

THE CAREER DISPATCH

T&A
we go beyond

INSIGHTS ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH ASIA



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**Agreement 25,
Housing crisis, &
more on Higher ed
in South Asia**

Introduction	2	Study in Focus: The Value of Humanities	9
South Asia Unlocked (SAU): Special series by T&A	3	News and events	10-11
SAU Part 2: Housing crisis	4-6	T&A initiatives	12-17
Event in Focus: Agreement 25 at Queen's University Belfast	7-8	About T&A Consulting	18



Introduction

South Asia presents a significant opportunity for higher education institutions due to its large population and developing economies.

It ranks as the second-largest region globally for student enrollments, accounting for 18% of all tertiary education students according to recent World Bank data.

The private sector dominates the higher education sector in countries like India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, with enrollment percentages ranging from over 65% to 20%.

The top destination countries chosen by South Asian students for higher education include the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Germany, and China. Emerging markets like Turkey and Ireland are also gaining popularity.

Although the region offers numerous opportunities, success in the highly competitive and ever-changing environment requires a dependable and knowledgeable local presence. Managing agent, school, and university relationships is crucial for continuous success.

I hope you find this edition of *The Career Dispatch* enjoyable and informative.

Tarun Gupta

Global Managing Partner, T&A Consulting

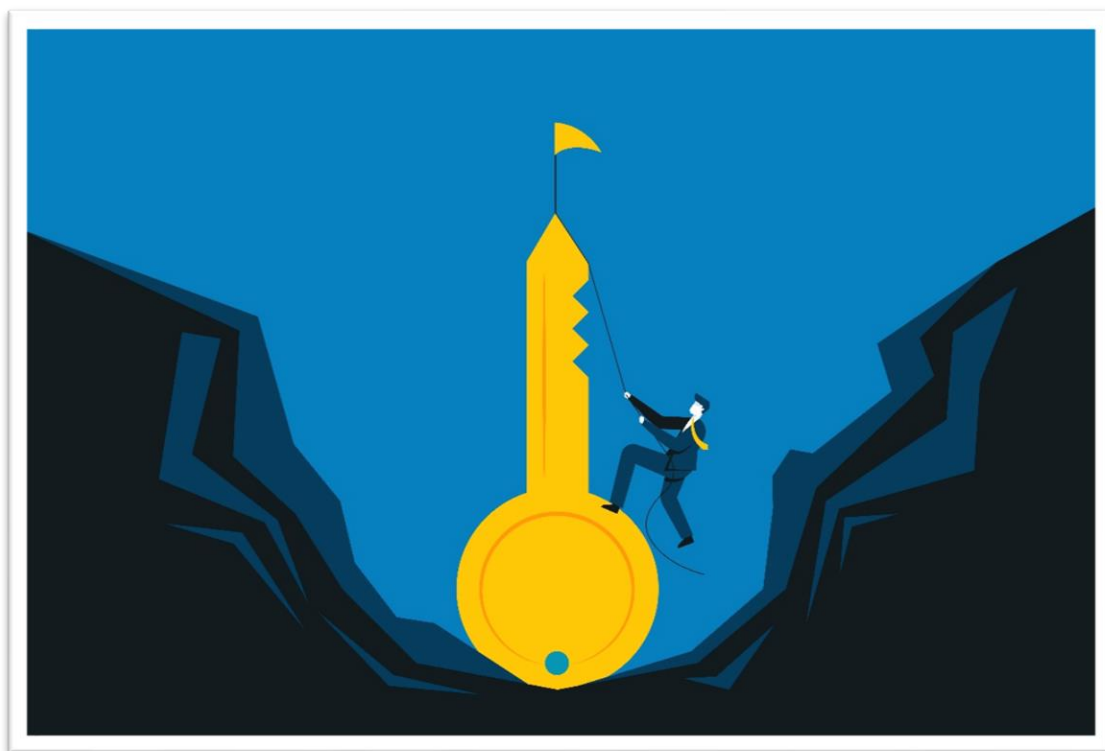


JULY 2023 ISSUE

2023 started with a bang for the international higher education industry, with students applying in droves at foreign universities, and recruitment levels surpassing pre-pandemic levels for many HEIs. But challenges also abound in the form of employment shortages, housing crises, and visa frauds. In this issue we discuss the housing crisis plaguing the international higher education industry and what can be done about it. As always, there's news related to the South Asian higher education industry to keep you abreast with the latest developments. Happy reading!

