

UK INDIA TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION: PATHWAY TO SUCCESS

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FOREWORD

India's Higher Education (HE) sector has been in the global spotlight since the National Education Policy (NEP) was released in July 2020, which set in motion a series of reforms to overhaul existing structures, modernise the system, and improve access to world class education for hundreds of millions of young Indians.



RICHARD MCCALLUM
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In May 2022, one of India's Higher Education (HE) regulators, the University Grants Commission (UGC), released COLLABORATION REGULATIONS permitting Indian and foreign higher educational institutions to offer dual and joint degrees and twinning programmes. Then in October 2022, the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) permitted foreign universities to establish INTERNATIONAL BRANCH CAMPUSES (IBCs) and Offshore Education Centres (OECs) in GIFT City in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. More recently, in November 2023 came the UGC notification allowing the Top 500 globally ranked (overall or subject-wise) foreign universities, or foreign institutions that possess outstanding expertise in a particular area, to setup campuses across the country, either through a joint venture with an Indian HE institution/Indian company or on their own.

These reforms and the fact that India will have a staggering 92 million students enrolled in Higher Education by financial year (FY) 2035 makes Transnational Education (TNE) an attractive proposition for UK and Indian universities and, of course, for Indian students themselves.[1]

Consequently, interest in TNE between UK and Indian HE institutions (HEIs) is currently at an all-time high. This was evident from the fact that the largest ever delegation of UK Vice Chancellors visited India in September 2023 to explore TNE opportunities.

While universities have welcomed these encouraging policy developments, they recognise that the rules are new and that it is a learning process for all stakeholders when it comes to implementation and establishing models of engagement.

[1] Statista November 2023 (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1286736/india-estimated-growth-of-student-enrolments-in-higher-education/>)



Although several reports have been published recently on TNE in the UK-India corridor, we felt that there was a need for a best practice guide that is holistic in its approach and sensitive to the needs of both UK and Indian universities.

Accordingly, this report aims to highlight the hurdles encountered by HE institutions in both countries, and to make simple and effective recommendations that will unlock TNE in the UK-India corridor.

To gather insights from both countries, our research methodology combined primary and secondary research, including interviews with representatives from six UK and four Indian universities, experts from the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and Times Higher Education (THE), as well as credible sources such as the British Council and research websites like Statista and Medium.

INTRODUCTION

The last five years have seen India's education sector undergo a remarkable transformation - expanding to include 1,200 universities, 50,000 colleges, 23 Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and 21 Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs).[2]

According to the research site Statista, the country had 40 million students enrolled in Higher Education in the financial year 2020, and this is set to more than double to reach 92 million by financial year 2035.[3]

Driven by India's fast-growing economy, expanding young population, the reforms and investments facilitating the expanding HE provision, Invest India has stated that the HE sector in India in 2024-25 will be worth \$225 billion (£176.5 billion), and that it will expand at a CAGR of 8.46% between 2024 and 2032.[4]

India is now the most important market for UK university international recruitment. Data from the Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA) show a staggering growth of 543% between 2017/18 and 2021/22, largely due to an increase in the numbers of postgraduate students.

Not only is India an important source of students coming to the UK but, given that travelling overseas for education is not possible for the vast majority, India also offers immense potential for TNE enrolments.

Although this is an area that has been underserved, it has started to grow in recent years: UK TNE enrolments in India grew by 43% from 8,370 in 20/21 to 11,950 in 21/22, making it the fastest growing market for TNE in South Asia. With the Indian Government's clear intent to enable and encourage greater TNE enrolments and collaborations, there are going to be ever more TNE programmes in India.

[2] 'Aspiration Nation' (a January 2024 report produced by Magenta and Indigo)

