

THE CAREER DISPATCH

INSIGHTS ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH ASIA



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Post-study work opportunities

As international education witnesses an unprecedented boom, we take a look at how employment opportunities can be a game changer for destination countries and HEIs

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Introduction

South Asia is a huge market for higher education institutes given the region's vast population and the developing nature of its economies. The region is the second largest in terms of student enrollments and accounts for 18% of all tertiary education students globally as per data provided by the World Bank. While the governments of these nations are involved in the development of primary education, it is the private sector that is a dominant force in the sphere of higher education in the region.

In India and Nepal, private education institutes, including universities, colleges, and stand-alone institutions, account for over 65% of higher education enrollment; in Bangladesh and Afghanistan, the share is over 40%; and in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, private HEIs cover 20% of all enrolment.

The top seven countries chosen by South Asian students are the USA, UK, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Germany, and China. But students are now also choosing many alternate destinations like Turkey, Ireland, and Russia for various reasons.

IN THIS ISSUE

The world is competing for talent from South Asia. And with **post-study work opportunities** more important than ever before, governments are responding to talent challenges, and universities are feeling the pressure on their rankings. We discuss this and more in this issue. Happy reading!



Why post-study work opportunities matter

Students from South Asia place considerable importance on the ease of immigration when choosing their destination country for higher education. In India, the biggest source country for international students, almost 8 in 10 Gen Z students looking to study abroad plan to work and settle overseas

Focus on employability outcomes

While the quality of education offered by a university remains an important consideration, students are now increasingly turning to rankings on graduate employability of institutions, such as QS's Graduate Employability Rankings and Times Higher Education's Global University Employability Rankings.

Preference to clear path to jobs and residency

Many international students, especially those from developing economies, aim to study in

countries where there is a clear path toward employment after graduation, and that also provide options of permanent residency.

One size doesn't fit all

Employability needs are different for international undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral students. They all look for specific measures and support to ensure employability. The uncertainties that arose during the pandemic, the rapidly evolving global economy, and intense competition for employment in populous countries of South Asia have altered employment prospects and necessitated increased demand for certain skills.



What students want as part of their overall international experience

- Meaningful linkages with industry and/or professional groups
- Work experience projects and internships
- Career guidance, support, and networking events
- Credible graduate outcome data to make better decisions

Upping the game: Best PSW offerings around the world



CANADA

Canada has emerged as the most preferred destination for the outbound movement of students due to lucrative policies like the Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP). Graduates from abroad can work in Canada for between 8 months and 3 years via the PGWP.

In the past five years, Indians in Canada have had an approval rate of over 95% for the PGWPP.



GERMANY

As per a report by OECD, Germany, along with Canada retains the most international graduates.

International graduates in Germany can apply for a residence permit valid for six months when their student visa expires and look for jobs. Germany also plans to provide dual citizenship and special citizenship status to skilled workers for 3–5 years.



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

In November 2018, UAE approved a decision to grant a 5-year visa to outstanding students. The country has revamped its Golden Residence rules as a part of the new Entry and Residence Scheme. The golden visa for outstanding graduates from the best 100 universities worldwide allows foreigners to live and work in the UAE for up to 10 years without sponsorship.

AUSTRALIA



While Australia took a long time to open up for international students, it has caught up well since it opened its borders in December 2021, and is on its way to becoming the second most popular study destination in the world. Particularly popular among students from Sri Lanka, and with Indians set to become Australia's largest group of foreign students, the country has added to its charm by increasing the post-study work rights by two years for graduates with degrees that teach sought-after skills.

The country also has provisions for recently graduated international students to apply for a Temporary Graduate Visa (subclass 485) to remain in the country for an additional 2-4 years to work. The 487 Regional Sponsored Visa is another option for gaining permanent residency in exchange for working in a designated rural or suburban area for a minimum of three years.



Country In Focus

UNITED KINGDOM

The fact that the South Asian market, especially India, has responded most strongly to the reintroduction of post-study work rights (Graduate Immigration Route) in the UK is consistent with the fact that short and long-term migration is a key motivator for many. According to the UK government, nearly 118,000 Indian students received a student visa in the year ending June 2022 – an 89% increase from the previous year.

The UK also released the High Potential Individual Visa in 2022, which will allow skilled workers to live and work in the UK for two or three years, depending on their degree level, without requiring sponsorship.