SOUTH ASIA UNLOCKED

A primer for HEIs looking to enter the market



In the last edition of *The Career Dispatch*, T&A Consulting kicked off the special series **South Asia Unlocked**, a primer for new market entrants as well as existing Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) looking to leverage opportunities in the vast South Asian market.

In the series, we discuss issues that are relevant to entry into the South Asian market—one of the most lucrative sources for international student recruitment that is undergoing massive changes in the sphere of higher education.

The **pilot topic for the series was Visa frauds** which have seen a spike in numbers as international borders opened post the Covid-19 pandemic and universities around the world opened their gates to international students. The impact has been severe on students from South Asia, given the unprecedented demand for international higher education from students in the region.

In this issue, we take a look at the **raging housing crisis faced by international students** and the severe impact on South Asian students.



Housing crisis: The international student dilemma

With international student recruitment reaching record numbers in countries around the world, the housing crisis has emerged as a big challenge that only seems to be growing. Rents in many popular study destinations have risen sharply as demand outstrips supply. And with China, the biggest source of international students, now lifting restrictions on its students to move abroad, the situation may only get worse.

For students coming from countries in South Asia, with less strong currencies, the soaring costs of accommodation become unbearable at times, with many resorting to taking more part-time work, couch-surf, measures like hot-bedding, and also skipping meals to save on living costs.

Couch-surfing and hot-bedding

With rising costs of accommodation, many international students are resorting to measures like couch-surfing: staying temporarily with their friends, usually in the spare spaces.

Another measure to cut costs is hot-bedding – sharing beds with strangers. It is similar to hot-desking, but instead of sharing desks, it involves sharing a bed with a stranger, so that you sleep in shifts.

WHAT ARE STUDENTS FACING

Acute shortage of living accommodations, skyrocketing rentals, and high fees are leading to acute pressure on international students, especially from South Asia.

Delays in visa processing also leads to delays in the moving process. And last-minute desperation to book accommodation leads to students having no option but to pay exorbitant prices, sometimes without even seeing the place in person.

This also gives rise to housing scams in many countries as vulnerable students become easy targets for scamsters.

As rents around the universities hit the roof, students are forced to take up crowded accommodations, often in distant places from where commuting times are long, apart from facing issues with landlords.

WHERE IS THE ISSUE MOST EVIDENT

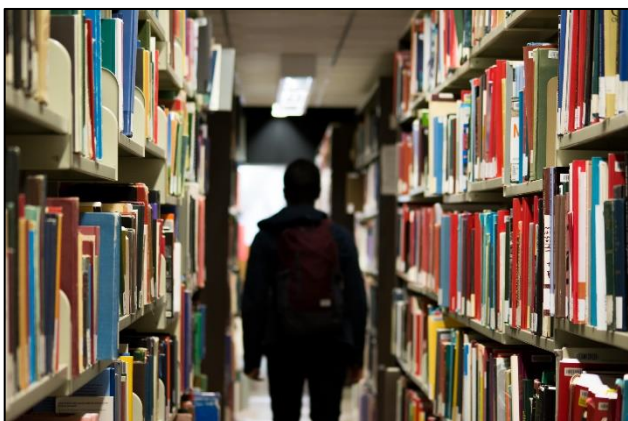
Countries that are receiving record numbers of students, like the UK, Australia, and US are also the ones facing accommodation shortages.



Recent news reports have brought out harrowing stories of students living in cramped spaces, rents being exorbitant, and homelessness being on the rise.

Australia received a record number of offshore student visa applications last year and India emerged as the top source in the last six months of 2022. But the situation has quickly turned sensitive as housing becomes a big issue for the administration. A 2022 report by the Student Accommodation Council shows that many Australian cities were already at capacity for purpose-built student accommodation beds. In Sydney, average rental charges have gone up by 33 percent in the last 12 months (May 2023).

Research from 2022 indicated that the proportion of financially secure international students in Australia's two largest cities went down from 44 percent in 2019 to just 30 percent in 2020.