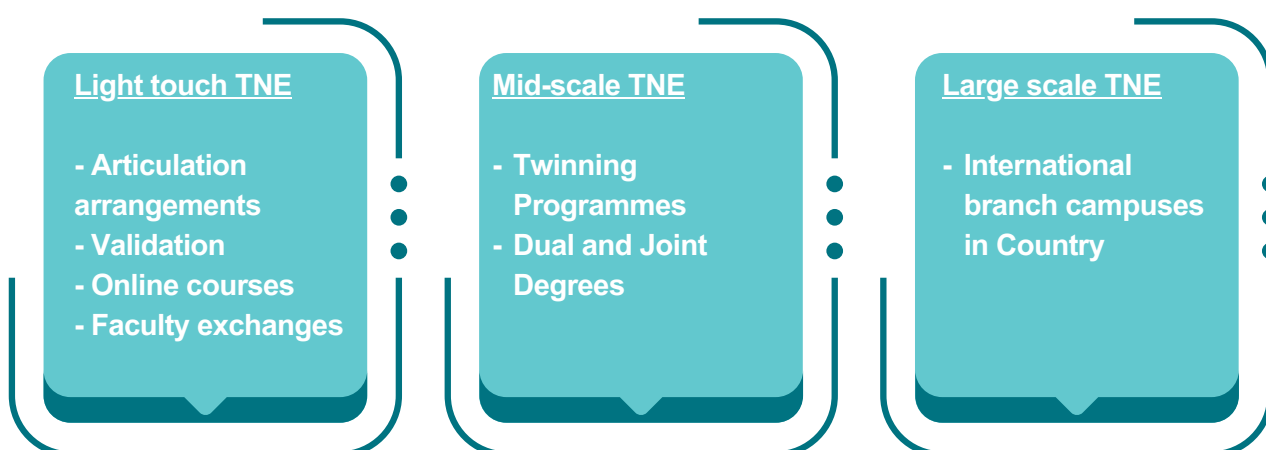
[3] Statista November 2023 (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1286736/india-estimated-growth-of-student-enrolments-in-higher-education/>).

[4] Medium December 2023 (<https://medium.com/@khanfirdosh/indian-higher-education-outlook-2024-and-global-recognition-76d0ab4337af>)

It is worth defining what we mean by Transnational Education (TNE). It can be simply defined as a student studying for a foreign university's degree or course in their home country, but the spectrum of TNE is wide-ranging, and typically includes the following models:

- a collaborative degree programme, eg, dual and joint degrees and twinning programmes, involving an Indian and foreign university;
- A local 'franchise' centre or delivery partner (e.g., at a private college that does not have its own degree awarding powers), where the degree is endorsed by the partner foreign university;*
- Validation where the programme is designed and delivered by the local Indian provider and recognised and certified by the international university;
- Articulation, where the student completes a portion of the course in India (with the balance completed in the UK) and where credits from the Indian university are accepted by the foreign university towards the degree;
- A foreign university's campus in India, where foreign faculty teach the course; such as those announced by the two Australian universities, Deakin and Woolongong, in GIFT IFSC and by Malaysia's Lincoln University College in Telangana.
- Through online learning where courses are offered by the foreign university to Indian students.[5]

For the purpose of this report, we have placed the different types of TNE into the following three categories:



[5] 'Spotlight on India: Recruitment Insight and Transnational Education Trends' – A Study portals and Times Higher Education report, September 2023

*Under UGC's May 2022 regulations, franchise arrangements or study centres are not permitted but this rule could change



It is interesting to note that prior to the UGC's May 2022 Collaboration Regulations which allowed twinning, joint and dual degree programmes, UK TNE in India was limited to light touch TNE. However with the recent reforms, this is starting to change and many UK universities are keen to broaden their existing partnerships and transition to mid-scale TNE, while some are also considering the large scale foreign campus route.

While interest and appetite for TNE in India is strong and growing, it is still at a very nascent stage. Accordingly, there is work to do to build understanding of the rules and their implementation and, for many universities, of how to form successful TNE partnerships.

The next section of this report highlights areas where understanding needs to be built, and then puts forward a pathway to achieving successful TNE partnerships, unlocking the full potential of the UK-India HE partnership.



**BUILDING UNDERSTANDING
OF THE UK-INDIA TNE CONTEXT**



BUILDING UNDERSTANDING OF THE UK-INDIA TNE CONTEXT

We have outlined below a range of areas, identified in our research, that UK and Indian HEIs should consider before starting their TNE journey.

UNDERSTAND THE ADDRESSABLE DEMAND FOR TNE IN INDIA

India's gigantic population size and impressive HE growth figures have led some universities to overestimate the potential demand for TNE in India. This in turn has led to inaccurate enrolment (and therefore budgeting) projections. There is a large and growing demand, but as we set out later in this report, marketing of the course needs to be done well. Optimism-bias needs to be avoided.

Accordingly, it is recommended that UK universities adopt a risk management strategy which considers various enrolment scenarios to ensure viability of the financial plan. This is explained in more detail in the *Pathway to Successful TNE in India* section below.

UNDERSTAND THE BREADTH OF HIGH QUALITY HEIs

When considering India, too many universities tend to focus too much attention on the IITs and IIMs, neglecting the wider (and expanding) ecosystem of excellent universities (both private and public). These institutions have the resources and appetite for foreign engagement, as well as high calibre students. In addition, there are also some major private HEIs whose students may be more able to meet UK universities' fee expectations.

