

**Joint Statement between  
the Ministry of Human Resource Development of the  
Government of India and  
the Department for Innovation, University and Skills  
of England  
Regarding Strengthening Co-operation and Exchange in  
Education**

1. The first India-UK Education Forum took place in London on 26th September 2008. The UK delegation was led by Ian Watmore, the Permanent Secretary at the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, London and the Indian delegation was led by Mr R P Agrawal, Secretary, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi.

**Context**

2. The UK and India enjoy a special relationship in education and research and have a significant number of institutional links. The momentum for increasing the number of educational links has been reinforced in recent years through various initiatives and the annual Prime-Ministerial summits. In January 2008, the two Prime Ministers of the two countries issued a joint declaration on Indo-UK education and research collaboration. This was followed by a visit to India of a delegation of Vice Chancellors led by the President of Universities UK and, by a delegation led by the Minister of State for Higher Education and Lifelong Learning, Bill Rammell MP.

**UK-India Education & Research Initiative (UKIERI)**

3. Both sides agreed that UKIERI has made a significant contribution to the recent enhancement in educational links between the UK and India. In three years, UKIERI has created sustainable partnership links in Higher Education, innovative links in Further Education as well as partnerships enabling 250 UK and Indian schools to work together in clusters. UKIERI is a mechanism which focuses on the delivery of mutual benefit to both Indian and UK partners.

**UK-India Education Partnership Agreement**

4. Both sides are pleased with the state of educational co-operation between the UK and India, and agreed to continue to work together to strengthen educational collaboration. Nevertheless, it was recognised by both sides that UKIERI is now over half way through its planned 5 year lifespan, ending in March 2011, and active consideration is being given in both countries to its legacy and the optimum relationship needed to be put in place post 2011.

5. It was agreed that officials from both sides will hold further discussions to develop the early draft framework of a UK – India Education Partnership

Agreement to give strength, purpose and direction to our joint efforts; to allow links to be made across sectoral boundaries; to help identify gaps and opportunities; to consolidate existing agreements on education; and identify new areas for future educational collaboration as equal partners.

6. The partnership framework should also reflect the geographical diversity of both countries. Both sides will seek to encourage partnerships across the whole of India and in the UK at the level of the devolved administrations of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales and at the regional level in England.

7. The two Secretaries exchanged views and experiences on the challenges and opportunities that both countries face in the sectors of higher education and vocational education and discussed ways in which the two countries could collaborate for further mutual benefit. They also discussed the impact that the UKIERI experience has had on the bilateral relationship both from an educational and corporate perspective. A further discussion was held on the challenges and opportunities presented by the Prime Ministerial agreement to extend the current range of educational exchange and co-operation programmes into new areas of twinning and research collaboration between higher education institutions, faculty development and quality assurance and mutual recognition of qualifications.

### **Higher Education**

8. Higher education is recognised by both sides as an area of long-term collaboration between the two countries. The two sides note with satisfaction the vigorous programmes of joint activity on higher education which have been conducted since the launch of UKIERI in April 2006. Collaboration has been extensive in areas such as research collaboration; the development of joint and dual course delivery; staff and student exchanges including the award of PhD scholarships and post-doctoral research fellowship awards and in-service faculty in universities and colleges; high-level policy dialogues and workshops.

9. Both sides endorsed the commitment made by the Prime Ministers of the two countries at their 2008 summit to deepen education collaboration between the UK and India and to promote and support, through specific measures, India's expansion of its HE capacity.

10. Both sides expressed a desire to have collaboration between the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India for sharing best practice, information and the sharing of policy experiences for advancement of higher education.

### ***Collaboration on New HE Institutions***

11. The two sides reviewed progress on the agreement by the two Prime Ministers in January 2008 that the UK would collaborate for the establishment of one new IIT, one new IISER and one New Central University in India. The UK side also agreed to consider extending the Prime Ministerial commitment

to include collaboration on the setting up of one IIM. The two sides confirmed that the UK side would work with IIT Punjab and IISER Pune. Each institution would enter into a collaborative arrangement with a consortium of UK HE institutions led by a single UK educational institution. This would allow for collaboration across a range of areas, including:

- Exchange visits of faculty, management and students;
- Support for faculty development;
- Dialogue on policy and development issues;
- Joint research and academic collaborations;
- Partnership schemes for setting up of laboratories;

12. It was agreed that more work was needed to firm up the proposal, particularly on the final shape of the UK consortium arrangements including agreement on the financial requirements. Both sides also welcomed the exchange of ideas underway on India's plans to develop new universities aiming for world class standards, including a special seminar between UK and Indian experts held ahead of the Forum. They further agreed to establish a joint working group comprising the relevant officials to develop a model for the various collaborative arrangements based around the Forum discussion and to prepare the necessary MoUs.

