



NITI Aayog

Internationalisation of Higher Education in India:

Prospects, Potential, and Policy Recommendations

Policy Brief

December, 2025



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NITI Aayog

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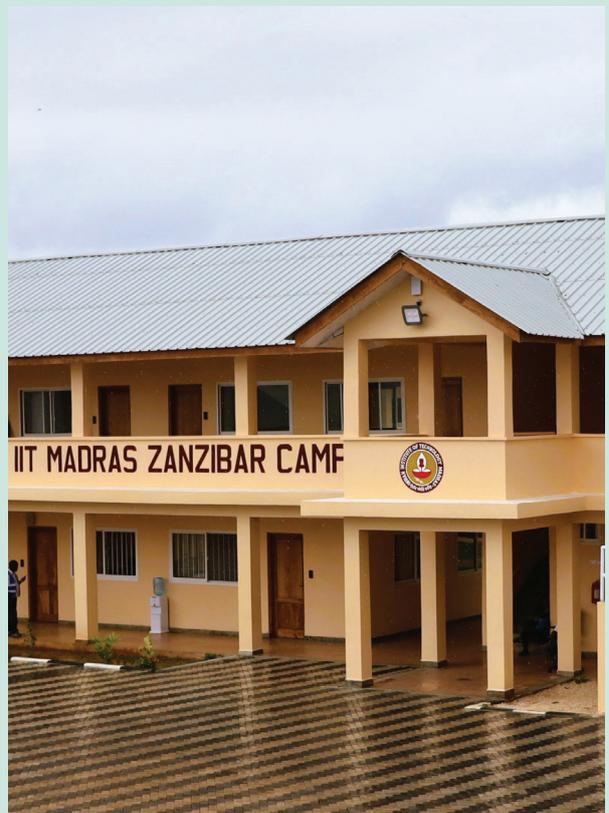
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INTRODUCTION

NEP 2020 has identified ‘internationalisation at home’ as a cornerstone for transforming India’s higher education and research ecosystem. It envisions a globally integrated education system, emphasising student and faculty mobility, academic and research collaborations, offshore and onshore campuses, and quality enhancement to drive knowledge exchange and innovation and create world-class institutions.

This focus of NEP comes at an opportune time because while 3% of India’s student population goes overseas for different kinds of academic programmes, 97% of the students continue to study in Indian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). These students will be a part of India’s workforce, contribute to the global talent pool, and hence must receive high quality education.

Outbound student mobility from India has surged in recent years, with over 13 lakh Indian students studying abroad in 2024. Top destinations are the Anglophone countries of Canada, USA, UK, and Australia. Meanwhile, the number of foreign students in the country was ~50,000 in 2021-22, with nearly 30% of students coming from Nepal. This imbalance between inbound and outbound student mobility reflects India’s challenges in retaining domestic talent and attracting international students.

The purpose of the study report on ‘*Internationalisation of Higher Education in India: Prospects, Potential and Policy Recommendations*’ is to study the patterns of international student mobility, both globally and in India, assess the impact of international collaborations in research and curriculum development, examine global approaches to institutionalise faculty and student exchange and talent attraction, study various models of onshore and offshore campuses, and provide a policy roadmap for shaping future internationalisation strategies that are rooted in India’s strengths, while responding to global challenges.

To become the global destination for higher education and research, India requires an increase in the inflow of international students. To provide estimates for these in the short-term (2030), medium-term (2035), and long-term (2047), the study has provided time bound projections based on two distinct forecasting models. The Global Benchmarking Approach based on the Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) has projected the range for international student enrolment in India between 85,000 and 1.3 lakh in 2030, 1.23 lakh and 2.44 lakh in 2035, and 3 lakh and 11 lakh in 2047. The Internationalisation Intensity Approach based on the strategic intensity model has estimated international student enrolment at 1.5 lakh in 2030, 3.59 lakh in 2035, and 7.89 lakh in 2047. These projections provide a data-driven roadmap for achieving the aspirational goals of NEP 2020 and positioning India as a higher education and research destination of choice.

This policy brief provides a snapshot of the 22 Policy Recommendations and 76 Action Pathways that could be followed by Central and State Governments, leading Central and State Public Universities (Top 100 NIRF - ‘Overall’ ranked institutions) and all Institutes of National Importance (INIs).

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. STRATEGY

1.1 Design a Comprehensive Strategy for implementation of Internationalisation

Policy Recommendation 1: Develop a Comprehensive Strategy for implementation of Internationalisation of Indian Higher Education and Research in accordance with the vision of NEP 2020.

Implementation Roadmap:

(i) **Establish an Inter-Ministerial Task Force**

Action Pathway: Establish an Inter-Ministerial Task Force anchored by the Ministry of Education and including Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Science & Technology, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, and Ministry of Finance to design and oversee the strategy. Launch the strategy with dedicated systemic and institutional funding and key deliverables.

(ii) **Create a Unified International Degree Equivalence System**

Action Pathway:

- Establish central equivalence architecture for professional and non-professional degrees with discipline-wise protocols and statutory clarity.
- Create a working group with representation from all statutory councils to develop a single-window online clearance mechanism in the form of a National Foreign Degree Equivalence Portal with category-specific eligibility, documentation and recognition norms.

