually giving details of the number of students admitted, Programme(s) conducted, number of students awarded such degree and any other information that the Commission may seek.

Expected Benefit of Credit Recognition under Twinning Arrangement

- ✦ Graduates are more employable benefitting from exposures with overseas institutions and students. This is the key driver in motivating students
- ✦ Social interaction and cultural exchanges due to mobility makes our students adaptable to new environment and cope with challenges arising out of diversity
- ✦ Institutional learning and quality improvement by virtue of exposure to foreign institution
- ✦ Adopt quality assurance mechanisms to the specialities of Twinning Programme
- ✦ Offering programme under Twinning arrangements track the underpinning concern of Twinning Programme and help in taking measures for further advancement.

4.3. Global Citizenship Approach

Global awareness and interconnectedness are increasingly sought after in today's global knowledge society. International dimension to curriculum, international offering in educational activities, international competencies in our faculty and students etc. will propel our institutions towards internationalisation of higher education. Internationalisation is not an end in itself but a driver of qualitative change in higher education. One of the foremost qualitative changes is fostering global ethos within our universities and making our learners 'Global Citizen'. Global citizen is someone who is aware of and understands the wider world and actively works towards making our planet more equal, fair and sustainable. Higher Education Institutions may take a Global citizen approach at their institution.

- ✦ Developing knowledge, skills and values in our next generation which they need to engage with the world and believing that “we can all make a difference”
- ✦ Empowering students with understanding of how the world works economically, politically, socially, culturally, technologically and ecologically.
- ✦ HEIs may endeavour to inculcate essential values such as diversity, interdependence, empathy and perspective in students.
- ✦ Engaging with community services with special focus in and around the higher education institution will contribute at a range of level from local to global
- ✦ Credit based projects and courses in the areas of community engagement, environmental education and value-based education
- ✦ Short courses and workshops on human and constitutional values, respect for others, cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit, spirit of service, respect for public property, scientific temper, responsibility, pluralism, equality, and justice
- ✦ Inculcate skill in students, such as
 - ✦ Critical thinking
 - ✦ Communication
 - ✦ Technology skills
 - ✦ Cross-cultural awareness
 - ✦ Adaptability
- ✦ Global citizens harness these knowledges, values, skills and are uniquely positioned to contribute in multiple contexts – locally, nationally and internationally. They will be extremely critical for building a more sustainable, resilient and compassionate world in the 21st century.

4.4 ICT based Internationalisation

Digital revolution and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has ushered in new possibilities in process and delivery of higher education. With the expansion of ICT, it has touched virtually all dimensions of higher education and it has a major role to play in internationalisation of higher education. ICT brings with it new educational opportunities along with flexibilities in approach. ICT can overcome traditional barriers to internationalisation. The borderless nature of ICT has the potential to transform the internationalisation process. Transformation with the help of ICT in itself is a motivation for Higher Education Institutions to undertake several measures to revitalize the higher education system.

- ✦ Addressing the concerns for access and equity through help of Massive online open courses (MOOCs)
- ✦ Creation of e-content and taking offering of online courses beyond physical boundaries
- ✦ Infrastructure upgradation with the help of ICT to make academic, administrative and residential infrastructure truly global
- ✦ Streamline the form and processes of admission of foreign students through help of ICT
- ✦ Data collection and analysis with help of ICT to track and study preference and needs of foreign students including prospective students.
- ✦ Virtual partnership with foreign experts in workshop, webinars and conferences.
- ✦ Virtual mobility by exposing students to foreign university through e-conferences and workshops
- ✦ Renewing and updating the learning approaches with the help of technology
- ✦ Reinforcing learning process through additional learning material to make the process truly international
- ✦ Effectively responding to the demand of students with the help of ICT based learning tools and collaborative learning
- ✦ Leveraging the potential of technology from integrated digital learning platforms to video lessons
- ✦ Exploring pedagogical opportunities of ICT in internationalisation

4.5 Academic and Research Collaboration

Academics and research in Higher Education Institutions around the world faces a number of wide ranging and interlinked global challenges such as food security, energy security, infectious disease etc. Collaboration among the top universities is essential to identify causes, addressing concerns and dealing with the impacts. This will also accelerate the progress of our institutions and enhance the quality of our education. Higher Education Institutions are encouraged to enter into collaborating activities, complying the relevant norms and Regulations. The activities may include:

- ✦ Student exchange programme for short-duration visits to reputed universities abroad
- ✦ Semester-abroad programmes under Twinning Arrangement.
- ✦ Faculty members are encouraged to get exposure to foreign universities in exchange programme, short-term projects etc.