UK universities should also broaden their scope to consider potential Indian partners beyond the Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities.

For Indian HEIs considering potential UK university partners, it is worth noting that the QS and Times Higher Education (THE) World Rankings put a heavy emphasis on research capability rather than other factors such as teaching and international partnering. So, Indian HEIs should look beyond the overall rankings when assessing a UK university's Suitability as a partner.

“ Indian universities are increasingly prioritising sustainable TNE practices to achieve global excellence, elevate existing standards, and nurture a resilient research ecosystem, aligning with the vision of India's NEP 2020. Given that India and the UK are strategic partners in higher education, the implementation of TNE initiatives holds the promise of mutual growth for universities and students alike, equipping them to navigate the future with confidence. ”

- Kuldeep Dagar, Joint Secretary, Association of Indian Universities

UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF A ROBUST INTERNATIONALISATION PLAN AND DELIVERY CAPACITY

While TNE partnerships are attractive to universities in the UK and India, not all universities are ready to embark on the journey. It is crucial that universities have a clear shared vision for TNE collaboration. And, importantly, the institutional capacity to make it happen. As mid and large-scale TNE is new to India, the UK universities we interviewed for this research felt that many, or most, Indian institutions were still working on their plans and capacity.

UNDERSTAND THE REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

Mid-scale TNE partnerships require both the UK and Indian institutions to work together to secure a series of approvals beyond the confirmation that they meet the initial eligibility criteria.

For mid-scale TNE, UK HEIs need to be ranked in the top 1,000 of QS World University or Times Higher Education (THE) rankings, while Indian HEIs need to be either a top 100 ranked NIRF (National Institutional Ranking Framework) or their NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) score should be 3.1 on a scale of 4 at the time of application.

For large-scale TNE, universities need to be in the QS or THE top 500 overall ranking or for the subjects they wish to teach in India.

To obtain these approvals, the university partners have to navigate between various regulatory bodies including the UGC, the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), some professional bodies, and at the State Government level. This takes time.

The AICTE is involved when the prospective Indian HEI partner is an autonomous technical college affiliated to a university. The AICTE is also directly responsible for approving courses in some subject areas such as Engineering and MBA. Professional bodies are involved for some courses such as Architecture and Law to name a few.

At the same time, the guidelines are new and relatively un-tested, so universities and regulators are still finding their way. This can lead to misunderstandings and different interpretations of the regulations.

Most universities who contributed to this report would like to see clearer guidance from the UGC on joint and dual degrees and, in particular, twinning programmes. Better understanding would lead to more mid-scale TNE partnerships, especially twinning programmes, happening more quickly.

The establishment of the proposed Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) would simplify the approval challenges listed above, providing a one-stop shop for approvals. This would enhance the consistency and speed of decision making.

UNDERSTAND YOUR PARTNER'S OPERATIONAL PRACTICES

Between partners it is usual for there to be differences in teaching and assessment methods, and in administrative structures. There are often also differing levels of experience and expertise of TNE. For example, because they internationalised much earlier, UK universities have more expertise in international collaborations than their Indian partners who are just setting out on their internationalisation journey.

These Indian institutions have ambition and appetite to internationalise and the UK university may need to invest time and resources to develop core capabilities within their Indian counterpart before they roll-out the new partnership. This can increase the costs and timeframe for launching the TNE partnership.

Cultural differences between partnering institutions are worth considering too. Universities we consulted have stressed the need for cross-cultural awareness training and for robust consideration of these aspects.

A cultural difference that is worth noting, although it is not an operations matter, is the question of how many Indian employers perceive graduates from TNE degree programmes.

For example, we understand that British and Indian university campuses outside their home countries are sometimes considered as less prestigious by Indian employers than their home campuses. This is something to address in marketing, which we cover below in the *Pathway to Success* section of this report.

For UK faculty, working overseas to teach on a long-term TNE programme may not be appealing depending on their family arrangements, their salary and the cost of living where they are seconded. Also, by being away from the home campus, faculty potentially miss out on new opportunities and mentoring from senior colleagues. This could lead to Indian students not receiving the same quality of education as they would have received in the UK if there is not enough experienced faculty in India.

UNDERSTANDING THE FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Cost was cited as an important factor for all stakeholders. For Indian students, large-scale TNE programmes will be more expensive than the domestic university option, and those spending time in the UK will have visa and living costs. For the UK university, the costs of teaching away from the home campus are higher. For the Indian university, they stand to lose student fees if the student spends time at the UK campus on a twinning programme.

It is also worth noting that the UK HEIs say they are uncertain about Indian taxation laws and rates at the national and state levels.