(iii) **Identify deliverables for internationalisation as envisioned in the NEP 2020 and develop a monitoring dashboard and progress indicators**

Action Pathway: Create a real-time dashboard to track the progress of HEIs against internationalisation deliverables. In accordance with NEP 2020 Section 12.7 and 12.8, indicators may include student and faculty mobility, academic collaborations, credit transfers, and the presence of support systems like international student offices and alumni cells.

(iv) **Initiate Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), Mutual Recognition of Qualifications (MRQ), and Migration & Mobility Agreements (MMPA)**

Action Pathway:

- Expedite the review and signing of all pending MoUs through a coordinated and time-bound process.
- Initiate the MRQs/MMPAs with top 10 host and source countries and ratify global conventions for recognition of qualifications concerning higher education to facilitate global mobility, providing an inclusive and reliable framework.
- Constitute a committee of experts to draft and vet the agreements to ensure quality, alignment with global standards, integration with NEP 2020 and its aim of ‘internationalisation at home’.
- Establish a central repository of MOUs/MRQs/MMPAs and other G2G and Institutional Level Agreements under the Ministry of Education to serve as a single platform for all higher education-related international agreements.

(v) Establish Country Centres of Excellence (CoEs) in Central Universities to serve as host institutions

Action Pathway:

- Designate every Central University to host a Centre of Excellence for a specific country. This will enable the University to emerge as the host institution and nodal point for the said country, develop expertise on that country through multidisciplinary research, and align thematic or disciplinary strengths (e.g., technology, humanities, agriculture) of the said country with India’s requirements.
- Currently, there are 54 Central Universities in India. Each of them can focus on 1 of the 54 countries with which the Government has signed MoU in higher education.
- These CoEs should receive dedicated funding, policy guidance, and staffing support to facilitate bilateral programmes, joint degrees and research collaborations. This will enable them to develop country specific expertise over the decade, which will help India with in-house expertise across 54 countries.
- Develop joint academic programmes and design credit-bearing, high-quality short-duration courses for international students in popular domains under CoEs.

(vi) **Design Institutional Strategy for Internationalisation**

Action Pathway: INIs and Top 100 NIRF ‘Overall’ ranked HEIs may transition to structured, long-term strategic planning for internationalisation. In the medium-term, institutions require a comprehensive strategy with focus on conferences, marketing, single window admission procedures, dedicated budgets, among others.

1.2 Promote creation of Global Higher Education Hubs through an Ecosystem Approach

Policy Recommendation 2:

- (a) Develop regional higher education hubs focused on STEAM3 sectors through an ecosystem approach involving universities, industry, government, and civil society. These hubs should serve as education-led regional innovation ecosystems through structured collaboration among universities, industry, R&D labs, local governments, and society.
- (b) Replicate the GIFT City approach by creating global higher education, research and innovation hubs based on strengths of state/regional ecosystems.
- (c) Provide special incentives and policy/regulatory enablers to establish high potential Indian and international universities in these clusters.
- (d) Create international innovation and entrepreneurship sub-clusters via partnerships between Indian and global HEIs. These partnerships should institutionalise international innovation centres with shared IP policies, cross-border mentoring networks, and funding/financing access.
- (e) Align Hubs with National Missions by strategically positioning hubs in alignment with Digital India, Startup India, Aatmanirbhar Bharat, Make in India, and Gati Shakti.
- (f) Leverage existing sectoral expertise available in existing innovation clusters e.g. fintech in GIFT City, biotech in Genome Valley, AI in Bengaluru.

2. REGULATION

2.1 Ensure Ease of Regulation for Inbound and Outbound Mobility

Policy Recommendation 3: Streamline administrative procedures to enable the seamless movement of students, faculty, and institutions across borders. This includes simplifying visa processes, reducing documentation burdens, and addressing regulatory bottlenecks that impede international collaborations and academic mobility.

Implementation Roadmap:

(i) Streamline Data Repository (for outbound international students):

Action Pathway: A centralised platform may be developed for accurate data collection and monitoring, leveraging immigration, university, and consular records. This system may enable real-time analytics and inform funding, scholarship targeting, and capacity building.

(ii) Improve Regulatory Transparency for Teaching Partnerships

Action Pathway: A tax moratorium for international faculty engaging in long-term teaching or collaborative research in Indian universities may be considered to attract global talent to Indian universities.

(iii) Introduce Licensing Processes for Recruitment Agencies

Action Pathway: Establish a Verified National Agent Registry, and license and monitor agents through a rigorous compliance framework. This will include clear registration criteria, periodic audits, grievance redress mechanisms, and collaboration with immigration departments to track agent practices.

(iv) Transform the Visa Process for International Students, Researchers and Faculty in India

Action Pathway:

- A centralised visa facilitation system with dedicated education visa desks at major Indian Missions abroad and integrated post-admission visa approval protocols may be developed.
- The complete list of required documents for each application type should be clearly listed on the e-FRRO (Electronic Foreigners Regional Registration Office) portal prior to submission. A copy of this list may also be shared with the institute to facilitate accurate guidance and support for applicants.
- Long-term research and faculty visas must be prioritised. Currently, the processing time for receiving FRRO certificates typically ranges from 7 to 10 working days and, in some cases, may extend to 15–20 days. Streamlining the review and approval process could help minimise this duration.
- Provide upfront visibility of all applicable charges for visa-related services such as registration, extension, or exit permits on the e-FRRO portal before submission, to support transparency and allow applicants to plan and complete payments efficiently

- For students who are required to obtain Police Clearance upon arrival, a prior notification may be provided to both the student and the host institute (Nodal Officer).
- Clear communication and simplification of the associated procedures would be beneficial in ensuring timely compliance and a smoother onboarding experience.