In Scotland, research by the National Union of Students (NUS) painted a bleak picture when it showed that:

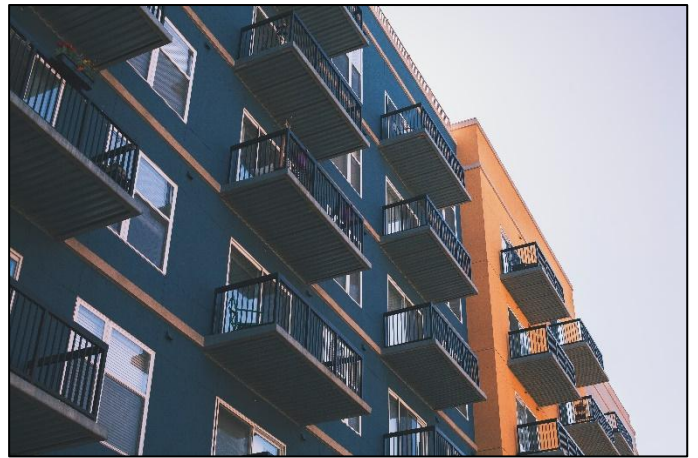
- 10% of international students have used foodbanks
- 29% have considered leaving their course because of financial difficulties
- 49% have skipped a meal
- 42% have gone without heating
- 29% have been unable to pay their rent in full
- 36% have been unable to pay their energy bills

As per the FBI, **in the US**, 11,578 people lost \$350,328,166 due to rental scams in 2021 alone. This is a 64% increase compared to 2020.

WHAT CAN BE DONE

While the issue of accommodation shortage needs addressing by multiple stakeholders, there are examples of proactive measures being taken by countries and universities that can serve as guides for others to follow:

Within the UK, the University of Glasgow is engaging its staff and students in large-



scale volunteering opportunities for homelessness prevention activities and specialist support, such as giving free legal advice to tenants at risk of eviction.

While the University of Roehampton organised a Homelessness Awareness Week on its campus in south-west London in March 2022, University of Chichester has introduced a 12-week bridge course called 'From Adversity to University', with the aim of preparing people to apply for a degree course.

The city of Nottingham is another example of how universities and administration can work together to solve the crisis. The city council has come up with a strategy to build more purpose-built student accommodation buildings, with the support of Nottingham Trent University and the University of Nottingham. The city is refurbishing old buildings to make space for student accommodation and beds for 9,500 more students will be created in the city over the next three years.

Another good example is the social housing scheme of the city of Vienna in Austria, where more than 60 percent of the city's 1.8 million inhabitants live in subsidized housing and nearly half of the housing market is made up of city-owned flats or cooperative apartments.



Event in focus:

25th anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement at Queen's University Belfast

ABOUT THE EVENT

The 25th Anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement was marked at Queen's University Belfast, and the landmark event saw participation by dignitaries like the former president of the United States, Bill Clinton, and the Chancellor of Queen's University Belfast, Hillary R. Clinton.

The three-day conference was hosted by Queen's University Belfast in partnership with the Global Federation of Competitiveness Councils, the Council on Competitiveness, Women in Business, Politics in Action, Commission for Victims and Survivors, Lyric Theatre, and Hillsborough Castle, where supporting events also took place, including a programme for schools.



About the Agreement

The Belfast Agreement, also known as the Good Friday Agreement, was signed on 10 April 1998. It brought an end to 30 years of conflict in Northern Ireland, known as the Troubles, and underpins Northern Ireland's peace, its constitutional settlement, and its institutions.

The three-day conference had four key themes:

- Celebrating the achievements of those who signed the 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement (GFA).
- Recognising the role of women in peace building.
- Amplifying the voice of the next generation of young leaders.
- Creating a dialogue that proposes and considers social and economic solutions to the major issues that will impact the region over the next 25 years.





Study In Focus

The Value of the Humanities

A report commissioned by Oxford University, titled *The Value of the Humanities*, has shown how studying the humanities can benefit young people's future careers and wider society.

The report uses an innovative methodology to understand how humanities graduates have fared over their whole careers after graduation. In the largest study of its kind, the report followed the career destinations of over 9,000 Oxford humanities graduates aged between 21 and 54 who entered the job market between 2000 and 2019.