But while the UK saw the “early-opener” advantage post the covid-induced lockdowns and hit the international student target of 600,000 before the 2030 deadline, it is fast facing competition from other countries and internal woes:

- 1- While the GIR helps in finding employment in the UK without sponsorship, many graduates face challenges explaining their immigration status to potential employers.
- 2- The anti-immigration stance taken by some politicians in the recent past has made the situation tricky.
- 3- The UK needs reliable graduate outcomes data to maintain its position as a leading study destination globally.

An International Education Commission is being set up by stakeholders in the UK to develop a new International Education Strategy 2.0 as a result of the changes to the geopolitical landscape since 2019 when the first strategy was launched.

The challenges that the commission hopes to address include a future student number target, priority countries for student pathways and research collaboration, sustainable recruitment strategies, visa offers, and the continued competitive international offer the UK has.



EXPERT CHAT

Expert chat is a special segment where we speak with experts in the international higher education industry on the changing landscape of international education and its implications on student mobility from South Asia. In this issue, we speak with Evlon De Souza, Associate Director International, Norwich University of the Arts, UK. Evlon has had a rich experience working in the higher education sector, which includes stints in teaching and volunteering. An educationist at heart, she is deeply committed to the internationalisation of education. Edited excerpts:



Evlon, the recent regulations by the University Grants Commission (UGC) to facilitate academic collaborations between Indian and foreign higher education institutes (HEIs), as well as the MoU signed between India and the UK, have opened a plethora of opportunities for HEIs in both countries. What is your take on this?

The landmark MoU for the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications (MRQs) between UK and India, alongside India's New Education Policy (NEP) 2022 will aid in the internationalisation strategies of both countries, while also accelerating opportunities for academic collaborations through the removal of the primary barriers to closer educational links.

The MRQ will cover 80% of courses that Indian students choose to study in the UK, apart from professional degrees in certain fields. The key benefit to students is that most Bachelors, Masters, and Doctoral degrees will be considered equivalent, regardless of duration or country of study.

For HEIs in both countries, it will improve international pathways, bilateral mobility of professionals, online learning, research, as well as formation of branch campuses. For India, the key benefit will be increased internationalisation, whilst for the UK it will further open TNE opportunities.

There has been an increasing trend among South Asian students to opt for STEM courses while pursuing higher education abroad, as these are considered to have high ROI in terms of employment. How has the landscape evolved for courses pertaining to arts and humanities in the recent past?

Indeed, South Asian students, particularly Indian students, have majorly favoured STEM courses overseas, not only owing to their view that it provides higher ROI in terms of employment, but also due to wider societal views that these courses provide more stable and successful careers. However, the world at large has started to see a shift from STEM to STEAM, with the focus on interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary studies steadily increasing. This has resulted in more South Asian students opting for creative arts and humanities subjects in recent intakes. Two major contributors to this trend are the increased awareness among students and their parents regarding available career prospects (for example, in the creative arts - Digital Marketing, Graphic Design, Animation & VFX), alongside the growing understanding that creativity and the Arts envelopes every aspect of the world we live in. The large volume of engineering students graduating each year in India that are struggling to find jobs has further accelerated this trend in India.

How are courses in the art domain being fine-tuned to make them more industry-focused and equip the students with relevant skills to join the workforce?

Universities such as Norwich University of the Arts are always innovating to ensure their graduates are employable and skilled at industry levels. At Norwich, we draw on 170+ years of history whilst having a clear focus on the future. We understand that future careers will look very different and therefore offer exciting, blended courses that are practical and focused on developing transferable skills.

Our BSc (Hons) Creative Computing course teaches students coding and software design skills, alongside creative design principles. Our BA and MA Games course allows students to focus on Game Art and Design or Games Development, whilst our BSc Creative Technology course introduces students to VR (Virtual Reality), AR (Augmented Reality), physical computing, projection mapping, and even soft robotics, using cutting-edge equipment such as motion sensors to develop unique forms of human-computer interaction.

What are some challenges that South Asian students face at UK educational institutes? How are universities tackling these challenging areas?

For a significant number of South Asian students, their move to the UK to study is their first time away from home, living independently.

This means that students naturally take some time to adjust to their new surroundings – make new friends, acclimatise to the weather and cultural differences, and overcome homesickness. UK universities welcome a large number of international students each year, and offer a range of support facilities to aid them.