(v) Create Study-based Stipend-based Internships

Action Pathway:

- Introduce Study-based Stipend-based Internships for a duration of 1-2 years for international students studying in Leading Indian HEIs.
- Develop specialised education-linked visa categories with streamlined processes for international students.

2.2 Ensure Ease of Regulation for establishing Standalone Onshore Campuses in India

Policy Recommendation 4: Broaden institutional eligibility criteria and streamline regulatory processes to make India an attractive global destination for setting up onshore campuses of leading global universities through systematic simplification, digitalisation and clarity.

Implementation Roadmap:

(i) Facilitate the Evaluation of Institutions that may not appear in the Top 500 Global Rankings

Action Pathway: To facilitate the evaluation of institutions that may not appear in the Top 500 global rankings but still maintain high standards, an expert review panel may be constituted. This panel may include academic leaders, internationalisation experts, and representatives from regulatory bodies, tasked with conducting a comprehensive assessment of the institution's credentials through research impact, teaching quality, infrastructure, governance standards, employability, faculty and student-led innovation and entrepreneurship.

(ii) Strengthen Single Window Clearance for Onshore Campuses

Action Pathway: Develop an integrated single-window digital platform to streamline all necessary approvals and regulatory clearances for foreign

institutions. Establish standard operating procedures (SOPs) to improve transparency, efficiency and accountability in decision-making.

(iii) Enable Full Digitalisation of Legal and Academic Processes

Action Pathway:

- India has been the pioneer of the best UPI platform. Similar efforts are recommended for fostering digital credentials and verification systems, which are the backbone of successful mobility. These could be enhanced through blended mobility programmes combining online and physical presence and cross-border virtual internships, enabling remote participation.
- Host joint webinars between universities across countries to foster diverse perspectives by bringing together participants from varied cultural and academic backgrounds.
- Modernise legal and regulatory procedures to accept digital documentation, contracts, certifications, and e-signatures.
- Introduce legal reforms recognising digital and cross-border e-signatures, ensuring parity with international norms.
- Fully digitalised academic workflows, including institutional registration, MoUs, credit recognition, and faculty/student exchange mechanisms.

(iv) Provide Clarity on International Tax and Financial Frameworks for Onshore Universities

Action Pathway: Release comprehensive FAQs, guidance documents, and standard compliance procedures to address the fiscal and operational concerns of foreign universities. Institutionalise tax incentives and clearly outline financial obligations (e.g., repatriation, royalty payments, taxation on revenue) to improve predictability. Set up a centralised help desk to address real-time queries and support international institutions.

2.3 Permit “Campus Within a Campus” Model with Sunset Clause for Foreign Higher Education Institutions (FHEIs)

Policy Recommendation 5: Establish integrated or co-located campuses within Indian public and private HEIs with a brownfield investment approach governed by a 10-year sunset clause and commercial rent-based models to ensure sustainability. Thereafter, the IBC may be mandated to have its own greenfield campus.

Implementation Roadmap:

(i) Permit Building Co-located Campuses with Sunset Clause

Action Pathway:

- Establish co-located HEIs that leverage the existing land and other ecosystemic resources in existing public and private HEIs to significantly lower capex for the FHEI.
- Introduce a 10-year sunset clause for “Campus Within a Campus” partnerships, with mandatory performance evaluations after 5 years based on enrolment, research output, institutional capacity building, academic and research collaborations with host HEI, and impact on student outcomes.

(ii) Explore Commercial Rent-Based Lease Mechanism

Action Pathway: Structure co-location models on a commercial rent basis, enabling host Indian HEIs to generate revenue while offering affordable global credentials to Indian students.

(iii) Create Pathway Programmes for Equity and Access

Action Pathway: Allow FHEIs to run pathway centres for language training, academic bridging, and digital learning.

2.4 Promote GIFT IFSC as a Global Hub for Onshore Campuses

Policy Recommendation 6: Establish GIFT IFSC as a model international education zone by expanding academic disciplines beyond finance, widening the pool of eligible universities, and ensuring regulatory and infrastructural readiness. This may be achieved by aligning policies with global standards and ensuring a conducive operational and living environment for students and faculty.

Implementation Roadmap:

(i) Expand Permissible Subject Areas

Action Pathway: The permissible subject areas in GIFT IFSC may be expanded to include related disciplines such as Business and Management Studies, Economics, Law and Legal Studies, Architecture and Urban Design, Sports Science, and other in-demand sectors.

(ii) Earmark Special Education Zone within GIFT SEZ

Action Pathway: A dedicated zone within the GIFT SEZ-IFSC may be reserved for IBCs and OECs, including common infrastructure such as conference halls, libraries, and auditoriums, with modern teaching and research facilities.