As per the report's key findings:

- 1- Humanities graduates develop skills like resilience and flexibility that help them adapt to challenging and changing labour markets.
- 2- The skills developed by studying a humanities degree, such as communication, creativity and working in a team, are "highly valued and sought out by employers".
- 3- Humanities graduates benefit from subject-specific learning.
- 4- Studying humanities helps graduates to make "wider contributions to society".
- 5- Humanities graduates have high levels of job satisfaction

The report challenges many of the misconceptions about humanities as a career option and broadens the perspectives of prospective students of the field.

News and Updates

Indian government exempts IFSC's foreign universities from UGC and AICTE's Acts



The Indian government has exempted courses in financial management, fintech, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics offered by foreign educational institutes in the International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) from certain provisions of the University Grants Commission (UGC) Act and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) Act.

A notification by the Ministry of Finance clarified that IFSCA's scope will be limited to establishment terms and conditions, while academic matters will be governed by the home country's regulatory framework.



Canada eases norms on language proficiency test

Canada's Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada announced changes to the English test requirements for Student Direct Stream (SDS) applicants ending the monopoly of IELTS for Canadian student visa.

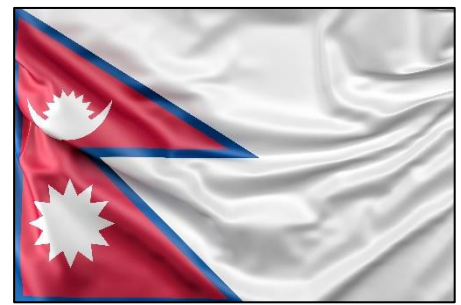
From August 2023, applicants can submit language test results from exams like CELPIP, CAEL, PTE, and TOEFL. The step can bring relief to South Asian students who face language barriers.



New visa rules for Indian students in Australia

Under the Mobility Arrangement for Talented Early-professionals Scheme (MATES), Indian students studying in Australia can apply to work without needing visa sponsorship for up to eight years starting 1 July 2023.

The temporary visa for young skilled professionals from India was introduced as a part of the MPPA agreement between India and Australia and will have 3,000 places for four years.



Nepal curbs non-degree study abroad

The government of Nepal has stopped issuing no objection certificates (NOC) to students planning to study diplomas or language courses abroad.

The law, which came out in 2016, is being made effective now with a new directive and it effectively bans non-degree study for outbound students. As per the law, only university-level education, or courses above bachelor's level, will now be considered higher education.



Uni of Birmingham and IIT Madras launch joint Masters programs

The University of Birmingham and Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) have opened applications for their new Joint Masters programmes in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence - the first such education partnership between any IIT and a UK Russell Group university. Successful applicants will study in Birmingham and Chennai before receiving a single degree awarded by both universities.



UK and India sign landmark Research MoU to boost collaboration

The UK and India signed a landmark agreement in April 2023 to collaborate on science and innovation. The MoU was signed after a meeting between UK Science Minister George Freeman and Indian Minister of State for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh.

Through this agreement, the two countries hope to minimise bureaucratic hurdles in the way of academic collaborations, and enable quicker, deeper collaboration on science.



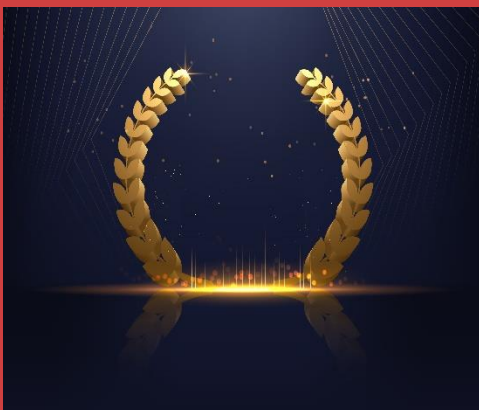
Embassy of Georgia holds a 2-city education fair in India

The Embassy of Georgia organized one of the largest foreign education fairs in the Indian cities of Bengaluru and Chennai.

Attended by over 1,000 students, the second edition of the flagship event focused on providing strategic support to Indian students who are eager to study medical and non-medical courses at Georgian universities and institutes. It saw participation from 11 universities from Georgia.