### **Faculty, Leadership and Student Development**

13. Both sides welcomed the agreement to jointly operate the India-UK Higher Education Leadership Development Programme. This agreement will enable participants gain first hand experience of senior management and leadership roles, issues and processes in Indian and UK HEIs; and to enable them to share experiences through study visits, group workshops, structured reports and a range of other networking opportunities.

14. Both sides agreed that there is a strong need to develop and ensure a good flow of students and faculty. It was agreed to develop a programme, under UKIERI, to support faculty development in key Indian universities with the participation of leading UK academics and vice-versa. Priorities will vary according to institutional needs and stage of development but there will be some common points.

- Split, joint and taught doctorates;
- Visiting lectureships;
- Partnership schemes;
- Sharing of international experience
- Capacity building including post-doctoral research of some selected in-service faculty members;
- Provide support to Summer/Winter schools, updating and refresher courses for young faculty members.

## **Policy Dialogue**

15. Both sides agreed that the partnership will provide, through UKIERI and other mechanisms, a variety of policy dialogues and processes aimed at enhancing the partnership and addressing the needs of both countries. Suggested topics would include:

- Widening participation policy and implementation;
- Libraries and learning centres;
- Quality assurance;
- Public/private partnerships;
- Trans-national and international education;
- Exchange of e-learning materials;
- Development of virtual laboratories;
- Promoting greater joint research by linking the National Knowledge Network and GEANT and other UK networks to facilitate the quick exchange of research data;
- Increasing the flow of students to both countries through scholarship schemes and other mechanisms;
- Intellectual property rights (IPR) for patents created through joint research;

## **Regulatory clearance, quality assurance and recognition of qualifications**

16. Both sides agreed that the quality of higher education is crucial and agreed to undertake further discussions and cooperation on quality assurance in trans-national education in India in the light of the higher education policies and mechanisms to be implemented during India's 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan.

17. As part of a multilateral initiative - involving UK, India, New Zealand and Australia - both sides have agreed to set up a working group involving the main Indian regulatory authorities: UGC, NAAC, AICTE, NBA and representatives of counterpart institutions from the other partner countries. The group will aim to achieve the following:

- Working towards mutual recognition of academic qualifications;
- Clarity for regulatory issues in each country with transparent processes published and agreed by each country;
- Sharing of information on quality assurance and reputation of institutions;
- A joint approach to the prevention of fraud, advertising codes of conduct and inappropriate institutional behaviour on both sides, inter alia, in recruitment and enrolment of students and export of education through distance learning.

18. Both sides agreed to encourage collaboration between the UK's Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and India's National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and National Board of Accreditation (NBA) for sharing best practice, information and sharing policy experiences for the advancement of quality assurance and recognition of qualifications through meetings and exchange of visits of experts.

### **Vocational Education and Training**

19. Both sides agreed that raising and updating workforce skills is one of the most important challenges in developing a competitive economy. Action needs to be taken to break down the barriers that prevent adults from receiving vocational education and training, improving their skills, job placements, career advancement and ensuring that in a fast changing world there is opportunity for all. The UK and India have much to learn from each other and agreed to share experience and encourage partnerships between vocational education institutions of the two countries.

20. Both sides agree to cooperate in the exchange of experience and information on topics including:

- design of national vocational education and skills development policies;
- professional associations and vocational education links;
- curriculum development led by enterprises and professionals;
- delivery and funding mechanisms for vocational education and training programmes;
- workplace learning;
- basic skills;
- leadership and capacity building in vocational schools and centres, particularly the training and development of teachers and trainers;
- quality assessment of vocational education;
- mutual recognition of vocational education qualifications.

### **Costs**

21. The financial implications of these new activities have yet to be determined and both sides agreed in principle to adopt a standard approach to cost sharing.

### **Education Forum**

22. Both sides acknowledged that fresh impetus to UK-India educational collaboration has been provided by the establishment of the Education Forum. It was agreed that the Education Forum will meet on an annual basis, at a mutually convenient time and alternating between London and New Delhi. Such an approach will have the advantage of giving strength, purpose and direction to our efforts; allow links to be made across sectoral boundaries; help identify gaps (e.g. research collaboration); and opportunities to prioritise.

23. A joint working group will be established comprising members designated by both sides to advise, facilitate and monitor progress of activity covered under the partnership framework, using sub-groups where appropriate. Specifically, to monitor progress on

- Collaboration in new Higher Education institutions;
- Regulatory clearance, quality assurance and recognition of qualifications; and
- To develop a strategic co-operation agreement in the area of vocational education and training which will facilitate partnership working between institutions in both countries

Signed on 26th September 2008, in London

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**R P Agrawal**  
**Secretary**  
**Department of Higher Education**

**For the Ministry of Human Resource  
Development, Government of India**

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**Ian Watmore**  
**Permanent Secretary**

**For the Department for Innovation,  
Universities and Skills on behalf of  
the Government and Devolved  
Administrations of the United  
Kingdom of Great Britain and  
Northern Ireland**