(iii) Develop World-Class Sports and Recreation Facilities

Action Pathway: A common sports and recreation centre may be developed in GIFT City through PPP model, offering world-class amenities.

(iv) Promote Affordable and High-Quality Student Accommodation

Action Pathway: Promote the development of high-quality student dormitories and service apartments in and around GIFT City through PPP.

(v) Clarify Applicability of FCRA for IBCs/OECs in GIFT IFSC

Action Pathway: A policy clarification may be issued to IBCs and OECs set up in GIFT IFSC regarding the applicability of FCRA provisions and compliance obligations with respect to their unique non-resident status. This clarification would enhance ease of doing business and improve the attractiveness of GIFT IFSC for foreign educational institutions.

(vi) Expand the eligibility criteria for Foreign Universities

Action Pathway: IFSCA may consider expanding the eligibility criteria to include other globally recognised University Rankings including region and discipline specific rankings.

2.5 Expand NIRF to include Internationalisation Metrics for Global Competitiveness

Policy Recommendation 7: Revise the NIRF criteria to incorporate dedicated internationalisation metrics for alignment between domestic performance evaluations and global benchmarks.

Implementation Roadmap:

(i) Integrate International Student and Faculty Ratios

Action Pathway: Include sub-parameters within the “Outreach and Inclusivity (OI)” or a new “Globalisation and Partnerships (GP)” category to measure the percentage of enrolled international students and globally recruited faculty.

(ii) Track International Research Collaborations

Action Pathway: Expand the “Research and Professional Practice (RP)” metric to include co-authored international publications, international research grants, and collaborative projects with FHEIs.

(iii) Measure Student and Faculty Mobility

Action Pathway: Develop indicators to track short-term student/faculty exchanges, and dual/twinning degree programme participation.

(iv) **Track Utilisation of Supernumerary Seats**

Action Pathway:

- Include the utilisation of supernumerary seats allocated for international students as a performance metric for NIRF rankings in order to incentivise HEIs to ensure greater inward student mobility.
- Maintain a database of HEI-level utilisation of supernumerary seats for international students.

2.6 Create a Framework for Multilateral groupings to encourage Regional Mobility

Policy Recommendation 8: Create a multilateral academic mobility framework similar to the European Erasmus+ Programme, tailored for regions such as ASEAN, BIMSTEC, BRICS, or any others. Dialogues may be initiated to develop multilateral agreements enabling systematic student and faculty exchanges—including PhD and postdoctoral levels. The framework could also be named after Rabindranath Tagore, Asia’s first Nobel Laureate, and called the ‘*Tagore Framework*’.

3. FINANCE

3.1 Establish a National Research Sovereign Wealth Impact Fund

Policy Recommendation 9: Establish a National Research Sovereign Wealth Impact Fund - *Bharat Vidya Kosh*, a diaspora-led, government-matched public trust fund with a sovereign wealth fund-like architecture to finance research, innovation, and capacity building in Indian higher education and skilling.

Implementation Roadmap:

(i) **Fund Design and Governance**

Action Pathway:

- Create a USD 10 billion corpus: 50% from diaspora/philanthropy and 50% matched by the Government of India.
- Governance Structure:
 - » Legal Entity: Not-for-profit (Section 8 Company/Trust) under the relevant Ministry with FCRA approval; local tax-compliant nonprofits abroad (e.g., 501(c)(3) in the US).
 - » Chapter Chairs: Indian Ambassadors/High Commissioners in countries with significant diaspora such as USA, UK, Canada, Australia, Japan, France, Switzerland, etc.

(ii) **Identify Core Investment Areas**

Action Pathway:

- Research Grants: For frontier tech and AI, climate change and green transition, medicine and public health, among other high impact areas.
- Global Talent Collaboration: Joint research chairs, fellowships, and visiting professorships.
- Digital Infrastructure for Education and Skilling: Investment in tier II/III city institutions.
- Internationalisation: Funding Indian Branch Campuses (IBCs) abroad and globalised curriculum domestically.
- Medical R&D: Develop clinical research hubs and AI-led diagnostics for underserved areas.

(iii) **Foster Diaspora Engagement Mechanisms**

Action Pathway:

- Diaspora Impact Councils in each global chapter, coordinated by Indian Embassies.
- Matched Giving Platforms with government matching (1:1 or 2:1), plus awards and naming rights.
- Thematic Working Groups on Health, AI, Startups, Climate, Skills.
- Flagship Vehicles:
 - » Viksit Labs in Indian universities led by diaspora faculty.
 - » Bharat Innovation Fellows embedded in Indian R&D teams.
 - » Smart Skill Districts co-designed with diaspora and industry.

3.2 Establish a Comprehensive Flagship Scholarship Programme to Enhance International Student Mobility to India

Policy Recommendation 10: Launch a prestigious scholarship programme '*Vishwa Bandhu Scholarship*' for international students for 2-year master's programmes modeled after global benchmarks. Provide study-based internships and financial support by offering competitive stipends, tuition support, research grants, accommodation and travel allowance, and health insurance.

3.3 Revamp Global Talent Attraction Programmes to Strategically Engage World Class Researchers, Faculty and Professionals through a Flagship Fellowship Programme

Policy Recommendation 11: Launch a prestigious international fellowship programme ‘*Vishwa Bandhu Fellowship*’ to create globally competitive, streamlined, and flexible frameworks for attracting and retaining top researchers, faculty and professionals, especially from the diaspora. Offer diverse engagement models, seamless onboarding processes, and tangible incentives to facilitate high-impact research and long-term collaboration.