THE Asia University Rankings 2023: South Asian universities in top 200 reach a five-year high

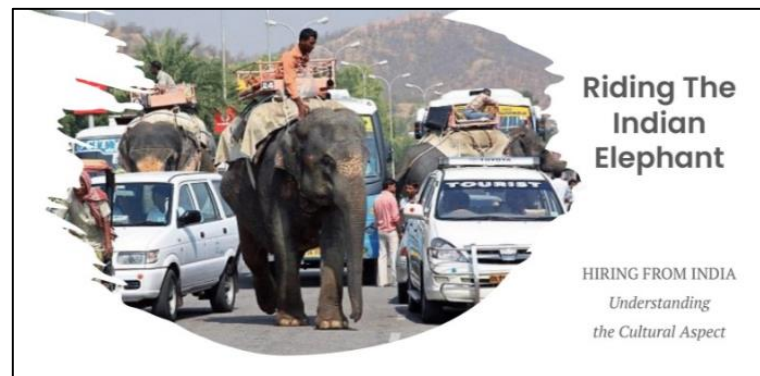
The number of South Asian universities featured in the top 200 of Times Higher Education's Asia University Rankings has reached a five-year high. 32 universities from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka are in the top 200 this year, up from 24 in 2022 and 25 in 2019. The top 200 has two institutions from Bangladesh for the first time: the University of Dhaka and North South University. While Pakistan has 10, India has 18 universities in the top 200 list. 1



T&A at work: Events & initiatives

T&A Consulting provides insights on hiring from India

T&A Consulting was invited to speak at "Navigating between Cultures: Meeting Indian and Finnish Work Cultures", a webinar by Business Finland. The objective of the webinar was to provide employers with a better understanding of India and its unique characteristics, with the aim of facilitating the relocation process for Indian employees to Finland.



During the webinar, Ashwin Merchant, Partner, T&A Consulting, presented key insights into the cultural aspects that employers should consider before hiring Indian employees. The presentation not only aimed to help employers make informed decisions about selecting the right candidates but also provided valuable insights into the social differences between India and Finland.



By providing a range of tips and recommendations, the presentation equipped participants with the necessary knowledge to avoid potential pitfalls in cross-cultural interactions.

Finland and India: A Comparison.

Finland (2021)

- Area: 303,940 km².
- Population: 5.54 million.
- # 45 economy in the world.
- GDP: USD 294.8 billion.
- Per capita GDP: USD 53,655.
- Merchandise exports: USD 81,971 million.
- Services exports: USD 52,950 million.
- FDI Inflow: USD 9,395.33 million.

India (2021)

- Area: 2,973,190 km².
- Population: 1.40 billion.
- # 5 economy in the world.
- GDP: USD 5,171 billion.
- Per capita GDP: USD 2,257.
- Merchandise exports: USD 395,425 million.
- Services exports: USD 346,647 million.
- FDI Inflow: USD 44,735.15 million.

Source: UNCTAD, World Bank, India Census

Ashwin Merchant

How Different Are We?

Finland:	India:
• Eye for detail (perfectionists).	• Functionality.
• Foresee problems in advance.	• No problems anywhere.
• Not used to negotiation.	• Bargaining is inherent.
• Focus on planning.	• Spontaneity is valued.
• Process driven.	• Extremely flexible.
• Risk averse.	• Risk is to be "dealt" with.
• Substance is key.	• Focus is on the person.
• Individualistic.	• Family, society, nation.
• Confusion of mistakes.	• Mistakes not pro-actively communicated.
• Functional.	• Acceptance of IST (Indian Standard Time).
• Professional decisions.	• Hierarchy decides.
• Penalty in case of violations.	• Rewards for adherence.

Ashwin Merchant

T&A Consulting explores cutting-edge trends in UK higher education with Mr. Viggo Stacey – Editor, The PIE

T&A Consulting had the pleasure of hosting Mr. Viggo Stacey – Editor, The PIE, at our office. The visit provided an exceptional platform for thought-provoking discussions and insightful exchanges on the recent developments in the UK higher education (UKHE) space.