The difference in costs and value proposition between different types of TNE need to be carefully considered. For instance, while joint degrees are not straightforward to put in place and deliver, they are seen to offer a greater value proposition than dual degrees.





**PATHWAY TO SUCCESSFUL
TNE IN INDIA**

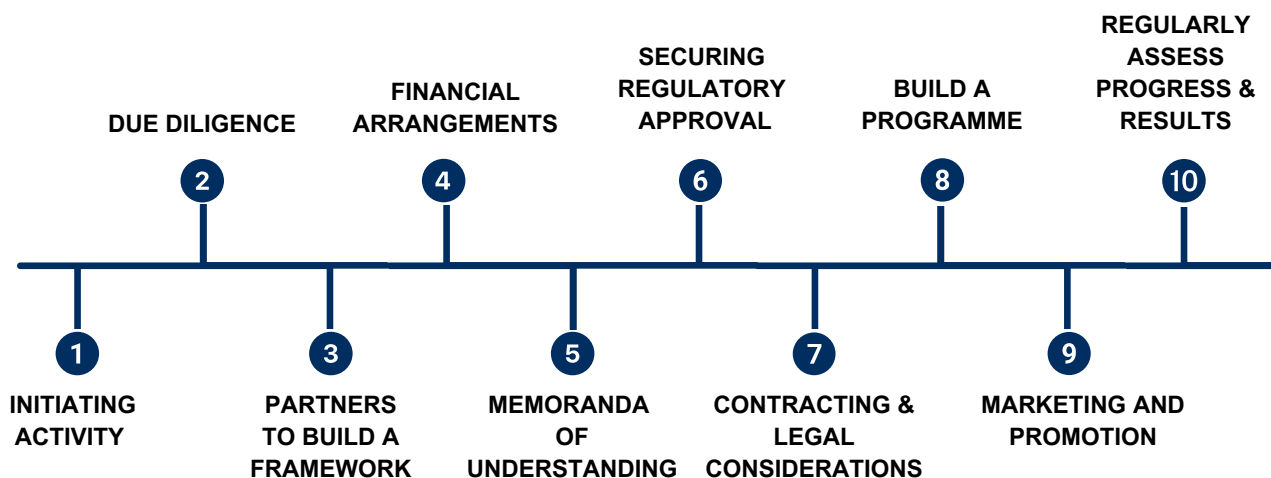
PATHWAY TO SUCCESSFUL TNE IN INDIA

Having reflected on the areas covered in the previous section, we consulted a wide range of stakeholders to identify the approach to take – a Pathway to Success. Below, we set out ten stages. Some relate only or mostly to UK HEIs, some only or mostly to Indian HEIs, and some equally to both.

Before detailing the ten stages, it is worth sharing a piece of recurring advice that we received – *“UK and Indian HEIs should not dive straight into the more involved mid and large-scale TNE relationships.”*

The common reasons given for this are that all parties are still testing and getting used to the UGC Collaboration Regulations, and not all institutions have the necessary systems and structures in place as yet, such as a dedicated office for international affairs, previous TNE experience, and ability to bear the costs incurred as part of this investment.

We therefore recommend that universities take a more medium to long-term approach which starts off on a light-touch level and gradually progresses into a deeper and increasingly more impactful relationship. This is a less risky approach, with a greater guarantee of long-term success.



STAGE ONE: INITIATING ACTIVITY – STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT, BUILDING UNDERSTANDING, AND POTENTIAL PARTNER IDENTIFICATION

It is important that HEIs spend time internally preparing their approach to TNE in India, and that they consider the following:

- **Their long-term international strategy.** Universities need to have a clear understanding of where growing TNE partnerships in India fits within the university's broader international strategy, and how TNE programmes might relate to the achievement of other institutional priorities in India.
- **Their criteria for selecting a TNE partner.** Important criteria to consider are rankings, accreditation, their history of partnerships, their values, and the student experience they currently deliver.
- **Market scanning and analysis.** It is important to undertake initial research to assess the demand for a particular subject, course level and preferred modes of study in India.
- **Proactively identify potential partners.** Universities should review a selection of potential partners that meet the initial criteria, rather than reacting to approaches they receive.

“As UK institutions consider tapping the vast TNE potential in India, it's not the “what” (what programmes, what price, what location etc.) but the “how” (how to set up the centre, how to recruit, who to partner etc.) that will be more critical. Being modular in the approach: starting small, learning quickly, ability to scale fast, can help.”