Implementation Roadmap:

(i) Introduce Permanent and Tenure-Track Academic Pathways

Action Pathway:

- International faculty selected under the programme may be eligible for 5-year renewable contracts, with tenure-track conversion after 3 years based on performance (research, teaching, mentorship).
- Host Indian Universities may be empowered to create Programme Faculty Tracks within their sanctioned faculty strength with fast-track confirmation and promotion processes.
- Faculty can progress to Chair Professorships and Deanships through national competitive processes.

(ii) Provide Globally Competitive Compensation and Research Support

Action Pathway:

- Salary packages and one-time signing bonus matching international benchmarks and may be given.
- Research Grants over 5 years may be provided based on high impact and cutting edge project proposals with fast-track approval processes and dedicated fund disbursement mechanisms.
- Dedicated funding may be provided to establish advanced labs, recruit international researchers, and purchase equipment through simple and timely procurement mechanisms.

(iii) Create a Single-Window Administrative Portal

Action Pathway: Unified Portal may be created to integrate Visa clearance, Bank accounts, PAN, tax IDs, housing allotment, research grant disbursement, institutional onboarding, among other key processes for ease of research and transition into the Indian University ecosystem.

(iv) Create Institutional Autonomy with Accountability

Action Pathway: Top 50 NIRF ‘Research Institutions’ category HEIs may be given delegated authority to hire faculty through international searches, offer compensation within defined bands and fast-track processing of contracts and promotions.

(v) Provide a Relocation and Family Integration Package

Action Pathway:

- Housing subsidy or on-campus housing may be provided.
- Spousal employment, admission support in international schools for children, and subsidised healthcare packages for dependents.
- Annual home visit allowance for non-resident foreign nationals.

(vi) Curate special fellowships for early- and mid-career professionals:

Action Pathway:

- Stipend and other facilities may be provided at par with the benchmarked programmes.
- No post-study work opportunities would be permitted.

3.4 Leverage Bilateral and Multilateral Joint Research Funds to advance Internationalisation

Policy Recommendation 12: Leading Indian Central and State Public Universities may proactively tap into bilateral and multilateral joint research funding programmes to support internationalisation. This may be achieved by developing institutional capacities to access and manage such funds, building global academic consortia, and aligning institutional priorities with national and international funding opportunities.

Implementation Roadmap:

(i) Tap into Bilateral Joint Funding Platforms

- (i) Action Pathway:** Leading Indian Central and State Public Universities may identify and prioritise relevant bilateral funding opportunities and create internal task forces or designated research offices to develop proposals, manage compliance, and support faculty engagement. Capacity building workshops may be conducted to enhance proposal-writing and partnership development skills.

(ii) Strengthen Institutional Preparedness and Visibility

Action Pathway:

- **Gain membership in international programmes and platforms:** Membership in organisations such as the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), International Association of Universities (IAU), Worldwide Universities Network (WUN), and professional platforms like NAFSA, EAIE (European Association for International Education), and APAIE (Asia-Pacific Association for International Education) for joint research, co-branded programmes, and policy dialogue on global education priorities.
- **Join Reputable Global Networks:** Prioritise engagement with international academic associations to strengthen institutional visibility, credibility, and collaboration potential.
- **Promote Faculty Mobility and Joint Research Degrees:** Develop consortium-based models that support faculty exchanges, collaborative research projects, and joint Ph.D. or dual degree programmes.
- **Appoint Dedicated International Partnership Officers:** Establish roles or teams responsible for managing global memberships, initiating proposals, and sustaining long-term engagement in international alliances.

4. BRANDING, COMMUNICATION, AND OUTREACH (BCO)

4.1 Create country-specific BCO Strategies for high potential source markets

Policy Recommendation 13:

- (a) Country/region-specific marketing strategies may be developed for attracting global students to Indian HEIs.
- (b) Strategic partnerships with digital platforms and education fairs may be leveraged to execute focused marketing campaigns.

Implementation Roadmap:

(i) Enable Fast-Track Financial Services for International Students

Action Pathway: Facilitate swift and simple processes for foreign students to open bank accounts, access remittance services, and avail other financial products.

(ii) Position India as part of a Globally Mobile Study Experience

Action Pathway: Promote India as a component of a global higher education journey by encouraging credit transfer arrangements like 1+1, 2+2, and other semester exchange models.

4.2 Create university-specific BCO Strategies for high potential source markets

Policy Recommendation 14: Each Leading Central and State Public University must develop a customised global BCO strategy rooted in its academic strengths, research capabilities, regional priorities, and national and international contributions.

Implementation Roadmap:

(i) Initiate University-level collaborations for Research and Engagement

Action Pathway: As part of their Institution Development Plan (IDP), each Leading Central University and State Public University may formulate an internationalisation blueprint with clearly defined objectives and timelines. These institutional strategies should focus on areas of strength and engage in international collaborations, student and faculty mobility, and global branding. Partnerships may be supported by cooperation with relevant ministries and overseas diplomatic missions.