At the Norwich University of the Arts, we run pre-departure events to guide students on what to pack, how to get a UK Phone number and how to open a bank account. We also run International Arrivals Lounge - a week full of social activities for international students to meet other international students. We arrange city tours for students to learn about Norwich more widely and walking tours to introduce them to their immediate surroundings. Our Student Support and Students Union also run two weeks of Moving in and Welcome Week activities to help international students learn more about British culture and what to expect at university and provide students with support-staff contacts. Students can also access support for mental health and wellbeing, student finances, accommodation, and disability support.

Every year, we collect feedback from students to ensure we better tailor our activities to best address our new incoming students. We are always elated to hear how so many of our students met their closest friends at our International Arrivals Lounge or how our Student Support team transformed their university experience!



STUDENT SPEAK

Student Speak is a special segment where we talk to South Asian students studying in different parts of the world and understand their journeys in foreign lands.

In this issue, we speak with Abhishek Nair, a final-year student at Queen's University Belfast. Abhishek, who hails from Mumbai in the state of Maharashtra, India, is studying M.Sc. Accounting and Finance, and is currently residing in Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK.

Edited excerpts:

How would you describe your experience as an international student in the UK right from applying to universities to adjusting to a new educational system?

There is a significant difference between applying to universities and attending the university of your choice in real-time. Although everything appears to be okay prior to entering universities, there are a few issues or rather difficulties in adapting to new cultures and surroundings, but this is only the initial phase, and as time goes on, you become accustomed to the new normal and adapt to it.

While deciding on which country or university to choose, what were the top 3 factors you considered, and how did the UK emerge as the top choice?

The top three criteria in choosing a university were the university's ranking, what its alumni are doing after finishing the course, and the university's global prominence. Furthermore, I chose the United Kingdom because of the vast opportunities in the subject in which I am pursuing my master's degree, as well as the shorter time required to obtain a master's degree in comparison to other nations.

Have you sought any part-time work opportunities during your studies? How did that make a difference to your overall experience of the country?

Yes, I had the opportunity to work part-time while studying, which undoubtedly demonstrates what to expect in the market



and the degree of competition in every profession.

In the long run, companies always prefer someone who has worked in the country and can truly survive in the employment market and provide what is required of them.

How has this experience shaped your expectations of finding full-time employment? Also, what measures by the government and universities can make finding suitable employment easier for international students?

I am now in my final semester and looking for a full-time employment opportunity. The institution provides opportunities by hosting career fairs, and there are many departments to assist with interview preparation.

However, the fact that our work experience back in India does not find much acceptance by employers here is a bit disheartening. If there can be some measures to make work experience in India count, that would be a great help for international students.

What would be your advice or suggestions to aspiring students from India looking to acquire an education from a foreign university?

The learning experience at a foreign institution goes way beyond academics, as it allows you to meet people from different parts of the world and learn about different cultures and perspectives. Having said that, while the whole experience is enriching, achievement requires hard work and discipline, and one should be prepared for that.

News and Updates

India finalises rules for entry of foreign universities into GIFT city



The Indian government has finalised rules for foreign universities to enter India via the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) route. Among the various points on which clarity has been provided include the removal of ‘inflexible’ domestic laws and controls on fees, admissions, college appointments and the bar on revenue repatriation to the parent institutions.

The courses or programmes offered by the foreign universities’ campuses “shall be identical in all respects with the course or programme” offered by the universities in their home countries.



Canada allows full-time jobs with regular studies to international students

In a move to give respite to international students and to address the labour shortage, Canada has allowed full-time jobs along with regular studies till December 2023, removing the 20-hour per week cap. However, students can work full-time only during scheduled breaks, like winter and summer holidays. During regular classes, they can only work for 20 hours per week.



Australia extends post-study work rights for in-demand graduates

International students with in-demand skills will now be able to stay and work in Australia for two more years. Graduates with select bachelor’s degrees will be able to stay in the country for four years, those with master’s degrees for five years, and those with PhDs for six. However, which degree programs will be permitted for these extended visas is yet to be announced.



A £4,000 scholarship for South Asian students by University of Dundee

The University of Dundee, UK, in October 2022 announced a £4,000 scholarship for students from eight South Asian countries—India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Students will get £4,000 every year and may get up to £20,000 for a full programme, depending on their choice of course. The scholarship is available for all undergraduate applicants except medicine and dentistry.