As a leading consultancy in the education sector, we were thrilled to engage in stimulating conversations that delved into various facets of the dynamic UKHE landscape. Our discussions extended far beyond surface-level topics, as we delved into emerging trends, disruptive innovations, and the transformative power of education. Together, we contemplated the future of UKHE and brainstormed strategies to navigate the ever-changing educational landscape.

One of the key focal points of our discussions revolved around the shifting demands and expectations of students in today's educational environment. As the student population becomes more diverse and globally mobile, our conversations explored the importance of cultural sensitivity, inclusivity, and the internationalization of education. We discussed strategies to attract and retain international students, promote cross-cultural understanding, and cultivate a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Moreover, we delved into how educational institutions are leveraging technology to enhance the learning experience, promote accessibility, and foster global collaboration. Our discussions touched upon the potential of artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and data analytics to revolutionize education, equipping students with the skills and competencies they need to succeed in an increasingly digital world.

The visit by Mr. Viggo Stacey proved to be an invaluable opportunity for T&A Consulting to broaden our horizons, challenge our assumptions, and gain deeper insights into the ever-evolving landscape of UK higher education.



T&A at the **Welcome to Finland** event in Delhi

T&A's team Talent Boost, the Knowledge Partner for Finland's Talent Boost programme in India, was delighted to participate in the 'Welcome to Finland' event organized by Business Finland in New Delhi.

The event provided a unique platform for offer holders who are keen to study in Finland to interact with the Finnish delegation and learn about the abundant work opportunities and lifestyle of the Happiest Country in the World.

One of the highlights of the event was the opportunity for offer holders to interact with Ms. Pauliina Fors, Attaché at the Embassy of Finland in India, who provided valuable information on residence permits and the next steps for Indian students planning to study in Finland. The event concluded with closing remarks by Mr. Harri Hälvä, Senior Specialist in International Marketing - Study in Finland, followed by a networking session.



Queen's University Belfast: South Asia team empowers students and builds connections through extensive outreach and a memorable Iftar gathering

The South Asia team at Queen's University Belfast has been diligently focused on promoting the university's undergraduate and postgraduate courses in South Asia. During the period from April 23 to June 23, they successfully orchestrated a comprehensive campaign consisting of 131 activities. These activities included 41 school engagement initiatives, 43 educational fairs, and a presence in 32 cities across South Asia.

The team's efforts encompassed career counseling sessions and workshops, benefiting over 900 students. These workshops were thoughtfully designed to provide students with valuable insights into the diverse opportunities that await them at Queen's University Belfast.

Furthermore, the QUB South Asia office went above and beyond by organizing a remarkable Iftar gathering in Dhaka. This special event brought together key education stakeholders and friends from across Bangladesh, creating a memorable experience. The gathering was attended by esteemed guests such as high school counselors, prospective university partners, and agent partners.



Norwich University of the Arts: Outreach in India

Norwich University of the Arts (NUA) has established itself as a top-ranked UK Creative Arts Specialist University, as per the latest Complete University Guide Ranking 2024. Despite its esteemed reputation in the UK, introducing NUA to the Indian market required dedicated efforts from T&A to position it strongly.

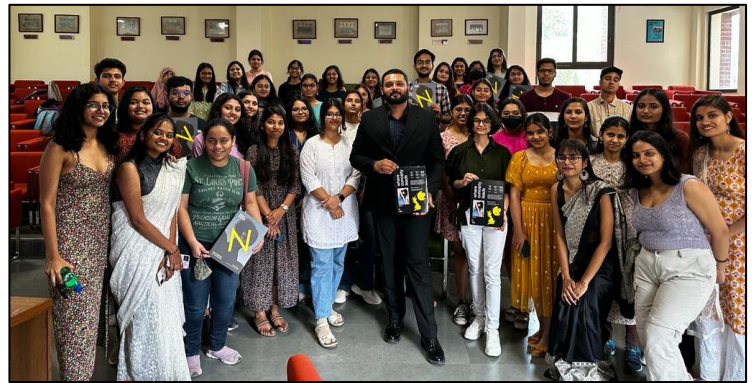
The team promoted NUA, reflecting the university's ethos across borders. Identifying key markets in Tier 1 cities and metropolitan areas, NUA was positioned as a premium brand for studying creative arts.