- ✦ Expanding strategic research partnership with international Higher Education Institutions
- ✦ Organising academic and research workshops, seminar and conferences in partnership with international universities
- ✦ Collaborating with alumni (both students and faculty) at various foreign universities for academic and research activities
- ✦ Formation of knowledge partnership i.e., a network of individual researchers who contribute knowledge, experience, resources and participate in two-way communications
- ✦ Establishment of Chairs abroad in the name of eminent Indian scientists/scholars and philosophers

4.6 Brand Building Abroad

A systematic brand building campaign by the Higher Education Institutions is very essential for global standing of the Higher Education Institutions and also for attracting students from abroad. This will include using all forms of communication and outreach, including social media. Higher Education Institutions are encouraged to undertake brand building exercise to make India and their institutions attractive study destinations.

- ✦ Preparing country specific report based on academic and market research on priorities of prospective students
- ✦ Accordingly, country specific strategy may be formulated and implemented with the help of government and regulatory bodies to attract those prospective students to study in India
- ✦ Higher Education Institutions are encouraged to set up offshore campuses in order to expand the outreach of the institutions and build the image of India as an international study destination. Institutions of Eminence have been permitted to have offshore campuses
- ✦ Dissemination of information on education system/accreditation/ranking process in India
- ✦ Scholarships are a very important component of making it attractive for students to come to India. Higher Education Institutions may include information on the existing scholarship on their brand-building strategy.
- ✦ Conducting seminars/workshops/presentations and cultural events in identified institutions and target countries highlighting educational opportunities available in India and their institution
- ✦ Collaborating with foreign alumni or alumni of Indian origin living abroad for brand building exercises

- ✦ Extending the reach of online and open and distance learning courses offered by Indian HEIs through systemic campaign
- ✦ Publicizing best practices of our education system and at our institutions to global academic and research communities
- ✦ Popularizing the language courses, bridge courses and short-term non-degree niche courses on Indian Art, Culture, Yoga, Ayurveda, Buddhism etc.
- ✦ Extensive use of digital platform and virtual mode for such brand building exercises

4.7 Alumni Connect

The Alumni are a strong support to any Higher Education Institution. An active Alumni Association can contribute in academic matters, student support as well as mobilization of resources – both financial and non-financial. Connecting with Alumni will enable the institutions to utilise the services of the alumni as brand ambassadors to showcase the strengths of Indian Higher Education system. Alumni of foreign origin as well as Indian alumni living abroad can play a crucial role in brand building of the Indian Higher Education Institutions abroad and making India a global study destination. Higher education institutions in India need to create a culture for alumni to reconnect, devise suitable vehicles for brand building and give due recognition to their contributions. The “Alumni Connect” encourages Indian HEIs to engage with Alumni (of foreign origin and Indians living abroad). In order to maintain a continuous engagement with the alumni, the HEIs may undertake a number of activities:

- ✦ Establish an alumni cell and maintain a detailed database of the alumni living abroad (both Indian and foreign)
- ✦ Sharing with the alumni regarding the latest initiatives of the institution
- ✦ Virtually connecting with the alumni and inviting them for participation in conferences/webinars
- ✦ Networking get-togethers among the alumni including through video conferencing
- ✦ Providing brochure, pamphlets and other advertising materials about the institution, programmes, courses for its dissemination abroad
- ✦ Engage in community service activity with help of Alumni
- ✦ Honouring distinguished alumni for supporting in brand building exercise as well as overall development of the institution
- ✦ System generated emails/SMS may be sent on various occasions
- ✦ Share details of alumni with Government whenever required