- Pranjal Kumar, CFO & Head Corporate Development, Emeritus

“Transnational Education is the beacon illuminating the path to a truly interconnected world, where knowledge transcends borders, cultures unite, and understanding flourishes. Durham University embraces the transformative power of TNE, transcending borders to ignite minds, cultivate global citizenship, and bridge cultures, ensuring knowledge knows no bounds.”

- Professor Kieran Fernandes, Durham University

STAGE TWO: DUE DILIGENCE

- **Initial due diligence** on the prospective partner institutions should be undertaken to assess important factors such as their track record of regulatory compliance, their financial position, any previous or pending litigations. Of course, it is important to assess the teaching infrastructure, the courses they offer, their faculty numbers, and affiliations as well.
- **Visit this potential partner institution on a regular basis**, not just to assess their facilities or teaching style but to build relationships and common ground with the leadership, the faculty and to meet the students. Aligning mission/objectives and values is important. It is these softer aspects that help to forge a rapport with the partner which in turn fortifies the partnership and makes it a more enriching one.
- **Due diligence** should also cover the potential partners' objectives, motivations, ambitions and culture. It is vital that both institutions are aligned. Potential partners need to have a clear vision of collaboration goals, focusing not just on the curriculum but also on aligning educator goals with student interests and programme plans, specifying the what, where, who, and how for success.
- **Financial objectives and understandings** need to be considered at this stage too, for example, a shared estimate of student demand should be examined, which means a discussion about fee levels.
- A more detailed due diligence will be necessary prior to finalising a contract.

“ A thorough understanding of the strengths and challenges of the HEIs involved, will make the partnership successful on ground. For this, the connector must understand the value each institution delivers, to construct the best value for the student. Factors a student considers are brand, trust, price, effort, credential, and recognition by employers, among others. A trusted partnership enabler will ensure the student is at the heart of it. ”

- Pooja Jayaram, Executive Vice President, University Partnerships, Emeritus

“ The leadership and Faculty of RV College of Engineering has opened the collaborative corridors of higher education, allowing diverse minds to converge, fostering innovation and preparing students for a world without academic boundaries. Partnerships with UK Universities transcend geographic limits, creating a mosaic of interconnected topics, collectively elevating the standards of education. ”

- Nataraj J.R., RV College of Engineering

STAGE THREE: PARTNERS TO BUILD A FRAMEWORK THAT WILL ENABLE SUCCESSFUL TNE

The commitment of both universities, thorough planning and unanimous leadership decisions, is pivotal in the formation and sustainability of TNE partnerships. To support this, both HEIs should establish consensus in the following areas:

- **Objectives for the partnership** – the mission and mutual interests, focusing on the universities' and student needs. In agreeing objectives and focus for the partnership, Indian universities, in particular, are keen that their UK counterpart is cognizant of the Government of India's national priorities. Aligning with national priorities will not only strengthen the collaboration between the two partners, but will also elevate the profiles of both universities in the Indian HE ecosystem.
- **Timelines for each stage of the partnership development.** Both parties should be realistic, accepting that progress is often not as fast as expected or intended. Our consultation suggested that:

PLANNING DISCUSSIONS FOR A NEW PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME CAN TAKE ABOUT A YEAR, WITH THE LAUNCH TOWARDS THE END OF THE SECOND YEAR.

- **A schedule of dialogue and visits**, so as to build trust through regular and open communication over a sustained period of time. A useful exercise at this stage is an audit of both universities' assets, strengths and specialisms that can be deployed in the partnership.
- **Roles and responsibilities**, and an outline of terms for an equitable partnership, laying out the investment of time, money and other resources (eg, IP/content) that both parties will contribute.
- **Criteria and standards** that will apply across the partnership. This is essential to maintain programme quality, address structural considerations, and uphold academic standards. A set of unified criteria ensures that all parties are aware of and adhere to the same benchmarks, contributing to the overall effectiveness and credibility of the partnership.



- **Quality assurance principles**, which are imperative and should be considered early in the relationship, for example teaching standards and the recruitment of excellent professors should be prioritised;
- **The subject areas to cover in the programme**, which will support the development of an academic curriculum tailored for the students' benefit. When it comes to dual degree programmes, Indian universities are advised to adapt to the one-year duration and 120-credit requirement of the Master's programme to remain competitive. Additionally, universities must agree on data sharing protocols for student transcripts, with grading systems specified.