(ii) Establish On-Ground Teams to Promote International Collaboration within Indian Embassies Abroad

Action Pathway: Dedicated on-ground liaison officers may be appointed within Indian embassies in target countries to promote international collaboration. These officers may actively engage local universities, industries, and student bodies to facilitate partnerships and promote Indian HEIs. Regular promotional events and problem-solving support may be integrated into their roles.

(iii) Improve Employer Perception of Dual/Degree Programmes

Action Pathway:

- To build global demand for joint and dual degree programmes offered by Leading Central Universities and State Public Universities, a communication strategy may be developed that highlights their international relevance. Multinational companies operating in both India and partner countries can help co-brand degree programmes, offer internships, and provide testimonials on employability outcomes.
- Employability metrics such as placement records, alumni success and impact stories, and skill alignment with global job markets may be embedded into the programme evaluation process and prominently communicated through employer-oriented platforms.
- Academic programmes can be co-designed with industry input to ensure global market readiness.

(iv) **Upgrade International Relations Offices (IROs)**

Action Pathway: Establish professionally staffed IROs in universities for global partnership development.

(v) **Leverage Language of Learning as a Window of Opportunity**

Action Pathway: Promote India as a global destination for English-medium higher education, especially to countries in Anglophone Africa, Southeast and Central Asia and the Global South. Launch initiatives to internationalise Indian languages and integrate foreign language learning within Indian HEIs to foster reciprocal cultural and educational mobility, and create world ready talent to meet the global talent shortages.

4.3 Create an Indian Alumni Ambassador Network (AAN)

Policy Recommendation 15: Launch an Alumni Ambassador Network (AAN): *Bharat ki AAN*, to identify and engage top 100 Indian-origin alumni from each Leading HEI (INIs and Top 100 ‘Overall’ NIRF Ranking Institutions) as brand ambassadors of Indian Higher Education.

Implementation Roadmap:

(i) **Initiate Identification and Repository Creation**

Action Pathway:

- Develop an objective framework to identify the top 100 alumni from each Leading HEI across diverse sectors.
- Collect data in partnership with HEIs using parameters like professional achievements, awards, contributions to alma mater, social impact, and global influence.
- Build a live, dynamic alumni database (with profiles, sectors, geographies) accessible to institutions, ministries, and international stakeholders.

(ii) **Initiate Chapter-wise Alumni Mobilisation**

Action Pathway:

- Establish regional alumni chapters in key geographies (North America, EU, Southeast and West Asia, Africa, Oceania).
- Partner with Indian Missions abroad and leading diaspora organisations to convene annual AAN meets.
- Assign regional leads to coordinate alumni engagement and represent India’s higher education at international fora.

(iii) **Leverage Alumni Engagement for Nation Building**

Action Pathway:

- Alumni may serve as mentors, guest faculty or R&D collaborators through a structured onboarding mechanism.
- Organise an annual ‘Bharat ki AAN’ Summit in India to connect these distinguished alumni with policymakers, institutions, and students.

4.4 Launch a Flagship Annual International Higher Education and Research Conference

Policy Recommendation 16: Host a flagship Annual International Higher Education and Research Conference - *Bharat Vidya Manthan* - to improve India’s global standing in the higher education and research landscape. The event will serve as a platform for fostering academic diplomacy, strengthening institutional partnerships, showcasing India’s academic strengths to a global audience, and conveying India’s potential and heft in becoming a global hub of knowledge and innovation.

Implementation Roadmap:

(i) **Co-Host Thematic Editions with Global Institutions and Knowledge Partners**

Action Pathway: Each edition of the annual conference may be co-designed in partnership with a world-class international university or consortium, and an Indian university with recognised expertise in the thematic focus area—such as sustainability and climate, frontier technologies, global health and wellbeing, economics and finance, business and entrepreneurship, among others. This collaborative approach will foster cross-border academic exchange and amplify India’s leadership in global knowledge domains.

(ii) **Launch an ‘India Knowledge Dialogue’ leading up to the Annual Conference**

Action Pathway: Initiate a year-round “India Knowledge Dialogue”- *Bharat Vidya Samvaad* - led by Indian embassies and INIs in key partner countries. This series will serve as feeder events for the flagship conference, support thematic planning and foster continuous academic and policy-level engagement.

4.5 Promote Global Academic and Research Exchange Programmes

Policy Recommendation 17: Enhance structured two-way mobility frameworks for students, researchers and faculty. This includes creating centralised guidelines for credit equivalence, signing bilateral mobility agreements, and offering grants for outbound and inbound mobility. Twinning programmes, dual-degree options, and research sabbaticals must be encouraged.

Implementation Roadmap:

(i) **Scale Virtual Exchanges and Joint Digital Classrooms**

Action Pathway: A percentage of credits that is granted through SWAYAM portal may be redirected to also include online courses delivered by world class universities through institutional and systemic arrangements.

(ii) **Design an Action Plan to improve international rankings of the Indian Universities**

Action Pathway:

- Design university-led strategic plans (as part of the Institution Development Plans) focused on elevating Indian institutions' visibility and performance in global university rankings (e.g., QS, THE).
- Institutions demonstrating year-on-year improvement in their international rankings may be provided with financial or other incentives (e.g., international travel grants, research capacity-building support, etc) to further accelerate their upward trajectory and global competitiveness.