4.8 Office for International Affairs

Establishment of an Office for International Affairs at institutions level will facilitate and operationalize effective approaches as discussed in all the previous strategies/initiatives earmarked in these Guidelines. This Office for International Affairs in each University will be a single point contact and an integral part of internationalisation of higher education in India. This office will be responsible for undertaking various activities including, but not limited to:

- ✦ Coordinate all matters relating to welcoming and supporting foreign students
- ✦ Single point contact for carrying out all collaborative activities with foreign institutions
- ✦ Act as a liaison body between the foreign students and the sponsoring agency
- ✦ Address the grievances of foreign students in all matters
- ✦ Single point contact for foreign student's registration with FRRO/e-FRRO
- ✦ Facilitate networking of international students with fellow students
- ✦ Extend all possible help to the foreign students to adapt to the new cultural environment and make their stay in India comfortable and enriching
- ✦ Provide support services for integration of international students into institution's academic and social activities.
- ✦ Disseminate information related to admission process among prospective foreign students
- ✦ Conceptualizing and engaging in promotional activities and effective approach towards brand building campaign abroad
- ✦ Addressing the concern of Indian students, under Twinning arrangement
- ✦ Implementing and monitoring of institution level strategies for internationalisation
- ✦ Maintaining records and disseminate information related to internationalisation
- ✦ Maintain database of foreign students including alumni and carry out survey on their needs and priorities
- ✦ Making information relating to internationalisation available on the Higher Education Institution's website and provide the same to government and regulatory bodies, whenever asked for.
- ✦ Sharing relevant information including the contact details of Office for International affairs in website and to government and regulatory bodies.

5. Role of Higher Education Institutions

These Guidelines are the broader framework in line with the National Education Policy 2020 for the Higher Education Institutions to endeavour towards developing their internationalisation strategy in line with national policies. The HEIs are encouraged to formulate strategy and undertake initiatives for collaboration with higher education institutions abroad and enhance international profile of the institutions. This will in turn boost the soft power of the nation.

- ✦ The Higher Education Institutions are encouraged to involve stakeholders like regulatory bodies, international organisations, alumni associations and industry in designing of internationalisation strategy
- ✦ Formulating a strategic approach spelling out the institutions objective and articulating their approach.
- ✦ Considering the cultural context at both home and abroad, the HEIs are encouraged to synchronise nation's priority in their approach
- ✦ Optimising implementation through establishment of Office for International Affairs and communicating effectively with the stakeholders
- ✦ Impact assessment of institutions' internationalisation strategy, monitor their implementation and take remedial measures on the basis of assessment
- ✦ Develop statistical indicators and surveys to support future strategies

Benefits attributed to Higher Education Institutions

The active participation of the Higher Education Institutions with support from stakeholders will usher in a new era in internationalisation of higher education in India. Higher Education Institutions are also encouraged to undertake innovative approach towards internationalisation of higher education. A successful implementation of these Guidelines along with innovative approaches will benefits the institutions in

- ✦ Framing intercultural and international curriculum
- ✦ Providing international exposure to our students through mobility
- ✦ Extending international competencies in our student, faculty and staffs
- ✦ Promoting institutional strength through collaboration
- ✦ Developing international institutional branding

6. Monitoring and Assessment

Periodic review of the progress of different components of internationalisation of higher education in India, in accordance with the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be conducted. Remedial measures and contingency strategy will be made upon interim assessment. The monitoring will be done on the following framework:

- ✦ Operationalisation of portal on various indicators of internationalisation
- ✦ Key performance indicators based on these Guidelines will be framed
- ✦ Periodic interaction with stakeholders to review progress
- ✦ Yearly progress reports on KPIs
- ✦ Assessment of the desired results in terms of quantitative as well as qualitative output
- ✦ Remedial measures and transparent continuous feedback mechanisms with student feedback fed into future plans and modifications in strategies
- ✦ Evaluation studies to support the planning and management of interventions to promote internationalisation.
- ✦ Assessment of internationalisation to be made part of ranking and accreditation to incentivize the Higher Education Institutions and gradual synchronization of NIRF and NAAC assessment parameters with international ranking like QS and THE.

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