STAGE FOUR: DEFINE FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS AND THE BUSINESS PLAN

- There needs to be a **fair and transparent approach** to the financial / commercial aspects of the partnership. This should be a shared undertaking, with an agreed risk management strategy.
- These **plans should be regularly reviewed and updated**, including when better information becomes available and if there are any changes in regulations.
- The **financial plan should also include a risk management approach** with respect to enrolment projections, ensuring that forecasts of student demand are not over-optimistic. This can be rectified by running various enrolment scenarios through the financial plan to ensure that the business plan is robust.
- This **initial plan provides a framework but needs to be updated and expanded** as more accurate data become available, particularly on likely enrolments, time scales and investment needs.

STAGE FIVE: MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING

An overarching MOU, approved by each universities' legal teams, should be signed that sets out the broad approach to the partnership and the areas to be addressed, including the points covered in Stages Three and Four above.

The Collaboration Regulations state that MOUs should include the following specific points:

- provisions relating to student obligations;
- fees and other financial arrangements;
- intellectual property rights;
- student's attendance patterns;
- duration of stay for the study programme in both the Higher Educational Institutions;
- joint supervision arrangements;
- language of thesis and examinations;
- admission and evaluation process; and
- graduation procedures.

UK universities should be aware that the Regulations require that any dispute arising in relation to collaborative arrangement between Indian and Foreign Higher Educational Institution(s) should be governed by Indian law. However, while the governing law has to be that of India, there seems to be no restriction in selecting a dispute resolution mechanism of choice.

Such MoUs often prove an important means towards securing support, initial investment and commitment from the respective university bodies and staff.[6]

STAGE SIX: SECURING REGULATORY APPROVAL

Indian Regulations

It is a regulatory requirement in India that the relevant authority approves all foreign degree partnerships. Depending on the Indian HEIs involved in the partnership, it will be either the UGC or the AICTE that are approached for approval.

“*Indian Higher Educational Institutions shall seek necessary approval from the relevant Statutory Councils/ Bodies before entering into collaboration in technical, medical, legal, agricultural and such other professional programmes.*”

- Aarushi Jain, Partner, Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas

[6] British Council 2015 Report: Transnational Education - A guide for creating partnerships in India

The purview of AICTE covers programmes of technical education such as training and research in Engineering, Technology, Town Planning, Management, Pharmacy, Applied Arts and Crafts, Hotel Management and Catering Technology to name a few.

It is the Indian university's responsibility to apply for Indian regulator approval, although the UK university's involvement is recommended.

The references and links to all guidance relating to AICTE approval are available on their website: <https://www.aicte-india.org/>

More specifically, the approval handbook can be found online at this address: <https://aicte-india.org/sites/default/files/approval/APH%20Final.pdf>

For details of UGC's May 2022 Collaboration Regulations, universities can refer to this link: https://www.ugc.gov.in/pdfnews/4555806_UCG-Acad-Collab-Regulations.pdf

“ UK universities should also be cognizant that beyond the UGC regulations, there could be additional regulatory procedures and approvals from bodies such as the AICTE, as well as state-specific rules, policies and strategies to take into consideration depending on the location of TNE within India. ”

- Ishan Cader, Director of Consultancy at Times Higher Education

STAGE SEVEN: CONTRACTING AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Agreeing on a mutually acceptable contract can be time consuming. Two matters that often prove contentious are the financial arrangements and making provision for responsibilities when it might prove necessary to close a programme.

Legal documentation must be robust and should include clauses on roles and responsibilities, intellectual property, representations, indemnity, data protection, term, termination and its consequences, and a dispute resolution process.

Tax assessment of the arrangement should also be undertaken to avoid tax risks for UK universities in India. Taxation at a federal, state and possibly city-level are all important to understand, and working with a local expert/law firm is advised.



At times, some legal obligations are unique to the UK such as compliance under the UK's Bribery Act, 2010. If the UK university would like the Indian counterpart to comply with this or any other UK Act, they may need to provide assistance by way of knowledge sharing about the legal requirements and training to the Indian party.

Programme closure and teach-out must be covered in the contract. All programmes will eventually come to an end and termination should never come as a surprise, especially if the partnership has operated as a team, sharing plans and monitoring progress.

Contracts have to provide for teach-out, with responsibilities and financial arrangements clearly outlined. The UGC's Collaboration Regulations state that the collaborating HEIs shall make provisions for exit pathways for students who are unable to complete the programme, clearly specifying the future acceptance of credits earned by the students. For example, an undergraduate degree programme will normally be a minimum of three years, so this implies a minimum commitment of five years to the students if problems occur and closure becomes necessary.

STAGE EIGHT: BUILD A PROGRAMME WITH STUDENTS AND STAFF AT ITS HEART

For any programme to succeed, it has to be student-centric, with high quality and well-supported faculty.

Students

Understanding and catering to the diverse interests and needs of students in both UK and Indian universities is not straightforward, but is crucial.