(iii) **Establish International Summer Schools to Attract Global South Students**

Action Pathway: Support Top 5 IITs, Top 5 IIMs, and Top 5 Central Universities (NIRF Rankings) to organise structured, international summer schools of 6-8 weeks duration. Each institution may host up to 500 students annually, with a special focus on attracting participants from Global South countries. These summer schools should integrate thematic teaching, research labs, field immersion, and Indian cultural experiences to create familiarity and boost inward student mobility.

(iv) **Launch a National Faculty Mobility Scheme for Global Academic Exchange**

Action Pathway: Create a National Faculty Mobility Scheme to support 250 Indian faculty members annually, selected through a challenge process across 20 national priority areas (e.g., green transition, frontier technologies, public health, renewable energy, advanced manufacturing technologies, space research, defence, among others). The scheme may also enable top Indian institutions to host international faculty for co-teaching and joint research.

4.6 Revamp “Study in India” as a One-Stop Solution for International Students

Policy Recommendation 18: Transform the current initiative into a comprehensive, centrally coordinated and brand-driven campaign to address all international student needs across the five key stages of mobility: pre-departure, transit, stay, integration and return.

Implementation Roadmap:

(i) Enhance User Experience and Digital Interface (UX/UI)

Action Pathway:

- Develop a unified digital platform as the central portal for international student engagement, featuring application tracking, programme comparison and real-time support.
- Ensure multi-language support and region-specific content.
- Integrate chatbot assistance, student testimonials and AI-driven course matching tools.

(ii) Strengthen International Promotion and Scholarship Management through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

Action Pathway:

- Institutionalise partnerships with specialised agencies to lead international promotion efforts. Ensure contracts are tied to clearly defined goals, key performance indicators (KPIs) and success metrics to drive accountability and maximise the impact of international student recruitment campaigns.
- Adopt a PPP approach to enhance the administration of international scholarships. By collaborating with professional scholarship management entities through structured PPP models, the process can be made more efficient

(iii) Align SII with International Branch Campus Objectives

Action Pathway: Mandate foreign institutions, as part of the UGC approval process, to submit international student recruitment strategies that identify enabling conditions needed for success. This will allow the government and other stakeholders to coordinate efforts and develop supportive mechanisms to meet shared objectives.

(iv) Clearly Define and Align SII with Broader Economic and Diplomatic Strategy

Action Pathway: Align SII's target geographies with India's foreign policy priorities. For instance, if the goal is to attract more students from the Global South, this objective should be integrated into multilateral and bilateral engagements such as BIMSTEC, ASEAN, BRICS or any others. Similarly, to recruit students from developed nations and upper middle income countries, leverage trade negotiations and international education agreements to promote reciprocal mobility—drawing lessons from EU-UK student flows.

5. CURRICULUM AND CULTURE

5.1 Foster Curriculum Innovation and Capacity Building to Enable Global Academic Integration

Policy Recommendation 19: Promote curricular reforms in Leading Indian HEIs to embed interdisciplinary coursework, reflective and communication skills, and international academic standards across programmes. Simultaneously, invest in comprehensive capacity-building for faculty and academic administrators to foster global-ready institutions and facilitate the seamless implementation of collaborative international degree programmes.

Implementation Roadmap

(i) **Introduce Interdisciplinary Curriculum Components**

Action Pathway: Ensure that every undergraduate and postgraduate programme includes coursework from outside the primary discipline. For instance, STEM programmes may integrate management and social science modules.

(ii) **Embed Reflective Writing and Communication Modules**

Action Pathway: Mandate foundational communication and reflective writing modules in the first year of all degree programmes. These modules will support intercultural competence, classroom inclusivity, and effective articulation—skills necessary for both domestic and international engagement.

(iii) **Launch Faculty Capacity-Building Programmes for Internationalisation**

Action Pathway: Design and implement structured training programmes for faculty covering international curriculum development, intercultural teaching and learning, virtual and physical mobility frameworks, and quality assurance. These may include core and elective training modules, faculty exchanges, and mentorship platforms. This may be provided through the iGOT Karmayogi platform of the Capacity Building Commission or integrated within existing teacher training initiatives such as the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Programme.

5.2 Embed Industry Engagement and Internships into Curriculum

Policy Recommendation 20: Integrate employability and industry engagement into the internationalisation strategies of INIs and top 100 ‘Overall’ NIRF Ranking Universities’

Implementation Roadmap:

(i) Establish Industry Experience Programmes

Action Pathway: Develop structured, credit-bearing internship models or sandwich-year formats embedded within degree programmes, in collaboration with industry partners. These may be tailored by sector and offered across disciplines to enhance practical exposure.

(ii) Establish Applied Research and Innovation Hubs

Action Pathway: Establish joint research centres or applied innovation clusters within HEIs in collaboration with industry, where students and faculty can work on live industry projects. These hubs may also serve as incubators for startups and applied research.

(iii) Design Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs)

Action Pathway: Design government-supported Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) schemes that connect academic researchers and students with SMEs to work on innovation projects, technology development, and business process enhancements.

(iv) Invite Industry Participation in Curriculum Design

Action Pathway: Involve industry leaders and professionals in curriculum advisory boards to co-create course content, offer industry-relevant certifications, deliver guest lectures, and support upskilling initiatives aligned with global standards.