6th meeting of India-Norway Joint Working Group on Higher Ed

India hosted the 6th session of the India-Norway Joint Working Group (JWG) on Higher Education in October 2022. The JWG was established to monitor implementation of the MoU on Higher Education, signed on 25th April 2022. The two sides deliberated upon overall higher education policy and priorities, student/faculty mobility and cooperation in the field of skill development.



India & Nepal shine in Victorian International Education awards

Three Indian and one Nepali international student were named finalists in the prestigious Victorian International Education Awards 2021-22, out of which two Indian students won the prestigious awards. The Victorian International Education Awards, presented by Study Melbourne, recognise exceptional Victorian international students and alumni.



UCB introduces degree programs from the University of London

Universal College Bangladesh (UCB) has introduced degree programmes from the University of London under the academic direction of the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). With 100% curriculum and testing from LSE, the offered courses at UCB will initially include BSc Business and Management, BSc Finance and BSc Accounting and Finance.



MoU between Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences and Arnhold Institute for Global Health to address global health

The Arnhold Institute for Global Health at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and the Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences and Dhulikhel Hospital in Nepal have announced a multi-year agreement to advance clinical education, training, research, and care in Nepal and throughout the Mount Sinai Health System to promote greater global health equity and access.

T&A at work: Events and initiatives

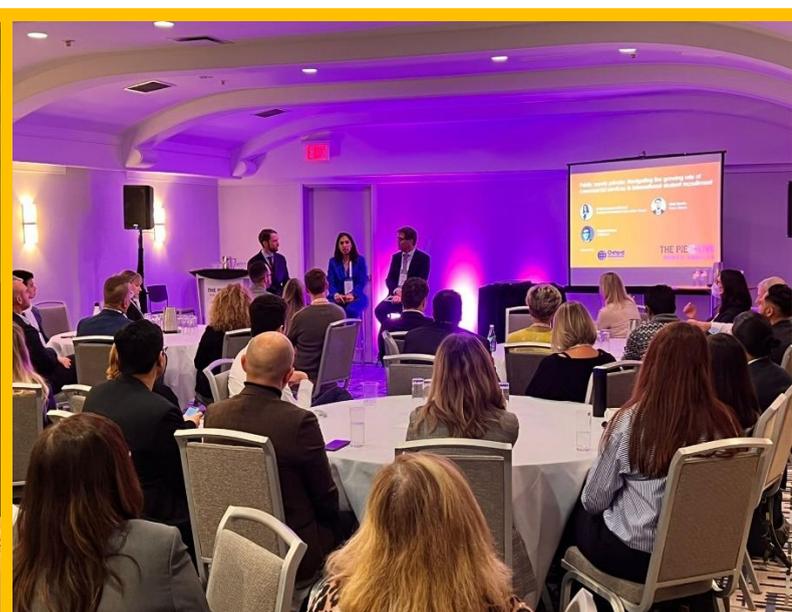
THE PIE LIVE, North America 13-14 October 2022

T&A Consulting was at the PIE LIVE, Toronto, an interactive two-day, face-to-face event focused on building connections and learning amongst leaders and aspiring leaders in international education from across North America and beyond.

The event was attended by delegates from around the world representing higher education, EdTech, private education and government.

The event hosted panel discussions, power presentations, roundtables and workshops on varied topics affecting international education, such as the importance of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in student recruitment, employment-linked outcomes, digital pathways, and student well-being.

As experts on international student mobility from South Asia, T&A participated in the event and discussed what the future looks like for higher education in South Asia.



**Queen’s University Belfast:
Medicine, Health & Life Sciences
and Engineering & Physical Sciences
workshops delivered in India**

Visiting faculty and the team from QUB’s South Asia office reached out to a number of prominent schools in India to deliver workshops that provided fun and interactive challenges to test the teamwork, communication, task management and problem-solving skills of students.

The Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences conducted workshops on a range of subjects ranging from Aerospace/Mechanical/Product design engineering to Architecture, Computing, Mathematics, and Structural Engineering.

Workshops from The Faculty of Medicine, Health, and Life Sciences team provided more hands-on activities and an opportunity for students to develop an appreciation for the physical nature of DNA and the process of DNA purification.

It was a pleasure to work with such interested and engaging students from The Shri Ram School, Rockwell International School, ITL Public School and Amity University. A huge thank you for the warm welcome.



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
Senior Engagement Manager
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

**Emaar Digital Greens, 416–420,
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



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