As part of this planning, it's important to consider the affordability of the programme, as well as the skills and preferences of Indian students. Research needs to be done in this area in order to design a programme that meets the needs and aspirations of students.

“ *Ultimately TNE must offer clear job-market related benefits for students to be impactful, so inputs from an industry perspective could shed light on how companies perceive and value TNE degrees.* **”**

- Professor Kieran Fernandes, Durham University

It is vital that students in India have access to a similar suite of learning support, including digital infrastructure and materials as their counterparts in the UK.

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The current UGC regulations mandate that joint/dual degrees and twinning programmes should have a certain component of foreign study, which would give Indian students the opportunity to experience foreign education outside India.

Universities should look to make the mobility aspects as simple as possible for students going to the UK, for example supporting with the visa application processes and with accommodation.

“ At ATLAS SkillTech University, we are enthusiastic about forging impactful TNE partnerships. Our commitment to excellence in global education drives our keen interest in collaborating with esteemed universities in the United Kingdom and all over the world. Together, we aim to cultivate a dynamic academic environment that transcends borders, fostering innovation and cultural exchange for the benefit of students and faculty alike. ”

- Utsav Shroff, Atlas SkillTech University, Mumbai

Staff Development

So that the student experience is maximised, staff development should be a priority from the outset. This is important for staff from both universities, and it needs to be ongoing.

The NEP sets out particular skills that Indian faculty need and in some partnerships there can be a role for the UK institution to impart this training.

In addition to the technical needs for quality assurance and support for teaching and learning, team building across the partnership was identified in our research as an important factor in securing success.

An element of faculty training that should be covered is on cultural differences as these have the potential to negatively impact the partnership.

Three differences to address are:

- Teaching, learning and assessment methodologies;
- Institutional cultures, management and governance; and
- Understanding and meeting regulatory compliance for both countries.

Good practice in Indian staff development involves access to the UK universities' postgraduate training programmes and qualifications, and possible enrolment on doctoral research programmes.

This investment in faculty upskilling will help maintain equal delivery of study in both partnering universities.

Involve Industry in the Partnership

Indian universities that we spoke to emphasised the importance of finding common ground between industry and academia and exploring commercial connections as part of the new TNE partnership.

In addition, gaining an on-the-ground industry view of the value of the TNE partnership (as perceived by recruiters) could help further guide decision-making as this complex landscape continues evolving.

“*Industry sponsorship and involvement would be advantageous at many levels – it would bring in additional funding to support the partnership, attract more students, open up new job opportunities and promote upskilling which is a major imperative of the Indian government.*”

- Dr Atharva Poundarik, Assistant Professor, IIT Ropar

STAGE NINE: MARKETING AND PROMOTION OF THE PROGRAMME

It is important to know that India has a robust consumer protection law, which prohibits misleading advertising. India also released guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns. In addition, the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), a self-regulating body of the advertising industry in India, has framed guidelines for advertising of content, which covers the education sector. It is important, therefore, that Indian laws and advisories should be carefully assessed for the purpose of marketing initiatives in India.

Once the legal aspects are understood, it is important to do robust market research to best identify and reach the target group of students.



In TNE partnerships to date, marketing has largely been left to the Indian partner – even though it is in the interest of both partners to succeed. UK universities should consider developing an overall brand proposition for India which encompasses TNE along with their broader engagement strategy.

To maximise the marketing impact of the TNE programme, it is advised that both partners commit to it and that it highlights that it is recognised by the UGC and the AICTE. This recognition makes the programme much more appealing to Indian students and their parents (who are important decisionmakers). Links with industry, any pro rata fee options, and details about the visa eligibility of the programme should also be highlighted. As, of course, should alumni testimonials.

A final, but important point on marketing is that content should be localised as much as possible, including in different languages. There are over 20 official languages in India, so tailoring can help build awareness.

STAGE TEN: REGULARLY ASSESS PROGRESS AND RESULTS

At regular intervals, it is important that both partners review progress to make sure milestones are being met and that faculty and student feedback continues to be positive. This is an opportunity to identify any adjustments or improvements that need to be made to the partnership.



CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 1 – UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM JOINT MASTER’S PROGRAMME IN AI AND DATA SCIENCE WITH IIT MADRAS

This University of Birmingham and IIT Madras collaboration, initiated in June 2022, involved extensive discussions and the amalgamation of curricula from both institutions to establish this unique joint master's programme – a first-of-its-kind venture between the UK and India. The TNE programme planning began with in-depth research into relevant subject areas, leading to the development of an academic curriculum designed for the students' benefit.