(v) Track and Publicise Graduate Outcomes

Action Pathway: Develop institutional mechanisms to track graduate outcomes including job placements, average starting salaries, and employer satisfaction. Use these metrics in international outreach, marketing, and rankings to enhance institutional credibility.

5.3 Enhance Multicultural Experiences at Indian University Campuses

Policy Recommendation 21:

- (a) To improve international students' experiences in India, universities may adopt baseline global standards for housing, campus safety, academic support, student and faculty counselling, and cultural orientation.
- (b) Provide language assistance, organise mentorship programmes and multicultural events to facilitate smoother integration in a supportive learning environment.

Implementation Roadmap:

(i) Upgrade Student Services and Campus Infrastructure

Action Pathway: Create a uniform infrastructure and safety protocol framework that is applicable to all INIs and Leading Central Universities and State Public Universities to ensure a standard experience for international students, researchers and faculty across Indian HEIs. Develop virtual learning platforms, e-libraries with high speed internet, modern labs and student friendly amenities.

(ii) Provide Investment Incentives for Student Accommodation

Action Pathway: Encourage PPP in high-quality international student accommodation and related facilities.

(iii) Integrate Alumni Networks for Cultural Immersion

Action Pathway:

- Create a standalone Alumni Relations Cell or integrate alumni engagement functions within the International Students Office (ISO) or Office of International Affairs (OIA) to ensure structured and consistent outreach to international alumni communities.
- Create a database by identifying regional clusters of alumni and mapping their expertise and influence across industries, academia, and geographic regions. This database can serve as the foundation for targeted engagement, collaboration, and networking.
- Facilitate the formation of country-specific and regional alumni chapters (e.g., North America, Europe, Southeast Asia) to support local engagement, event organisation, and representation in international initiatives.
- Build robust digital alumni portals to enable sustained virtual interaction, knowledge-sharing, and networking opportunities. Features may include alumni directories, discussion forums, job boards, newsletters, and event registration.
- Connect current students with international alumni to offer career guidance, application support, and global exposure. A digital platform linking international students with alumni mentors may be created in INIs, Leading Central and State Public Universities.
- Leverage alumni in international university fairs, promotional campaigns, ambassador programmes, and diplomatic education events. Their visibility in such settings can boost credibility and student recruitment globally.

5.4 Integrate Global Approaches with Indian Culture and Philosophy in Teaching and Research

Policy Recommendation 22:

- (a) Ensure the integration of global approaches with Indian philosophical, ethical, and cultural dimensions in teaching, research, and management practices.
- (b) Promote research in areas that provide solutions to pressing socioeconomic challenges in India, and create global intellectual visibility for the rich Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in the STEM and non-STEM areas.

Implementation Roadmap:

(i) Ensure Pedagogical Synthesis of Global and Indian Perspectives for Educators

Action Pathway:

- Build intercultural competence of faculty and administrators through capacity-building initiatives that focus equally on global pedagogies and the integration of Indian philosophical, ethical, and cultural dimensions in teaching, research, and management practices.
- Promote faculty exchange programmes that facilitate mutual learning between Indian and international educators on culturally responsive pedagogy.
- Encourage classroom deliberations on socioeconomic decision making using perspectives of both the Global South and the Global North such that the HEIs can create holistic and inclusive mindsets that are required for creating world-ready talent.

(ii) Ensure Curriculum Alignment for Inclusivity of Students

Action Pathway:

- Encourage Indian and Foreign HEIs to embed Indian philosophical, ethical, and cultural perspectives within globally benchmarked curricula across disciplines and integrate Indian Knowledge Systems, local case studies, and regional languages.
- Academic collaborations may include research on Indian culture and heritage, history and philosophy, the role of democracy and diversity that has thrived in the Indian context, the success of cooperative and competitive federalism, the role of decentralised governance and citizenry in nation building, the impact of innovation and entrepreneurship in grassroots growth and development, and such other unique Indian facets within the global frameworks to strengthen India's intellectual visibility.

WAY FORWARD

The main study report consists of 22 Policy Recommendations, 76 Action Pathways for specified stakeholders with 125 Performance Success Indicators, and 30 Indian and Global Practices currently being implemented by various systemic and institutional stakeholders. The recommendations are directed towards Central Government, State Governments, leading Central and State Public Universities (Top 100 NIRF - ‘Overall’ ranked institutions) and all Institutes of National Importance (INIs). This policy brief provides a snapshot of the policy recommendations and action pathways, which are based on extensive consultations with over 160 Indian universities, nearly 30 international institutions, officers from the Centre, State and UT Governments, representatives from 16 countries, and international education experts.

The study report aims to contribute to positioning leading Indian higher education institutions at the forefront of global academic and research discourse, ensuring India-centric internationalisation, and creating world-ready talent to enable India to play an influential role as a knowledge economy. The commitment of systemic and institutional leaders, faculty members, researchers, and students will be key in translating these ideas into action. It is hoped that the report will serve as a valuable resource for all concerned stakeholders.

With collective and concerted action, we can position India as a hub for world-class research, innovation, and talent development and achieve our vision of becoming a Viksit Bharat by 2047.



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NITI Aayog