Leveraging a reliable agent partner network, the NUA India team has successfully generated excitement in the market. Over 500 agent counselors, along with 50 key team members, maintain continuous communication with T&A.

Collaborating with top schools and colleges across India, the team is working on progressive MoUs. Engaging workshops on topics like "Transition from STEM to STEAM," "Careers in Creative Industries," and "Portfolio Development" were conducted at esteemed institutions, including Miranda House, JDMC, Christ University, and RV College of Architecture.

Through counseling over 1000 students via calls and meeting hundreds more at education fairs in Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Pune, and school outreach activities in top cities like Dehradun, the team has reached a wide audience.

The relentless efforts of the NUA India team, coupled with the university's prestigious ranking, have yielded remarkable results. The university has successfully carved a strong presence in the Indian market, slowly becoming a top choice for aspiring students in the creative arts field.



University of Derby: **Counseling of more than 500** **students across 5 major cities**

From April to June 2023, the University of Derby team at T&A had two primary focuses. First, we dedicated substantial efforts to converting the offer holders for the September 2023 intake through online channels. Concurrently, we were actively engaged in hosting events for the offer holders of the September 2023 intake in various major cities. At the same time, we also extended our services to prospective students interested in the January 2024 intake.

Throughout this period, we successfully organized over 15 agent fairs, 2 school events, and 5 virtual events specifically tailored for the offer holders. These events proved to be excellent opportunities for counseling and guidance. Across the country, in cities like Delhi, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Pune, and Guwahati, we had the privilege of counseling and assisting more than 500 students.



ABOUT T&A CONSULTING

INDIA & SOUTH ASIA EDUCATION REPRESENTATION SERVICES

T&A Consulting is an international consulting practice to government economic development organisations, higher education institutions (HEIs), and private businesses.

We specialise in developing and successfully executing market entry and growth strategies across the many markets in which we operate. As a global practice, we have a subsidiary in Canada and representative offices in Europe and the UK.

With a strong belief in the age-old adage “quality is the best business plan”, and going against the more traditional approach of representing multiple HEIs, we understand that HEIs want more than just a marketing function in-market. HEIs want to build sustainable brand recognition in the South Asia region, which is the fastest growing geography for international student mobility in the world.

Therefore, we made a deliberate choice to introduce a unique reward-based partner approach to a limited number of HEIs, ensuring each one of them has dedicated resources and the full support of our experienced marketing, representation, and admissions capabilities.



T&A CONSULTING | SERVICES

In Market and Operational Support

- Assistance in developing strategies and implementation of plans to recruit students in line with entry requirements.
- Management and reassessment of existing agents' network.
- Appointment of new agents in previously unexplored South Asian markets including Tier 2,3 and 4 cities in India.
- Maintenance of data on market specific changes, admission requirements and course information.
- Market Intelligence towards new interventions including new programmes, agent engagements and rewards and scholarships.



Get in touch with our University Engagement Manager



Arjun Mukundd

Associate Director – Client Engagement

Email: amukundd@taglobalgroup.com





Event Management & Logistics

- Design, schedule and implement physical and virtual events
- On-site logistics, AV equipment, catering, venue set-up
- Co-ordinate inter and intra city travel and transport



Industry Integration /Employability

- Development of industry linkages to boost student work placements
- Partnerships with private companies with research and innovation centres to provide hands-on research experience to students



Marketing & PR Services

- Brand positioning and strategy development
- Social media strategy creation and implementation
- Managing social media platforms
- Designing advertising campaigns
- Strategic planning and execution of public relations initiatives



T&A Consulting – India

416, Tower A, Emaar Digital Greens
Golf Course Extension Road,
Sector 61, Gurgaon 122001, India
Tel: +91-124-4314960

T&A Consulting – Americas Inc

Suite No 501, 77 City Centre Drive,
Mississauga ON L5B1M5, Canada
Tel: +1 4379838483

T&A Consulting – UK

3 The Anchorage Donaghadee, County Down
Northern Ireland BT21 0EW, United Kingdom
Tel: +44-7772-726449

www.taglobalgroup.com
contact@taglobalgroup.com



Follow us on social media

A large, stylized yellow star graphic with a thin outline, positioned behind the text.

**Connect
With US**