Support from the University of Birmingham’s Chancellor and Vice Chancellor facilitated internal approvals within IIT Madras, an institution that had not previously launched a joint degree programme.

The programme's structure allows students to spend the first 6 months at IIT Madras (comprising 5 months of study and 1 month of industry placement). Students then choose to either continue their studies for 12 or 6 months in the UK. The fee structure is arranged so that with both 6-month and 12-month options students are eligible for UK domestic student fees. Moreover, the 12-month students qualify for a UK post study work visa, in line with UK regulations. The decision between 6 or 12 months must be made within the initial 3 weeks of the programme.

The selection process for this joint master's programme involved an exam and interview, with only 30 out of 700 applicants from IIT Madras being accepted. The collaboration process, which commenced in June 2022, involved meetings between the Vice Chancellors in November 2022 and subsequent discussions in March 2023. By May that year all necessary documentation was completed, with the first batch commencing their studies in August.

The objectives – of this partnership were clear from the start - to attract talented students, enhance the reputations of both institutions, and foster research collaborations. Fees were less of a priority as both sides view it as a long-term investment.

What also stands out is the mission alignment, shared objectives, meticulous planning and unanimous decision making that went into making this partnership an exemplary one.

“ *Our landmark new Joint Masters programmes open new and exciting opportunities to study in two countries, benefitting from the expertise and industry links of both IIT Madras and the University of Birmingham. Successful applicants will experience a global perspective as they learn the fundamental principles of data science and explore the world of AI. Our research-informed teaching will put students at the forefront of these rapidly evolving fields.*

”

This innovative partnership illustrates how the relationship between IIT Madras and the University of Birmingham will develop – the first of many fruitful education and research collaborations which will emerge as we work ever closer together.

- Dipankar Chakraborty, Country Director, University of Birmingham’s India Institute

CASE STUDY 2 – UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM DUAL MASTER’S PROGRAMME IN BIOTECHNOLOGY WITH AMITY UNIVERSITY

The University of Nottingham has two international campuses, one in China and one in Malaysia. It also has a long-standing TNE programme in Thailand, initiated 20 years ago.

The partnership with Amity University was established in 2023, following the UGC notification of May 2022, and is a 1+1 dual master's programme in Biotechnology.

The Nottingham - Amity relationship initially started with research in February 2013, which then progressed into an articulation agreement, featuring both 2+1 and 2+2 programmes. The first batch of the dual master’s students are due to begin the course next year.

This partnership, although built on an existing research collaboration and established relationships, was still subject to a rigorous due diligence process, with in-depth analysis and programme mapping. The ongoing commitment from leadership and academics of both universities has also contributed to its success.

CONCLUSION

India is on the cusp of becoming one of the most dynamic TNE opportunities in the world, and naturally UK universities want to play their part.

The above recommendations provide a template for strong and sustainable TNE partnerships that will endure over the long term, and deliver wide-ranging benefits to students, faculty, the universities and their wider stakeholders.

The deeper the partnerships, enhancing over time from light touch to mid-scale and then to large scale, the greater their impact will be.

More TNE would provide increased access to quality education for a large swathe of the Indian population, and would promote cross-pollination of ideas and innovations between both countries. Nurturing these relationships over time will expand networks and build shared understanding - bolstering the living bridge and improving trade and diplomatic ties between the UK and India.

The positive impact would be further enhanced by industry connections underpinned by social responsibility and by two-way mobility, especially more movement of UK students to India.

Ultimately it is the human and soft power element which will cement the TNE partnership, so student-centric collaboration, built on trust, shared values, equitable exchange, interpersonal relations and common goals will stand the test of time.

Universities who opt for this progressive, emotionally intelligent partnership model will experience sustainable success and will stand out as examples to emulate.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AICTE	All India Council for Technical Education
AIU	Association of Indian Universities
ASCI	Advertising Standards Council of India
CAGR	Compound Annual Growth Rate
GIFT	Gujarat International Finance Tec-City
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
IBCs	International Branch Campus
IFSCA	Financial Services Centres Authority
IIM	Indian Institutes of Management
IIT	Indian Institutes of Technology
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEP	National Education Policy
OEC	Offshore Education Centres
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
THE	Times Higher Education
TNE	Transnational Education
UGC	University Grants Commission

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.

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WHO ARE WE

Emeritus is a pioneer and global leader in the education industry, making high-quality education accessible and affordable to individuals, companies, and governments around the world. Founded in 2015, by Ashwin Damera & Chaitanya Kalipatnapu, Emeritus, part of the Eruditus Group, is committed to teaching the skills of the future.

